

We wish Readers a Happy Holi & a Happy HOLA

INSIDE

GENDER EQUALITY IS FAR FROM ACHIEVED PAGE 2

TRUMP-PUTIN-MODI SUMMIT IS DOABLE PAGE 8

POISONING YOUR KIDS: THE HIDDEN DANGERS OF PASSING PREJUDICE TO THE NEXT GENERATION PAGE 9

WHY THE UNITY OF INDIA BLOC IS FALTERING PAGE 10

HOLI THE FESTIVAL OF COLORS, JOY AND UNITY PAGE 36

THE INDIAN PANORAMA HOLI / HOLA CELEBRATION TO PROMOTE BONDS OF LOVE AMONG COMMUNITIES IS EIGHT YEARS OLD PAGE 38

Supreme Court of India no to status quo on Dharavi project



The Supreme Court of India refused to halt the ongoing work on the Dharavi redevelopment project

MARCH 7, 2025

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Supreme Court on Friday, March 7, refused to halt the ongoing work on the Dharavi redevelopment project, which is being executed by Adani Properties Pvt Ltd. However, a Bench led by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna issued notices to the Maharashtra government and Adani Properties Pvt Ltd, seeking their responses to a petition filed by UAE-based Seclink Technologies Corporation.

Trump warns Russia of sanctions, tariffs until Ukraine ceasefire deal reached



'To Russia and Ukraine, get to the table right now, before it is too late,' Trump warned

MARCH 7, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C (TIP): US President Donald Trump has said he is "strongly considering large-scale banking sanctions and tariffs" on Russia until a "ceasefire and a final peace settlement agreement" with Ukraine is reached.

His statement comes after Moscow launched a massive drone and missile attack on Ukrainian energy and gas infrastructure on Thursday.

In a post on Truth Social on Friday, Trump wrote, "Based on the fact that Russia is absolutely "pounding" Ukraine on the battlefield right now, I am strongly considering large-scale Banking Sanctions, Sanctions, and Tariffs on Russia until a Cease Fire and FINAL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT ON PEACE IS REACHED."

CONTD ON PAGE 54

US pushes for grand trade pact with India, wants access to agri market



US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick has said India needed to open its agriculture market

MARCH 7, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): The US on Friday, March 7, pitched for a macro, large and grand trade agreement with India, and not 'product-by-product' arrangement, to boost bilateral ties between the two countries.

US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said India needed to open its agriculture market, emphasizing it could not be "off the table" when the country was negotiating with its largest trading partner.

"Because India is so gigantic, and the US is so gigantic, the right way to do it (trade pact) is a macro, and that's why we think we can get it done. The US is interested in doing a macro, large-scale, broad-based trade agreement with India that takes everything into account, and that I think it can be done... it's time to do something big, something grand, something that connects India and the US together, but does it on a broad scale, not product-by-product, but rather the whole thing. Let's bring India's tariff policy towards America down," he said at a media conclave here.

In the agriculture sector, he said the Indian agriculture market had to open up, and it could not just stay closed.

CONTD ON PAGE 54

Trump creates task force to prepare for 2026 World Cup



FIFA President Gianni Infantino, right, presents President Donald Trump with the new FIFA Club World Cup official ball in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington on Friday, March 7, 2025. Photo: PTI

MARCH 7, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): President Donald Trump created a task force on Friday to prepare for the 2026 World Cup, which will bring the globe's premier soccer tournament to North America at a time when his on-again, off-again tariffs have ratcheted up tensions across the continent. "I think it's going to make it more exciting," Trump said about playing the World Cup amid sharp rhetoric between leaders of the host

CONTD ON PAGE 54

Advertisement for Manhattan Reproductive Medicine, featuring a pregnant woman and text about fertility treatments.

Advertisement for OMNI MORTGAGE CORP. featuring photos of Andy Singh and Herman Singh, and contact information.

# Gender equality is far from achieved

By Indrajit Saluja



International Women's Day (IWD), celebrated on March 8, has served as a global platform for advocating gender equality, recognizing women's achievements, and addressing challenges they face worldwide. Proposed in 1910 by Clara Zetkin, IWD aimed to promote women's suffrage, labor rights, and gender equality. Over time, it has become a significant occasion for social activism, policy change, and celebrating progress, but the question remains whether its objectives have been fully achieved.

The key objectives of IWD include advocating for gender equality, recognizing women's contributions, mobilizing for change, and empowering women across social, economic, and political spheres.

As we prepare to celebrate the day, it would be interesting to consider the level of progress in achieving these objectives.

**GENDER EQUALITY:** While strides have been made in education,

where the gender gap in primary education is nearly closed globally, significant disparities persist. The World Economic Forum's 2020 Global Gender Gap Report predicts it will take about 135 years to close the gender gap in economic participation, health, education, and political empowerment. In regions like sub-Saharan Africa, girls face barriers like child marriage, preventing equal access to education.

**RECOGNITION OF WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS:**

Women's contributions have gained recognition, but they remain underrepresented in leadership roles. For example, women held just 29% of senior management positions globally in 2020. Women also

occupy only 26.1% of seats in national parliaments, according to the Global Gender Gap Report.

**MOBILIZATION FOR CHANGE:** IWD has inspired movements like #MeToo, advocating for equal rights and safety. However, progress has been slow, and laws addressing domestic violence and sexual harassment are often poorly enforced. According to the World Health Organization, one in three women has experienced physical or sexual violence globally.

**EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN:** Economic empowerment has improved, but challenges remain, including a global gender pay gap of 20%. Women continue to face barriers to career advancement due to biases, caregiving responsibilities, and workplace discrimination.

While International Women's Day has contributed to progress, gender equality is far from achieved, and continued efforts for policy change and societal transformation are necessary.

## READERS WRITE

### PASSPORT WOES

Hello, my name is Chirag Patil.

I live in the state of Washington and I'm a legal resident of the USA. I applied for passport renewal and my mail was received by the consulate at San Francisco on December 5th 2023.

I received an email from escalationssf@vfsglobal.com on December 8th 2023 asking for additional documents which was the marriage certificate and a letter explaining my current marital status. I sent them both via courier and they received it by December 29th 2023 and then I heard nothing back for over 2 months. Again, on February 23rd 2024 I received the same email asking for same documentation, which I sent them both via courier and then received no email response nor any call. The tracking status on their website would say- 'Passport application is under review'.

I contacted VFS Global in the interim via paid calls and they said their job is to just take care of application and my case is with the consulate and they cannot do anything further. I was confused and worried because it was over 4 months. I emailed the same email (escalationssf@vfsglobal.com) multiple times and received no response. I tried calling the consulate but they have no helpline numbers where you can speak to someone. So, I called the emergency number and they said, they cannot do anything since it's not a family or medical emergency and hung up the call. I was losing hope at this point.

I tried contacting the San Francisco consulate via email. I emailed each and every email I found on their website asking for update or any help and that I was stressed and wanted to travel home for over one year, I emailed these accounts-

cg.sf@mea.gov.in,  
consuloci.sf@mea.gov.in  
dcs.sf@mea.gov.in, misc.sf@mea.gov.in,  
passport.sf@mea.gov.in,  
passport1.sf@mea.gov.in,  
vcoci.sf@mea.gov.in,  
misc.sf@mea.gov.in,  
passport.sf@mea.gov.in

I emailed them all on April 29th 2024, June 26th 2024, August 19th 2024, August 25th 2024, September 24th 2024, October 31st 2024, November 11th 2024, January 9th 2025 and I received not a single email response or any point of communication from the consulate.

In the meantime, I tried looking for help to expedite my process and found an agent who at that time was in Florida. Even after being a legal resident in the US, I was asked to pay thousands of dollars to check on it which I couldn't afford.

Meanwhile my grandmother was sick and I had no option but to go see her which was sad and frustrating.

I had lost hope and luckily through some medium in January 2025(13 months since I applied) I found out about REDIO and their role in helping Indians overseas, Upon contacting Dhanashree Patil ma'am, she swiftly responded and got my case to the attention of Mr. Prem Bhandari sir who lives in New York and takes pride in helping those in need. He got in touch with me and started taking notes of all the details till date. Since their calls at VFS are charged \$2.48/min, he called VFS Global multiple times using his personal credit card and spoke with them about this case. Finally, after he asked VFS to explain and get this case resolved, initially they would give the same answer but after he spoke to them and explained who he was and held them accountable, they started working on it. VFS asked me for the same documents again which they asked 14 months ago which I had sent them via courier twice already.

He used his Twitter handle @PremBhandariNYC to keep the responsible authorities accountable and it helped. After the wait of 14 months and 27 days, they initiated a police verification for my passport renewal and Mr. Prem Bhandari sir wasn't pleased with that. His words and hold of power in the Indian diaspora is very strong and hence they skipped the police verification process and printed my passport the next day and I received it on March 04 2025, after 14 months and 29 days.

It took Mr. Prem Bhandari sir less than 2 weeks to get everything done for me.

I have never met this person before or have any personal relation with him, but he showed me the true meaning of 'Seva', and our Indian Government and our Indian community should be proud to have people like him who selflessly help others in need without expecting a single rupee in return.

I am touched by his helping nature and way of getting things done, and it's inspirational to young people like me.

The whole process was such a stressful and frustrating one. If Bhandari sir had not helped me out, I would still be clueless and would not be able to see my ailing grandmother.

Now I can finally make travel plans to visit home. Thank you so much to Mr. Prem Bhandari sir and team REDIO for helping people like me in times of need.

Chirag Patil  
Washington, USA

The Indian Panorama welcomes readers' complaints, suggestions and views. Please email to salujaindra@gmail.com

#### 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

Lovlien 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

## DISCLAIMER

THE INDIAN PANORAMA ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CLAIMS MADE IN ADVERTISEMENTS. WE ONLY SELL SPACE. VIEWS PUBLISHED IN THE NEWSPAPER ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE NEWSPAPER. ALL RIGHTS ARE RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IN WRITING FROM THE INDIAN PANORAMA IS PROHIBITED.

**Eye Foundation of America**  
A World without Childhood Blindness

3,50,000 Vision Screenings  
18,710 Eyeglasses Given  
325,000 Vision Surgeries  
18,400 Retinopathy of Prematurity

**Wishes Readers of The Indian Panorama A HAPPY HOLI**

*Holi is a time to reach out with the colors of joy. It is the time to love and forgive.*

*It is the time to express the happiness of loving and being loved through colors.*

**Protect your eyes, as you play Holi with Colors**

Eyes are extremely vulnerable because of their strategic position in body, and also because of the use of harmful chemicals in colors

**Please ensure your eyes remain protected at all times**

**Use a sunglasses to protect your eyes from a misfire of color -filled dart of water jets**

**With your help, we can go where the need is greatest, often rural or impoverished areas, to provide sight-saving care to those in need, completely free of charge.**

**DONATE**

**Eye Foundation of America**  
A World without Childhood Blindness

Donate with PayPal  
Donate with a Debit or Credit Card  
All donations are tax exempt.  
Tax Exempt #55-0621735  
Registered in UK, too.  
[efoauk@eyefoundationofamerica.org](mailto:efoauk@eyefoundationofamerica.org)

**MEET THE TEAM**

**"There is nothing new under the sun. In this world, nothing is more important than children's nutrition and education. If we give them nutrition and education, they will take care of themselves. Since 1977, Eye foundation of America is striving to do just that. "Be part of that effort "**

 VK Raju, MD President and Founder	 Leela Raju, MD Secretary and Education Coordinator	 Sam Stone Board Member, Legal Counsel	 David Raese Board Member	 Sekhar Vemparala Board Member	 Sanku Rao Board Member	 Deepak Dwivedi New Delhi, India
 Srinu Maddula Board Member	 Sam Maddali Board Member	 Ashok Raju Board Member	 Rajeev Rai Board Member	 Kathy Martin Board Member	 Lekha Hota, M.D New Orleans, LA	 Vaidehi Dedania, M.D New York

**CONTACT US**  
We are always thankful for individuals wishing to get involved!  
Donations are accepted via mail, PayPal, FaceBook, or DonorView.  
For more information, feel free to contact our organization directly:

**BY MAIL:** 695 Westview Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505  
**BY PHONE:** 304-599-0705 | 304-288-2080  
**BY EMAIL:** [eyefoundationofamerica.org@gmail.com](mailto:eyefoundationofamerica.org@gmail.com), [vkraju@comcast.net](mailto:vkraju@comcast.net)

# IITM Ahmedabad opens to a Buzzing Start, setting the Stage for Business & Networking

'INDIA INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MART': INDIA'S PREMIER TRAVEL AND TOURISM EXHIBITION

**MARCH 7, 2025**

**AHMEDABAD (TIP):** Ahmedabad is set to host the much-anticipated 'India International Travel Mart' (IITM) from 7 - 9 March 2025, bringing together key stakeholders from the travel, tourism, and hospitality sectors.

The much-anticipated India International Travel Mart (IITM) returns to Ahmedabad from 7 - 9 March 2025 at YMCA International Centre. As one of India's leading travel and tourism exhibitions, IITM continues to be a premier platform connecting travel trade professionals, destinations, and tourism stakeholders from across the globe.

With a strong legacy of promoting tourism and fostering business collaborations, IITM Ahmedabad will showcase an array of domestic and international destinations, travel and hospitality brands, tourism boards, airlines, tour operators, hotels, and more. The event provides an unparalleled opportunity for industry professionals and travel enthusiasts to explore new travel trends, products, and services.



## THE GUESTS OF HONOR AT THE INAUGURATION INCLUDED:

Mr. Paras Lakhia, National Treasurer, Travel Agents Assc. Of India

Mr. Prakash Madlani, Chairman, Travel Agents Assc. of India

Ms. Aparna, India Tourism

Ms. Dipika Parikh, National Coordinator, Global Tourism Club

As IITM celebrates its 25th Anniversary this year, the occasion forms an important business platform. Travel agencies, hoteliers, tour companies, and other industry stakeholders can interact and network resulting in collaborations, partnerships, and joint ventures. IITM features 100+ exhibitors from 15 Indian states, showcasing diverse travel options like pilgrimages, adventures, culture, wildlife, and more.

The tourism stakeholders from over 15 Indian states such as Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, etc., were seen aggressively marketing their destinations, products, and services.

## FEATURES OF IITM AHMEDABAD 2025:

- B2B Networking Opportunities - A dedicated platform for exhibitors to connect with travel agents, tour operators, corporate buyers, and MICE planners.
- Diverse Exhibitor Portfolio - Featuring leading state tourism boards, international tourism organizations, hospitality brands, and travel tech innovators.
- Hosted Buyer Program for Travel Agents from Gujarat - A curated initiative ensuring high-

quality business interactions between buyers and exhibitors.

- Exclusive Travel Offers - Special deals for travelers looking to plan their next getaway.



Sphere TravelMedia Director, Rohit Hangal, said, "Welcome to the heart of innovation and collaboration in the travel industry. This exhibition here in Ahmedabad is a gateway to shaping the future of travel through new opportunities and partnerships. Let us explore new horizons, forge lasting connections, and inspire the world of travel. The B2B Tourism Exhibition celebrates collaboration, resilience, and excellence in the industry, bringing together top minds to pioneer sustainable practices, innovative technologies, and new partnerships."

Sphere TravelMedia Director, Sanjay Hakhu, added: "India has emerged as a key player in the travel industry, offering opportunities for leisure and business travel. The IITM Event, with over ten thousand B2B visitors over three days, showcases our commitment to advancing travel. It serves as a hub for idea exchange, partnership building, and innovation. The growing outbound travel market in India presents vast possibilities, with more Indians seeking unique global experiences".

## INDIA'S MOST PRODUCTIVE TRAVEL-MARKETPLACE

For those in the travel and hospitality industry, the event offers an unparalleled networking opportunity to add more to their holiday portfolio. The timing is just perfect, when the industry has emerged out of the Covid-shadows to an era of growth. It is a unique opportunity for the travel trade to meet, network, negotiate and conduct business. The event is aimed at bringing the industry, face-to-face with the travel trade, corporate buyers as well as the end-customer with requisite purchasing power.

The Exhibitor profile includes Tourism Boards,



Destination Management Companies, Hotels and Resort, Wellness organizations, travel agents and tour operators, adventure tour operators, travel technology companies, etc. The event offers exposure to start-ups and new entrepreneurs who are planning their foray into the travel and tourism industry as well.

## HIGHLIGHTS

The time has come to explore new destinations and enjoy the sensations of the world as the Indian passport continues to gain popularity! The IITM is a fantastic way to connect, network, and conduct business since it draws partners from all over the world.

- Biggest Travel Exhibition in Ahmedabad, before the summer season
- Biggest variety of holiday packages of over 1000 destinations in India and abroad.
- This year, find more than 100 exhibitors showcasing 15 Indian tourism destinations making it one of the highlights of your search for that perfect travel partnership.
- Nepal Tourism is the Partner Country at the IITM 2025
- Tourism Malaysia is the Feature Country
- Delhi Tourism, Tripura Tourism and Lakshadweep Tourism are the Feature States
- View 'Incredible India' with all its amazing hues and peerless vibrancy.
- A once-a-year opportunity for travel agents and tour operators to reach out to partners.
- Add more to your travel portfolio
- Adventure - International Destinations - Visas - Pilgrimage - Cultural pursuits - Wildlife - Conference - Wedding Destinations - pure joy!
- The event is on a B2B format and only open for trade - visitors only.
- Entry is free and Registration at the site is mandatory.



The forthcoming editions of India International Travel Mart 2025 - 26 are scheduled as follows: IITM Chennai: 16 - 18 July 2025, IITM Bangalore: 24 - 26 July 2025, IITM Delhi: 24 - 26 September 2025, IITM Mumbai: 9 - 11 October 2025, IITM Pune: 27 - 29 November 2025, IITM Hyderabad: 4 - 6 December 2025, IITM Cochin: 22 - 24 January 2026, IITM Kolkata: 12 - 14 February 2026 and IITM Ahmedabad: 12 - 14 March 2026

For more information, write in to [info@spheretravelmedia.com](mailto:info@spheretravelmedia.com) | [media@spheretravelmedia.com](mailto:media@spheretravelmedia.com)

# Indian American engineer and professor Rohit Karnik appointed by MIT as their new Water and Food Systems Lab director

MARCH 5, 2025

**BOSTON (TIP):** The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has named Rohit Karnik, an Indian American mechanical engineering professor to lead its only program specifically focused on water and food for human need.

Karnik, Tata Professor in the MIT Department of Mechanical Engineering, became the new director of MIT's Abdul Latif Jameel Water and Food Systems Lab (J-WAFS), effective March 1, Cambridge, Massachusetts-based private research university announced.

Karnik, who has served as associate director of J-WAFS since 2023, assumes the role of director at a pivotal time for J-WAFS, as it celebrates its 10th anniversary.

Announcing the appointment in a letter to the J-WAFS research community, Vice President for Research Ian A. Waitz noted Karnik's deep involvement with the lab's research efforts and programming, as well as his accolades as a researcher, teacher, leader, and mentor. "I am delighted that Rohit will bring his talent and vision to bear on the J-WAFS mission, ensuring the program sustains its direct support of research on campus and its important impact around the world," Waitz wrote.

J-WAFS is the only program at MIT



Rohit Karnik has been appointed by MIT as their new Water and Food Systems Lab director

focused exclusively on water and food research. Since 2015, the lab has made grants totaling approximately \$25M to researchers across the Institute, including from all five schools and 40 departments, labs, and centers.

It has supported 300 faculty, research staff, and students combined. Furthermore, the J-WAFS Solutions Program, which supports efforts to commercialize innovative water and food technologies, has spun out 12 companies and two open-sourced products.

As associate director, Rohit has been

integral to J-WAFS operations, planning, and grant management, including the proposal selection process. He was instrumental in planning the second J-WAFS Grand Challenge grant and led workshops at which researchers brainstormed proposal topics and formed teams. Karnik also engaged with J-WAFS' corporate partners, helped plan lectures and events, and offered project oversight.

"The experience gave me broad exposure to the amazing ideas and research at MIT in the water and food space, and the collaborations and synergies across departments and schools that enable excellence in research," says Karnik.

"The strengths of J-WAFS lie in being able to support principal investigators in pursuing research to address humanity's water and food needs; in creating a community of students through the fellowship program and support of student clubs; and in bringing people together at seminars, workshops, and other events. All of this is made possible by the endowment and a dedicated team with close involvement in the projects after the grants are awarded."

(Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

## INDIA AMERICAN HOBOKEN MAYOR RAVI BHALLA JOINS COALITION CHALLENGING HEALTH RESEARCH FUNDING CUTS



Mayor of Hoboken city Ravi S. Bhalla has joined a coalition of over 45 elected officials, cities, and counties across the country in challenging the Trump Administration's cuts in National Institutes of Health (NIH) research funding.

MARCH 4, 2025

**HOBOKEN (TIP):** Ravi S. Bhalla, Indian American mayor of Hoboken city in New Jersey, has joined a coalition of over 45 elected officials, cities, and counties across the country in challenging the Trump Administration's cuts in National Institutes of Health (NIH) research funding.

"We join with cities across the country to stop this illegal action that will cause layoffs, lab closures, and undermine scientific progress," said Bhalla, a Democrat. "I commend my alma mater, UC Berkeley and all of the other colleges and universities for having the courage and moral clarity to stand up to the Trump Administration. In times like these, America needs this type of leadership to ensure it remains a global leader in medical and scientific research. These cuts are shortsighted, harmful to innovation, and detrimental to public health."

Bhalla signed on to an amicus brief, filed in federal court in Massachusetts, arguing that NIH's funding cuts are unjustified, illegal, and would devastate research institutions and medical progress, according to a press release from his office.

NIH has significantly reduced reimbursements for indirect research costs to universities and medical institutions from up to 70% to just 15% for both new grant recipients and existing grant recipients, the release stated. These indirect expenses, covering essential costs like utilities, office space, and administrative support, maintain the infrastructure needed for groundbreaking medical and scientific research.

Hoboken is directly affected by these cuts, as Stevens Institute of Technology receives millions in NIH grant funding.

Mayors from Boston, San Francisco, Baltimore, St. Louis, Cleveland, and other major cities have joined the effort, alongside hospitals, research universities, and state attorneys general arguing that federally funded research institutions in cities employ hundreds of thousands of Americans and drive the country's leadership in scientific discovery.

(Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

## Indian-origin student found dead in US; Chicago consulate in touch with family



Praveen Kumar Gampa, a student pursuing post-graduation at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, has died

MARCH 6, 2025

**CHICAGO (TIP):** India's Consulate General in Chicago expressed sadness over the death of Praveen Kumar Gampa, a student pursuing post-graduation at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in the US.

It said on Wednesday, March 5, that they are in contact with the family, and the university is offering them all support. It did not provide details about the cause of his death.

In a post on X, the Consulate General said, "We are saddened by the untimely death of Praveen Kumar Gampa, a postgraduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The Consulate is in contact with Praveen's family and the University is helping them with all possible support. Our heartfelt condolences and prayers are with the family and friends of the departed."

## Indian origin woman on death row executed in UAE

MARCH 4, 2025

**ABU DHABI (TIP):** A 33-year-old Indian-origin woman, who was on death row in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for allegedly killing a four-month-old baby, was executed by the authorities, the Ministry of External Affairs informed the Delhi High Court on Monday, March 3.

Shahzadi Khan, hailing from Uttar Pradesh's Banda district, was executed on February 15. The grim news was formally communicated to the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi only on February 28, leaving her family in shock and grief. Shahzadi's father, Shabbir Khan, had been desperately seeking answers regarding her whereabouts and legal status, unaware that her execution had already taken place.

Khan had approached the Delhi High Court, requesting urgent information about his daughter's well-being. It was during this legal proceeding that Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Chetan Sharma revealed the devastating truth - that Shahzadi had already been executed under UAE law.

With no further legal recourse left, the court disposed of the plea, calling the entire episode a "sad and unfortunate" incident. Her cremation is scheduled for March 5 in Abu Dhabi.



Shahzadi Khan, hailing from Uttar Pradesh's Banda district, who was on death row in the UAE for allegedly killing a four-month-old baby, was executed on February 15

A senior MEA official also confirmed Shahzadi's execution in the UAE on charges of murder of an infant. "The highest court of the UAE, the Court of Cassation, upheld the sentence. The Embassy provided all possible legal assistance to Ms. Shahzadi, including sending mercy petitions and pardon requests to the Government of the UAE," the official said.

He said that the UAE authorities intimated to the embassy on February 28, 2025 that the sentence of Shahzadi has been carried out in accordance with local laws following which the ministry informed her family of the matter.

(Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

# Six Outstanding Women Achievers Honored by the Indian American Forum



MARCH 6, 2025

**GARDEN CITY, NY (TIP):** Celebrating the strength, resilience, and remarkable achievements of women, with the aim of Inspiring others to understand and value women's inclusion to forge a better world, Indian American Forum honored several dignified and accomplished women of substance at their 14th Annual Women's Achievements Awards Gala this past weekend at the Akbar Banquet in Long Island.

Under the leadership of Chairperson Indu Jaiswal and Gala Chair Shammi Singh, known for their strong commitment and dedication to the community cause, along with the entire team of IAF, were the organizing force behind the GALA, celebrating the success of the outstanding achievements by these distinguished personalities in the presence of many accomplished guests and community leaders.

Several distinguished women, representing various sectors were recognized and honored. The honorees were presented with special citations from Nassau County Executive, Town of Oyster Bay, Town of Hempstead, Town of North Hempstead and Nassau County Legislature.



## OUR DISTINGUISHED AWARDEES AND HONOREES INCLUDED:

- Dr. Jagmohan Kalra, MD -> Board certified Hematologist-oncologist, a renowned community leader and Karaoke group owner and singer.
- Dr. Leena Doshi - Founder of Doshi Diagnostics and non-profit Doshi Smiles, an athlete, philanthropist and painter.
- Dr. Nita Mehta - Specialization in Ophthalmology and glaucoma. Board member of Indian Cultural Unit at Parker Jewish Institute and on the board/committee of several organizations like Rotary, Indo-American Senior citizen center of NY, India Home and GGKLI.
- Sarina Jain - Founder of Masala Bhangra - A trailblazer in fitness and a dynamic cultural ambassador revolutionizing fitness through culture and movement celebrating over 30 years in the fitness industry.
- Falu (Falguni Shah) - Grammy Award winning multi-lingual singer/song-writer, recognized by Economic Times as one of the 20 most influential Indian women and named as one of the Top 50 Global leaders from India in Business



and Arts.

- Sanjana Iyer - Youth Empowerment- Syosset school senior and professional Bharatnatyam dancer and musician, Two times DECA state qualifier, Two-time speech and debate LIFA qualifier using her professional dance experience for Parkinson's research fund raising.

Several Officials including Nassau County Comptroller Hon. Elaine Phillips, Town Supervisor Hon. Joseph Saladino, Town of North Hempstead Supervisor Jennifer DeSena, Hon Rose Walker, Nassau County Legislature and Deputy Supervisor Hon. Dorothy L. Goosby, were respectfully invited and welcomed by Dr. Bobby Kalotee, portrayed the women empowerment and success.

Starting with the beautiful décor and warm welcome with sumptuous appetizers, the evening started with American and Indian National Anthem followed by a rocking welcome by hosts Indu Jaiswal, Roopam Maini and Shammi Singh.



Traditional Bharatnatyam and Kathak dance performances portrayed true colors of our rich culture. Sarina Jain from Masala Bhangra rolled the feet of audience with her powerful Bhangra dance moves. DJ Parminder rocked the dance floor.

Several distinguished political and community leaders, IAF Board of Trustees, Members, Volunteers, supporters and audience graced the occasion applauding the distinguished accomplishments of women honorees. Several Board of Trustees and community leader in presence included Dr Bhupendra Patel, Mukund Mehta (Indo-American Senior Citizens of NY), Jasbir (Jay) Singh, Anil and Sunil Jain (Vass Pipe), Dr. Nitin Doshi (Doshi Diagnostics), Beena Kothari (President-AIA), Dr N Kukar, Dr Jagdish Gupta, Flora Parekh (President - Gift of Life USA), Dr. Bhavani Srinivasan (AAPIQLI), Ravi Bhooplapur (Xaviers Medical College), Shashi Malik (SEVA center for Humanity), Vimal Goyal & Deepak Bansal (IDPUSA), Rotary Club, Lions Club, Sandy Bhatia (Flushing Bank), Rizwan Quereshi (HAB Bank), Dr. Mamta Shaha, Kalpana Patel (UCI), Sudhir & Swati Vaishnav, Vijay Goswamy, Anju & Sanju Sharma (Registration), Dr. Prachi Dua, Beena Kothari and team produced Souvenir Journal, several past honorees and many other organization leaders. Our sincere gratitude to outstanding media professionals for their generous coverage and support. Aashmeeta Yogiraj emceed the event and concluded with a Thank you note from Shammi Singh and Roopam Maini.. Entire IAF team with several volunteers were instrumental in making the event a grand success. It was indeed a very successful evening, showcasing and honoring outstanding women achievers, who are successful in business, cultural, professional, education, and medical. Community and social services.



(Based on a Press Release)

# NYC Council Speaker Adrienne Adams launches run for mayor

MARCH 5, 2025

**NEW YORK CITY (TIP) :** New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams announced late Wednesday, March 5 that she will run for mayor this year, jumping into an already crowded primary field that was reshaped by former Gov. Andrew Cuomo's recent entry into the race.

"New Yorkers can't afford to live here, City Hall is in chaos, and Donald Trump is corrupting our city's independence. It's time to stand up," the speaker said in a statement confirming her plans to run for mayor.

"I never planned to run for mayor, but I'm not giving up on New York City," she continued. "Our city deserves a leader that serves its people first and always, not someone focused on themselves and their own political interests."

To officially kick off her campaign, the speaker plans to hold a rally Saturday in her Queens district that will be attended by fellow Council members and other local leaders expected to support her run, according to a source familiar with the matter.

The speaker - whose announcement was first reported by Politico - faces an uphill battle in mounting a run against Mayor Adams in June's Democratic primary.

Though seen internally in the Council as a steady hand, she has little name recognition on a citywide level.

Petitioning for the primary, meantime, started late last month and must be completed by April 3, giving her team a short window of time to complete the labor-intensive signature process required to get on the June 24 ballot.

According to a source familiar with the matter, the speaker will immediately start petitioning.

The speaker only had about \$210,000 in her Council campaign account at the end of the most recent filing period. That pales in comparison to the millions of dollars that most of the other Democratic 2025 mayoral candidates are sitting on after months of fundraising.

Speaker Adams' candidacy could spell trouble for both Mayor Adams and Cuomo, though.

Representing a section of eastern Queens that includes Jamaica and South Ozone Park, the speaker is popular with moderate Black voters, a key base of political support that the mayor and Cuomo also court. The speaker endorsed Eric Adams' successful 2021 campaign, but has since soured on him amid heavy clashes over policy and budgetary issues.

For months, Cuomo - who launched his

campaign on March 1 - has been ranked in polls as the race's clear front-runner, as Mayor Adams faces intense political headwinds amid his continuing federal corruption indictment, surrounding scandals and record-low approval ratings.

The speaker's entry could scramble Cuomo's calculus in the race, given their overlapping bases of support.

"I'm a public servant, mother, Queens girl and I'm running for mayor," her statement said. "No drama, no nonsense - just my commitment to leading with competence and integrity."

She is only the second woman to announce a mayoral campaign this year, with the other being Queens state Sen. Jessica Ramos, who announced her run in September. If elected, Adams would become the first Black woman and female mayor in New York history, giving her candidacy a historic air.

Adams was first elected to the Council in 2017 and is term-limited from serving another four years in the legislative body.

She's widely considered a moderate Democrat though she has as speaker helped push through a slate of progressive legislation. That includes leading the charge to override the mayor's vetoes last year of two high-profile public safety bills that implemented new



New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams delivers the State of the City address at the Jazz at Lincoln Center concert hall in Manhattan on Tuesday, March 4, 2025.

Credit: Barry Williams / New York Daily News

transparency requirements on NYPD officers and banned solitary confinement in city jails.

Adams has also as speaker clashed with the mayor over budgetary matters and mounted an aggressive advocacy campaign last year that resulted in the mayor undoing spending cuts he enacted to the city's public libraries.

In her fourth and final State of the City speech as speaker earlier this week, Adams hinted at her discontent with the mayor.

"The dignity and trust in government leadership has been shaken in our city," she said, "and it must be restored."

## Legislator Solages Joins Ramadan Observance in Valley Stream



Legislator Solages Joins Ramadan Observance in Valley Stream  
Photo Credit : Office of Legislator Carrié Solages

MARCH 5, 2025

**VALLEY STREAM, N.Y. (TIP):** Nassau County Legislator Carrié Solages (D - Valley Stream) joined the community at Masjid Hazma in Valley Stream on Monday, March 3 to commemorate Ramadan as Muslims in Nassau County and around the world observe the holy month with fasting, religious study, special prayers, and community gatherings. Attendees received gift bags

containing ZamZam holy water and dates. "Legislative District Three is blessed by the presence of a vibrant and prosperous Muslim community, and the holy month of Ramadan so beautifully spotlights the values of empathy, humility and charity embodied by this observance," Legislator Solages said. "I wish everyone who is observing Ramadan a meaningful and reflective month with your loved ones."

## ATLAS ROLL OFF CORP.

### DISPOSAL SITE

OPEN Monday - Friday 6.30 AM to 4.00 PM  
Saturday 6.30 AM to 1.30 PM

For  
construction  
Debris,  
Demolition  
& Cleanouts



Located at 895 Essex Street, Brooklyn, NY 11208  
Just 5 minutes from JFK



Roll Off Container Service  
10, 15, 20, 30 & 40 Yards

Serving all the five boroughs of New York Since 1983  
NYC BIC LIC #711

Reasonable low rates \*\* All major credit cards accepted

Call @ 718-345-6451

# Trump-Putin-Modi summit is doable

THE GREAT GAME: CAN THE PM, WHOSE FOREIGN POLICY DEXTERITY MUST BE APPLAUDED, TAKE A LEAF OUT OF VIRAT'S BOOK?



---> By Jyoti Malhotra

"Only the Chinese are standing up for now. You know what that means. That Trump has recognized that his real antagonist is Xi Jinping, not Putin. That the Chinese, no one else, have the strength and the wherewithal to take on the Americans. Perhaps that's why Trump wants to embrace the Russian bear - he wants to wean him away from the dragon-like clasp of the Chinese leader. It's incredible that Trump has realized this basic truth so quickly, but that it eluded the rest of Washington DC for years."



Trump has recognised that his real antagonist is Xi Jinping, not Putin.

Photo Credit: PTI

The blow-up between Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelenskyy a week ago is already a thing of the past. The world changed that Oval Office morning and the world saw the raw exercise of power. If Europe - and the Ukrainians - fulminated about the lack of grace and courtesy in the exercise of that power, perhaps they're right. But they also know that it's not easy to make omelets if you can't break a few eggs.

What is amusing is that the Europeans and Britain are this shocked. The British and the French, both Security Council permanent veto powers - as well as all those other nations on the Continent trying desperately to assert themselves on the world stage - have kowtowed to the Americans at least since the end of the Second World War, riding piggyback on the strength of the American dollar.

Europe's worst-kept secret is the barely hidden contempt the Europeans have for the ugly American - except they want their money. The most overpriced baguettes the other side of Suez are manufactured by Parisians in the summer - when Paris empties itself in anticipation of the hordes of American tourists descending upon the French capital, all looking for one or another version of A Moveable Feast a la Hemingway.

The thing about Trump & Co - JD Vance, Elon Musk and the lot - is that they have no time for what well-known journalist Shekhar Gupta calls "tanpura-setting." Meaning, all the frills and the fuss that Europe loves so much, couched in words like "egalite" and "liberte" and even "fraternite" - although you should, dear Reader, check out France's not-long-ago record in North Africa, especially Algeria, where even the White French were dismissively known as "pied noir" or "black feet," because they weren't white enough for Mainland French - is all

so soul-stirring and uplifting because at the end of the day they know that the bill will be picked up by the Americans across the pond.

Well, Trump & Vance just announced that the time for all this "tanpura-setting" is over. Or, you can continue to set your tanpura, but not on our time or our cheque book. So, Ukraine is welcome to fight till the last Ukrainian, but not on American money. At least Afghanistan taught the US & Europe one thing - fighting someone else's war doesn't mean your boys should die for it. Perhaps that's why they loosened their purse strings, to assuage their guilt.

Trump called out Europe's hypocrisy that morning in the Oval Office. For three years, Europe and Canada have been encouraging Zelenskyy to fight Vladimir Putin, except, unlike in Afghanistan, they have not been willing to put their body bags where their mouths are.

It's taken less than a week for the world to fall in line. Not just Zelenskyy, everyone else is also preparing for a Trump-led brave new world, because they know they have no other choice.

Only the Chinese are standing up for now. You know what that means. That Trump has recognized that his real antagonist is Xi Jinping, not Putin. That the Chinese, no one else, have the strength and the wherewithal to take on the Americans. Perhaps that's why Trump wants to embrace the Russian bear - he wants to wean him away from the dragon-like clasp of the Chinese leader. It's incredible that Trump has realized this basic truth so quickly, but that it eluded the rest of Washington DC for years.

What, then, must one make of Indian

foreign policy in the Age of Trump? Clearly, the Modi government did well by going to meet Trump early, even though this happened around the same time Indians were being deported by the US President in handcuffs and chains. So, Modi swallowed the bitter pill quickly because he knew he had to - quickly get out in front, meet the American President and say your piece.

Modi's presence in DC was also a reminder of his old slogan, "Ab ki baar, Trump Sarkar", the stark opposite of Zelenskyy's support for Biden.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is smartly tying up the rest. That's why he announced that India will not be in favour of a de-dollarization move, although that is exactly what India had signed up for at the China-led BRICS summit in Russia's Kazan; before the Budget, tariffs for luxury motorcycles were brought down, because Trump had wanted that to happen in his first administration.

In short, try and please Trump, or at the very least pacify him, show him you mean no harm. You know he's unpredictable - he has just reversed the tariffs he had set for Mexico and Canada - so get on his right side. Don't pretend you're non-aligned, because you're not, nor publicly blather about your friendship as is the usual wont of insecure allies.

As for the upcoming US-Russia entente, India has just been thrown a roll of dice and come up trumps. If Modi plays this well, he can leverage India's standing both in the West and in the East. A Trump-Putin-Modi summit is no longer out of the realm of possibility.

It follows that the Modi government should pick up some tips about the

exercise of power - making friends with your enemies is far more important than with your friends, for example. If Modi wants India to become a regional power, he cannot allow the old prejudices about Pakistan to come in the way. This is far more important than the desire for people-to-people contact - although it would be wonderful to have friends from Pakistan visit for life-changing events like celebrations and marriages in Delhi - and amounts to a fundamental strategic shift in PM Modi's world-view.

India can never be strong if it is faced by a China-Pakistan axis on either side. Why not drive a wedge between the two by making friends with your weaker, western neighbor, one with whom you also have so much more in common? Instead, India has restored the relationship with China and continues to blacklist Pakistan.

Virat Kohli, about whom the PM admirably tweets and often, showed the way some days ago when he bent over to tie the shoe-laces of the Pakistani batsman he was playing against - a calm confidence about himself, his game and his place in the world.

Can the PM, whose foreign policy dexterity must be applauded, take a leaf out of Virat's book?

*(Jyoti Malhotra is Editor-in-Chief of The Tribune group of newspapers.*

*She has been a journalist for 40 years, working in print, TV and digital, both in English and Hindi media, besides being a regular contributor on BBC Radio. She is also interested in the conflation between politics and foreign policy. Her X handle is @jomalhotra Insta handle @jomalhotra Email: jyoti.malhotra@tribunemail.com)*

# Poisoning Your Kids: The Hidden Dangers of Passing Prejudice to the Next Generation



---> By Mike Ghouse

Are You Poisoning Your Child's Mind? Do you have the right to corrupt your child's innocence with your own biases, fears, and prejudices? Every parent influences their child's worldview, but are you shaping them to be open-minded, compassionate individuals or burdening them with unnecessary hatred?



Parents often unknowingly poison their children by instilling fears and biases against certain races, religions, or social groups. This subconscious conditioning affects their future relationships, career growth, and mental well-being. As responsible adults, we must break this cycle and raise socially fit, inclusive children.

This article dives deep into real-life experiences of prejudice, how it gets passed down, and what we can do to ensure our kids grow up free from unnecessary biases.

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF PARENTAL PREJUDICE



A Doctor's Regret: "I Wish My Parents Hadn't Poisoned Me"

A young doctor once stayed at my condo while attending residency meetings. At the end of his stay, he admitted, "I wish my parents had not poisoned me against Blacks, Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Everything I had heard from them turned out to be false."

Growing up with ingrained biases, he struggled to interact with colleagues from diverse backgrounds. His work suffered, and his relationships lacked trust. Only after living and working with people from different backgrounds did he realize the damage his upbringing had done.

His story is not unique-many children inherit their parents' biases and unknowingly limit their own potential.

## HOW BIAS AFFECTS WORK AND SOCIAL LIFE

When children grow up believing in stereotypes and false narratives, they develop subconscious biases that impact their professional and personal lives.

**Workplace Discrimination:** Employees with biases often struggle to collaborate with colleagues from different backgrounds, limiting innovation and teamwork.

**Personal Relationships:** A biased individual may find it difficult to form meaningful friendships or romantic relationships with those outside their immediate community.

**Mental and Emotional Struggles:** Holding onto negativity, suspicion, or superiority complexes creates stress and anxiety.

**Connections:** They find it out of place with many places and find it difficult to connect with others.

If you're poisoned against others, you might unknowingly pass this onto your children-affecting their career opportunities, friendships, and future happiness.

## REAL-LIFE STORIES OF BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION

### The Indian and Pakistani Divide in America

As an Indian-American, I have interacted with many Indians and Pakistanis in the U.S. While most coexist peacefully, some carry deep-seated resentment. The worst part? They pass this hatred to their children.

A Pakistani child once harassed my son in a mall simply because of his Indian heritage. My son retaliated by calling him a "Paki." It took multiple discussions to help him unlearn that mindset and recognize that nationality should never determine a person's worth.

### RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE IN INDIA



When I was ten, my father took me on a tour of Mysore City with the town council members from Yelahanka. During the trip, we visited the Ranganath Temple in Srirangapatna, where the temple priest expressed his hatred towards Muslims by denigrating Tipu Sultan, the King of Mysore from about 225 years ago. He falsely claimed that Tipu had destroyed the temple.

My father intervened to correct him, explaining that Tipu had donated significant sums of money to the temple, and some of the brass items from that era are still in use today. He also reminded the priest that Tipu had protected Shankara Charya's mutt in Sringeri from raids by the

Hindu Maratha kings. Realizing he was addressing municipal councilors, the priest apologized for his earlier comments. I hope he did not continue with that hateful talk afterward.

There is a great deal of bias expressed by people around the world, particularly against minorities. Regardless of whether they are religious, racial, or social, no group of people is spared. A white South African man once stayed at my place and shared with me the challenges that white individuals face as a minority in South Africa.

In the book, I will provide many examples of raising interfaith children to help them have a great life without biases and live a happier life, please do not poison your children.

### RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE IN ISRAEL

(Photo P 3 here)

On a trip to Jerusalem, an Israeli tour guide on the bus falsely stated that Islam's first pillar was Jihad, defining it as "killing Jews and Americans." As a Muslim, I immediately corrected her and explained that Islam has only five pillars, none of which involve violence.

Her misinformation was a clear example of how biased narratives spread through generations, shaping entire societies. Thanks to the fellow passengers in the bus, they asked the guide to give the microphone to me to explain and correct the mistake.

### RACIAL PROFILING IN AMERICA

In Colorado, a white mother touring a university reported two Native American teenagers to campus security simply because she felt "uncomfortable" around them. They were detained but later released when officers found they had done nothing wrong.

Was this truly her fault, or had her parents poisoned her against minorities from a young age?

### SOCIAL POISONING: ARE WE RAISING THE NEXT GENERATION OF BIGOTS?

Many children grow up believing in misconceptions such as:

Jews have horns (a myth still believed by some), Muslims don't talk or behave like "normal" people, Black people are dangerous, LGBTQ individuals are unnatural.

Where do these ideas originate? Parents, teachers, religious leaders, and even media outlets play a role in spreading them. If we continue poisoning our kids, they will carry unnecessary fears and prejudices throughout life, affecting their ability to succeed in a diverse society.

**Freedom from Bias: A Path to Peace and Success**

### A MONK'S LESSON: DROP THE BAGGAGE

A famous Buddhist story tells of two monks who needed to cross a river. A pregnant woman asked for help, and the senior monk carried her across.

Later, the junior monk criticized him, saying, "You broke the rule by touching a

woman." The senior monk replied, "I put her down at the riverbank. Why are you still carrying her in your mind?"

Like that junior monk, many people carry inherited biases for a lifetime. It's time to let them go.

### HOW CAN YOU FREE YOURSELF FROM BIAS?



**Challenge What You've Been Taught:** Ask yourself if your beliefs are truly yours or if they were imposed on you.

**Engage with Different Communities:** Visit different places of worship, interact with people of diverse backgrounds, and expand your worldview.

**Teach Your Children Inclusion:** If you expose them to multiple perspectives, they will be free from inherited prejudice.

If we want a better world, we must start with ourselves.

### WHY THIS MATTERS FOR AMERICA (AND THE WORLD)

#### Can a Biased Child Serve a Nation Fairly?

Imagine an Indian-American is appointed as a U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan. If their parents raised them to hate Pakistanis, would they serve American interests fairly?

Bias affects governance, diplomacy, and leadership. Perhaps we should introduce a law requiring government employees to have a clear, inclusive mindset before taking office.

America's Strength Lies in Diversity  
**The United States thrives because of its freedoms:**

Freedom of religion, Freedom of speech, Freedom of press, Freedom to assemble and protest

**If we allow racial, religious, and cultural divisions to fester, we threaten the very fabric of our nation.**

**Final Thoughts: Raising a Generation of Leaders, Not Haters**

*Your child could one day be the President of the United States. Will they look at every American as a fellow citizen-or as an enemy based on race, religion, or nationality?*

*If we want peace, we must raise children who respect the otherness of others and embrace diversity.*

*Let's make a commitment: We will not poison our kids with bias. We will raise them to be open-minded, compassionate, and socially responsible individuals.*

*Because a truly free society starts with the minds of its children.*

(Dr. Mike Ghouse is Thinker | Author | Speaker | News Contributor | Interfaith Wedding Officiant. He has authored a book "The American Muslim Agenda" which is available on Amazon. He can be reached at mikeghouse@gmail.com)

# Why the unity of INDIA bloc is faltering



By Ajay K Mehra

THE SILVER LINING IN THIS GLOOMY SCENARIO IS THAT VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF INDIA HAVE SUPPORTED THE AAP. JAMMU AND KASHMIR CHIEF MINISTER OMAR ABDULLAH SARCASTICALLY SUMMED IT UP WELL: "AUR LADO AAPAS MEIN" (KEEP FIGHTING AMONG YOURSELVES). THE HOPE FOR THE ALLIANCE TO COME TOGETHER IN THE FUTURE ELECTIONS IS STILL ALIVE. THE RESULTS OF THE THREE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, BOTH IN TERMS OF THE FINAL RESULTS AND THE STRATEGIC APPROACH, CLEARLY INDICATE THAT THE ALLIANCE IS NEITHER UNITED NOR COORDINATED. IN ORDER TO MAKE ITSELF RELEVANT TO THE COUNTRY AND POLL BATTLE-READY, INDIA NEEDS TO ADDRESS THE CAUSES OF ITS DISUNITY."

Formed to take on the electoral juggernaut of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its National Democratic Alliance (NDA) during the 2024 General Elections, the Indian National Democratic Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) shook the BJP and the Narendra Modi regime, but it could not uproot it.

The organizationally strong and ideologically coherent BJP has been able to put its act together with convincing electoral victories in Haryana, Maharashtra and Delhi. Trapped in its own contradictions, the INDIA bloc, which began as a 28-party coalition, has appeared wandering without an aim since the 2024 General Elections ended.

Of course, the Lok Sabha got a recognized Opposition and a leader of Opposition after a decade. But the leadership issue of the organizationally weak Congress at its various tiers has remained unresolved and it has failed to fix its breached fortress. The other components of the bloc appear to be struggling to protect their local citadels rather than standing united to achieve convincing electoral wins.

The Haryana Assembly poll is a stark

example of the lack of understanding among the coalition partners. Prepared to go under the INDIA alliance bloc, the AAP had initially demanded 10 seats. It later came down to five, but the Congress was agreeable to only three. Also, the AAP leadership thought that it was being offered seats in constituencies where the BJP was strong, reducing its chances of a win.

The prospects of the Congress-plus-AAP segment of the INDIA bloc are difficult to project, but perhaps an amalgamated cadre could have bridged the voter hiatus that led to the Congress' defeat.

The alleged irregularities in the voting list that the ECI closed its eyes to would still have remained, but a composite alliance would have had better prospects.

The election in Maharashtra also exposes the error of judgment by each of the three partners - the NCP, Shiv Sena (Uddhav) and Congress. The partners ended up making an unviable seat

AAP to such an extent that even Arvind Kejriwal lost the election. It was equally unwise for the Congress to celebrate the AAP's defeat. The BJP will surely use it in the future elections against INDIA.

The silver lining in this gloomy scenario is that various components of INDIA have supported the AAP. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah sarcastically summed it up well: "Aur lado aapas mein" (keep fighting among yourselves). The hope for the alliance to come together in the future elections is still alive. The results of the three Assembly elections, both in terms of the final results and the strategic approach, clearly indicate that the alliance is neither united nor coordinated. In order to make itself relevant to the country and poll battle-ready, INDIA needs to address the causes of its disunity.

Unity was sacrificed at the altar of consolidation of individual parties and leaders in their supposed strongholds.

have any alliance with the Congress. It would take some persuasion from Rahul and Akhilesh to climb West Bengal's electoral hill.

Ideological and programmatic vacuum are inherent to INDIA. The parties in the coalition, including the Congress, TMC, Samajwadi Party, CPM, CPI, NCP, Shiv Sena (UBT), RJD, DMK, JMM, AAP and JKNC, are distant from one another.

The Congress had attempted to revert to its previous self with the 2024 Nyay Patra (manifesto). The Samajwadi Party's ideological mooring is prosaic, so is that of the CPM and the CPI. The NCP and the TMC, offshoots of the Congress, are closer to it. While the state parties are stuck in their regionalism, the AAP has declared itself non-ideological and apes the BJP's Hindutva.

Apparently, building ideological coherence in INDIA under the circumstances is nearly impossible. However, this shortcoming can be overcome by forming a well-structured



Ideological and programmatic vacuum are inherent to INDIA

Photo credit: Tribune

distribution. The NCP was given lesser seats than it could conveniently win, the Shiv Sena took up more than it could have successfully contested, so did the Congress.

Tied up between Uddhav Thackeray, Supriya Sule (NCP) and local Congress leaders, the leadership issue, too, remained muddled.

In the Delhi elections, it was Arvind Kejriwal who was not prepared to contest in partnership with the Congress. Despite the fact that the party did not have a sufficient number of winnable candidates, Kejriwal announced a solo run even before a seat-sharing formula with the Congress could be worked out.

This irked Rahul Gandhi and other Congress leaders and they decided to contest the poll on all the seats despite minimal winnability. This harmed the

Arvind Kejriwal did not share the imagined strength of the AAP in Delhi with the alliance. Similarly, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) leaders in Maharashtra attempted to hold on to their bastions in a bid for the chief-ministerial throne and sacrificed the collective coalitional advantage.

The dilemma of the Congress is also noteworthy. Though Rahul Gandhi has put the alliance before the party in several instances, the party's continuing quest for its past glory is a hurdle in the way of alliance politics. Arvind Kejriwal was unreasonably rigid in Haryana and Delhi. Flexibility in organizational matters in contesting the elections in the alliance mode would have been more advantageous.

The elections in West Bengal are still a year away, but Mamata Banerjee has already announced that she would not

common programme, which can be easily understood by the voters.

Thus, both the organizational and programmatic issues deserve urgent attention. The leadership issue is closely linked to a cohesive organization. The Congress, being a historical entity in this alliance, is seen as a threat by the others despite its current weak state. While the Congress must aim to restore and renovate its organization, for now, it must project a non-threatening stance to the partners.

*(Ajay K. Mehra is a political scientist. He was Atal Bihari Vajpayee Senior Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, 2019-21 and Principal, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Evening College, Delhi University in 2018).*

# Black History Month Celebrated at the Indian Consulate, New York

Struggles and Contribution of the African-American Community and Gandhi's Influence on Dr. King Jr. Recounted



Consul General of India Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan addresses the gathering.

MARCH 5, 2025

**NEW YORK CITY (TIP):** In a powerful display of solidarity and reflection, the Indian Consulate in New York and the Shanti Fund hosted a vibrant celebration of Black History Month. The event, which took place on February 22, 2025, emphasized the immense contributions of the African American community and explored the enduring connections between African Americans and the Indian diaspora, especially through shared struggles for equality and justice. With dignitaries and notable figures from various sectors of society in attendance, the gathering marked a moment of both remembrance and inspiration for future collaboration.

Those who addressed included the Consul General of India, Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, Andrea Stewart Cousin, NYS Senate Majority Leader, Dr. Danielle Lee, Associate Dean of the SUNY-OW, Dr. Shawn F. Brown, Principal of Uniondale HS, Amanda Dixon of HWPL, and Dr. Bernard Gannett, VP of Enrollment at the Bronx Community College.

Soh Young Lee- Segredo and Nadine Sharman sang a couple of songs.

Arvind Vora of Shanti Fund, co- host of the celebrations was the MC.



Soh Young Lee- Segredo and Nadine Sharman sang a couple of songs.



Guests join in singing The Negro National Anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing".

The celebration began with opening remarks by the Consul General of India, Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, who highlighted the extraordinary success of Indian leaders educated at the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). He noted that 23 such leaders now occupy major leadership positions, including CEOs of global companies like YouTube, IBM, Microsoft, and Starbucks. These accomplishments, he emphasized, are deeply rooted in the education provided by IITs, which have long been considered a cornerstone of India's educational excellence. He also mentioned the recent establishment of an IIT in Africa, a significant step towards fostering greater international collaboration.

Following the Consul General's address, Andrea Stewart Cousin, NYS Senate Majority Leader, took the

podium to offer remarks on the importance of Black History Month. Expressing deep gratitude for the opportunity to celebrate the profound achievements of the African American community, she spoke passionately about the history of Black Americans—a history shaped by struggle, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to justice. Reflecting on last year's celebration, the Senator recounted powerful speeches that highlighted the vital contributions African Americans have made to the nation, shaping the fabric of the United States.



Andrea Stewart Cousin, NYS Senate Majority Leader addresses the gathering

In particular, she delved into the historic ties between the Indian and African American communities, drawing attention to shared struggles against colonialism, discrimination, and systemic inequality. "Our histories are intertwined," the Senator remarked. "Both communities have faced immense challenges but have also contributed immeasurably to the progress of not only the United States and India but to the world at large."

The Senator also highlighted the pivotal role Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent resistance played in the American Civil Rights Movement. Drawing a direct line from Gandhi to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Senator noted that King's admiration for Gandhi's non-violent methods was the key in shaping his leadership of the Civil Rights Movement. Dr. King's visit to India in 1959, where he acknowledged Gandhi's influence on his approach to social justice, was also cited as a significant moment in the deepening connection between the two movements.

The Shanti Fund, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, was also recognized for its work in fostering cultural and intellectual exchanges between Indian and African American communities. These exchanges, the Senator emphasized, are essential in building a world grounded in unity, equality, and mutual respect. The Senator expressed a deep commitment to strengthening these ties and advancing the shared goals of dignity and justice.

The theme of overcoming adversity through education and resilience was further explored by several other speakers, each sharing personal stories of struggle and triumph. One speaker, recounting their own journey from growing up in segregated housing projects to becoming a prominent political figure, discussed the systemic barriers that Black people face, including limited job opportunities and inadequate healthcare. They reflected on the powerful impact of the Civil Rights Movement, which led to significant legislative changes, such as the desegregation of public schools and the passage of immigration reform. "My mother was a skilled professional, but she couldn't find work due to racism," the speaker shared. "I've seen how systemic barriers hold back people, and I've dedicated my career to breaking down those barriers."

A champion of human rights, they underscored the importance of education in overcoming adversity. "Education is the key to liberation," they asserted, echoing the sentiments of civil rights leaders like Frederick Douglass and Dr. King. They also spoke about

the importance of joy as a form of resistance—emphasizing that joy is not just a celebration of life but a powerful weapon against oppressive ideologies. "Joy affirms our dignity and humanity," they said, urging the audience to embrace joy as a form of resistance and solidarity with global liberation movements.

Another speaker shared a deeply personal story of transformation. From a troubled youth who struggled with anger and direction, they found solace in education and faith. They recounted how they channeled their frustrations into boxing and basketball before discovering the liberating power of education. They spoke about the importance of mentorship, sharing a story of a student who had been on the verge of dropping out of school but found support and encouragement through their educational journey.



From L to R: Dr. Shawn F. Brown, Principal of Uniondale HS; Amanda Dixon of HWPL; Hon. Andrea Stewart Cousin, NYS Senate Majority Leader; Ambassador Binaya Pradhan; Dr. Danielle Lee, Associate Dean of the SUNY-OW; Dr. Bernard Gannett, VP of Enrollment at the Bronx Community College; and Arvind Vora of Shanti Fund.

The celebration also marked the 30th anniversary of Shanti Bhavan, a remarkable institution that promotes cultural integration between mainstream and Southeastern immigrants, as well as the 25th anniversary of the Gandhi statue and the fifth anniversary of the Gandhi Garden. The garden, which features a tree from each of the 50 U.S. states, was inaugurated by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a collaborative effort involving the Government of India, local sponsors, and various organizations. The significance of these milestones was not lost on the attendees, who recognized the importance of continued cultural exchange and community engagement in fostering mutual understanding and progress.



Arvind Vora of Shanti Fund emceed the event.

Photos : Ashish Chandratreya

As the event came to a close, Arvind Vora of Shanti Fund emphasized the importance of continuing the work of the past while looking toward the future. The gathering, they stated, was not just about remembering struggles but also about inspiring future generations to continue the work of justice and equality. The evening concluded with a call to action, urging all attendees to honor the past, embrace the present, and work toward a more just and equitable future for all.

The celebration of Black History Month at the Indian Consulate in New York was a testament to the enduring spirit of solidarity between the Indian and African American communities—communities united by shared histories, struggles, and triumphs. It was an evening that not only honored the past but also inspired future collaboration in the pursuit of a more inclusive and just world.

# Indian Film Festival commences at University of Montana

**MARCH 5, 2025**

**SEATTLE (TIP):** Consulate General of India in Seattle, in partnership with the Montana World Affairs Council, organized the first ever "Festival of Indian Cinema" at University of Montana in Missoula from 2-4 March 2025.

Nearly 500 plus students from 33 schools participating in the Montana Academic World Quest 2025 attended the Indian Film Festival, which featured screenings of Indian films like "English Vinglish", "Zindagi Na Milegi Dobar" and "Rakshabandhan" on 2nd, 3rd and 4th March 2025 respectively, at the University Center Theater of University of Montana.

The opening ceremony of the Indian Film Festival was jointly attended by the Mayor of Helena, Wilmot J. Collins, Consul General of India in Seattle Mr. Prakash Gupta, and the World Affairs Council Executive



Opening Ceremony of the Indian Film Festival in Montana on March 3, 2025



Mr. Seth Bodnar, President of the University of Montana, was felicitated on the sidelines of the Indian Film Festival on 4th March 2025.



Mr. Wilmot Collins, Mayor of Helena, addressing students at the inaugural ceremony of the Indian Film Festival on 3rd March 2025



Lec-Dem on Indian Music and Dance conducted by Prashanti Chitre Institute of Performing Arts (PCIPA) at the University of Montana on 4th March 2025 at Missoula.

Director, Ms. Nikki Geiszler. The Film Festival aimed to provide high school and university students from Montana with a better understanding of the richness and cultural diversity of India through the medium of Indian cinema.

It may be noted that India was also the Theme Country of this year's Academic World Quest, which is an annual multi day conference providing an immersive global experience to high school students from all over Montana and hosted by the Montana World Affairs Council. On the sidelines of this year's



Felicitation of winning students at the University of Montana at Missoula on 4th March 2025.

Academic Conquest, interactive sessions on Indian classical dance and music, along with presentations on India's Digital Payments Platforms and the recently concluded Maha Kumbh were also organized at University of Montana in Missoula. Winning students of this year's India Theme Country Academic World Quest are likely to visit India later this year.

## Panel Discussion on Theme Country India ( 4 March 2025, Missoula )

Interactive Panel Discussion with students on Theme "Country India" at Academic World Quest, addressed by Consul General Prakash Gupta on 4th March 2025, at Missoula.

# Zelenskyy seeks more sanctions as Russian strikes in Ukraine kills 14, injures over 30

08 MAR 2025

**DOBROPILLIA (TIP):** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on March 8 called for more sanctions against Russia as overnight strikes killed at least 14 people and wounded dozens more, days ahead of talks between US and Ukrainian negotiators aimed at securing a truce.

A Russian assault hit the centre of Dobropillia in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region late on Friday, killing 11 people and wounding 30, according to the emergency services.

Separately, three people were killed and seven others wounded in a drone attack early on Saturday in the city of Bogodukhiv, the military head of the eastern Kharkiv region, Oleg Synegubov, said.

Russia fired two missiles and 145 drones at Bogodukhiv, Ukraine's air force said.

The overnight air raids came after US President Donald Trump threatened new sanctions and tariffs on Russia but said it may be "easier" to work with Moscow than Kyiv on efforts to end the three-year-long war.

"Such strikes show that Russia's goals are unchanged. Therefore, it is very



important to continue to do everything to protect life, strengthen our air defence, and increase sanctions against Russia," Zelenskyy wrote on the Telegram social media channel.

In Dobropillia, AFP saw charred residential buildings, flattened market stalls and evidence of cluster bomb damage.

Irina Kostenko, 59, spent the night cowering in her hallway with her husband. When she left the apartment

building on Saturday, she saw a neighbour "lying dead on the ground, covered with a blanket."

"It was shocking, I don't have the words to describe it," Kostenko told AFP.

Zelenskyy said that Russia had struck Dobropillia, waited until rescuers arrived and then "deliberately" targeted them as well. "This is a despicable and inhumane tactic of intimidation that the Russians often use," he said. (AFP)

## CLASHES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT FORCES AND ASSAD LOYALISTS KILL MORE THAN 70 IN SYRIA

**LATAKIA (TIP):** Clashes between Syrian security forces under the country's new, Islamist authorities and gunmen loyal to ousted President Bashar Assad in Syria's western coastal region have killed more than 70 people and left an area outside government control, a war monitor said March 7.

The clashes, which erupted on Thursday and appear coordinated across the coastal region, were a major escalation and a challenge to the new government in Damascus, where the former insurgents now in power have pledged to unite Syria after 14 years of brutal civil war.

Overnight, Damascus sent reinforcements to the coastal cities of Latakia and Tartus, as well as nearby towns and villages — the heartland of Assad's minority Alawite sect and his longtime base of support, trying to get the situation under control, state media reported.

It was the worst violence since Assad's was toppled in early December by insurgent groups led by the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS. Since then, there have been some sectarian attacks against minority Alawites, though the new authorities say they won't allow collective punishment or sectarian vengeance.

Under Assad, Alawites held top posts in the army and security agencies. The new government has blamed his loyalists for attacks over the past weeks against the country's new security forces.

Large numbers of troops were seen Friday morning in Latakia, where a curfew that was imposed in the city and other coastal areas remained in force. Members of the security force said there were minor clashes in one of the city's neighborhoods but most of Latakia was calm and under government control.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitor, said 35 members of Syrian government forces, 32 fighters loyal to Assad and four civilians have been killed.

The Observatory's chief Rami Abdurrahman said the outskirts of the coastal towns of Baniyas and Jableh were still under control of Assad loyalists, as was Assad's hometown of Qardaha and many Alawite villages nearby.

A Qardaha resident told The Associated Press in a text messages that the situation "is very bad." The resident, who asked that his name not be made public fearing for his safety, said government forces were firing with heavy machine guns in the town's residential areas. Another resident, who also spoke on condition of anonymity fearing for his safety, said that they have not been able to leave their homes since Thursday afternoon. (AP)

## Court orders South Korean President Yoon released from jail for his criminal trial over martial law

**SEOUL (TIP):** A South Korean court on March 7 ordered impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol to be released from jail, more than a month after he was arrested and indicted over his short-lived imposition of martial law.

The decision by the Seoul Central District Court would allow Yoon to stand his criminal trial while not being physically detained.

The hearings in his impeachment trial concluded in late February and the court is expected to rule soon on whether to uphold his impeachment or remove him from office.

The Seoul Central District Court said it accepted Yoon's request to be released from jail because the legal period of his formal arrest expired before he was indicted in late January. The court said the investigative agency that detained Yoon before his formal arrest didn't have legal rights to investigate the criminal rebellion charges.

Investigators have alleged that the martial-law decree amounted to rebellion. If he's convicted of that offense, he would face the death penalty or life imprisonment.

Yoon's martial law decree, which involved the dispatch of troops to the National Assembly, evoked traumatic memories of past military rules among many South Koreans. The decree lasted only six hours as enough lawmakers managed to get into an assembly hall and voted to overturn it unanimously. (AFP)

## Pope Francis thanks people for their prayers 'from the bottom of my heart' in audio message

**ROME (TIP):** A weak and breathless Pope Francis thanked people for their prayers for his recovery in a remarkable audio message broadcast March 6, the first public sign of life from the 88-year-old pope since he was hospitalized three weeks ago with double pneumonia.

Francis' feeble voice, discernible through his labored breaths and in his native Spanish, was recorded Thursday from the hospital and broadcast to the faithful in St. Peter's Square who had gathered for the nightly recitation of the rosary prayer.

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your prayers for my health from the square, I accompany you from here," he said, his soft voice piercing the hushed square. "May God bless you and the Virgin protect you. Thank you."

For anyone used to hearing Francis' voice, which is often so soft it sounds like a whisper, the audio was an emotional punch to the gut that hammered home just how sick he is. The cardinal presiding over the prayer, Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, had told the crowd at the start of the service that he had "beautiful news, a beautiful gift" to share.

The Vatican has given twice-daily updates on Francis' medical condition, but has distributed no photos or video of him since the morning of Feb. 14, when he held a handful of audiences at the Vatican before being admitted to Rome's Gemelli hospital for what was then just a bad case of bronchitis. (AP)

## Vietnam expands cost-cutting drive with province merger plan

**HANOI (TIP):** Vietnam is planning to merge provinces and eliminate district-level authorities, the government said March 6, as a streamlining drive aiming to slash billions of dollars from state budgets gathers pace.

The cost-cutting measures have already seen the number of government ministries and agencies slashed from 30 to 22, and one in five public sector jobs will be cut over the next five years.

On Thursday, a statement on the government's website cited Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh as saying a "key and urgent task" was to complete the rearrangement of "administrative boundaries... merging some provinces... and cutting off the district level."

State media said the merging of provinces is scheduled for this year, aiming at "streamlining the apparatus and improving the quality, efficiency and effective distribution of resources."

Communist-ruled Vietnam, a one-party state, is currently divided into 63 major cities and provinces, under which there are around 700 administrative units at the district level and more than 10,000 at the communal level.

Almost two million people worked in the public sector as of 2022, according to the government, which announced this year that 100,000 people would be made redundant or offered early retirement as part of the bureaucratic reforms.

It is unclear if there will be further job cuts as part of the provincial mergers, or which provinces will be affected. (AFP)

Get  
to the  
Point



*The* **INDIAN**  **PANORAMA**

EVER TRUTHFUL

**A DELIGHTFUL READING EVERY WEEK**

**Widest Coverage**

*Your Trusted Partner in Business*

**The Indian Panorama**

P.O. Box No. 190067, South Richmond Hill, NY 11419, Tel: 646-247-9458

[www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news)

Join us for an  
**UNFORGETTABLE**

**RANA**

**Holi Celebration & Rajasthan Diwas!**

**as we bring the festival of colors  
to the waters of New York!**



**Date: Saturday, March 29th, 2025**

Venue:

**Skyline Princess Cruise**

(Departing from World Fair Marina)

**Reporting Time:** 5:00 PM

**Cruise Time:** 6:00 - 10:00 PM

**TICKETS:**

**ADULT \$100**

**KIDS 5-12 YRS \$50.00**

*President*  
**Prem Bhandari**  
(516) 589-0961

*Vice President*  
**Dr. Sharad Kothari**  
(718) 509-7626

*Secretary*  
**Ravi Jargad**  
(718) 564-9352

*Treasurer*  
**Neelam Modi**  
(516) 987-0053

*Get ready for an evening filled with DJ, DANCE and a spectacular Bollywood singer performance! Enjoy the vibrant festival of Holi with a flower celebration and savor a delightful spread of delicious food.*

Reserve your spot now and celebrate Holi in a unique and exciting way!  
**RIGHT NOW TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE ON RANA WEBSITE. WWW.RANAUSA.ORG.**

# SGPC removes Akal Takht, Keshgarh Sahib jathedars for 'taking action' against Sukhbir Singh Badal

AMRITSAR (TIP)

Amid the ongoing tussle between the Akal Takht and Shiromani Akali Dal, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) Friday, March 7, removed Giani Raghbir Singh as the Jathedar of the Akal Takht.

The decision to remove Raghbir Singh was taken by the executive committee of the SGPC, headed by vice president Raghujit Singh Virk in the absence of Harjinder Singh Dhani, who had resigned from the position of the president last month. The executive committee also removed Giani Sultan Singh as the acting Jathedar of Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib. This comes after SGPC removed Giani Harpreet Singh as the Jathedar of the Takht Damdama Sahib last month.

With the March 7 development, three Sikh Jathedars, who had ordered then SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal's removal as the party president, declared him 'Tankhaiya (sinner)' and announced a series of punishments against him and other Akali Dal leaders, have been removed.

Virk said in a statement that Giani Raghbir Singh was removed from his position for having failed to "adequately" guide the Sikh community and take a firm stance on critical matters. "His



Giani Raghbir Singh



Giani Sultan Singh

inconsistent statements and reluctance to address serious incidents impacting Sikh values and morality led to disappointment among the Sikh Sangat," he said.

Giani Kuldeep Singh Gadgaj has now been appointed as the Jathedar of Takht Keshgarh Sahib, and given the additional charge as Jathedar of Akal Takht. Baba Tek Singh, head of Bunga Mastuana, Damdama Sahib has been appointed as Jathedar of Takht Damdama Sahib.

The Akal Takht is the highest temporal body of the Sikhs, while the SGPC regulates the functioning of all historical gurdwaras in Punjab, Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh. Both bodies are the upholders of the Sikh maryada, or Sikh code of conduct.

Takht Damdama Sahib and Takht Keshgarh Sahib are among the four other seats of temporal authority of the Sikhs,

each of which is headed by a SGPC-appointed Jathedar.

Virk added in the statement that the Akal Takht is the supreme authority of Miri Piri (Sikh doctrine of close relationship between religion and politics), established by Guru Hargobind Sahib, and remains the spiritual and political centre of Sikh governance. "However, in the face of growing challenges, the leadership of former Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh was deemed inadequate in guiding the Panth and addressing contemporary issues effectively," he said.

The SGPC vice president highlighted concerns over increasing divisions within Sikh institutions, rising threats to Sikh identity worldwide, and the alleged failure of the former Jathedar to take a firm stance on critical Panthic matters.

"In this era of globalisation, the Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib must provide clear, unwavering leadership to safeguard Sikh interests. Unfortunately, Giani Raghbir Singh's inconsistent approach has weakened Panthic unity instead of strengthening it. Given these serious shortcomings, the executive committee decided to retire him from the post of Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib," he said.



Kannada film actor Ranya Rao.

## 'Can't sleep...having mental trauma': Ranya Rao after as DRI says she's part of gold smuggling syndicate

Kannada film actor Ranya Rao, who was arrested on March 3 at the Bengaluru International Airport while allegedly attempting to smuggle 14.2 kg of gold on her person while returning from a visit to Dubai, was part of a syndicate, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) indicated before a special court in the process of obtaining her custody.

A special court for economic offences in Bengaluru on Friday handed Rao alias Harshavardini Ranya, 33, to DRI custody for three days. The DRI had sought her custody on the grounds of investigating the existence of a larger conspiracy and gold smuggling racket.

The DRI investigation has revealed "the existence of a syndicate to commit an offence by misusing the protocols", the special court observed. The court also noted that the alleged modus operandi used by the actress to smuggle the 14.2 kg of gold illegally into India was "by wrapping the gold bars with the help of crepe bandage and tissues around her body parts", which has been revealed in the mahazar drawn for the case by the DRI.

In its affidavit submitted to the court, the DRI stated that Rao tried to smuggle 14.2 kg of gold valued at Rs 12.56 crore and was trying to evade customs duty to the tune of Rs 4.83 crore by concealing the gold on her person.

Rao told her advocates that she was undergoing "mental trauma". "I keep thinking why did I get into it. My mind keeps going back to the day at the airport. I cannot sleep...I am having mental trauma," she told her lawyers amid tears.

The DRI told the court that it required Rao's custodial interrogation to confront her with forensic extracts from her mobile phone and laptops. The special court ruled that the DRI was justified in its claim and "also to investigate regarding the involvement of a syndicate and misuse of protocols".

The special court handed custody of the actress to the DRI till March 10.

# Security forces recover 114 weapons across Manipur after voluntary surrender period expires

NEW DELHI (TIP)

In a series of operations, security forces have recovered 114 weapons, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), grenades, and ammunition across Manipur after the expiry of a two-week period for voluntarily surrendering looted and illegally held arms in the ethnic strife-torn state, an official statement said on Saturday, March 8.

Intelligence-based operations were launched in the hill and valley districts of Bishnupur, Senapati, Thoubal, Jiribam, Chandel, Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, Imphal East and Imphal West.

Altogether 114 weapons, IEDs, grenades, ammunition, and war-like stores were recovered during these operations, an army statement said.

People handed over to the security forces more than 1,000 arms along with ammunition during the two-week provided to them for voluntarily surrendering looted and illegally held weapons in Manipur, a police officer said on Friday, a day after the deadline ended.

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla had on February 20 urged



warring groups to voluntarily surrender weapons robbed from security forces and other illegally held arms within seven days. He extended the deadline till 4 PM on March 6, following demands by people from both hill and valley areas for additional time.

The administration had assured

people that no punitive action would be taken against those who surrendered their weapons within this period, emphasising that "this is the last opportunity for everyone concerned to contribute to peace, communal harmony, the future of our youth, and the security of our society". Source: PTI

## India, Russia sign deal for T-72 tank engines

The Ministry of Defence on Friday, March 7, signed a contract with Russia's Rosoboronexport (RoE) to procure 1000 HP engines for T-72 Tanks.

"T-72 is the mainstay of the tank fleet of the Indian Army, and it is currently fitted with a 780 HP engine. Equipping the existing fleet of T-72 Tanks with 1000 HP engines will enhance the battlefield mobility and offensive capability of the Indian Army."

The deal also includes transferring Technology (ToT) from RoE to Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (Heavy Vehicle Factory), Avadi, Chennai, for integration and subsequent licensed production of engines under ToT to boost 'Make in India' initiative in the defence sector.

In addition to this upgrade plan for the T-72 tanks, a plan is being developed to prepare to replace these over four-decade-old main battle tanks with future-ready combat vehicles (FRCVs) by 2030.

The FRCVs, with the capability to act as multiple weapon platforms and an infusion of niche technology, will meet future capability requirements and enhance the Indian Army's (IA) overall operational effectiveness index by addressing emerging threats in varied terrain. There are commonly three categories of tanks: light, medium, and heavy tanks. The Army's MBT Arjun weighs around 60 tons, T-90 around 48 tons, and T-70 around 45 tons.

## Clerics adjust Juma Namaz timings for Holi

With Holi falling on Friday, March 14, Muslim clerics in Lucknow, including the Imam of Lucknow Eidgah, have advised mosques to hold Juma Namaz at 2 pm instead of the usual 12 noon. The Eidgah Imam also urged worshippers to offer prayers at their local mosques rather than travelling to distant ones.

The advisory was issued by Maulana Khalid Rasheed Farangi Mahali, chairman of the Islamic Centre of India and an executive member of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB). He noted that since Holi celebrations with colours continue until 1 pm, it would be appropriate to schedule Juma Namaz later in the afternoon. Namaz at Jama Masjid Eidgah in Lucknow will also be held at 2 pm instead of 12:45 pm on March 14.

In Sambhal, it was decided that Hindus will celebrate Holi until 2:30 pm, after which Muslims will offer Juma Namaz. Senior police officials confirmed that seven companies of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) have been deployed in the city to ensure peace during the festival.

# Delimitation: Stalin writes to CMs of seven states, calls for unified action against centre

CHENNAI (TIP)

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president M K Stalin on Friday, March 7, wrote to leaders of political parties and CMs of seven states, inviting them for a meeting in Chennai on March 22 as a first step towards "unified action" against any move by the BJP-led union government to implement delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies in a manner that will reduce the representation of states that have successfully implemented population control.

The letter comes after an all-party meeting in TN, chaired by Stalin, on Wednesday, during which it was resolved to constitute a Joint Action Committee (JAC) comprising parliamentarians from southern states to take forward a united struggle on the issue.

Though the all-party meet resolution only mentioned southern states, Stalin has sent the letter to the CMs and the leaders of national and regional parties in Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal, Punjab and, interestingly, the BJP-ruled Odisha. In his post regarding the letter on X, he also tagged the state units of the BJP and its allies in the seven states.

Stalin also sought the leaders' consent to be a part of the JAC, comprising eight states, and a nomination of one representative from each party to serve on the committee to help coordinate a unified strategy. Only a collaborative analysis and unified advocacy can secure a delimitation process that honours the states' role in nation-building without



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin.

compromising their current representation in percentage terms, he said.

Stressing the need to rise above political differences, Stalin wrote, "What is at stake is not any abstract principle -- it is our states' ability to secure rightful resources for development, to influence crucial policies on education and healthcare and to ensure our economic priorities receive due attention in the national agenda."

He said the issue transcended individual states' concerns as it "strikes at the heart of our federal principles" and called for a joint examination of delimitation across the constitutional, legal, and political dimensions and development of alternatives that preserve the existing share of representation.

Pointing out that the 84th constitutional amendment froze the

delimitation until the first census carried out after 2026, he said the exercise would have been postponed to 2031, if not for the delay in conducting the 2021 census. Stating that delimitation could now happen much earlier, he said, "This acceleration gives us very little time to protect our interests."

Stalin said the situation may become "drastically skewed" if the exercise is conducted based on the next census population. Once implemented, he said this "democratic imbalance" could persist for decades, leaving the states with diminished capacity to advocate for their people's interests, he underscored.

"For the record, we are not against delimitation. What we oppose is its weaponisation against states that had fulfilled their national duties, thus punishing their progress," he clarified. He blamed the union government for providing neither clarity nor any concrete commitment to address the concerns, despite the gravity of the issue.

"Their representatives have vaguely stated that delimitation would follow a 'pro-rata' basis, without explaining the base used for such pro-rata calculation as well as raising an empty rhetoric that no state will face a decrease in its seats," he said.

"When the very foundation of our democracy is at stake, can we accept such vague assurances? When our states' futures hang in the balance, do we not deserve a transparent dialogue?" he asked.

## 'License accorded to extremist forces': MEA on security breach during EAM Jaishankar's UK visit

NEW DELHI (TIP)

India has reacted strongly to the security breach in London during External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to the United Kingdom, with the Ministry of External Affairs saying the incident highlighted the licence accorded to extremist forces in the country.

EAM Jaishankar was heckled by Khalistani extremists while he was leaving after an event in London on Wednesday (March 5, 2025)

Videos of the incident showed a group of people near the venue; they subsequently rushed towards the visiting Indian External Affairs Minister's car as he was leaving and disrespected the Indian flag.

India has already conveyed its "deep concern" to the UK authorities about this breach of security arrangements by



the UK-based Khalistani extremists.

Addressing the media at the weekly briefing in New Delhi on Friday (March 7, 2025), MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "I would like to reiterate that we have conveyed our deep concern to the UK authorities about the breach of security arrangements by the UK-based separatist and extremist elements

during the External Affairs Minister's visit".

Responding to questions on the incident, the MEA Spokesperson noted that the incident should not be seen in isolation. He referred to earlier incidents targeting Indian missions to highlight what he described as "indifference" on the part of the UK authorities.

"There is a larger context to the incident...it brings out both the license accorded to such forces as well as indifference to intimidation, threats and other actions aimed at impeding our legitimate diplomatic activities in the UK," Jaiswal stated.

"While we have noted the statement issued by the UK's Foreign Office on the matter. Our view on its sincerity would depend on the action taken against culprits on this and previous occasions," MEA Spokesperson Jaiswal said.

# India in history this Week

## MARCH 7 TO MARCH 13

### 07 MARCH

1956 A huge steel tube plant was opened in Jamshedpur on this day in 1956.

1987 Sunil Gavaskar made history. On this day, he scored 10,000 runs in a Test match.

1994 India and Iraq signed three Memorandum of Understanding in Tehran.



1998 Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was given the leadership of BJP's MP Party.

1835 Proposal was made to promote the propagation of European literature and science in India.

1985 The first antibody test for AIDS, the ELISA-type test, was started.

2007 Pakistan and India prepared in 2007 to help investigate terrorism.

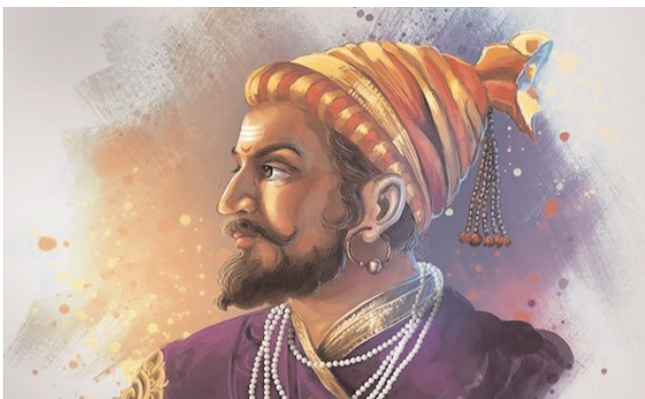
1961 Renowned freedom fighter and senior leader Govind Ballabh Pant died in 1961.

### 08 MARCH

1909 International Women's Day is started to celebrate.

1948 Air India International was established.

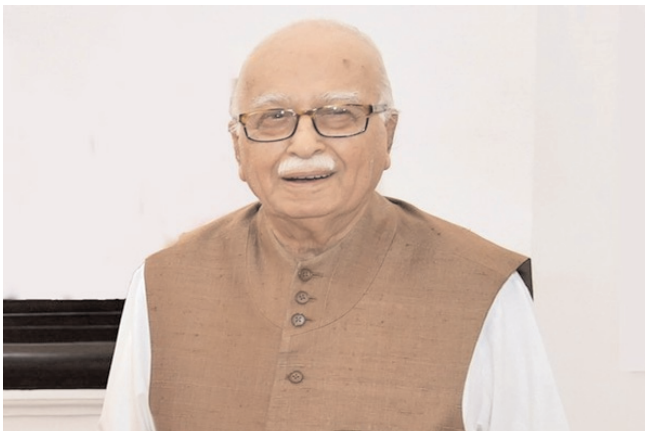
1535 Bahadur Shah found Fateh at Chittor Fort.



1673 Chhatrapati Shivaji burst upon the fort of Panhala.

1930 Mahatma Gandhi started the Civil Disobedience Movement.

1986 BJP leader Advani was elected party president.



1998 Indian Airlines flew with all women crew members.

1833 Journalist Vishwanath Narayan was born.

### 09 MARCH



1951 Famous tabla player Zakir Hussain is born.

2007 Indian doctors in Britain get legal success on discriminatory migrant rules.

1999 Indian-based, British-based industrialist Swaraj Paul was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Central Birmingham in 1999.

### 10 MARCH

1922 Mahatma Gandhi was arrested in 1922 on charges of treason.

1969 The CISF Act was passed in Parliament.

1985 India won the Benson and Hedges Cricket World Cup in 1985.



2010 The Women's Reservation Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament.

1932 Born in 1932 of Udipi Ramchandra Rao, a space scientist and former president of ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization).

1945 Famous Congress leader Madhavrao Scindia was born on this day in 1945.



### 11 MARCH

1399 Taimur Lung crossed the Indus River in 1399, after committing a rampage in North India including

Delhi.

1999 Infosys Company is the first Indian company to appear on the Nasdaq (NASDAQ) International Stock Exchange list in 1999.

2007 Sunita completed the 2,012 km journey from Kolkata to Wagah in 2007 by driving in reverse gear.

### 12 MARCH



1913 Yashwantrao Chavan, the first Chief Minister of Maharashtra and the fifth Deputy Prime Minister of the country was born after the bifurcation of Bombay State in 1913.

1922 Mahatma Gandhi was arrested by the British for the movement against buying goods made from Europe and working with the machines of British rule.

1930 Mahatma Gandhi started the Dandi March from Sabarmati Ashram. The aim was to 'break the salt law' made by the British.



1993 There were 13 bomb blasts in Mumbai in which 257 people were killed and 800 people were injured.

1872 Sher Ali, the assassin of Lord Mayo, the then Viceroy of India, was hanged in 1872.

1954 The Government of India inaugurated the Sahitya Academy in 1954.

1958 In 1958, British Empire Day was named 'Commonwealth Day'.

1993 The serial bomb blasts in Mumbai in 1993 killed 300 people and injured hundreds more.

### 13 MARCH

1940 Indian revolutionary Udham Singh opened fire on General Dyer in London to avenge the Jallianwala Bagh from the British.

1997 Sister Nirmala was chosen as the leader in 1997 by Mother Teresa at the Indian Missionaries of Charity.

2009 The SAARC Literature Festival began in 2009 in Agra.

1971 Famous Hindi poet Atma Ranjan was born in 1971.



# SHREE SIDDHIVINAYAK TEMPLE OF TOMS RIVER

IS PROUDLY HOSTING

## DHUN MUSICAL GROUP, USA

FOR THE 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FUNDRAISER CONCERT



# Shaam-E-DHUN "at Toms River, NJ"

**WHEN**

**SATURDAY, MAY 10, 2025  
AT 5:00 PM EST**



**DINNER INCLUDED  
REGISTRATION RECOMMENDED**

**PLEASE DONATE!**

**DONATIONS WILL GO  
TOWARDS NEW TEMPLE  
COMMUNITY HALL  
CONSTRUCTION & TEMPLE  
EXPENSES**

**VENUE**

**SHREE SIDDHIVINAYAK  
TEMPLE, USA  
1916 LAKEWOOD ROAD  
TOMS RIVER, NJ 08755**

**GUESTS OF HONOR**



**ANKUR VAIDYA  
CHAIRMAN FIA**

**SPECIAL GUESTS**



**DR SUDHIR PARIKH  
PHYSICIAN, CHAIRMAN, & PUBLISHER-  
PARIKH WORLDWIDE MEDIA,  
ITV GOLD & LIFE GLOBAL**



**SREEKANTH AKKAPALLI  
CEO, TV9 NORTH AMERICA GLOBAL**

**TEAM DHUN (WWW.DHUNUSA.COM)**



**CHIEF GUEST**



**MR. BINAYA SRIKANTA  
PRADHAN  
CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA  
IN NEW YORK.**

**SPONSORSHIP OPTIONS**

SILVER	\$100
GOLD	\$250
PLATINUM	\$500
DIAMOND	\$1000

**WELCOMING HOST**



**RAJEEV SINGH  
FOUNDER, DHUN  
MUSICAL GROUP,  
USA**



**DR. AVINASH GUPTA  
CHAIRMAN SIDDHIVINAYAK  
TEMPLE, USA & PAST  
PRESIDENT FIA**

**DINNER SPONSORED  
BY AARZU**



**SUPPORTERS**



**MEDIA PARTNER**



**CONTACT FOR REGISTRATION DETAILS, SSVTUSA1916@GMAIL.COM**

# 'Sweet and sour' - When bureaucrats turn writers



BY  
PRABHJOT SINGH

"Just overwhelmed". Thank you all for your welcoming and warm messages, phone calls and kind wishes conveyed in person to the first episode of my new monthly blog. I sincerely hope you will continue to back this offbeat venture as it is about you and me and our common friends. On my side, I shall make every endeavor to sustain your interest by recalling events or talking about developments that are of mutual interest.

Incidentally, February turned out to be an eventful month. A lot was happening around. A visit to my alma mater - Department of Languages, Culture and Journalism in the College of Basic Sciences and Humanities at Punjab Agricultural University - was most fulfilling.

It was more than a reunion. Returning to the Department on the first floor of the infamous Pal Auditorium revived memories of the Functional English classes we used to attend in the Department.

We were three students - Bhagwan Dass, AP Singh, and me - when the M.Sc. in Agricultural Journalism degree programme was revived after a gap of a couple of years. At that time, Dr Hazara Singh was the Head of the Department of Languages, Culture and Journalism.

From the earlier batches, senior journalists like Surinder Sud and PPS Gill, besides Rantej Singh and Shiv Jagday, were among the successful passouts. The Masters in Agricultural Journalism was introduced when Dr M.S. Randhawa was the Vice-Chancellor and Promila Kalhan of the Hindustan Times was roped in as Guest Faculty and Head.

The Department's claim to fame is based on a rich crop of journalists it has produced over the years. The successful alumni include Ramesh Vinayak, Aditi Tandon, late Sarabjit Pandher, Amardeep Bhattal, Varinder Walia, Umesh Dewan, Ramaninder Bhatia, Dr Balwinder Singh, Kamlesh Singh Duggal, Anupam Bhargia, Jai Raj Kajla, Bandeep Singh, Amarpal Singh and Kanwal Preet Kaur, and several others.

Professor Hazara Singh, a perfectionist, would keep us amused by narrating his encounters with some of the freedom fighters. An ardent and committed follower of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh, Professor Hazara Singh was a teacher of an altogether different genre. He would get his lectures typed - there were no computers those days - and give us copies.

He was not only an excellent teacher but also a great motivator. He inculcated in his students the qualities of inquisitiveness and scientific temperament. He also religiously followed the progress of each of his



The Vice-Chancellor of Punjab Agricultural University, Dr Satbir Singh Gosal, presented Dr Balwinder Singh with a memento at the alumni meet of the Department of Languages, Culture, and Journalism in the College of Basic Science and Humanities of PAU.



The Legacy Tree signed by alumni



Dr Satbir Singh Gosal addressing the audience



Ms Ramaninder Kaur Bhatia



A view of the dais (from left to right) Dr Balwinder Singh Dhaliwal, Mr Ramesh Vinayak, Dr Satbir Singh Gosal and Dr Amarjit Singh Hayer.

students and would volunteer to help in case any one of us needed extra classes or help as two of us - myself and Mr Bhagwan Dass - came from a different system of education while PAU followed the American 4.0 grading system with weekly and monthly tests. We both had done our Bachelor of Journalism from Punjabi University, Patiala, while our other class fellow, AP Singh, an excellent photo artist, was a PAU graduate.

Meeting my batchmate AP Singh was

gratifying. Dr Amarjit Singh Hayer, who also taught English to students of the subsequent batches, has been the spirit behind organizing the reunion. Dr Amarjit Singh Hayer, now settled in Mohali, misses no opportunity to stay in touch with all passouts from the Department.

The Vice-Chancellor of PAU, Dr Satbir Singh Gosal, must have cancelled all his appointments to spend the entire day with the alumni. He not only



Dr Amajit Singh Hayer.



Dr Kiran Bains, Dean, College of Basic Sciences.



Gurmanag Dass with Nassar Ali Khori.

participated in all events but also interacted freely with all old students, applauding the role media has been playing in the dissemination of information, thus bridging the gap between the research institutions and farmers, the ultimate beneficiaries, and the agrarian societies.

Also in attendance were the Dean of College of Basic Sciences, Dr Kiran Bains, Acting Director of Communications Centre, Dr T.S. Riar, Prof (retd) Dr Amarjit Singh Hayer, Dr Sheetal Thapar, Head of Department of Journalism. Dr Hina Goyal played master of ceremonies while students of the Department volunteered to make the day memorable for all of us.

Three of the outstanding alumni - Ramesh Vinayak, Executive Editor, Hindustan Times; Ms Ramaninder Bhatia, a former senior Assistant Editor of Times of India; and Dr Balwinder Singh, who had a stint as a teacher in the Department, before moving to Canada, where he runs Radio Sargam - made excellent presentations on the theme of the reunion "Reaping Stories: Sowing Ideas."

Among the alumni were senior journalists, including senior Tribune staffer Umesh Dewan, Jai Raj Kajla (ex-Commissioner, Income Tax), Kanwal Preet Kaur, Bandeep Singh, Brampton-based Satbir Singh, Amarpal Singh (Ludhiana Head of Daily Savera), Anupam Bhargia, and an accomplished teacher of journalism Kamlesh Singh Duggal, besides others.

Continued on Page 22

# Tariff war: Nothing 'American' in Canada and vice versa?

Groups supporting "Made in Canada"; while in Canada "Buy Canada"; "Donald Trump Canada is no US Dump"; and "Canada First" have been gaining both popularity and acceptability as more than 3600 American brands of alcohol have started disappearing from Liquor shops and vends in Ontario and British Columbia.



BY  
PRABHJOT SINGH

March 3, 2025

TORONTO (TIP): They say power-electricity-has no color; but it can color the economies of manufacturing hubs, provinces, and nations. US President Donald Trump has decided to proceed with his long-threatened tariffs on Canadian goods. Ontario Premier Doug Ford, fresh from his third consecutive mandate, is determined to color the electricity flowing into the United States with a 25 percent surcharge.

The tariff war is getting "livid" with the outgoing Canadian Premier Justin Trudeau supported by Premiers of various provinces and territories making no secret of their intentions to resort to "tit for tat". They have already started imposing "tariffs" on most American goods, with Justin Trudeau announcing a 25 per cent tariff on imports worth US \$ 30 billion.

Mark Carney, who is the front runner to succeed Justin Trudeau as Canadian Premier, sent a message to his supporters saying: Canada is at a crossroads. The world is more uncertain, more dangerous, and more divided than it has been in decades. The next Liberal leader must be ready to meet this moment with serious leadership and a serious plan.

That's why I stepped forward in this race-to fight for a strong, independent, and competitive Canada. One that invests in its people, grows its economy, and builds a better future. We need a leader who will put



:"This is not the outcome anyone wanted," Ford said at Queen's Park in Toronto. "We could have poured our efforts into making Canada and the U.S. the two richest, most successful, safest, most secure two countries on the planet. Unfortunately, one man - President Trump - has chosen chaos instead."

Canada first. We need a leader who will invest in Canadians. We need a leader who will build a stronger economy because a strong economy means a strong Canada.

The truth is we are now facing the most serious crisis in our lifetime. Donald Trump is back in the White House. The world is shifting fast, and Canada must be ready to stand strong.

Pierre Poilievre is the wrong person at the worst time. He takes his cues from Trump. He tears things down instead of building. His reflex is always to cut and destroy, never to strengthen and invest, Mark Carney said.

Canada is scheduled to get its new Prime Minister on March 9.

Groups supporting "Made in Canada"; while in Canada "Buy Canada"; "Donald Trump Canada is no US Dump"; and "Canada First" have been gaining both popularity and acceptability as more than 3600 American brands of alcohol have started disappearing from Liquor shops and vends in Ontario and British Columbia. Ontario has also threatened to

rip up its \$100-million deal with Elon Musk's Starlink internet provider. The U.S. companies will also be banned from procurement contracts as part of the province's response to President Donald Trump's tariffs on Canadian goods.

Premier Doug Ford, who is the chair of the Federation of Canadian Premiers, has been on the forefront in "tariff war" taking it across the international borders by warning lawmakers in New York, Michigan and Minnesota that if the trade war "persists" Ontario will put a 25 per cent surcharge on electricity flowing into the states and potentially cut the flow off entirely.

Ontario supplies roughly 1.5 million customers in the border states with electricity. "This is not the outcome anyone wanted," Ford said at Queen's Park in Toronto. "We could have poured our efforts into making Canada and the U.S. the two richest, most successful, safest, most secure two countries on the planet. Unfortunately, one man - President Trump - has chosen chaos instead."

Just after midnight, Trump moved ahead with long-threatened 25 per cent tariffs on most Canadian goods. A 10 per cent tariff will similarly be applied to all Canadian energy exports heading south of the border. The "tariff war" could wreak havoc on vital Ontario industries like auto manufacturing and steel production, as well as drive up retail prices and fuel more inflation. Auto giants based in the province have warned that plants could be forced to halt production within five to eight days.

Intriguingly, Donald Trump, as president who signed the most recent free trade deal with Canada and Mexico, said in 2020 that it was "the best and most

important trade deal ever made by the USA." Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced Canada's retaliatory response that included matching tariffs on \$155 billion worth of U.S. goods - roughly \$30 billion worth of goods right away and the remaining \$125 billion in 21 days to give Canadian companies time to adjust their supply chains. He added that he believes Trump's ultimate goal is to weaken the Canadian economy so he can try to annex the country.

"First of all, that is never going to happen. Canada will never be the 51st state," he continued.

Doug Ford says he will 'spare no expense to protect Ontario workers,' while highlighting a slew of retaliatory measures in response to sweeping tariffs imposed by Donald Trump. Ford has also threatened to surcharge or cut off critical mineral exports to the U.S. should the trade war linger.

"We also need to be ready to dig in for a long fight," Ford said. "We need to be ready to escalate using every tool in our tool kit."

Ford spoke just after hours Ontario's primary liquor wholesaler and retailer confirmed it will stop purchasing and selling U.S. alcohol. The LCBO previously offered some 3,600 American products sourced from 35 states, amounting to roughly \$1 billion in annual sales. As the province's main booze distributor, it means grocery and convenience stores, bars and restaurants, and other retailers will no longer be able to buy U.S. alcohol.

Ontario is pulling 3,600 U.S. products off LCBO shelves in response to Trump's tariffs, with Premier Doug Ford encouraging people to buy Canadian brands instead.

Contd on P22

## Anita Anand revises her decision to contest 2025 federal polls

March 3, 2025

OTTAWA (TIP): Canada's Transport Minister and President of Treasury Board, Anita Anand, who announced earlier this year her decision to skip the 2025 federal polls, has changed her mind.

Realizing the difficult times ahead because of the ongoing tariff war with the largest trade partner and neighbor, the United States, Anita Anand, while reiterating her commitment to making "Canada first", said that she would continue to serve the people of Canada through their difficult times.

Anita Anand, who became the first woman of Indian origin to hold the portfolio of Defense, had declared early this year that she plans to go back to academics.

While she was considered a strong candidate for the Liberal Party leadership and Prime Minister of Canada after Justin Trudeau made an announcement to quit the Liberal Party leadership as well as the office of the Prime Minister after a growing dissent in the Liberal caucus, she opted out.



Anita Anand has now decided to contest the 2025 federal election

Photo Credit: Government of Canada

There were repeated attempts by the main Opposition party, the Conservatives, to bring down the Liberal Government under Justin Trudeau. He, however, managed to survive two no-confidence motions brought in by the Conservatives, thanks to support by the fourth largest party in the House of Commons, the New Democrats.

Later, when New Democrats also

turned hostile and announced to bring in a no-confidence motion against his government, Trudeau offered to quit and requested the party high command to choose his successor. At the same time, he called on the Governor-General to seek prorogation of the House of Commons till March 24 so that the Liberals could choose their new leader.

The House of Commons was to resume its sitting on January 27. The governor-general acceded to Justin Trudeau's recommendation and prorogued the House till March 24.

Four candidates - Mark Carney, Frank Baylis, Chrystia Freeland and Karina Gould - are in the run for the Liberal Party leadership. The election process will be completed by March 9.

Meanwhile, the number of sitting members of the House of Commons in general and the Liberal party in particular opting out of the 2025 federal elections started growing. At one stage, three Cabinet ministers of Indian origin - Anita Anand, Harjit Sajjan and Arif Virani - also joined the list of those not

seeking re-election.

Anita Anand has, however, relented and decided to seek election from Etobicoke, a riding she has been representing in the House of Commons. The Liberal Party website, however, does not reflect Anita Anand as a candidate from Etobicoke so far.

Anita had taken to X handle to announce her revised decision. She said: "Canada is facing a crucial moment in our nation's history. In the time since early January, when I made my announcement to step away from public life, the gravity of this moment has only grown in significance. Now, I look forward to continuing to serve and to running in the next federal election.

"Over the past seven weeks, I have been heavily engaged on the Canada-US file and have made headway on reducing interprovincial barriers to trade, with more work for me to do on both fronts," she said revealing that "the words of my late mother ring even louder in my ears today. She often said to me, "you must serve your country."

# PIOs make a satisfactory start to electoral battles



BY  
PRABHJOT SINGH

March 4, 2025

TORONTO (TIP): The Indo-Canadian community has every reason to feel satisfied with the performance of its candidates in the first electoral battle of 2025 by retaining all the seats they held in the outgoing Ontario Provincial Parliament (Assembly). While Hardeep Grewal, Prabhmeet Singh Sarkaria, Amarjot Sandhu, Deepak Anand and Nina Tangri (all representing the ruling Progressive Conservatives from various ridings of Brampton) retained their seats, other candidates of the South Asian origin - Adil Shamji (Don Valley East), Vijay Thiagarajan (Scarborough Rouge Park), Dolly Begum (NDP) (Scarborough Southwest), and Chandra Pasma (NDP - Ottawa West) - also retained their seats.

In all, candidates of South Asian origin ended with nine seats.

Other candidates in the contest performed well, as elections were called more than a year ahead of the scheduled recorded 45.4 percent turnout. Incidentally, after more than 140 years, elections were organized in the wintery conditions of February after a series of snowstorms had impacted the biggest province of Canada.

Timing and weather failed to dampen the spirit of the ever-growing Indo-



Canadian community that put up candidates not only for major political outfits - Progressive Conservatives, New Democrats, Liberals, Greens - but also for a new entity - New Blue Party - besides a few Independents.

Looking back at the performance of unsuccessful candidates of Indian origin, several finished second, and a few placed third, thus raising hopes that they can improve their acceptability and vote share in the coming times. In several ridings, especially in Brampton, Mississauga, and Scarborough, the votes of the South Asian community were divided because of the multiplicity of community candidates.

One of the most interesting ballot battles involving the Indian community was in Brampton East, where it captured the first three positions. The sitting legislator, Hardeep Grewal, retained his seat by polling 14,795 votes, against Vicky Dhillon of the Liberals, who received 8519 votes, and third-placed Martin Singh of the NDP, who polled 3106 votes.

In Brampton Centre, Williams Charmeins of the Progressive

Conservatives won, Sukhamrit Singh of the NDP finished third, and Kamal Preet Kaur of the New Blue Party placed fifth. In adjoining Brampton North, Ranjit Singh Bagga of the Liberals, with 9270 votes, finished second to Graham McGregor of the ruling PC.

In Brampton South, incumbent Prabhmeet Singh Sarkaria defeated three candidates of Indian descent - Bhavik Parikh (Liberals - 9324 votes), Rajni Sharma (NDP - 2410 votes) and Rajinder Boyal (Greens - 911 votes). In the fifth riding of Brampton area (West), Amarjot Sandhu of the ruling PC defeated, among others, a candidate of Indian descent - Pushpek Sidhu (Independent).

In Niagara Falls riding, new face Shafoli Kapur, contesting on the Liberal ticket, finished third with 3398 votes, while in Markham Unionville, another first-timer, Jagbir Dusanjh put up a good fight to finish second by polling 10,158 votes.

In Oshawa, where there were two candidates in the run, Viresh Bansal of the Liberals finished third with 3891 votes. His candidature remained mired in controversy over the comments he had made against the Sikh community. He apologized for his utterings before the polling after the Liberal leader Bonnie Crombie threatened to strip him of the Liberal party tag. Another candidate of Indian origin in the run was Rahul Padmini Soumian, an Independent, who ended sixth with 142 votes.

In Parkdale-High Park, Rimmy Riarh, representing the Communists, also had a

sixth-place finish with 283 votes.

Another first-timer, Gurwinder Dusanjh, contesting on a Liberal ticket, was placed third with 3038 votes.

Among the Green Party candidates of Indian origin, Mini Batra gave one the best performance by polling 1302 votes in Pickering Uxbridge to finish fourth.

Another candidate of Indian origin, Vandan Patel (Liberal), was placed third with 2918 votes in the Haldimand-Norfolk riding.

Pit Goyal, who contested on the Ontario Progress Party ticket from Willowdale, ended fifth in the contest as he got 217 votes.

Scarborough that has emerged as a new center of people of South Indian descent, saw Anita Anandarajan (Liberal - 8316 votes) and Naveenethan Thadsa (NDP - 2496 votes) making their political debut in the Scarborough North riding. From Scarborough South, Sonali Chakraborty (NDP) ended third with 2628 votes.

From Ottawa-Vernier, Rishab Bhatia, a candidate of the New Blue Party, was placed sixth with 495 votes. From neighboring Ottawa South, Nira Dookeran (Green) ended fourth with 1214 votes, while Maria Dsouza of New Blue Party was placed fifth from Ottawa Centre.

Gurwinder Dusanjh (Liberal) was placed in the number three slot after polling 3038 votes in Sault Ste. Marie riding.

Raymond Bhushan, who contested from Richmond Hill riding, finished third with 1771 votes.

## From Page 20

To make the event memorable, all guests signed a "Heritage tree" while students regaled the audience with some popular Punjabi folk numbers to give a musical finish to the day-long event.

Other than the "Reaping Stories: Sowing Ideas" event, I had a chance to meet several old timers and friends in sports like Gurmangal Dass, who, after his degree in Engineering, returned to his village Rurka in the Doab. In the last 30 years, he has not only taken his native village to the world soccer map through his football club - YFC - but also got it on a select list of five cities that run the Generation Amazing programme to empower youth. Rurka is the only center in India.

Meeting Gurmangal Dass after a long gap was both illuminating and rewarding. He is perhaps the first person in the subcontinent to talk about the "Right to Sports" and believes education through sports is the best way to take a nation forward.

Starting with a modest budget of Rs one lakh, YFC Rurka Kalan now spends Rs 18 crore a year in its endeavor to produce world leaders of tomorrow.

"We are thrilled to deepen our partnership with YFC Rurka Kalan, building on the strong foundation, we established in 2017, remarked Nasser Ali Khori, Executive Director of Generation Amazing, who was present

at the inauguration of the GA Multi Sports Facility at Rurka Kalan that includes football pitch, synthetic courts for basketball, tennis, volleyball and picket ball as well as a multi-activity hall and a modern 50-station gym. Additionally, the facility features a 200-seat auditorium for community events and training sessions. It has on-site accommodation and dining facilities where, at present, 60-odd athletes, including soccer players and wrestlers, are training under the watchful eyes of qualified trainers.

Developed with the support of the Generation Amazing Foundation, the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy of the FIFA World Cup 2022, and the contributions from non-resident Indians, the US\$ 1 million project will provide free access to children and youth in the community.

The backbone of this project has been the support it has been getting from the overseas Indian community. Gurmangal Dass recalls how his first trip to England helped him to collect £30,000 for his Youth Football Club (YFC) Rurka Kalan, the forerunner to the newly launched Generation Amazing programme.

Talking about the new facility, Gurmangal Dass says that the "inauguration of this facility is a proud moment for the YFC Rurka Kalan and the entire community. I can say that this facility is more than just a sports complex - it is a beacon of hope and

opportunity for thousands of young people in Punjab.

Yes, weaning youth away from the menace of drugs, sports is the best way.

Among others, he is supported in his endeavor by his college classmate, Amandeep Singh Marwaha, and his elder brother Rajeev Rattan, also known as Tony Sandhu.

Those who have been lending all support from overseas include Balbir Singh Sandhu, ex-Deputy Mayor of Derby, and Ravinder Singh Sandhu, past District Governor, Coventry.

It is time to stand by people like Gurmangal Dass in their endeavor to put disenfranchised Punjabi youth back on track to progress and prosperity.

*(Prabhjot Singh is a Toronto-based award-winning independent journalist.*

*He was celebrated by AIPS, the international body of sports journalists, for covering ten Olympics, at its centennial celebrations held at UNESCO Centre in Paris during the 2024 Olympic Games. Besides, he has written extensively about business and the financial markets, the health industry, the public and private sectors, and aviation. He has worked as a political reporter besides covering Sikh and Punjab politics. He is particularly interested in Indian Diaspora and Sikh Diaspora in particular. His work has also appeared in various international and national newspapers, magazines, and journals. He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)*

## Continued from Page 21

He added that he believes Trump's ultimate goal is to weaken the Canadian economy so he can try to annex the country.

"First of all, that is never going to happen. Canada will never be the 51st state," he continued.

Ford has previously expressed support for the federal government to go "dollar for dollar" with retaliatory tariffs against U.S. goods.

The premier said American companies will not be able to bid on the \$30 billion worth of procurement contracts the province awards each year or bid on contracts related to his \$200-billion infrastructure plan to build highways, tunnels, transit, hospitals and jails.

"U.S.-based businesses will now lose out on tens of billions of dollars in revenues," Ford said. "They only have President Trump to blame."

As for the deal with Starlink to provide high-speed internet to northern Ontario, rural and remote First Nation communities, "it's done, it's gone," he said.

Doug Ford has also cautioned against tough times ahead.

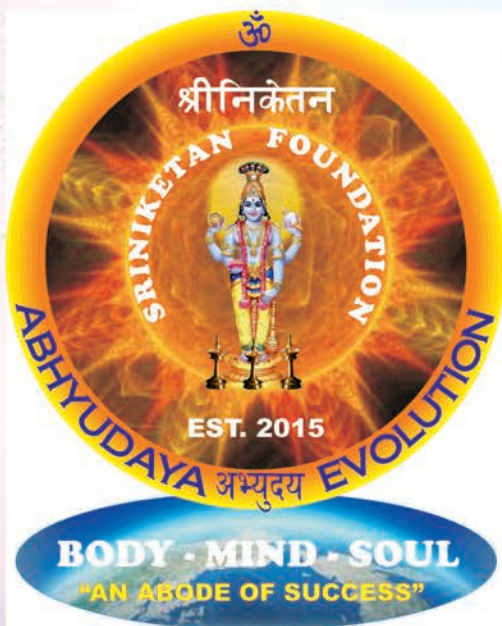
"Businesses and families will feel the pain of this needless fight, but together we're going to stand up for Canada," he said. "We're going to get through this more united than ever before."

# Sriniketan Foundation

A 501 © (3) Non Profit Organization Established in 2015

**HAPPY  
HOLI**

AN ABODE OF SUCCES OF BODY MIND SOUL  
THROUGH VARIOUS THERAPIES-ENERGY SCIENCE THERAPIES  
NATUROPATHY - HOMEOPATHY - BASIC YOGA - MANTRA THERAPY  
MUSIC THERAPY - LAUGHING THERAPY - KRIYA YOG - AYURVEDA  
MEDICATION - REFLEXOLOGY - REIKI THERAPY - LISTENING THERAPY  
FOR CHAITANYA - JAGRUTI (AWARENESS & PURE CONSCIOUSNESS)



**FOUNDER & PRESIDENT**

**PURNIMA A. DESAI**

(646) 472-9255 (971) 361-9672

EMAILS : GURUPURNIMA24@AOL.COM

SRINIKETANFOUNDATION2015@GMAIL.COM

WWW.SRINIKETANFOUNDATION2015.ORG

**KRIYA ACHARYA**

**REIKI GRAND MATER**

**KARUNA REIKI MATER  
MASTERSHIP CERTIFICATE  
ADVANCE REIKI HEALER  
PASTLIFE THERAPIST  
CRYSTAL BALL GAZING  
DOWSING  
CLINICAL HYPNOTHERAPY  
WHOLE BRAIN OPTIMIZATION  
THE SCIENCE OF FINGER PRINTS**



**Mrs. Purnima A. Desai**

All these courses were learned from  
Reiki Healing Foundation World Largest Reiki Foundation - Delhi India  
Gurus : Dr N K Sharma and Dr Savita Sharma

# Embassy of India in Guatemala Organizes Indian Film Festival

MARCH 2, 2025

**GUATEMALA CITY (TIP):** The month-long Indian Film Festival organized by the Embassy of India in Guatemala between October and November 2024 had received an exceptional response, successfully bringing together communities from both urban and rural areas. The festival showcased India's rich cultural heritage and demonstrated the universal appeal of Indian cinema. The enthusiastic and unprecedented reception from local Guatemalans inspired plans to screen more films in additional parts of the region. As a result, the festival was extended for another two months to reach even more remote areas.

The Indian Film Festival in Guatemala was not merely a cinematic showcase but a strategic cultural diplomacy initiative aimed at strengthening ties between India and Guatemala. By bringing Indian cinema to diverse regions, the festival introduced audiences to the rich tapestry of Indian storytelling while also creating opportunities for collaboration with the Indian film industry. The Embassy of India, in partnership with local producers, had involved local talent in dubbing Indian movies into Spanish. This initiative has already seen success, with hundreds of Indian films effectively dubbed, enhancing accessibility for local audiences. The festival further enriched these collaborative efforts, as numerous local partners expressed a strong interest in aligning with the Indian film industry. They recognize immense opportunities in India, ranging from advanced post-production techniques to state-of-the-art special effects that could significantly boost the capabilities of Guatemala's film sector. The screenings not only offered Guatemalans a glimpse into Indian culture but also opened new avenues for business opportunities within the Indian film industry, marking a significant step forward in cultural and economic engagement between the two nations.

The second phase of the Indian Film Festival commenced in February 2025, featuring the screening of eight Indian movies across various locations in Guatemala. Building on the enthusiastic response from the first phase, local municipalities embraced the initiative wholeheartedly, offering robust support and logistical assistance to ensure its success. The overwhelming success of the festival was particularly evident in Cobán, where the Embassy of India received an extraordinary turnout of 3,500 students. Due to logistical constraints, these students had to be divided into three groups, each attending separate screenings on 25 and 26 February 2025. The local administration in Cobán played a pivotal role in managing the large crowds and coordinating transport. Similar enthusiasm was witnessed in other regions, where municipalities struggled to accommodate eager audiences due to limited space. Several local administrations even requested additional screenings



Screening of the movie Mary Kom at Municipality of San Jose Pinula

to meet the high demand. A remarkable example of this



Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra at Raxruha, Coban, Alta Verapaz, to inaugurate the Indian Film Festival. Approximately 2000 students from Don Bosco Educational Center were present.



Special screening of Indian film at Colegio Los Verdes, Fraijanes

enthusiasm was seen in San José Pinula, where the screening was organized at the municipality on 4 March 2025 specifically for school children. The impact of the movie was so profound that the Mayor of San



Screening of Indian movie at Colegio Benito Juarez, Guatemala

José Pinula formally requested the Embassy to organize five more screenings in the region under the municipality's patronage. This response not only highlighted the wide-reaching appeal of Indian cinema but also underscored its potential as a tool for cultural exchange and community engagement.

The second phase of the festival also marked a significant shift in the audience demographic. In addition to the previously targeted municipalities, the festival also saw a growing interest from educational institutions. Students and faculty from Colegio Los Verdes in Fraijanes institution expressed an eagerness to engage with Indian cinema, signaling an academic interest in the cultural exchange facilitated by the festival. Liceo Técnico in Quezelpaque also joined the list of educational entities requesting to host Indian film screenings, highlighting the potential for educational outreach through cinema. Colegio Benito Juárez in Guatemala City is another prominent educational institution that reached out to host screenings, further demonstrating the growing popularity of Indian films among young audiences in Guatemala. This shift from municipal screenings to educational institutions underscores the increasing recognition of Indian films as an effective tool for cultural exchange and educational enrichment. Students and faculty are not only enjoying the films but also engaging in discussions about the narratives, themes, and cultural contexts presented in the films. The positive reception and continued requests for screenings indicate a strong desire to continue promoting the rich cultural diversity of India through its cinema. The festival's outreach into educational institutions is an exciting step forward, reflecting the evolving nature of international cultural collaborations in Guatemala.

In conclusion, the month-long film festival organized by the Embassy of India in Guatemala has been a remarkable celebration of Indian cinema, culture, and creativity. The event successfully fostered greater understanding and appreciation of India's rich cultural heritage, bringing together diverse audiences and strengthening the bond between India and Guatemala. The Embassy extends its heartfelt gratitude to all the organisers, municipalities, educational institutes, participants, and attendees who made this festival a resounding success. The Embassy remains committed to promoting cultural exchange and looks forward to more such initiatives in the future, continuing to bridge the gap between our nations through the universal language of film.



Screening Indian Bollywood movie Queen at Instituto Tecnológico Juan Carlos Pellecer, San Juan Municipality

# Embassy of India organizes special screenings of Pariksha Pe Charcha 2025 in Guatemala

MARCH 5, 2025

**GUATEMALA CITY (TIP):** The Embassy organized special screenings of Pariksha Pe Charcha 2025 at several key locations across Guatemala like Chiquimula, Fraijanes, Coban, Mixco, Guatemala City, Quezelpaque and San José Pinula in the months of February and March 2025.

Launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Pariksha Pe Charcha initiative has emerged as an inspiring and impactful platform to engage with students, teachers, and parents across India. The initiative focuses on alleviating the stress around exams, offering valuable guidance, and addressing the concerns of students about their academic pressures. It is also an opportunity for students to interact directly with the Prime Minister, who shares insightful advice on coping with stress, balancing studies with other aspects of life, and fostering a growth mindset. The Pariksha Pe Charcha 2025 special screening is a significant event, as it not only inspires students but also underscores India's growing prominence in the education sector. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, India is on the path to regaining its position as the Vishva Guru (Global Leader) in education, with this initiative reflecting a global vision to guide and support the younger generation for their academic and personal success.

This interaction with local students in Guatemala in Spanish language was designed to offer direct lessons on how to approach exams without anxiety, the importance of holistic learning, and how to maintain mental well-being. The Prime Minister's candid engagement with the students, where he listens to their concerns and offers thoughtful responses, was especially appreciated. The Embassy aimed to extend the reach of this screening to various schools and universities, ensuring that local students had access to these invaluable insights. Local municipalities and educational institutions provided overwhelming support to this initiative, facilitating its smooth execution and amplifying its impact on students



Special screening of Pariksha Pe Charcha 2025 at Embassy of India in Guatemala City



Students in Municipalidad de Chiquimula watched special screening of Pariksha Pe Charcha 2025

throughout the region.

In these locations, the students were particularly engaged with the Prime Minister's personal stories



Special screening of Pariksha Pe Charcha 2025 at Instituto Tecnológico Juan Carlos Pellecer, San Juan Municipality



Students from Liceo Tecnico Quezaltepeque, Chiquimula enthusiastically participated in the special screening of Pariksha Pe Charcha 2025

and messages about overcoming exam stress. The screening allowed them to see the human side of education, with emphasis placed on emotional and mental resilience. Students expressed deep appreciation for the advice and felt encouraged to embrace exams not as a burden but as an opportunity for growth. The local educational institutions and municipalities echoed this enthusiasm, with many actively participating in promoting the event and ensuring its success.

The success of Pariksha Pe Charcha has been seen worldwide, with students from different countries now taking part in the interactive event, finding value in the universal lessons it imparts. The global reception of the initiative further solidifies India's position as a leader in educational thought and innovation. The continued success of the program not only promotes stress-free learning but also helps India build a broader educational network and exchange of ideas. India's role as an educational powerhouse is reinforced as this initiative spreads beyond borders, offering global students valuable insights and guidance that enhance their learning experiences and overall well-being.

This initiative has been well received by local students in Guatemala, with many expressing a greater sense of purpose and confidence as they approach their academic challenges. Building on the success in Guatemala, the Embassy is now planning to extend this initiative to neighboring countries, including Honduras and El Salvador, further expanding the reach of India's educational vision and offering its wisdom to students across Central America.

*(Based on a press release issued by Ramesh Khulbey)*



Approximately 2000 students participated in the special screening of Pariksha Pe Charcha 2025 at Raxruha Coban, Alta Verapaz

# Indian Embassy in Guatemala completes specialized ITEC course on the Prevention of Corruption



Guatemalan participants attending the special ITEC Course, Prevention of Corruption, which was held 13 to 26 February 2025

**MARCH 3, 2025**

**GUATEMALA CITY (TIP):** The Indian Embassy in Guatemala has successfully completed a specialized ITEC (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation) course on the Prevention of Corruption, which was held from 13 to 26 February 2025 in National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development, New Delhi, India. The course, designed to share India's expertise in promoting transparency and good governance, saw the active participation of over 30 distinguished officials, including Congressmen, Supreme Court judges, and Ministry of Public Administration (MoPA) officials from Guatemala.

The specialized course is part of India's commitment to supporting capacity building and knowledge-sharing across the Global South. The initiative was first announced by Hon'ble Minister for External Affairs, Dr. S. Jaishankar, during his meeting with the Foreign Ministers of the Central American Integration System (SICA) in Panama in April 2023. The Minister's offer to organize tailored courses for the SICA member countries has come to fruition with this focused training on anti-corruption measures, offering practical insights and strategies for strengthening governance systems.



Participants attending the class at special ITEC Course on Prevention of Corruption

The Government of India has made significant

strides in reducing corruption and enhancing transparency across all levels of governance. Through a series of legislative, institutional, and technological reforms, India has focused on promoting accountability and integrity within the public sector. Key initiatives include the implementation of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, which empowers citizens with access to government-held information, and the introduction of e-governance initiatives to minimize human discretion and reduce opportunities for corruption. Additionally, the establishment of anti-corruption bodies like the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has strengthened the mechanisms for investigating and addressing corruption-related issues. India's commitment to transparency is also reflected in its efforts to digitize public services, improve financial auditing, and promote the use of technology to ensure greater public sector accountability. These comprehensive measures align with India's vision of fostering a corruption-free governance model and serve as a model for other countries striving for similar objectives.

Earlier, as part of the ITEC on-site program, a delegation of four mining experts had visited El Salvador in October 2022 to participate in a specialized training program for the experts from El Salvador. The primary objective of their visit was to offer expert guidance on the effective closure of abandoned mines. This initiative focused on addressing the environmental and safety challenges associated with derelict mining sites, while also sharing India's best practices for remediation and sustainable land restoration efforts. The visit aimed to enhance the knowledge and capacity of local authorities in managing abandoned mines and mitigating their long-term impacts on the environment and public health.

The ITEC Program is an initiative of the Government of India, aimed at providing technical assistance and training to developing countries. Established in 1964, ITEC offers more than 600 courses annually, covering various sectors to promote the development of partner



A delegation of four mining experts from India visited El Salvador in October 2022 to participate in a specialized ITEC training program for experts from El Salvador

countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The programme continues to be a cornerstone of India's development partnership with the Global South. These courses, offered to SICA member countries and other nations, aim to enhance cooperation and foster sustainable development.

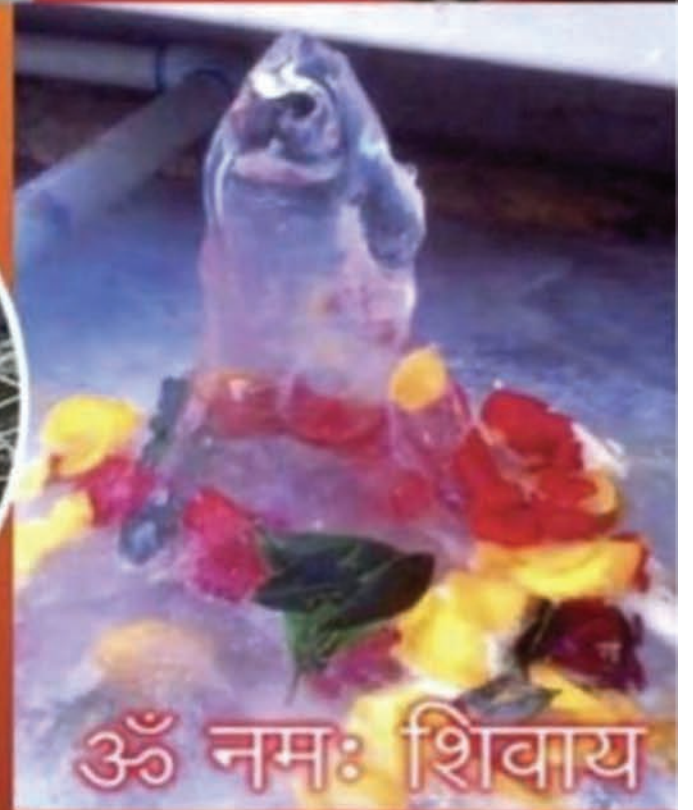
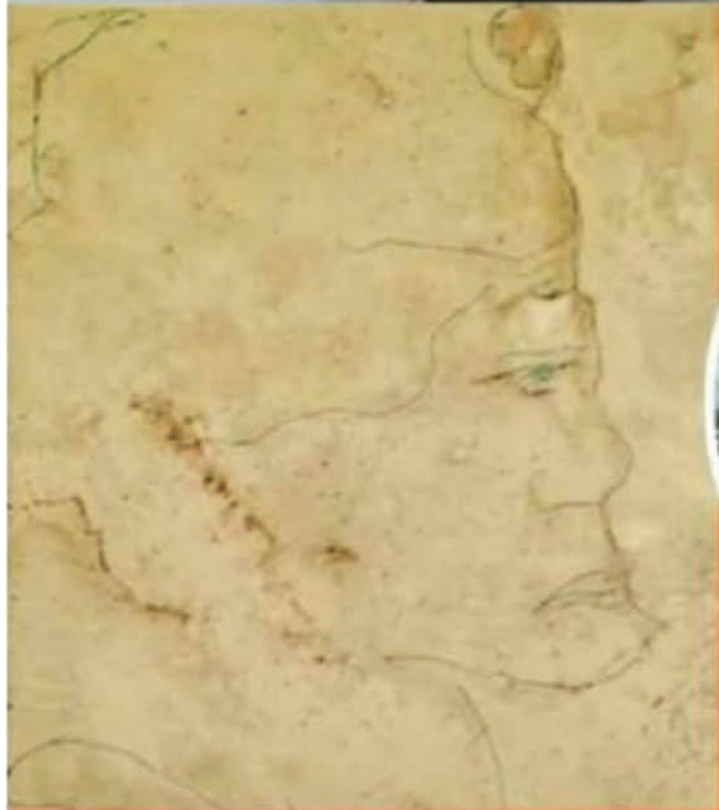
Over the years, more than 600 professionals from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador have benefitted from India's ITEC courses, gaining valuable knowledge and skills in a wide range of sectors. These courses, offered as part of India's ongoing commitment to capacity building and development cooperation, have provided participants from these countries with the tools and expertise to enhance their work in areas such as governance, public administration, technology, agriculture, and healthcare. By engaging with Indian experts and learning from India's diverse experiences, these professionals have been able to implement innovative solutions and best practices in their respective fields. The ITEC program continues to be a cornerstone of India's partnership with the countries of Central America, fostering deeper collaboration and mutual growth.



Embassy of India conducts a pre-briefing session before the departure of ITEC students

The Indian Embassy has expressed its gratitude to all participants for their active engagement in the course and their commitment to strengthening their nation's governance structures. The Embassy remains dedicated to furthering India's role as a partner for progress and development in the region and looks forward to expanding the ITEC offering with more specialized courses in the future to meet the unique needs of SICA member countries.

*(Based on a press release issued by Ramesh Khulbey)*



**Abhishek Mishra & Family**

25 Lavender Drive, Edison, NJ

# SALUTING ZAKIR HUSSAIN

BY MABEL PAIS

"If people all over the world would consider interacting with each other the way musicians and artists all over the world interact with each other, we would have a much more peaceful planet."

- Zakir Hussain in an interview with *India Today* magazine

A memorial tribute to the legendary Ustad Zakir Hussain was hosted by The Asia Society, New York, in collaboration with Sneh Arts, New York and Sound Traditions, New Jersey. 'A Life In Rhythm' celebrating the maestro was held on February 1 at The Asia Society (725 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021 - (212) 288-6400) at 4 p.m.

The event brought together an extraordinary gathering of cultural leaders, admirers and local musicians who celebrated his unparalleled legacy through stories, shared memories, and music.

## PROGRAM

The program commenced with inspiring opening remarks by Rachel Cooper (Asia Society's Director of Global Performing Arts and Cultural Initiatives), Sunny Thakkar (Founder, Sneh Arts & Sneh Arts Foundation), and Shruti Rawoot (Co-Founder, Sound Traditions). Their reflections set the tone for an evening of deep gratitude and admiration for Ustad Zakir Hussain's monumental contributions to music and culture.

The opening musical offering was a deeply spiritual moment, featuring a harmonious blend of:

*Shruti Rawoot's serene rendition of 'Dhrupad Bandish.'*  
*Amira Dvorah's moving Islamic prayers.*

*Deepak Kumar's soul-stirring Sanskrit peace prayer accompanied by the tanpura.*

A curated video tribute captured key milestones of Zakirji's illustrious career, evoking emotions among the



Rachel Cooper of Asia Society speaks at the Memorial for Maestro Zakir Hussain. Credit: Sneh Arts

audience as they witnessed his journey through sound and artistry.

## COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS

The memorial brought forth heartfelt reflections from esteemed members of the community. Speakers shared personal anecdotes and professional insights into Zakir ji's life, influence, and enduring impact.

Robert Browning, Founder-then Executive Director of the World Music Institute (WMI) said of Zakir Hussain, "He brought a musical genius to all his endeavors. He was someone who had the strongest respect and empathy for people from so many cultures. He exuded joy, innovation & a deep appreciation for all life. He made us feel that we were all part of a family of music lovers and adventurers. No matter how dull or trying your day may have been, you came away from a Zakir Hussain concert with a feeling of exaltation."

Gaby Sappington, current Executive Director of WMI

said, "He will always be an inspiration to all of us at WMI. His service as an honorary Board member added prestige and credibility to our small but mighty non-profit organization. Zakir brought the soul of Indian music to collaborations with a wide variety of international artists such as George Harris, Ben Morris, Bill Laswell, Mickey Hart, John McLaughlin, and Bela Fleck... just to name a few."

## MUSICAL TRIBUTE

The tribute continued with mesmerizing performances by:

*Avirodh Sharma (tabla) and Rohan Misra (sarangi) in a special dedication to Zakirji.*

*Amira Dvorah shared some personal funny stories and music with a moving flute performance.*

The program concluded with a final video of Zakir ji speaking about being one with his instrument and the magic that happens when their spirits meet. It created a powerful closing moment that resonated with all in attendance.

Watch a video of the event: [youtu.be/bs73jvsGU80](https://youtu.be/bs73jvsGU80)

## SNEH ARTS

Sneh Arts (@snehartsny): A New York-based arts organization founded by Sunny Thakkar, dedicated to preserving and promoting Indian music, dance, and culture.

## SOUND TRADITIONS

Sound Traditions: Co-founded by Shruti Rawoot, promoting "Baithak Style" concerts and sparking cultural innovation through Indian classical music.

## ASIA SOCIETY MUSEUM

Asia Society Museum: A leading institution fostering global understanding through arts and education.

# WHARTON ARTS' YOUNG MUSICIANS CREATE GIANT MUSICAL PARTY AT JERSEY GARDENS MALL

BY MABEL PAIS

Wharton Arts will bring the joy of music to the mall at The Mills at Jersey Gardens on Sunday, March 16 from 12:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. located at 651 Kapkowski Road in Elizabeth.

Families and audiences of all ages are invited to Jersey Gardens for a day of creativity, community, and inspiring performances. Wharton Arts welcomes guests to experience the performing arts up close with free participatory music-making stations and performances by over 700 young musicians from the New Jersey Youth Chorus, New Jersey Youth Symphony, Paterson Music Project, and Performing Arts School. All are encouraged to celebrate the festivities!

## WHARTON ARTS DAY SCHEDULE

Center Court

12:00 p.m. Performing Arts School

1:00 p.m. Paterson Music Project

2:00 p.m. New Jersey Youth Chorus

4:00 p.m. New Jersey Youth Symphony PLAYATHON

## POP-UP STAGE NEAR SAKS OFF 5TH

1:00 p.m. New Jersey Youth Symphony Fortissimo Flutes

1:30 p.m. New Jersey Youth Symphony Clarinet Ensemble

2:00 p.m. New Jersey Youth Symphony Jazz Program including the Jazz Orchestra, Big Band, and Jazz Workshop

## KIDS ZONE NEAR CENTER COURT

12:00 - 3:15 p.m. Instrument Petting Zoo, Art Activities, and more!

## KIDS ZONE (ZONA INFANTIL) SCHEDULE

12:00-12:45 PM Paper Violin Craft (Manualidad de Violín de Papel)



Wharton Arts Music Schools perform. Credit: WhartonArts.org

12:45-1:00 PM Drum Circle #1 (Círculo de Tambores)

1:00-1:45 PM Hosophone Activity (Actividad de Instrumento con Manguera de Jardín)

1:45-2:00 PM Drum Circle #2 (Círculo de Tambores)

2:00-2:45 PM Make your Own Pan Flute (Haz Tu Propia Flauta de Pan)

2:45-3:15 PM Drum Circle Finale #3 (Círculo de Tambores)

Helen Cha-Pyo, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor, said, "Wharton Arts Day is like a giant musical party at the mall! There's nothing more exciting than filling the space with the energy and passion of over 700 young musicians. From movie soundtracks to jazz grooves, and even the chance to conduct a 500-piece orchestra, there's something for everyone. We invite the community to experience the joy of live music, engage in hands-on

activities, and witness the incredible talent of our students. This event not only showcases the powerful impact of music education but also reinforces our commitment to making the performing arts accessible to all."

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS) returns to 'The Mills at Jersey Gardens,' New Jersey's largest outlet and value retail center, for its annual Playathon as part of the 2025 Wharton Arts Day. Over 500 talented young musicians will entertain shoppers with pops favorites, including symphonic highlights from 'Harry Potter,' 'The Lord of The Rings,' and 'Star Wars.'

Audience members can bid on a chance to conduct the 500-piece orchestra and the crowd favorite 'Stars and Stripes Forever' at 5:15 p.m. In addition to the festival orchestra performance in Center Court at 4:00 p.m., an additional stage will feature NJYS jazz and woodwind performers beginning at 1:00 p.m.

## PLAYATHON & MUSICARES

As the youth orchestra program's largest fundraiser, Playathon helps provide financial assistance for students who would not otherwise be able to participate in NJYS, as well as ensures the continuation of programs that support excellence in music education for all. This year, 20% of donations made to the Playathon on March 16 will go to support MusiCares' fire relief effort to support music professionals impacted by the Los Angeles wildfires. For more information, visit [musicares.org](https://musicares.org). To learn more or donate to the NJYS Playathon, visit [playathon.givesmart.com](https://playathon.givesmart.com).

**Wharton Arts' Mission & Vision & Arts Education**  
Learn more at [WhartonArts.org](https://WhartonArts.org)

(Mabel Pais writes on *The Arts and Entertainment, Spirituality, Social Issues, Cuisine, and Health & Wellness*)

# NJ SYMPHONY'S XIAN ZHANG CONDUCTS RACHMANINOFF AND GREGORY MCDANIEL CONDUCTS NJ PREMIERE OF SOUNDING & MORE

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](http://nj.com)

New Jersey Symphony will present Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2 with Music Director Xian Zhang conducting. The Symphony's Colton Conducting Fellow Gregory D. McDaniel will conduct Debussy's 'Clair de Lune' and Nico Muhly's 'Sounding.' There will be four performances in locations in New Jersey (see program below).

## PROGRAM

Rachmaninoff Symphony No. 2  
New Jersey Symphony Classical  
Xian Zhang conductor  
Gregory D. McDaniel conductor  
Adam Tendler piano  
New Jersey Symphony  
Newark - Thursday, March 13, 1:30 pm, NJPAC  
Princeton - Friday, March 14, 8 pm, Richardson Auditorium  
Newark - Saturday, March 15, 8 pm, NJPAC  
Morristown - Sunday, March 16, 3 pm, Mayo Performing Arts Center  
Claude Debussy 'Clair de Lune'  
Nico Muhly 'Sounding' for Piano and Orchestra (New Jersey Symphony Co-Commission)

## Sergei Rachmaninoff Symphony No. 2

The program starts with Debussy's 'Clair de Lune,' the third movement in his 'Suite Bergamasque,' arranged by André Caplet. Originally composed in 1889 and later revised in 1903, 'Clair de Lune' was inspired by a poem of the same name by Paul Verlaine and embodies both the beauty and sadness of moonlight. The first half of the program continues with the New Jersey premiere of Nico Muhly's 'Sounding,' which is a



Gregory McDaniel

co-commission with Vermont Symphony. Adam Tendler played the premiere in Burlington last May and will be featured as the soloist in this program.

The program concludes with Zhang conducting Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2. While composing the symphony, Rachmaninoff was influenced by Tchaikovsky. In the same turn, Eric Carmen's 1976 hit song 'Never Gonna Fall in Love Again' drew inspiration from the Second Symphony's slow movement.

## Thursday, March 13 - Relaxed Performance

The concert on Thursday, March 13, at 1:30 pm at NJPAC will follow a Relaxed Performance format, which is designed to accommodate the differing needs of the Symphony's patrons. Patrons are encouraged to bring their own sensory manipulatives, noise-reduction headphones and other tools that will allow you to react and enjoy the music in a way that is most natural for you!

For more information about Relaxed Performances and the resources you can expect to be available, visit [njsymphony.org/relaxedperformance](http://njsymphony.org/relaxedperformance)

## PRE-CONCERT CLASSICAL CONVERSATIONS

Two pre-concert Classical Conversations will take

place on

Friday, March 14, at 7 pm at Richardson Auditorium in Princeton and

Sunday, March 16, at 2 pm at Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown. Concertgoers will be able to learn more about the music from Symphony musicians, guest artists, and other engaging insiders.

**CONCERT PRELUDE** : On Saturday, March 15, at 7 pm in the lobby of NJPAC, Newark, New Jersey Symphony Youth Orchestra's Curtland E. Fields Ensemble will present a Concert Prelude.

## TICKETS & MORE INFORMATION

For more information on concerts and tickets, visit [njsymphony.org/events](http://njsymphony.org/events) or call 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

**XIAN ZHANG** : 2024-25 marks the GRAMMY and Emmy Award-winning conductor Xian Zhang's ninth season as music director of the New Jersey Symphony. Starting in 2025-26.

Learn more at [xianzhangconductor.com](http://xianzhangconductor.com)

**GREGORY D. MCDANIEL** : Gregory D. McDaniel is a passionate conductor who is active in many different musical surroundings. Learn more at [gregorymcdaniel.com](http://gregorymcdaniel.com).

**ADAM TENDLER** : GRAMMY-nominated pianist Adam Tendler is a recipient of the Lincoln Center Award for Emerging Artists, the Yvar Mikhashoff Prize, and "currently the hottest pianist on the American contemporary classical scene" (Minneapolis Star Tribune), a "remarkable and insightful musician" (LA Times), and a "relentlessly adventurous pianist" (Washington Post) "joyfully rocking out at his keyboard" (New York Times). Tendler is a Yamaha Artist and serves on the piano faculty of NYU.

Learn more at [adamtendler.com](http://adamtendler.com)

## CONNECT WITH NJ SYMPHONY

Follow NJ Symphony on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, and YouTube

# VADIM GLUZMAN PERFORMS BRAHMS' VIOLIN CONCERTO WITH NJ SYMPHONY

BY MABEL PAIS

New Jersey Symphony presents Lina González-Granados conducting alongside Vadim Gluzman as he performs Johannes Brahms' Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 77, March 20-22, 2025 in NJ locations.

## PROGRAM

Vadim Gluzman Plays Brahms  
New Jersey Symphony Classical  
Lina González-Granados conductor  
Vadim Gluzman violin  
New Jersey Symphony  
New Brunswick - Thursday, March 20, 7:30 pm, State Theatre New Jersey  
Red Bank - Friday, March 21, 8 pm, Count Basie Center for the Arts  
Newark - Sunday, March 23, 3 pm, NJPAC

## Robert Schumann Overture, Scherzo, and Finale

Gabriela Ortiz Clara  
Johannes Brahms Violin Concerto  
Robert Schumann's Overture, Scherzo, and Finale starts off the program. Composed in 1841 and often described as "the symphony without a slow movement," the high-spirited melodies keep the music upbeat throughout the piece. The program's first half continues with Mexico City native Gabriela Ortiz's Clara as it sonically explores the relationship between husband and wife - Robert and Clara Schumann - in its five sections.

The program closes with Brahms' Violin Concerto. A year after composing his Second Symphony, Brahms

completed this concerto in summer 1878. Brahms' friend Joseph Joachim, one of the great violinists of the 19th century, was instrumental in shaping the solo part of the piece.

**Pre-Concert Classical Conversations** : Two pre-concert Classical Conversations will take place on Thursday, March 20, at 6:30 pm at State Theatre, NJ in New Brunswick and Saturday, March 22, at 7 pm at Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank. Concertgoers will be able to learn more about the music from Symphony musicians, guest artists, and other engaging insiders.

**Pre-Concert Performance** : The concert on Sunday, March 23, will open with a performance by the students from the El Sistema New Jersey Alliance, featuring Paterson Music Project, Trenton Music Makers, and United Children's Music Project.

**TICKETS & MORE INFORMATION** : For more information on concerts and tickets, visit [njsymphony.org/events](http://njsymphony.org/events) or call 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

**Lina González-Granados** : Praised for her "rich, heartfelt orchestral sound" (Chicago Sun-Times), "rhythmic vitality" (San Francisco Chronicle), and "raw power" (LA Times), Colombian American conductor Lina González-Granados has distinguished herself nationally and internationally as a singular talent. Learn more at [linagonzalezgranados.com](http://linagonzalezgranados.com).

**Vadim Gluzman** : Universally recognized among today's top performing artists, Vadim Gluzman breathes new life and passion into the golden era of the 19th and 20th centuries' violin tradition. Learn more at



Lina González-Granados

Credit : [njsymphony.org](http://njsymphony.org)

[vadimgluzman.com](http://vadimgluzman.com).

**New Jersey Symphony** : New Jersey Symphony is a GRAMMY and Emmy Award-winning orchestra. Under the direction of the Music Director Xian Zhang, the Symphony performs more than 60 concerts at mainstage venues across the state, including Newark, Princeton, New Brunswick, Red Bank, and Morristown as well as schools and public spaces statewide. Programming at the Symphony reflects an unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion while providing students across the state unparalleled opportunities to achieve musical excellence through its Youth Orchestra and other outreach programs.

For more information about the New Jersey Symphony, visit the website at [njsymphony.org](http://njsymphony.org) or call 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

**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, Cuisine, and Health & Wellness)

# A CALL FROM PLAN INTERNATIONAL FOR WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH/ INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

BY MABEL PAIS

**Empower girls today, so they can lead tomorrow.**

**Change the future.**

On International Women's Day (March 8) and Women's History Month (month of March), PLAN INTERNATIONAL calls out to all peoples of the earth to: **EMPOWER GIRLS TODAY SO THEY CAN LEAD TOMORROW** by banding together for action.

Her future starts now

International Women's Day is more than just a celebration; it's a call to action. Every March 8, the world unites to call for equal rights and opportunities for women and girls.

Plan works with girls around the world, helping them access the skills, education and resources they need to become the powerful, confident women leaders of tomorrow. PLAN states: Her future starts now, and she's ready to take the lead. Will you help her?

PLAN does this not only with committed supporters and child-sponsors, but also with committed corporate partners who envision a world where every girl can lead, learn, decide and thrive.

Together, PLAN forms a powerful alliance with girls, supporting their ambitions, amplifying their voices and breaking down the barriers that keep them from fulfilling their potential.

## WHAT PLAN DOES

Plan International taps into the preserving optimism of the children the non-profit organization works with,



Plan's Youth Leader 17-year-old Delia educating young people about puberty and periods in Guatemala.

Credit: planusa.org

especially girls, as well as its partners and supporters worldwide, to provide proven and powerful ways to positively change lives in more than 80 countries around the world.

Together, PLAN won't stop until we are all equal.

The non-profit centers its work around seven key impact areas: Youth empowerment; Inclusive, quality education; Early childhood development; Skills and work; Emergencies; Protection from violence; and Sexual and reproductive health and rights.

## PLAN'S UNIQUE DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

GirlEngage is Plan International's unique development approach that lets girls become the drivers of the change they want and need in their lives. It is a strategy focused on adolescent girls between the ages of 10 and 18 that makes it possible for the girls themselves to lead their programs - from designing projects, to leading activities, to measuring success. At all levels, girls provide expertise and insights into Plan's work. Plan is constantly innovating and searching for new ways to involve them and achieve results.

For example, in Zimbabwe, the GirlEngage model was used to co-design a dorm with girls in The Graduation

Project (planusa), so their home away from home meets their needs. And, in response to girls' feedback, PLAN has connected participants with Purdue University to co-design a sustainable water solution for their school.

GirlEngage supports girls as they safely transition into adulthood and create the futures they want for themselves. The volunteers ask questions, listen and co-create sustainable change based on their ideas. This approach reflects the understanding that girls don't experience life according to Plan's program areas. Their education might depend on their health, their family or the culture they live in. Plan might anticipate that they need bathrooms at school, but the girls might share first that they need a way to get to school without being assaulted.

Plan believes that girls hold so much power within themselves. With GirlEngage, Plan acts as the encouraging facilitator to help them see what they are capable of achieving.

So, how can GirlEngage unlock the potential of more girls around the world?

Without volunteer, child-sponsor and corporate-partner support, GirlEngage won't be possible. And girls need this opportunity to be unlocked. Otherwise, more girls will be forced to quietly, maybe unknowingly, sacrifice their potential. And the communities in which they live will never progress toward supporting every child, regardless of gender, to have equal rights and equal opportunity to exercise those rights.

**Plan International**

Learn more at [PlanUSA.org](http://PlanUSA.org)

## ARTSXCHANGE CELEBRATES: 'THE FUTURE IS PURPLE' FOR WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

BY MABEL PAIS

**Celebrate Women's History Month and the inspiring women in your community with ArtsXChange!**

WHERE: Gant-Gilbert Arts Collective

WHEN: Thursday, March 20, 2025 at 6 pm

'The Future is Purple' trivia event returns for a second year. Learn how much you know about noteworthy Black women in Newark and across the country. This special event also features dance and musical performances that speak to the power of sisterhood and honor the unbreakable bond between generations of women and girls.

## REGISTRATION

Registration is required at [njpac.org/event/the-future-is-purple-2/](http://njpac.org/event/the-future-is-purple-2/)

## 1,000 CHILDREN AND EDUCATORS ATTEND WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH CONCERT

BY MABEL PAIS

Wharton Arts in partnership with Union County Performing Arts Center (UCPAC) presented a free Education Concert on Wednesday, March 5 at 10:00 a.m. at the Main Stage at UCPAC in Rahway. The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), a program of Wharton Arts, performed for nearly 1,000 elementary and middle school students from Union, Essex, Morris, and Passaic counties in a special event celebrating Women's History Month. The one-hour concert, featuring the NJYS Youth Symphony led by Helen H. Cha-Pyo, brought the music of Louise Farrenc, Florence Price, Chen Yi, and Gabriela Lena Frank to life for the young audience in a rare opportunity to engage with music, history, and culture in a meaningful way.

Helen Cha-Pyo, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor said, "Music has the power to tell stories, preserve history, and shape the future. As we celebrate Women's History Month, the New Jersey Youth Symphony was thrilled to present 'Raise Their Voices!', a special educational concert highlighting the works of four trailblazing women composers who have made a lasting impact on classical music. Spanning over 200 years, the program featured composers from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, each with a unique voice that has contributed to

the evolution of orchestral music and the advancement of women's equality in the arts."

As Wharton Arts honors the voices of remarkable women composers, students, educators, and audiences of all backgrounds were invited to join in celebrating their legacy. Their music speaks to the enduring impact of women in the arts. Young audience members also experienced a variety of symphonic dances and festival music and enjoyed a special segment introducing various orchestral instruments with visual presentations. For more information, visit [NJYS.org](http://NJYS.org).

## UNION COUNTY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (UCPAC)

UCPAC operates on the Main Stage, built in 1928 and is listed in both the State and National Register of Historic Places, at 1601 Irving St., and the modern and intimate Hamilton Stage, at 360 Hamilton St., in the heart of Rahway, New Jersey's Arts District. To learn more, visit [ucpac.org](http://ucpac.org).

## WHARTON ARTS

Learn more at [WhartonArts.org](http://WhartonArts.org)

*(Mabel Pais writes on The Arts and Entertainment, Spirituality, Social Issues, Cuisine, and Health & Wellness)*



**Gurmej Singh**  
**917-513-9830**

**FORMER PRESIDENT**  
**Gurdwara Baba Makhan Shah Lobana**  
**Sikh Center, New York**



**Daler Singh**  
**917-849-9033**

**FORMER PRESIDENT**  
**Baba Makhan Shah Lobana Sikh Center, New York**  
**President, Akal Gatka Gurmat Group Inc. New York**



# International Women's Day: Celebrating women's strength and equality

International Women's Day (IWD) is a globally recognized celebration of the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. Observed annually on March 8, IWD is a significant occasion that highlights the progress made toward gender equality and also recognizes the challenges that remain. The day serves as a call to action for accelerating gender parity and fostering an inclusive society where women can thrive. Over the years, International Women's Day has evolved into a global movement, supported by governments, organizations, and individuals who strive for gender justice and empowerment.

## History of International Women's Day

### Origins in the Early 20th Century

International Women's Day has its roots in the early labor movements of the 20th century. The concept emerged from the struggles of working-class women who were fighting for better wages, working conditions, and voting rights. The earliest Women's Day observance took place on February 28, 1909, in the United States, organized by the Socialist Party of America to honor a 1908 garment workers' strike in New York.

### Role of Socialist and Feminist Movements

The idea of a dedicated International Women's Day was first proposed by Clara Zetkin, a German feminist and socialist, at the 1910 International Socialist Women's Conference in Copenhagen. Zetkin's proposal was unanimously accepted, and the first official International Women's Day was observed on March 19, 1911, in countries such as Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland.

A pivotal moment occurred in 1917 when Russian women went on strike for "Bread and Peace" in response to the hardships caused by World War I. Their protest led to significant political changes, including the granting of voting rights to women in Russia. The date of their strike, March 8, later became the globally recognized date for International Women's Day.

### Women's rights movement

women's rights movement, diverse social movement, largely based in the United States, that in the 1960s and '70s sought equal rights and opportunities and greater personal freedom for women. It coincided with and is recognized as part of the "second wave" of feminism. While the first-wave feminism of the 19th and early 20th centuries focused on women's legal rights, especially the right to vote (see women's suffrage), the second-wave feminism of the women's rights movement touched on every area of women's experience—including politics, work, the family, and sexuality. Organized activism by and on behalf of women continued through the third and fourth waves of feminism from the mid-1990s and the early 2010s, respectively. For more discussion of historical and contemporary feminists and the women's movements they inspired.

### Prologue to a social movement

In the aftermath of World War II, the lives of women in developed countries changed dramatically. Household technology eased the burdens of homemaking, life expectancies increased dramatically, and the growth of the service sector opened up thousands of jobs not dependent on physical strength. Despite these socioeconomic transformations, cultural attitudes (especially concerning women's work) and legal precedents still reinforced sexual inequalities. An articulate account of the oppressive effects of prevailing notions of femininity appeared in *Le Deuxième Sexe* (1949; *The Second Sex*), by the French writer and



philosopher Simone de Beauvoir. It became a worldwide best seller and raised feminist consciousness by stressing that liberation for women was liberation for men too.

The first public indication that change was imminent came with women's reaction to the 1963 publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. Friedan spoke of the problem that "lay buried, unspoken" in the mind of the suburban housewife: utter boredom and lack of fulfillment. Women who had been told that they had it all—nice houses, lovely children, responsible husbands—were deadened by domesticity, she said, and they were too socially conditioned to recognize their own desperation. *The Feminine Mystique* was an immediate best seller. Friedan had struck a chord.

### Reformers and revolutionaries

Initially, women energized by Friedan's book joined

with government leaders and union representatives who had been lobbying the federal government for equal pay and for protection against employment discrimination. By June 1966 they had concluded that polite requests were insufficient. They would need their own national pressure group—a women's equivalent of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). With this, the National Organization for Women (NOW) was born.

The organization was not an instant success. By the end of its second year, NOW had just 1,035 members and was racked by ideological divisions. When the group tried to write a Bill of Rights for Women, it found consensus on six measures essential to ensuring women's equality: enforcement of laws banning employment discrimination; maternity leave rights; child-care centres that could enable mothers to work; tax deductions for child-care expenses; equal and unsegregated education;

and equal job-training opportunities for poor women.

Two other measures stirred enormous controversy: one demanded immediate passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. Constitution (to ensure equality of rights, regardless of sex), and the other demanded greater access to contraception and abortion. When NOW threw its support behind passage of the ERA, the United Auto Workers union—which had been providing NOW with office space—withdrawed its support, because the ERA would effectively prohibit protective labour legislation for women. When some NOW members called for repeal of all abortion laws, other members left the fledgling organization, convinced that this latest action would undermine their struggles against economic and legal discrimination.

NOW's membership was also siphoned off from the left. Impatient with a top-heavy traditional organization, activists in New York City, where half of NOW's membership was located, walked out. Over the next two years, as NOW struggled to establish itself as a national organization, more radical women's groups were formed by female antiwar, civil rights, and leftist activists who had grown disgusted by the New Left's refusal to address women's concerns. Ironically, sexist attitudes had pervaded 1960s radical politics, with some women being exploited or treated unequally within those movements. In 1964, for example, when a woman's resolution was brought up at a Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC) conference, Stokely Carmichael flippantly cut off all debate: "The only position for women in SNCC is prone."

While NOW focused on issues of women's rights, the more radical groups pursued the broader themes of women's liberation. Although they lacked the kind of coherent national structure NOW had formed, liberation groups sprang up in Chicago, Toronto, Seattle, Detroit, and elsewhere. Suddenly, the women's liberation movement was everywhere—and nowhere. It had no officers, no mailing address, no printed agenda. What it did have was attitude. In September 1968 activists converged on Atlantic City, New Jersey, to protest the image of womanhood conveyed by the Miss America Pageant. In February 1969 one of the most radical liberation groups, the Redstockings, published its principles as "The Bitch Manifesto." Based in New York City, the Redstockings penned the movement's first analysis of the politics of housework, held the first public speak-out on abortion, and helped to develop the concept of "consciousness-raising" groups—rap sessions to unravel how sexism might have coloured their lives. The Redstockings also held speak-outs on rape to focus national attention on the problem of violence against women, including domestic violence.

Responding to these diverse interests, NOW called the Congress to Unite Women, which drew more than 500 feminists to New York City in November 1969. The meeting was meant to establish common ground between the radical and moderate wings of the women's rights movement, but it was an impossible task. Well-dressed professionals convinced that women needed to reason with men could not unite with wild-haired radicals whose New Left experience had soured them on polite discourse with "the enemy." NOW's leadership seemed more comfortable lobbying politicians in Washington or corresponding with NASA about the exclusion of women from the astronaut program, while the young upstarts preferred disrupting legislative committee hearings. NOW leaders were looking for reform. The more radical women were plotting a revolution.

#### Official Recognition by the United Nations

The United Nations (UN) officially recognized International Women's Day in 1977, encouraging member states to observe the day in support of women's rights and global peace. Since then, the UN has played a key role in promoting gender equality through themes, campaigns, and global initiatives aimed at empowering women.

#### Evolution Over the Decades

Since its inception, International Women's Day has evolved from a socialist and labor movement event into a



global day of recognition and advocacy. Over the decades, it has become a platform to address a wide range of gender issues, from education and employment to political participation and reproductive rights.

### Objectives of International Women's Day

#### 1. Promoting Gender Equality

One of the primary goals of International Women's Day is to promote gender equality in all spheres of life. Despite progress, women still face gender-based discrimination in many areas, including the workplace, politics, and education. IWD aims to create awareness and encourage action to bridge these gaps.

#### 2. Advocating for Women's Rights

IWD serves as a reminder of the importance of upholding women's rights, including access to education, healthcare, and legal protection. It calls for an end to discrimination, workplace harassment, and gender-based violence.

#### 3. Economic, Social, and Political Inclusion

Women's economic empowerment is a critical objective of IWD. The day highlights the need for equal opportunities in leadership, business, and entrepreneurship. Political representation is also a key focus, as increased participation of women in decision-making processes leads to more inclusive policies.

#### 4. Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination

One of the most pressing issues affecting women worldwide is gender-based violence. IWD campaigns often focus on raising awareness and advocating for policies to combat domestic violence, sexual harassment, and human trafficking.

### Programs and Initiatives

#### 1. UN and International Organizations' Initiatives

Each year, the United Nations selects a theme for International Women's Day, focusing on pressing gender issues. Past themes have included "DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality" (2023) and "Choose to Challenge" (2021). The UN Women organization actively engages in programs that support women's empowerment worldwide.

#### 2. Government-Led Programs

Governments around the world organize events and policy initiatives to commemorate IWD. Many countries introduce new gender-equality laws, host women's rights conferences, and launch programs that provide support for women entrepreneurs and professionals.

#### 3. Corporate and Workplace Engagement

Corporations play a crucial role in supporting gender equality through workplace policies. Many companies use IWD to highlight initiatives such as equal pay, leadership development programs for women, and diversity and inclusion policies. Major corporations often hold panel discussions, mentorship programs, and

employee engagement activities.

#### 4. Grassroots and Local Community Movements

Local organizations and NGOs use IWD as an opportunity to engage with communities, advocating for change at the grassroots level. These efforts include educational workshops, health and wellness programs, and legal aid support for women facing discrimination or violence.

#### 5. Role of Social Media and Digital Activism

In the digital age, social media campaigns have amplified the reach of International Women's Day. Hashtags like #EachforEqual, #IWD2024, and #BreakTheBias have gone viral, encouraging conversations and activism on a global scale. Online petitions, webinars, and digital storytelling have become powerful tools for raising awareness and driving change.

### Challenges and Future of International Women's Day

#### 1. Persisting Gender Disparities

Despite progress, gender disparities remain in many parts of the world. Women continue to face challenges such as the gender pay gap, underrepresentation in leadership roles, and lack of access to education and healthcare.

#### 2. Political and Cultural Resistance

In some regions, the fight for women's rights faces strong political and cultural resistance. Traditional norms and legal barriers hinder progress, making advocacy efforts more challenging.

#### 3. The Role of Men and Allies in Gender Equality

Achieving gender equality requires the involvement of men as allies. IWD encourages men to support gender-inclusive policies, challenge stereotypes, and advocate for equal opportunities.

#### 4. The Future of Gender Rights Activism

Looking ahead, the future of International Women's Day will be shaped by intersectional feminism, digital activism, and global collaboration. The rise of youth-led movements and increased corporate accountability will continue to drive progress toward a more equitable world. International Women's Day is more than just a celebration—it is a movement that continues to shape the future of gender equality. By acknowledging the achievements of women, advocating for their rights, and addressing the challenges they face, IWD remains a powerful force for change. As societies progress, the collective efforts of governments, organizations, and individuals will play a vital role in ensuring that gender equality becomes a reality for all.

Each year, International Women's Day serves as a reminder that the fight for gender equality is far from over, but with continued effort and commitment, a more inclusive and just world is within reach.



## Salman film with Jawan director Atlee put on hold

Salman Khan and Atlee's ambitious collaboration has reportedly been put on the backburner. The film, billed as a pan-India action entertainer, was supposed to feature Salman in a two-hero storyline with a major south star as the other lead. However, now a report states that the film has been put on hold due to scheduling conflicts.

A Pinkvilla report quoted a source as saying, "A6 with Salman Khan was always planned as a two-hero project, and the intent was to rope in two top names from the North and South to justify the mammoth budget of ₹650 crore. While Salman Khan okayed the film, Atlee and Sun Pictures were confident to rope in either of Kamal Haasan or Rajinikanth for the film. The conversations with both the giants of Tamil Cinema continued for over 6 months, but things didn't fall in place for multiple reasons."

The film was originally slated to feature Kamal Haasan, but he passed it on, after which Rajinikanth was brought on board. However, the makers could not work out the Tamil superstar's dates for the shoot. "While Kamal Haasan wasn't too sure about playing the role of Salman Khan's father in the film, Rajinikanth is committed to shooting for Coolie and Jailer 2 until the start of 2026.

# Rakul Preet Singh joins Saif Ali Khan in Ramesh Taurani's film

Filmmaker Ramesh Taurani earlier confirmed that actor Saif Ali Khan will be returning to lead 'Race 4'. Now, India Today has exclusively learnt that Rakul Preet Singh might have joined Khan in this anticipated thriller franchise. While the source didn't confirm that the project Singh has joined is indeed 'Race 4', it is likely to be the one, considering Khan and Taurani are working together on only this project right now.

More details about the project have been kept under wraps, but Singh's entry into the 'Race' world definitely makes it look more exciting.

A source close to the production informed us that Singh seems to have been truly excited to do something that she has never done before. While she has acted in many big-budgeted films over the years, entering the 'Race' franchise is going to be an interesting challenge for the actor.

The source said, "Rakul is set to team up with Saif Ali Khan for an exciting new project under Ramesh Taurani's banner. After the success of 'Mere Husband Ki Biwi', she's making smart choices, and this film will only add to her momentum."

The 34-year-old has worked in varied genres in the past. She's known to have a strong hold on the romantic-comedy genre, and 'Race 4' will provide a further edge to her versatile career. However, an official announcement is yet to be made by the makers.

Saif Ali Khan's return to the 'Race' franchise has already added a lot of intrigue around this project. If Rakul Preet Singh is joining the film, one can



expect a fresh pairing on-screen. It is, however, not clear yet whether the two have been paired together or not.

Earlier last year, while confirming that Khan is doing 'Race 4', producer Ramesh Taurani told the news agency PTI: "Saif will be back in the 'Race' franchise, and we are excited to have him on board. He did a great job in the first two films. The film will boast an ensemble cast, and we are finalising the

script and cast. We haven't finalised the director either. We will announce the film officially before we go on the floor, most likely next year."

Meanwhile, Singh was last seen in 'Mere Husband Ki Biwi' alongside Arjun Kapoor and Bhumi Pednekar. The film was released earlier this month. 'Race 4' is going to be a fantastic addition to her resume.

Source: India Today



## Kiara steps out of Don 3 after pregnancy announcement: Report

Kiara Advani, who was supposed to play the female lead in Ranveer Singh's Don 3, has decided to step out of the film to "prioritise her personal life" post pregnancy announcement.

According to a Pinkvilla report, Kiara Advani has "currently chosen to prioritize her personal life over Farhan Akhtar's Don 3." However, there's no official confirmation yet either from Kiara Advani or Don 3 makers over the recent development.

Last year, the makers announced that Kiara Advani would be a part of the film. Excel Entertainment wrote on social media, "Welcome to the Don universe Kiara Advani #Don3." The announcement video however did not reveal any information about Kiara's role in the film.

Kiara Advani announced her pregnancy last week. Kiara and Sidharth Malhotra shared a joint post announcing the good news. The post features a pair of tiny socks. The caption read, "The greatest gift of our lives. Coming soon."

On the work front, Kiara Advani is currently wrapping up the shoot of highly-anticipated War 2. In the film, she will share screen space with Hrithik Roshan and Jr NTR. She is also a part of Yash's Toxic.

Apart from these two films, rumours are rife about Kiara Advani's potential involvement in Shakti Shalini and Dhoom 4, both slated for 2026. To keep her personal life on the forefront, if Kiara would work in these films or not, we have to wait for an official announcement.

# Millie Bobby Brown slams 'disturbing' articles about her body

Actor Millie Bobby Brown, best known for her role in *Stranger Things*, has sent out a message to media who criticised her over her changing physical appearance. In an Instagram post, Millie penned down a lengthy note, calling out media for their "disturbing" coverage that is devoted to "dissecting my face, my body, my choices."

"I want to take a moment to address something that I think is bigger than just me, something that affects every young woman who grows up under public scrutiny. I think it's necessary to speak up about this. I started in this industry when I was 10 years old. I grew up in front of the world, and for some reason, people can't seem to grow with me. Instead, they act like I'm supposed to stay frozen in time, like I should still look the way I did on *Stranger Things* Season 1. And because I don't, I'm now a target," she wrote.

Millie stated that she felt "bullied" due to such coverage. "Let's talk about the articles, the headlines, the people who are so desperate to tear young women down. 'Why are Gen Zers like Millie Bobby Brown ageing so badly?' by Lydia Hawken. 'What has Millie Bobby Brown done to her face?' by John Ely.

"Millie Bobby Brown mistaken for someone's mom as she guides younger sister Ava through LA' by Cassie Carpenter. 'Little Britain's Matt Lucas takes savage swipe at Millie Bobby Brown's new mommy makeover look'—written by Bethan Edwards, amplifying an insult rather than questioning why a grown man is mocking a young woman's appearance. This isn't journalism. This is bullying. The fact that adult writers are spending their



time dissecting my face, my body, my choices, it's disturbing," she pointed out.

"The fact that some of these articles are written by women? Even worse. We always talk about supporting and uplifting young women, but when the time comes, it seems easier to tear them down for clicks. Disillusioned people

can't handle seeing a girl become a woman on her terms, not theirs. I refuse to apologize for growing up. I refuse to make myself smaller to fit the unrealistic expectations of people who can't handle seeing a girl become a woman. I will not be shamed for how I look, how I dress, or how I present myself," she added.



## Dakota Johnson-starrer 'Materialists' to release on June 13

Filmmaker Celine Song is set for another project starring Dakota Johnson, Chris Evans and Pedro Pascal. The film is set to be released on June 13.

A24 confirmed the premiere date for 'Materialists' on X. "Save the date. Celine Song's MATERIALISTS 6.13.2025," the post said, with a photo of a heart-shaped Materialists cake, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

The romantic comedy follows a young matchmaker in New York City (Johnson), who is torn between her ideal match and an imperfect ex. The ensemble cast features Zoe Winters, Marin Ireland, Dasha Nekrasova from *Succession*, and Louisa Jacobson.

Principal photography on *Materialists* began in New York on April 29, 2024, and wrapped the following June. Christine Vachon and Pamela Koffler of Killer Films, together with David Hinojosa of 2AM, are producers, as per the outlet.

Song's plays include *Endlings* and *The Seagull* on *The Sims 4* (both 2020). Her directorial film debut, *Past Lives* (2023), received critical acclaim and was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Picture and Best Original Screenplay.

# Are Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner giving love another shot?

Ever since Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez finalized their divorce last month, rumour mills have been churning speculations about his close bond with his ex-wife, Jennifer Garner. Now, after Daily Mail reported exclusive footage showing an intimate moment between Affleck and Garner, sources claim JLo feels "betrayed" by their growing closeness.

The video shows Affleck placing a tender arm around Garner's lower waist during a paintball outing near Los Angeles. The former couple, who share three children, were spending the day with two of their teenage kids.

"[JLo] saw the paintballing images when the rest of the world did, and of course, it will make her question things from their time together," a source close to the singer told Daily Mail. "Her friends have questioned how platonic Jen [Garner] and Ben are."

Just months ago, Affleck and Lopez were still married, and she had publicly supported him through his personal struggles. "She will feel betrayed because she invested so much time in supporting Ben through his challenges and had a rough year as their marriage broke down," the source added.

"Seeing how quickly he has started spending more time with Garner has exacerbated the concerns she already had about his relationship with her while they were married."

The two rekindled their romance in 2021, nearly two decades after calling off their first engagement, and married in 2022. However, their relationship reportedly faced strains early on—even during their Italian honeymoon. By 2024, Affleck had moved out of their \$68 million Beverly Hills home and into a rental just blocks away from Garner's residence.





# HOLI

## The festival of colors, joy and unity



**H**oli, often referred to as the "Festival of Colors," is one of the most vibrant and joyous celebrations in India and among Indian communities worldwide. This Hindu festival, symbolizing the victory of good over evil, the arrival of spring, and the celebration of love and unity, brings people together in a riot of colors, music, and festivity.

### History of Holi

Holi has deep roots in Hindu mythology and ancient traditions. The most famous legend associated with Holi is the story of Prahlada and Hiranyakashipu. According to Hindu scriptures, Hiranyakashipu, a demon king, sought revenge against Lord Vishnu and demanded that everyone worship him instead. However, his son Prahlada remained a devout devotee of Lord Vishnu. Enraged, Hiranyakashipu attempted to kill Prahlada multiple times but failed due to divine intervention.

In a final attempt, he enlisted the help of his sister, Holika, who had a boon that made her immune to fire. She tricked Prahlada into sitting on a pyre with her, hoping to burn him alive. However, by divine grace, Holika perished in the flames while Prahlada emerged unharmed. This event symbolizes the victory of righteousness over evil and is commemorated by the lighting of bonfires on the eve of Holi, known as Holika Dahan.

Another popular legend links Holi with the divine love of Radha and Krishna. Lord Krishna, known for his playful and mischievous nature, was concerned about his dark complexion compared to Radha's fair skin. His mother, Yashoda, playfully suggested that he color Radha's face in any hue he wished. This tradition evolved into the modern practice of smearing colors on loved ones during Holi.

### Significance of Holi

Holi is more than just a festival of colors; it holds profound cultural, social, and spiritual significance:

- **Victory of Good over Evil:** The story of Prahlada and Holika reminds people that truth and righteousness always triumph over wickedness.
- **Harvest and Spring Festival:** Holi marks the arrival of spring and the end of winter, signifying renewal, fertility, and abundance.
- **Social Harmony:** The festival breaks down social barriers, as people of all backgrounds come together to celebrate, forgive past grievances, and renew



- relationships.
- **Spiritual Renewal:** Holi serves as a reminder to let go of negativity, grudges, and past misunderstandings, fostering unity and love.

### Celebrations of Holi

Holi is celebrated with great enthusiasm across India and in various parts of the world where Indian communities reside. The festival typically spans two days:

#### Holika Dahan (Chhoti Holi)

On the night before Holi, bonfires are lit to symbolize the burning of evil

(Holika) and the triumph of good. Families and communities gather around the fire, offer prayers, and perform rituals seeking prosperity and protection from harm.

#### Rangwali Holi (Dhulandi or Phagwah)

The main day of Holi, also known as Rangwali Holi, is filled with exuberant celebrations. People throw vibrant gulal (colored powders) at each other, dance to lively music, and enjoy festive delicacies. Some key aspects of Holi celebrations include:

- **Color Play:** Friends, families, and even strangers smear each other with colors, water balloons, and

pichkaris (water guns), creating a spectacle of joy and camaraderie.

- **Music and Dance:** Traditional folk songs, Bollywood tunes, and dhol (drum) beats set the festive mood, with people dancing energetically in the streets.
- **Festive Sweets and Drinks:** Special treats like gujiya (sweet dumplings), malpua (pancakes), thandai (a spiced milk beverage often infused with bhang), and puran poli are prepared and shared with loved ones.
- **Community Gatherings:** Holi brings people together, breaking societal barriers of caste, class, and status, fostering unity and joy.
- **Holi in Temples:** In some regions, temples organize grand Holi celebrations where devotees sing bhajans (devotional songs) and participate in color play in a spiritual environment.

### Regional Variations of Holi

Different regions in India have unique ways of celebrating Holi:

- **Lathmar Holi (Barsana, Uttar Pradesh):** Women playfully hit men with sticks, recreating a legendary episode from Radha and Krishna's time.
- **Basant Utsav (West Bengal):** Inspired by poet Rabindranath Tagore, Holi is celebrated with graceful dances and cultural performances.
- **Royal Holi (Rajasthan):** The festival is marked by grand celebrations in royal palaces, including processions and cultural events.
- **Holla Mohalla (Punjab):** Celebrated by Sikhs, it includes martial arts displays and horse-riding competitions.
- **Shigmo (Goa):** A combination of Holi and spring carnival, featuring folk dances and elaborate processions.
- **Manjal Kuli (Kerala):** In the Konkani and Malayali communities, Holi is celebrated uniquely with turmeric and traditional songs.

### Holi Around the World

Holi is no longer confined to India; it is celebrated globally in countries like Nepal, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and South Africa. Events like "Holi festivals" in major cities attract diverse crowds, celebrating Indian culture with music, dance, and color play. In Nepal, Holi is a national holiday and features grand celebrations in cities like Kathmandu and Pokhara.

### Reference in Ancient Texts and Inscriptions

Besides having a detailed description in the Vedas and Puranas such as Narad Purana and Bhavishya Purana, the festival of Holi finds a mention in Jaimini Mimamsa. A stone inscription belonging to 300 BC found at Ramgarh in the province of Vindhya has mention of Holikotsav on it. King Harsha, too has mentioned about holikotsav in his work Ratnavali that was written during the 7th century. The famous Muslim tourist – Ulbaruni too has mentioned about holikotsav in his historical memories. Other Muslim writers of that period have mentioned, that holikotsav were not only celebrated by the Hindus but also by the Muslims.

### Reference in Ancient Paintings and Murals

The festival of Holi also finds a reference in the sculptures on walls of old temples. A 16th century panel sculpted in a temple at Hampi, capital of Vijayanagar, shows a joyous scene of Holi. The painting depicts a Prince and his Princess standing amidst maids waiting with syringes or pichkaris to drench the Royal couple in coloured water. A 16th century Ahmednagar painting is on the theme of Vasanta Ragini – spring song or music. It shows a royal couple sitting on a grand swing, while maidens are playing music and spraying colors with pichkaris.

There are a lot of other paintings and murals in the temples of medieval India which provide a pictorial description of Holi. For instance, a Mewar painting (circa 1755) shows the Maharana with his courtiers. While the ruler is bestowing gifts on some people, a merry dance is on, and in the center is a tank filled with colored water. Also, a Bundi miniature shows a king seated on a tusker and from a balcony above some damsels are showering gulal (colored powders) on him.

### Legends and Mythology

In some parts of India, specially in Bengal and Orissa, Holi Purnima is also celebrated as the birthday of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (A.D. 1486-1533). However, the literal meaning of the word 'Holi' is 'burning'. There are various legends to explain the meaning of this word, most prominent of all is the legend associated with demon king Hiranyakashyap. Hiranyakashyap wanted everybody in his kingdom to worship only him but to his great disappointment, his son, Prahlad became an ardent devotee of Lord Narayana. Hiranyakashyap commanded his sister, Holika to enter a blazing fire with Prahlad in her lap.

Holika had a boon whereby she could enter fire without any damage on herself. However, she was not aware that the boon worked only when she enters the fire alone. As a result she paid a price for her sinister desires, while Prahlad was saved by the grace of the god for his extreme devotion. The festival, therefore, celebrates the victory of good over evil and also the



triumph of devotion. Legend of Lord Krishna is also associated with play with colors as the Lord started the tradition of play with colours by applying colour on his beloved Radha and other gopis. Gradually, the play gained popularity with the people and became a tradition.

### Holi in Barsana

Holi in Barsana Holi of Barsana, the birthplace of Radha, a village, 42 kms away from Mathura, is of particular interest. Here, men from Nandgaon, the land of Krishna come to play Holi with the girls of Barsana and hope of raising their flag over Shri Radhikaji's temple. But, instead of colours they are greeted with sticks by the gopis. Hence, the Holi get its new name here- Lathmaar Holi. Smart enough, men come fully padded as they are fully aware what kind of welcome awaits them and also the fact that they are not allowed to retaliate on that day. In this mock battle of sorts, they try their best not to be captured.

The unlucky one's however, are forcefully led away

and get a good thrashing from the women. Further, they are made to wear a female attire and dance in public. All in the spirit of Holi. Renowned poets like Surdas, Nandadas, Kumbhan-das and others have picturesquely described how Lord Krishna received similar treatment and was forced to don a sari and wear make-up and perform dance before being released by the gopis. The next day, it is the turn of men of Barsana. They reciprocate by invading Nandgaon and drench the womenfolk of Nandgaon in colours of kesudo, naturally occurring orange-red dye and palash. Today, the women of Nadagow beat the invaders from Barsana. It is a colorful site.

However, in the interest of tourism and safety, the state tourist board has set up excellent vantage points for the public. A large open ground, on the outskirts of the town is specially set aside for the most magnificent display of the festivities. The week long Holi celebrations also continue in the various Krishna temples on different days. The celebrations are filled with clouds of colours and of course, much fun.



# The Indian Panorama Holi / Hola celebration to Promote Bonds of Love among Communities is Eight Years Old

By I.S. Saluja

Glimpses of the First Holi Celebrations 2018 with Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty



Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty extends Holi greetings.

L to R: New York City Council Member Paul A Vallone, Mrs. Vandana Sharma, Air India Regional Manager, Americas, Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty, Mrs. Chakravorty, Prof. Indrajit S Saluja



Mrs. Vandana Sharma shares her thoughts.

L to R: Mrs. Vallone, Paul Vallone, Mrs. Vandana Sharma, Sandeep Chakravorty, Mrs. Chakravorty.



Council Member Paul A. Vallone shares his thoughts.

L to R: Paul Vallone, Sandeep Chakravorty, Mrs. Chakravorty. In the background, seen, among others is Dr. Jagdish Gupta on extreme right.



At the celebration with Consul General Chakravorty

L to R: Dr. Jagdish Gupta, Sandeep Chakravorty, Mr. Mansukhani, Mr. Rastogi, Prof. Saluja, Dr. Ajay Lodha



At the celebration with Consul General Chakravorty.

L to R: Prof. Saluja, Dr. VK Raju, Dr. Leela Raju, Mrs. Vandana Sharma, Mrs. Purnima Desai, Mrs. Vallone, Mr. Paul Vallone, Sandeep Chakravorty, Mrs. Chakravorty, Malini Shah

## Glimpses of 2019 Holi/ Hola Celebrations with Consul General of India Sandeep Chakravorty



Holi Milan. Mrs. and Mr. Sandeep Chakravorty are accorded a traditional Holi reception on arrival. Anu Jain and Jaskiran greet them with smearing their faces with color



Kamal, a budding singer, regales the gathering with a Punjabi song



Young Gatka players from Akal Gatka Academy give a thrilling Gatka performance



A scintillating dance performance



Dance performers with Mrs. & Mr. Chakravorty. Also seen in the picture, among others, are Ravi Batra, Ranju Batra and Prof. Saluja



Time to announce the Mahamoorkh. L to R: Anu Jain, Sandeep Chakravorty, Prof. Saluja, Ravi Batra, Indu Gajwani



Gatka players and their trainer Sardar Daler Singh, community leaders Master Mohinder Singh, Gurmej Singh and their families pose for a photograph with Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty. Also seen in the picture is Prof. Saluja



The Grand Finale. Mrs. & Mr. Chakravorty join the revelers



Crowning the Mahamoorkh. Sandeep Chakravorty is crowning the Mahamoorkh Ravi Batra.

Glimpses of 2021 Holi / Hola Celebrations with Consul General of India Mr. Randhir Kumar Jaiswal



Guest of Honor Harry Bolla, Chairman/ CEO of Bolla Group of Companies was very appreciative of the Gatka players. He announced a gift of \$1100 to the group - Photo / Vijay Shah



A colorful welcome to the chief guest and his family. L to R: Ms Jaiswal, Dr. Abha Jaiswal, Consul general Randhir Jaiswal, Pinky Jaggi, Indu Gajwani, Amita Karwal, Jyoti Gupta, Anu Jain, Rizwan Qureshi and Prof. Saluja - Photo / Vijay Shah



Jaskiran Saluja, a member of the organizing committee welcoming guests on behalf of The Indian Panorama, the organizing committee, and the community. - Photo / Vijay Shah



Gayatri Balsara and Anjana Moolay from Muktambar Fine Arts Academy, New Hyde Park performing a classical dance - Photo / Vijay Shah



Ambassador Randhir Jaiswal pays a floral tribute at Dr. Ajay Lodha's portrait to all those who died of COVID-19. Dr. Ajay Lodha, a darling of the Indian American community died of COVID last year after an eight-month long struggle to survive. - Photo / Vijay Shah



Vicky Kohli, in the background, made ladies dance to his melodious singing. L to R: Pinky Jaggi, Abha Jaiswal, Jyoti Gupta, Ranju Batra, Indu Gajwani - Photo / Vijay Shah



Prachi Makkar (left) sang a Punjabi song with her brother Surya Makkar providing exciting Dhol beats. And they made guests dance - Photo / Vijay Shah



Attorney Ravi Batra shared his experience and impressions of COVID-19 - Photo / Vijay Shah



A view of the gathering - Photo / Vijay Shah



Mr. Balasubramaniam Elango, Chief Executive, Bank of Baroda, New York, chosen in a draw of lots the Mahamoorkha, an old tradition at Holi celebration, is being crowned by Consul General Randhir Jaiswal. To Mr. Elango's left is seen the Mahamoorkha of 2019 Mr. Ravi Batra.

## Glimpses of 2021 Holi / Hola Celebrations with Consul General of India Mr. Randhir Kumar Jaiswal



Gatka players with the chief guest, guests of honor, organizers and community representatives - Photo / Vijay Shah



Consul General Jaiswal (seated 6th from left) and Dr. Abha Jaiswal (seated 5th from left) with ladies at the event - Photo / Vijay Shah



Jaskiran Saluja, a member of the organizing committee welcoming guests on behalf of The Indian Panorama, the organizing committee, and the community. - Photo / Vijay Shah



Ambassador Jaiswal (seated 4th from left) with male guests at the event. - Photo / Vijay Shah

## Glimpses of 2023 Holi / Hola celebrations with Consul General of India Mr. Randhir Kumar Jaiswal



Ambassador Randhir Kumar Jaiswal addresses the gathering



Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman speaks on the occasion. To his right is Prof. Indrajit S Saluja, and to his left is Ragini Srivastava



Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar and Ragini Srivastava present proclamation on behalf of Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman to Ambassador Jaiswal who also received a proclamation for Dr. Abha Jaiswal



Crowning of "Mahamoorkh" Tirok Malik. Crowning ceremony was performed by Ambassador Jaiswal, Ravi Batra, a former "Mahamoorkh", and members of the organizing committee of Holi & Hola celebrations



County Executive Bruce Blakeman enjoying the Gatra performance



The gathering



Bollywood Medley Dance by dancers from RS International group



Surya Makkar on Dhol and Prachi Makkar singing Punjabi songs and bolian



Vicky Kohli regaled with his lovely singing



Kadambini receives a certificate of appreciation

## Glimpses of 2024 Holi / Hola celebrations with Consul General of India Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan



Consul General is presenting a replica of the Golden Temple to Sardar Daler Singh, the coach of the Gatka team



Consul General is addressing the gathering



New York State Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar is addressing the gathering



H. P. Singh was selected in a draw of lots as Mahamorkh and was crowned by the Consul General. Seen in the picture, from L to R: Jyoti Gupta, Balbeer Pahwa, H.P. Singh, Consul General, Ragini Srivastava, Anju Sharma



A part of the organizing committee. Seated L to R: Prof. Indrajit Saluja, Jyoti Gupta. Standing L to R: Abha Bhatnagar, Shashi Malik, Jag Kalra, Mr. Kothari, Beena Kothari, Anju Sharma. Gunjan Rastogi and Jaskiran Saluja are missing



Consul General presented to Ragini Srivastava a replica of the Golden Temple. Seen in the picture, from L to R: Dr. Jag Kalra, Beena Kothari, Gunjan Rastogi, Jyoti Gupta, Prof. Indrajit Saluja, Consul General Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, Ragini Srivastava, Shashi Malik



GOPIO New York supported The Indian Panorama in organizing the event. Seen in the picture, from L to R: Kalpana Ben, Beena Kothari, President, Mrs. Lal Motwani, Mr. Lal Motwani, Chairman.

Photos by Jay Mandal and Vijay Shah



Display of Sikh Martial Art Gatka by the Akal Gatka Group, New York - Photo / Vijay Shah



**H**oli, the Hindu festival of colors, is celebrated to mark the arrival of spring, the victory of good over evil, and the eternal love between Radha and Krishna, with celebrations involving throwing colored powders and water, dancing, and enjoying festive foods. It is normally observed in the month of March.

Hola Mohalla, a festival of valor and brotherhood, was initiated by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, who founded the Khalsa, in the 17th century. It serves as a reminder of the Sikh martial heritage and the principles of chivalry and self-defense emphasized by the Sikh Gurus. Mohalla is a Punjabi word that implies an organized procession in the form of an army column accompanied by war drums and standard-bearers, and proceeding to a given location or moving in state from one place to another. It takes place on the second day of the lunar month of Chett, usually a day after the Hindu spring festival Holi, but sometimes coincides with it. Hola Mohalla is a big festive event for the Sikhs around the world.

Back in 2018, Consul General of India at New York, Mr. Sandeep Chakravorty who is currently India's Ambassador to Indonesia, happened to suggest a celebration of Holi. The Indian Panorama Holi then came into being. A large group of Indian Americans and non-Indians, and elected officials was invited to Holi celebrations at a lunch hosted by The Indian Panorama. It was the beginning of a tradition of The Indian Panorama Holi / Hola celebrations.

The following year the Holi celebration also embraced the Hola celebrations. Mr. Chakravorty who loved the Indian festival celebrations led from the front to ensure



that the celebrations were historic. A representative gathering of Indian Americans and American friends from various walks of life joined in the festivities. We had a rich variety of entertainment. It included songs and dances, a poetic comedy session, and tit bits. And then, on top of it, we had a Mahamoorkh selection which in itself was a comic stuff. By a draw of lots, the Mahamoorkh was chosen and crowned, much to the delight of the gathering.

Eminent attorney Ravi Batra, a very dear friend, was chosen as the Mahamoorkh.

There was a captivating display of Gatka by the young kids from Akal Gatka group, headed by Sardar Daler Singh, a well-trained teacher of martial arts which Gatka is. Gatka originated in the Punjab in the 15th century. There has been a revival during the later 20th century, with an International Gatka Federation was founded in 1982 and formalized in 1987, and gatka is now popular as a sport or sword dance performance art and is often shown during Sikh festivals.

The guests relished Thandai, a special drink on the occasion and the sumptuous food at the Lotus Banquet Halla and Restaurant in Hicksville. That was in 2019.

Covid-19 which struck the US in early 2020, took a heavy toll on social life and, of course, human lives. The outdoor fun-loving people were forced to stay in and lead a restrained life for the next 2 years.

The Indian Panorama Holi / Hola festivities were paused.

Resuming the celebrations in the post-Covid era, we were glad to welcome the new Consul General Mr. Randhir Kumar Jaiswal, now Spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs, who arrived in the thick of COVID-19 and had to work under extremely adverse circumstances. However, at the first opportunity he got to socialize, he with his lovely wife Dr. Abha Jaiswal joined us to celebrate the Holi / Hola Festival at Metropolitan Banquet in Glen Cove on April 4, 2021. The Indian American community in New York area had lost many during the COVID-19, and one of them was Dr. Ajay Lodha, a wonderful person and an eminent physician who was extremely popular in the community. He was a dear friend. An interfaith prayer was held for him and for all who had fallen to Covid.

Among the guests were the Deputy Consul General Mr. Shatrughna Sinha, who is a Consul General in Germany now, Dr. VK Raju, an eminent ophthalmologist who is President of the Eye Foundation of America, Eminent attorney Mr. Ravi Batra, his wife, Ranju Batra, Chair Diwali Stamp Project, who was instrumental in getting the Diwali stamp issued by the USPS, Mr. Harry Singh Bolla, a well-known businessman, and Tirlok Malik, Emmy Award nominee and Happy Yoga Life Guru, besides many community leaders and elected officials.

It was a time when people, tired of their forced seclusion, looked for fun. So, they had the opportunity. It was a fun filled event with Holi Milan with colors, a display of Gatka by the volunteers of the Akal Gatka Group of Sardar Daler Singh, dances, songs, poetry recitation, tit bits, and of course coronation of Mahamoorkh. Mr. Elango, Chief Executive, Bank of Baroda was crowned Mahamoorkh.

The Indian Panorama continued with the tradition of annually hosting the Holi / Hola festivities with the cooperation of the Consulate and the community.

The 2023 Holi / Hola celebrations were graced by a number of elected officials and lawmakers, besides the Consul General Mr. Randhir Jaiswal. Nassau County Executive Mr. Bruce Blakeman, New York State Senator Kevin Thomas, New York State Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar, Town of North Hempstead Clerk Ragini Srivastava were among those who graced the occasion. Mr. Ravi Batra and Mrs. Ranju Batra, Mr. Tirlok Malik, the Emmy Award nominee, as also a number of prominent community members participated in the festivities.

Mr. Blakeman was particularly impressed with the Gatka performance. He awarded citations to all Gatka participants, besides speaking with them about the sport.

Mr. Tirlok Malik was crowned the Mahamoorkh.

Come 2024 March, and The Indian Panorama got ready with the celebrations of Holi/Hola with the new Consul General Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan. Another fun-filled, thoroughly enjoyable event saw the Consul General enjoy the thrilling Gatka performance by the young Gatka players from Mr. Daler Singh's Akal Gatka Academy. Mr. Daler Singh has spent decades to promote Gatka, and his Gatka group has always been much in demand. A couple of years ago, the Embassy of India in Washington asked me to have the gatka group perform at an event in the Embassy. And the Gatka group performed there and their performance was highly appreciated by the then Ambassador Mr. Shringla.

Among the dignitaries present were New York State Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar and Ms Ragini Srivastava, Town Clerk, Town of North Hempstead. Mr. Harvenderpal Singh crowned the Mahamoorkh at the festivities. We are now getting ready to celebrate the annual event with usual enthusiasm on April 5, 2025. Initially planned for March 15, we had to delay the festivities in view of the persistent cold weather. We look forward to having great fun, as usual.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all patrons and friends of The Indian Panorama in organizing the annual Holi / Hola event which aims at promoting the feelings of brotherhood and love even as it is a source of entertainment. I am particularly grateful to the Consul General Mr. Pradhan who has been very supportive of the event. Hope to see you at the festivities on April 5, 2025.

# Ramadan: The sacred month of fasting, reflection and spiritual growth

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, is one of the most sacred months for Muslims worldwide. It is a time of fasting, prayer, reflection, and community, commemorating the revelation of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Muslims observe fasting (sawm) from dawn to sunset, refraining from food, drink, smoking, and marital relations during daylight hours. Beyond fasting, Ramadan is a period of spiritual growth, increased devotion, and acts of charity. This article explores the significance, practices, history, and impact of Ramadan on individuals and communities worldwide.

## The Significance of Ramadan

Ramadan holds immense religious and spiritual significance for Muslims. The Quran states:

*"The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it..." (Quran 2:185)*

The month is seen as an opportunity for believers to purify their souls, strengthen their faith, and grow closer to Allah. It is a time of self-restraint, patience, and devotion, helping individuals develop discipline and empathy for those less fortunate.

## Fasting in Ramadan (Sawm)

Fasting during Ramadan is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, making it obligatory for all adult Muslims, with exceptions for children, the elderly, pregnant or menstruating women, travelers, and those who are ill. The daily fast begins at Suhoor (pre-dawn meal) and ends at Iftar (meal at sunset).

## Rules of Fasting

During the fasting hours, Muslims must abstain from:

- Food and drink (including water)
- Smoking
- Sexual relations
- Negative behaviors such as gossiping, lying, or arguing

Breaking the fast intentionally without a valid reason requires expiation (kaffarah), which may involve fasting for an extended period or feeding the poor.

## Benefits of Fasting

Beyond religious obligations, fasting offers numerous physical, psychological, and spiritual benefits:

- Physical health: Promotes detoxification, weight management, and improved metabolism by regulating eating habits and allowing the body to repair itself.
- Mental well-being: Enhances self-discipline, patience, and emotional resilience by fostering mindfulness



and self-control.

- Spiritual growth: Encourages gratitude, introspection, and a stronger connection with Allah through prayer and self-discipline.

## Ramadan Practices and Traditions

### Prayer and Worship

- Taraweeh Prayers: Special nightly prayers performed in congregation at mosques, in which long portions of the Quran are recited. Some aim to complete the entire Quran during these prayers.
- Quran Recitation: Many Muslims aim to complete the recitation of the Quran at least once during the month. Special study circles (halaqas) are formed for in-depth reflection and understanding.
- Increased Supplication (Dua): Devotees engage in extra prayers, seeking forgiveness, divine guidance, and blessings.
- I'tikaf (Seclusion in the Mosque): In the last ten days of Ramadan, some Muslims practice I'tikaf, a spiritual retreat in the mosque to dedicate themselves to prayer and worship without worldly distractions.

### Charity and Generosity

- Zakat (Obligatory Charity): Many Muslims choose Ramadan to fulfill their annual zakat (2.5% of their wealth) to help those in need.
- Sadaqah (Voluntary Charity): Encouraged acts of kindness, such as feeding the poor, providing necessities to struggling families, and funding community projects.
- Iftar Gatherings: Sharing meals with family, friends, and the less fortunate strengthens communal bonds. Many mosques and organizations offer free iftar meals to ensure that everyone, regardless of financial status, can break their

fast comfortably.

- Fidyah and Kaffarah: Those unable to fast due to chronic illness or other valid reasons can compensate by feeding the poor (Fidyah). Those who break their fast without a valid reason must perform Kaffarah, which may involve fasting for 60 consecutive days or feeding 60 needy individuals.

## Laylat al-Qadr (The Night of Decree)

One of the most significant nights in Ramadan is Laylat al-Qadr, believed to be the night when the Quran was first revealed. It falls within the last ten nights of Ramadan and is described in the Quran as:

*"The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months." (Quran 97:3)*

Muslims spend this night in worship, seeking blessings, forgiveness, and divine mercy. It is a night of intense prayer, recitation of the Quran, and making heartfelt supplications. Many believe that their prayers on this night hold immense power and that seeking forgiveness can erase past sins.

## The End of Ramadan: Eid al-Fitr

Ramadan concludes with Eid al-Fitr, a joyous festival marking the completion of fasting. The day begins with a special prayer at the mosque, followed by feasting, charity, and social gatherings. Key aspects include:

- Eid Prayers: A large congregational prayer held in mosques and open areas, often followed by sermons and communal supplications.
- Zakat al-Fitr: A mandatory charity given before Eid prayer to help the needy afford festive meals and clothing.
- Festivities: Celebrations with family, friends, and community members, often involving traditional foods, gift-giving, and

wearing new or special attire.

- Visiting Loved Ones: Many Muslims visit relatives and friends to exchange greetings, gifts, and meals, strengthening familial bonds.

## Ramadan Around the World

Ramadan is observed by over 1.9 billion Muslims across diverse cultures, each bringing unique traditions:

- Middle East: Traditional dishes such as dates, lentil soup, and kebabs are popular for iftar, along with refreshing drinks like Jallab and Qamar al-Din.
- South Asia: Rich foods like samosas, pakoras, biryani, and sweet treats like jalebi are common during suhoor and iftar.
- Africa: Special drinks like tamarind juice and baobab fruit beverages accompany meals, along with regional delicacies such as porridge and grilled meats.
- Western Countries: Muslim communities organize interfaith iftars, fostering understanding and unity. Special Ramadan bazaars, online Quran classes, and communal events help maintain traditions.

## Challenges and Adaptations

Observing Ramadan can be challenging, particularly in non-Muslim-majority countries or regions with extreme daylight variations. Muslims adapt through:

- Flexible Work and School Schedules: Some workplaces and schools accommodate fasting employees and students by adjusting work hours or allowing breaks for prayers and iftar.
- Fasting in Extreme Climates: In places with long daylight hours (e.g., Norway, Sweden), scholars permit following the fasting duration of Mecca or nearby Muslim-majority countries.
- Virtual Connectivity: Online resources, such as live-streamed prayers and digital Quran study groups, help Muslims stay spiritually engaged regardless of location.

## The Spiritual Impact of Ramadan

Beyond its rituals, Ramadan transforms lives by instilling:

- Self-discipline: Strengthening control over desires and habits, fostering resilience in daily life.
- Empathy and Compassion: Encouraging an appreciation for the struggles of the underprivileged and motivating acts of generosity.
- Faith and Devotion: Enhancing spiritual connection through worship, increased Quranic engagement, and sincere supplication.

# Is your phone hurting your relationship? Signs of disconnection and how to fix it

Cell phones are an invaluable technology that has fundamentally changed the way we communicate and get information. But as with anything good, too much of it can lead to problems. A growing body of research is highlighting the various drawbacks of overusing cell phones and other mobile devices, including—ironically—the fact that all this communication technology is actually pulling us farther apart and negatively affecting our interpersonal relationships.

One increasingly-talked-about downside to constantly being attached to a cell phone is phubbing, or "phone snubbing," a trend that is unfortunately on the rise. Phubbing is basically defined as looking at a cell phone rather than interacting with the person you are with, and research shows that it can damage your relationship with your romantic partner and may also harm your bond with your kids.

Overusing cell phones and cell phone addiction are the compulsive companions to phubbing, and like phubbing, they are increasingly becoming problems for more and more people. Being constantly attached to our cell phones is taking a toll, not just on our relationships but on our mental and emotional well-being, affecting our overall health.

## Signs that your partner is addicted to their Smartphone

- You get ignored: Talking to them is like talking to a wall as they are so zoned out in their phone that they ignore you. And it's not like they purposely do it, it's just the extent of their Smartphone addiction.
- Your partner is easily distracted: It's tough to get your partner's attention as they are always



distracted: they can't properly pay attention to you. As a result, intimacy in the relationship suffers.

- Your partner gets anxious without their phone: Without their phone, they are like a fish without water, they get anxious.

## Ways to deal with the problem

- A non-confrontational conversation: By being confrontational or judgmental towards partner, you will worsen the situation. Empathize and try to make them self-aware about how their Smartphone addiction is ruining the relationship.
- Create gadget free zone and time: Addiction doesn't go away in an instant, it takes time. Therefore, creating gadget free zones in the house and gadget free time, where you and your partner converse in the absence of cell phone is imperative.
- Get help: If the above two don't help then your partner has got a serious problem and needs professional help.

# Why millennial women are letting men handle money—and why it might be risky

Marielle Schurig spoke to a group of women at a wellness event at Lululemon Athletica Inc.'s store in New York's Flatiron district, after they'd sweat it out together in a yoga and circuit-training class. Following her remarks, attendees lined up for an hour to talk to her about their finances.

The women told Schurig, 31, an account vice president at UBS Financial Services Inc., that they let their spouses or partners decide on money matters. Despite investing hours in self-care, many of the self-proclaimed feminists admitted that they had taken a back seat in their own financial affairs.

That's not uncommon: 59% of women age 20 to 34 defer investing and financial planning to spouses, according to a survey by UBS Group AG that was released Wednesday. The Swiss bank found that younger women are more likely than earlier generations to give such leeway to their partners.

"I was really surprised to see that," Schurig said in an interview at UBS's office in New York. "You see women fighting for equal rights and equal opportunities, for respect in the workplace and at home. There's all these women running for political office. We continue talking about breaking glass ceilings. But once we make the money and get those positions, what are we doing with it?"

UBS Global Wealth Management polled 3,652 women globally with a minimum of \$250,000 in investable



assets. Millennial women cite other responsibilities as being more urgent than investing and financial planning, according to the study. And younger women often don't include financial health as a factor in their well-being, said Schurig, a regular at SoulCycle.

"Women will spend a lot of time researching the best skin care, makeup product - they're not sitting down and examining their financial life," she said. "It'll be hard for us to be fully equal with men if we're not on the same financial page as them."

## FOOD CORNER



## Cheese and garlic pita wedges

### Ingredients

1 whole wheat pita bread or 1 pizza base, 6 tbsp melted butter, 2 flakes of garlic - crushed (½ tsp), 3 tbsp chopped fresh basil or 1 tsp oregano, ½ cup grated mozzarella or pizza cheese, A pinch of salt & pepper

### Method

- Slit pita bread/pizza base horizontally from the centre to get 2 thin rounds.
- Cut each pita bread/pizza base round equally into 8 wedges (triangular pieces). This way you have 16 pieces in all.
- Combine butter, garlic, basil, salt and pepper, brush over inner/cut side of bread wedges, then sprinkle with mozzarella cheese.
- Place in single layer on oven trays.
- Bake in a hot oven for 5-6 minutes at 200°C or until crisp.



## Keema samosa

### Ingredients

Mutton mince ½ kg, singer 1" piece, garlic - a few flakes  
Garam masala 1 ½ tsp, coriander leaves chopped 2  
tbsps, Mint leaves chopped 2 tbsps, Onion finely chopped 1  
no, Green chilies cut fine 4 nos, Thick curd 1 tbsp, Maida  
300 gms, Oil for frying, Salt to taste To taste

### Preparation

- Make a stiff dough with the maida, 4 tablespoons oil and salt. Make 20 medium sized balls of this dough.
- Roll thin round chappatis of the balls. Heat a tava and roast the chappati on one side only.
- Make all the chappatis in the same way.
- Now cut each chappati into two pieces and keep them covered. Using a little water make a thick paste of 2 tablespoons maida and keep aside. Make a paste of ginger and garlic
- Heat oil in a frying pan and fry the onions, chilies and ginger and garlic paste.
- Now add the mince meat, salt and cook on a low flame till done.
- Add the garam masala, curd, coriander and mint leaves and cook for some more time.
- Remove from the flame and let it cool.
- Make a cone of each half chappati and fill with the mince.
- Then seal the edges with the flour paste.
- Make samosas with the rest of the chappatis in the above manner.
- Heat oil well and deep fry the samosas till golden brown. Serve hot with pudina chutney.

# Avoid chronic headaches: Strategies for long-term relief

Chronic headaches can significantly impact daily life, making it difficult to focus, work, or even enjoy leisure activities. While occasional headaches are common, frequent and persistent headaches require a proactive approach to prevention. Understanding the causes and implementing lifestyle changes can greatly reduce their occurrence. Here are some effective strategies to avoid chronic headaches and improve overall well-being.

## Identify and Manage Triggers

Many headaches are caused or worsened by specific triggers. Keeping a headache diary to track patterns can help pinpoint potential causes. Common triggers include:

- Stress and anxiety
- Poor posture
- Dehydration
- Irregular sleep patterns
- Certain foods and drinks (e.g., caffeine, alcohol, processed foods, artificial sweeteners)
- Sensory overload (e.g., bright lights, loud noises, strong smells)
- Weather changes

Once you identify your triggers, take proactive steps to avoid them. For example, if stress is a major trigger, incorporating relaxation techniques such as meditation or deep breathing can be beneficial.

## Maintain Proper Hydration

Dehydration is a common but often overlooked cause of headaches. Ensure that you drink enough water throughout the day, particularly if you consume caffeine or alcohol, as these can contribute to dehydration. A good rule of thumb is to drink at least 8 glasses (about 2 liters) of water daily, adjusting for activity level and climate.

## Prioritize Sleep Hygiene

Lack of quality sleep can lead to chronic headaches. Aim for 7-9 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night by establishing a consistent sleep routine. Tips for better sleep include:

- Going to bed and waking up at the same time every



day

- Avoiding screens (phones, TVs, computers) at least an hour before bedtime
- Creating a comfortable and dark sleep environment
- Reducing caffeine and heavy meals in the evening

## Adopt a Healthy Diet

Certain foods and dietary habits can contribute to headaches. Maintaining a balanced diet rich in whole foods, lean proteins, and healthy fats can help prevent headaches. Avoid excessive consumption of processed foods, artificial sweeteners, and foods high in monosodium glutamate (MSG), as these can trigger headaches in some individuals.

## Manage Stress Effectively

Chronic stress is a leading cause of tension headaches. Implementing stress management techniques can help reduce their frequency and severity. Consider activities such as:

- Meditation and mindfulness
- Regular physical activity, like yoga or walking
- Breathing exercises
- Spending time in nature

# Key protein identified for treating Alzheimer's

A team of researchers from the University of Cologne has made an important contribution to understanding the role of the tau protein in Alzheimer's disease.

Using human induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs), the international team demonstrated that a specific variant of the tau protein, known as the 1N4R isoform, mediates the harmful effects of protein clumping in human brain cells.

The study was led by Dr. Hans Zempel from the Institute of Human Genetics, who is also a group leader in the Career Advancement Program (CAP) at the Center for Molecular Medicine Cologne (CMMC) of the University of Cologne and University Hospital Cologne. If a person suffers from Alzheimer's disease, certain proteins accumulate in brain cells, forming clumps that restrict normal cell function or even cause the cell to die.

Dr Buchholz and Dr Zempel's team have used state-of-the-art techniques such as CRISPR/Cas9 gene editing and live-cell imaging in human induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) to demonstrate that the 1N4R tau isoform is responsible for the pathological effects on the cell. iPSCs are human stem cells that are generated from other cells. For example, skin cells can be



reprogrammed into iPSCs and then transformed into brain cells (neurons). The researchers tested different forms of the tau protein by expressing them specifically in nerve cells. This allowed them to analyse how each protein isoform affects the cell.

According to Dr Sarah Buchholz, first author of the study, "this study represents a significant advance in helping us to understand the mechanisms of Alzheimer's disease. By identifying 1N4R tau as a key protein, we have discovered a potential new target for future treatments."

## India may have over 440 million overweight people by 2050: Lancet study

By 2050, India could have over 440 million obese and overweight people, a global analysis published in The Lancet journal has estimated.

Number of overweight and obese adults by mid-century in India (218 million men and 231 million women) could be the second highest in the world, after China, with the US, Brazil and Nigeria expected to rank third, fourth and fifth, respectively, the findings by an international team of researchers reveal.

These researchers, including those from the Indian Council of Medical Research, collaborated for the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2021.

As per the study, already almost half the world's adults -- a billion men and over a billion women aged 25 years and above -- were overweight and obese in 2021. In India, the numbers were over nearly 180 million -- 81 million men and 98 million women.

However, by 2050, this number globally could rise to nearly 3.8 billion -- 1.8 billion men and 1.9 billion women -- "over half of the likely global adult population at that time", the authors said.

"While China, India, and the USA will continue to constitute a large proportion of the global population with overweight and obesity, the number in the sub-Saharan Africa super-region is forecasted to increase by 254.8 per cent," they wrote.

The researchers also estimated that about 16 million boys and over 14 million girls in India, aged 5-14 years, could be overweight and obese by 2050, making it world's second highest after China.

However, in the 15-24 age group, the world's highest burden could come from India, with over 22 million men and nearly 17 million women in the country suffering from this health crisis in 2050.

Lead author Emmanuela Gakidou, Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), University of Washington, US, which coordinates the GBD study, said, "The unprecedented global epidemic of overweight and obesity is a profound tragedy and a monumental societal failure." The study, the "most comprehensive global analysis to date", could help governments and the public health community "identify priority populations experiencing the greatest burdens of obesity who require immediate intervention and treatment, and those that remain predominantly overweight and should be primarily targeted with prevention strategies", Gakidou said.

The latest estimates come against the backdrop of Prime Minister Narendra Modi making a strong pitch for combating obesity in his monthly 'Mann Ki Baat' radiocast on February 23.

Obesity will have to be dealt with to be a fit and healthy nation, he said. Obesity, a body mass index (BMI) of over 30, is known to have wide-ranging effects, including raising one's risk of metabolic and heart disease.

PAGE SPONSORED BY

### 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



## Skype's final call set for May as Microsoft prioritises Teams

Skype will ring for the last time on May 5 as owner Microsoft retires the two-decade-old internet calling service that redefined how people connect across borders.

Shutting down Skype will help Microsoft focus on its homegrown Teams service by simplifying its communication offerings, the software giant said. Founded in 2003, Skype's audio and video calls quickly disrupted the landline industry in the early 2000s and made the company a household name boasting hundreds of millions of users at its peak. But the platform has struggled to keep up with easier-to-use and more reliable rivals such as Zoom and Salesforce's Slack in recent years.

The decline was partly because Skype's underlying technology was not suited for the smartphone era.

# iOS 18.4 beta 2 brings a host of upgrades, including Visual Intelligence for old iPhones

Apple has rolled out iOS 18.4 beta 2 for developer testers, and it's packed with a range of new updates and improvements. While the update is still in its testing phase, it already gives eager testers to try out the latest features of iOS 18.4, ahead of its April release. Some of the key highlights of the latest beta version include Visual Intelligence support for some older iPhones, the ability to customise Priority Notifications, new toggles in the Control Center and more. Here's a look at what's new in the iOS 18.4 beta 2 release.

### Visual Intelligence comes to older iPhones

One of the standout features in iOS 18.4 beta 2 is the arrival of Visual Intelligence on the iPhone 15 Pro and iPhone 15 Pro Max. This feature, which was initially exclusive to the iPhone 16 lineup, allows users to perform visual searches using AI, connected to Google and ChatGPT. Previously, Visual Intelligence could only be accessed through the Camera Control button on the iPhone 16 models. However, with the iPhone 16e lacking a Camera Control button, Apple adapted the feature to work via the Action button and Control Center. Now, this functionality has been extended to the iPhone 15 Pro series as well.

### Priority Notifications get more customisable

Another notable addition in this beta is the ability to customise Priority



Notifications. Introduced in iOS 18.4 beta 1, Priority Notifications use AI to highlight your most important alerts. Now, with beta 2, users can choose which apps are eligible for prioritisation. In the Settings app, you'll find a list of all installed apps, allowing you to decide which ones should have their notifications prioritised. This gives users more control over how they manage their alerts, ensuring that only the most relevant ones take centre stage.

### Control Center gets smarter

The Control Center has also received some attention in this update. Apple has added new toggles for quicker access to Apple Intelligence and Siri features. These include options like Talk to Siri, Type to Siri, and Visual Intelligence. The Type to Siri toggle isn't entirely new — it was introduced in iOS 18.1 last year — but its inclusion in the Control Center makes it more convenient to use. These

toggles are available on all iPhone 15 Pro and iPhone 16 models.

### New emoji and Shortcuts actions

Emoji enthusiasts will be pleased to know that iOS 18.4 beta 2 introduces seven new emojis, including a face with bags under the eyes, a fingerprint, a leafless tree, and even a harp. While the rise of Genmoji in the iOS ecosystem might make default emoji feel less relevant, these new additions still bring a bit of fun to messaging.

For those who rely on Shortcuts, there's good news too. Apple has added a slew of new Shortcuts actions to its native apps, including Books, News, Safari, and Maps. These actions lay the groundwork for more advanced Siri capabilities, such as in-app actions and personal context, which could be rolled out in future updates.

### Apple Vision Pro app, EV routing updates

iOS 18.4 also introduces a new Apple Vision Pro app, designed to help Vision Pro users discover content, spatial experiences, and tips for using their devices. Additionally, Apple Maps is set to improve its EV routing feature in the US, particularly for Ford drivers. The update will allow Apple Maps to recognise that certain Ford vehicles can charge at Tesla NACS stations, not just CCS stations, making it easier for electric vehicle owners to plan their journeys.

# Five facts about 'Ghost Riders in the Sky'

Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost lander successfully touched down near Mons Latreille, a volcanic feature within Mare Crisium, a large basin in the Moon's northeastern quadrant.

As part of NASA's Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) initiative, Blue Ghost Mission 1 delivered 10 scientific and technological instruments to the lunar surface.

With NASA's backing and support from the Artemis program, private companies are taking on a bigger role in lunar exploration, aiming to develop a sustainable lunar market.

Firefly became the second private company to achieve a soft Moon landing, following Houston-based Intuitive Machines, whose Odysseus lander made an uneven but successful touchdown last year. Previously, only five nations—the Soviet Union, the U.S., China, India, and Japan—had accomplished soft lunar landings.

Mare Crisium, once an ancient asteroid impact site, formed around 3 billion years ago when volcanic eruptions filled the basin with basaltic lava. Firefly's payloads gathered crucial data on the Moon's regolith, geophysical



properties, and interactions between solar wind and Earth's magnetic field.

### Interesting facts

- **Journey and landing:** Launched on January 15, Blue Ghost spent around 45 days travelling to the Moon, conducting system health checks and initiating scientific operations. It successfully landed in Mare Crisium on Sunday and will operate its payloads for a full lunar day (14 Earth days).

- **Eclipse and lunar sunset observations:** On March 14, Firefly will capture high-definition images of a total eclipse, where Earth blocked sunlight from reaching the Moon. On March 16, Blue Ghost will record the lunar sunset, gathering data on how solar activity causes lunar dust to levitate, a phenomenon first observed by Apollo 17 astronaut Eugene Cernan.
- **Scientific contributions:** Blue Ghost's payloads will contribute to

lunar research through groundbreaking experiments, including testing regolith collection, Global Navigation Satellite System capabilities, radiation-resistant computing, and lunar dust mitigation. These studies aimed to support future lunar missions and provide insights into space weather's effects on Earth.

- **Design and stability:** Standing 2 metres tall and 3.5 meters wide, Blue Ghost was engineered for stability with shock-absorbing feet, a low centre of mass, and a broad footprint. It incorporated flight-proven technologies from Firefly's launch and orbital vehicles, ensuring cost efficiency and reliability.
- **Final descent and landing:** In its last hour of descent, Blue Ghost used vision-based terrain navigation and hazard avoidance to assess its position, identifying craters, slopes, and rocks before selecting a safe landing spot. Its Reaction Control System (RCS) thrusters fired as needed, ensuring a controlled and smooth landing. *Source: HT*

# India's exports under pressure as US and EU tighten trade policies

India's exports are facing heightened challenges owing to aggressive trade policies from partners like the US and the European Union (EU), said a senior trade ministry official, reported Reuters.

Santosh Sarangi, head of the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), pointed to the increased import tariffs by the US and policies like the CHIPS Act, which support local manufacturing. He said that India needs to rethink its trade and industrial policies to stay competitive.

He also mentioned that high import tariffs on raw materials, technological disadvantages in some manufacturing sectors and India's limited participation in global supply chains have affected the country's export growth.

US President Donald Trump's plan to impose reciprocal tariffs from April is a major concern for Indian exporters, particularly in sectors like automobiles, agriculture, and manufacturing.

According to Citi Research analysts, these tariffs could result in losses amounting to nearly \$7 billion annually for Indian businesses.

It must be mentioned that India's trade minister, Piyush Goyal, has travelled to the US for trade talks ahead of the planned tariff changes.

India's total exports stood at \$682.59 billion for the period between April 2024 to January 2025, up 7.2% from the



previous year. On the other hand, the country's imports were recorded at \$770 billion for the same period, thereby resulting in a trade deficit amounting to \$87.47 billion.

Moreover, the EU's carbon tax and increasing reliance on protective non-tariff measures are adding challenges for Indian exporters.

As a result, despite export growth, India still witnesses a trade deficit, signalling a need to expand market reach and improve competitiveness, said Sarangi.

## Trump tariffs send US stock market spiraling as investors fear trade war

Major US stock indices fell when the tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump on Canada, Mexico and China came into effect.

These tariffs further fueled the already escalating investor worries about their

impact on the global economy, news agency Reuters wrote.

As a result, gold prices rose due to increased safe-haven demand, with spot gold going up 0.6%, reaching \$2,911.88 an ounce.

In response, China and Canada retaliated while Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum vowed to respond likewise, but gave no specific details.

On top of all this, a trade group representing nearly all major automakers warned that the new 25% tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico imposed by Trump will lead to drastic price hikes.

"Trump's tit-for-tat approach has heightened fears of a global trade war, pressuring risk assets while boosting safe havens," the report quoted Uto Shinohara, a senior investment strategist at Mesirow in Chicago as saying.

## Slowdown in credit card growth continues, disbursement at 4-year low: Report

The credit card sector in India is witnessing a slowdown, with disbursement growth falling to a four-year low, according to a report by ACMIL, a stock market firm.

The report, which provides insights into the credit card segment for January 2025, highlights a decline in total spending and a drop in the number of credit cards in circulation.

Aggregate credit card expenditure in January stood at Rs 1.84 trillion, marking a month-on-month (MoM) decline from Rs 1.88 trillion in December 2024.

Despite this drop, spending was up 14 per cent on a year-on-year (YoY) basis. The MoM decline was primarily due to a high base in December, when spending typically rises due to year-end festivities and New Year celebrations.

The report also added that the transaction volumes followed a similar trend, falling 1 per cent MoM to 430 million transactions. However, YoY transaction growth remained strong at 31 per cent.

Despite this, the report pointed out that this was the weakest YoY growth in transaction volumes since March 2024, indicating a sustained slowdown in the sector.

The report said "Notably, this represents the weakest YoY growth in transaction volumes since March 2024, underscoring a persistent deceleration trend within the sector".

# US seeking zero tariffs on car imports in India ahead of Tesla's entry

The United States wants India to eliminate tariffs on car imports under a proposed trade deal between the two nations, but New Delhi is reluctant to immediately bring down such duties to zero even as it considers further cuts, sources told Reuters.

India's high auto tariffs will feature in formal talks for a bilateral trade deal that are yet to begin, said one of the three sources, all of whom were briefed on the matter, paving the way for American electric vehicle maker Tesla, which is gearing up for an India launch.

Taxes on cars imported into India are as high as 110%, which Tesla chief Elon Musk has criticised as being among the steepest in the world. The EV giant last year shelved its plans to enter the world's third-largest car market for a second time.

Musk has now found support from U.S. President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly railed against India's high taxes and in an address to Congress on Tuesday slammed the country's auto tariffs of more than 100%, threatening reciprocal action.

"The U.S. ask is for India to bring tariffs down to zero or negligible in



most sectors, except agriculture," the first source said, adding the expectation on New Delhi eliminating auto tariffs was "clearer than any other".

A second source said India was "listening to the U.S." and had not pushed back, adding it would respond with its position on the tariffs after consulting local industries.

The office of United States Trade Representative, India's trade ministry, and the foreign affairs ministry did not

respond to requests for comment.

## Trade worth \$500 billion

After a meeting between Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi last month, the two nations agreed to resolve tariff rows and work on the first segment of a deal by the fall of 2025, aiming for bilateral trade worth \$500 billion by 2030.

Indian trade minister Piyush Goyal is on a nearly week-long trip to the U.S.

and on Tuesday met U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick to pursue trade talks. He is also expected to meet the United States Trade Representative Jamieson Greer.

While India is unlikely to relent to U.S. demands to reduce tariffs on auto imports to zero immediately, it has been priming the industry to prepare for a lower tariff regime and be open to competition, said the first source and a fourth person.

Last month, the Indian government met domestic carmakers to decide on any tariff cuts and understand their reservations over taxes going down to zero immediately, the first source added.

India's 4 million-vehicles-a-year car market is one of the most protected in the world and its domestic players have previously argued against lowering tariffs, saying such a move would dry up investment in local manufacturing by making imports cheaper.

The likes of Tata Motors and Mahindra & Mahindra have especially lobbied against lowering import tariffs on EVs, saying it would hurt the nascent sector in which they have invested heavily.

## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - MARCH 10 - MARCH 16, 2025

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA



Aries

## ARIES

Ganesha says this week will be excellent for Aries. You will be successful in your daily tasks, and your health will also be good. This week is the right time for you to start new plans. You will get monetary benefits, and you can improve your financial condition. This week, you must control your language and not talk to anyone without thinking. Do your work carefully and stay away from your working people. You will get a chance to spend time with your loved ones and you can also increase your entertainment with them. This week, you should take care of your physical and spiritual health. You may get good proposals from marriageable people, and you can buy some items for your home or vehicle. This week is the time for good decisions for you, and you should move towards new enthusiasm in your life. You will be successful in your work this week.

## TAURUS



Taurus

Ganesha says your horoscope will not be favorable according to the weekly overview. You may face many obstacles in your work. You have to take care that you maintain patience in your work and keep your situation in mind. You also have to pay attention to your health. To keep yourself healthy, you have to take care of your daily food. You have to include a healthy diet and exercise in your routine. This week, you should be excited to do something new. You have to pay more attention to your work and try to achieve your goals. You have to cooperate with your colleagues and take the right advice from them. You have to maintain continuity in your work and work hard to achieve your goals. This week will be very favorable for students.

## GEMINI



Gemini

Ganesha says you may face some challenges in your personal and business life. You should be careful in your business and understand your investments. You may need to make the right decision regarding your work. This week, you may also need to pay attention to your health, so take care of your diet and exercise. This week's horoscope will not be favorable for you. You may face some challenges in your personal and business life. You should be careful in your business and understand your investments. You may need to make the right decision regarding your work. This week, you may also need to pay attention to your health, so take care of your diet and exercise.



Cancer

## CANCER

Ganesha says this week's horoscope is very auspicious for Cancer people. You are going to have a lot of success in the coming days. You will get a chance to perform very well in your work. You will get a great opportunity to show your abilities, which will help you move forward. You will also get a very good time for new work which will prove to be very beneficial for you in the coming time. You will also get a lot of success in your business, which will prove to be very beneficial for you in the coming time. You will also get a lot of success in your business, which will prove to be very beneficial for you in the coming time. You will also get a lot of success in your business, which will prove to be very beneficial for you in the coming time. You will also get a lot of success in your business, which will prove to be very beneficial for you in the coming time.

## LEO



Leo

Ganesha says this week's horoscope is expected to be very good for Leo. You will taste success in all areas of your life today. You can get good returns from your old investments and employed people can also benefit from promotion or increment. Your source of income can also increase, and there can be a big property-related settlement. If you have a case going on in the court, then the decision can come in your favor. On this day, you can also take a gift for your partner, and new flowers of love will bloom between you. You have to take care of your health and it is important to pay attention to your diet. You will get the support of family members, and you will fulfill your responsibilities well. Keep your diet healthy so that you can fight any disease easily. This week, you are expected to improve both financial and family conditions.

## VIRGO



Virgo

Ganesha says this week will be inauspicious for Virgo from the beginning. You have to maintain peace of mind before starting your day. Whatever work you do this week, you will not succeed in it. You may need to stay away from your friends and family. You may need to put in more effort to run your business well. You need to control your speech and choose your words carefully. You need to maintain good relations with your employers. Today will not be a good day for you regarding money matters. You may need to spend more time with your loved ones. You may spend money on entertainment. You may get a good proposal for marriage from your marriageable people. You may need to buy some items for your home.

## LIBRA



Libra

Ganesha says this

week's horoscope will not be favorable for Libra people. You may feel unfavorable, and you may have difficulty in fulfilling your needs. You have to restrain your emotions and control your thoughts today. You may get some monetary benefits in your job and business, but you have to be careful in your work and stay away from your competitors. You also have to control your speech as there may be arguments with your relatives. You have to focus on your work today and work toward achieving your goals. You also have to take care of some things in your social life and try to spend time with your friends and family. You also have to spend time with your loved ones and share your happiness with them.

## SCORPIO



Scorpio

Ganesha says this week will be excellent for Scorpio natives. Today will be a very auspicious day for you. You will get a lot of happiness in your life. Do not ignore health, otherwise, it can cause you trouble. Try to take care of your health. You may get some special gifts from your relatives. Love will flow in your married life, and there will be a lot of respect in your pair. Employed people will be very busy in their work and your work will also be appreciated. If you are preparing for a government job, then you may get to hear good news today. You need to control your increasing expenses, otherwise, you may have problems later. Do not do any work in excitement, otherwise, you may be misunderstood. Complete necessary tasks on time and create a budget for your income and expenses.

## SAGITTARIUS



Sagittarius

Ganesha says this week will be good for Sagittarius people. You may have to be busier in your daily activities. You need to take care of your health, so do not ignore your health. Otherwise, you may have to face difficulty. You may get some special gifts from your relatives which will make you happy. Your married life will also be full of love. Employed people will be very busy in their work and your work will also be appreciated. Today, some people may get to hear the good news of a government job. You need to keep your expenses under control otherwise, you may have to face problems later. Do not do any work with over-enthusiasm because you may be misunderstood. You should complete your necessary tasks on time and make a budget for your income and expenditures.

## CAPRICORN



Capricorn

Ganesha says this week will not be favorable for Capricorn from the beginning. You will need to focus on your work. Also, you have to be careful of your opponents. You should not trust anyone completely. This week, you do not need to react to everything. You have to stay calm and avoid conflict with your family. Anger

can harm your work. This week, your expenses may increase, and you may feel a shortage of money. You need to stay mentally strong. Spending some time on your favorite hobby can calm your mind. Students may need to take a break from their studies this week.

## AQUARIUS



Aquarius

Ganesha says this week will be very good for you. You will have a lot of success in your daily activities. Do not ignore your health, and try to spend more time with your loved ones. You may get special gifts from relatives, and love will pour into your married life. Employed people will be very busy in their work and your work will be appreciated. According to your information, people preparing for government jobs may get good news. You need to control your expenses and not do any work with overexcitement. You should make a budget for your income and expenditure. This week is indicated to be very good for Aquarius people. You will get a lot of success in your daily activities, and your day will also go very well. Therefore, you should not ignore your health.

## PISCES



Pisces

Ganesha says this week will not be favorable for you. You have to take care that you complete your tasks on time and control your expenses. You also have to take care of your health. Otherwise, you may have to face problems. This week, you may get special gifts from your relatives, and love will pour into your married life. Employed people will be busy with their work and they will also get respect. People preparing for a government job may get to hear some good news today. But you have to pay attention to your increasing expenses. You should not do any work in excitement, as it can be misunderstood by others. Therefore, you should complete the necessary tasks on time and make a budget for your income and expenditures.

## 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](http://chiragdaruwalla.com). He is available for consultations on WhatsApp number +91 8141566266 or by email: [info@chiragdaruwalla.com](mailto:info@chiragdaruwalla.com)

## BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : MARCH 10 TO MARCH 16 BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

### MARCH 10

Ganesha says that although you have many natural abilities to influence people and are generally positive, you need to learn to rein in your tendency to act irrationally and impatiently occasionally. Fresh graduates have good employment prospects, and the time is also good for academics, scientists, writers, and athletes. Monetary gains are likely, but expenses may also increase in the long run.

### MARCH 11

Ganesha says that people respect you for your honesty and determination to fulfill your duties, but you need to rein in your vindictive and jealous behavior at times. Monetary gains are guaranteed as long as you surround yourself with smart, talented people. Some may find new love through social events and fun. Later in the day, you may experience religious impulses that may prompt you to seek spiritual blessings.

### MARCH 12

Ganesha says you should be very

careful today, especially when managing money. Spiritual blessings may give you mental peace and tranquility at this time. Long-distance travel may be considered. A proper diet is important for those suffering from chronic diseases. Demand for sales and marketing positions is likely to remain very high. Matrimonial matchmaking for those looking for a life partner. Although help from others may be available and generally this is a positive period, hasty or careless decisions can only cause harm.

### MARCH 13

Ganesha says that since the stars are in your favor today, you are likely to get significant success and fame. Some of you may also inherit wealth from your ancestors. You will need to be diplomatic and delicate on the domestic front. Being stubborn may only make things worse. You will have no problem reaching your goals and exceeding people's expectations. Children may excel in both athletics and academics. There may be a holiday at the end of the day.

### MARCH 14

Ganesha says information may be the key to your success today. You may feel successful and motivated during this time, and you may make gains. For some, there will be spiritual growth at the end of the day. You will be in a good position to ask for favors, raise funds, and manage others. Monetary gains are likely, but do not be extravagant. Travel may be very exciting and enlightening.

### MARCH 15

Ganesha says you need to rein in your tendency to act rashly, wastefully, and selfishly at times. Today, you will experience a boost in confidence. You may take part in activities that improve your quality of life and secure your future. At work, you will take on a leadership role and have a lot on your shoulders. Making new contacts may open up great business and growth opportunities. Someone of the opposite sex who loves you a lot may spice up your life.

*Nastur Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at [www.bejandaruwalla.com](http://www.bejandaruwalla.com) [info@bejandaruwalla.com](mailto:info@bejandaruwalla.com) | +91 81412 34275*



VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

### MARCH 16

Ganesha says that while there may be financial gains today, it may be difficult to save money due to increased expenses. You should pay full attention to your professional development as it may bring desired results faster. Businesspeople may make useful contacts. Children and spouses may be very demanding but supportive. Minor health problems like stiff neck, backache, or other body pains may cause problems. You may be socially successful if you travel and participate in clubs and social activities.

|| SHREE GANESHAY NAMA ||



# Know/Buy your Lucky Gemstones

From the House of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla

To buy any Gemstone, visit [www.BejanDaruwalla.com](http://www.BejanDaruwalla.com)

Contact us for all kind of Astrology Services

Call/ Whatsapp +91 8141234275

Email: [info@bejandaruwalla.com](mailto:info@bejandaruwalla.com)



World Famous Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla



Nastur Bejan Daruwalla

# Sikh History This Week

## MARCH 7 TO MARCH 13

### 7th March



1921 Gurudwara Tham Sahib was forcibly taken over and brought under the control of SGPC.

1959 SGPC at its general meeting accepted the announcement of Sri Damdama Sahib as Guru Khalsa Panth's fifth Takhat.

1966 The formation of Punjabi Suba was declared.

1966 On the occasion of Hola Mohalla festival at Takhat Sri Kesgarh, Sri Anandpur Sahib, Khalsa Panth declared that all Hindi letters from the official boards, signs, and milestones be obliterated throughout the state and the Sikhs removed all those.

### 8th March

1644 Patshahi Seventh, Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji, ascended to Guruship. Guru Hargobind had five sons, three of whom had died during his life time. Of the two who had survived him, SURaj Mal, born in 1617, was a worldly man, with only a moderate interest in religion, and Tegh Bahadur, born in 1621, was a recluse. So by the command of Guru hargobind, the young Har Rai, grandson of the Guru, who was fourteen years old, was anointed as the seventh Guru of the Sikhs. The ceremony was performed by Baba Bhana, son of Baba Budha. Just before his death, Guru Hargobind put five paisas and a coconut before Har Rai, bowed to him and Baba Bhana put on his forehead the saffron mark and declared him to be the seventh Guru of the Sikhs.

1758 Sikhs attacked Lahore. Taemur escaped to Kabul. Adina Begh became the new Governor and initiated atrocities against Sikhs.

1853 Maharaja Dalip Singh converted to Christianity.



Christian missionaries had spread their network to Lahore, Amritsar and other parts of the Punjab after its annexation. They saw hopeful signs of conversion of the Sikhs and made them a special target.

### 9th March

1783 Sikh forces, under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Baghel Singh attacked Delhi and ransacked Houz Khaas after breaking the Mori Gate. Sabzi Mandi, Malkagunj and Pahari Dhiraj areas were plundered. Sikhs set up their headquarters at Majnu Tilla, out-skirts of Delhi. During this attack the Sikh forces captured Delhi.

Sardar Baghel Singh returned to Punjab only after getting some major concessions for the Sikhs, raising Kesri Flag on Red Fort and constructing seven historical Gurudwaras connected with Sikh Gurus, including Sis Ganj and Rakab Ganj as memorials to the martyrdom of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur.

### 10th March



1644 Bhai Mani Singh Ji, a great martyr and Granthi of Harmandir Sahib was born.

1746 Subaegh Singh and Mehtaab Singh Ji were martyred.

1746 All the Sikhs of Lahore were beheaded at Nakas. After the 1745, Sarbat Khalsa resolution, Sikhs attacked Lahore one evening and decamped with a large booty. Yahya Khan who had taken over as Governor asked Diwan Lakhpar Rai to displace the Sikhs from the nearby swamp hounts. One of the units led by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia on the way to the hills clashed with his younger brother Jaspal Rai and chopped of his head. Lakhpat Rai now in rage vowed to erase the Sikhs from the pages of history. He got a proclamation for general massacre of the Sikhs. All Sikhs of Lahore were beheaded at Nakhas on amavas, despite a petition by general body of Hindus that the executions should not take place at least on amavas. The Sikh scriptures that fell into his hands were desecrated and destroyed.



1846 British took Koh-i-noor from Lahore.

1923 Buta Singh, Lambardar of Nangal Shammann is murdered.

1946 Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee (SGPC) passed resolution for the formation of s Sikh State.

1996 GurSikh women participated in the cleansing of Sri Harimandir Sahib's floor in the Amrit Vela.

### 11th March

1783 Sikhs entered Red Fort in Delhi and hoisted their Kesri flag, under the leadership of Baghael Singh, after successfully attacking and capturing Delhi. Further Jathedar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was seated on throne of Diwane-Aam. Peace arrived at with Sikhs through Begam Samru after certain major concessions were made to Sikhs. Baghel Singh controlled Delhi for 8 months during which period he constructed seven historic Gurudwaras in Delhi connected with Sikh Gurus.



1985 Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, President Shiromani Akali Dal and Morcha Dictator of Dharam Udh morcha (initiated on Aug. 4, 1982) was released from Udaypur Jail. He was arrested from within the Darbar Sahib complex on June 6, 1984, during the Operation Bluestar.

### 12th March

1921 Gurudwara Ram Das Sahib was forcibly taken over and brought under the control of SGPC. -Ref. "Babbar Akali Movement, A historical Survey," by

Dr. Gurcharan Singh, Aman Publications, 1993.

1947 87 GurSikh women of Boha Khalsa gave their lives through drowning by jumping into wells to save their honour rather than be subjected to humiliations by the Muslims.

1972 Elections to Punjab assembly were held. Akalis won only 24 of 104 seats. This marked the end of Fateh Singh's leadership.

1983 Sikhs decided on a protest strategy in response to Harsimran Singh's unfair termination from the Punjab University, Chandigarh.

### 13th March

1849 The Sikh army fought the British forces at Gurjrat. The British had vastly superior artillery. Sikhs fought valiantly but were routed. Raja Sher Singh and the remaining army surrendered thus ending Sikhs opposition to British.

1921 To his dismay and amazement, Mahatama Gandhi learnt that the Sikhs did not consider themselves to be Hindus, which he had perceived them to be. Precisely, for his Gujarati audience, he wrote in the Navjivan, "Till today, I had thought of them as a sect of Hinduism. But their leaders think that theirs is a distinct religion." Gandhi went back to add, "Their sacred book is the word of their gurus and, apart from that book, they accept no other scriptures as holy."

-Source "The Sikhs in History," by Sangat Singh, 1995

1928 Central Sikh Association presented the Sikh case before the Simon Commission.

1940 Sardar Udham Singh of Sunam killed Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who was Lieutenant General of Punjab at the time of the Jallianwala incident in Amritsar. He was killed in London.

# Holashtak: The eight days before Holi

**H**olashtak is a significant period in the Hindu calendar that occurs in the eight days leading up to the festival of Holi. It is mainly observed in North Indian states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh. The word "Holashtak" is derived from two Sanskrit words: "Hola," which refers to Holi, and "Ashtak," meaning eight, signifying the eight days preceding the festival.

During this period, specific activities such as marriage ceremonies, housewarming rituals, and other auspicious events are generally avoided. Holashtak is believed to be inauspicious due to astrological influences, and it marks a time for spiritual reflection and preparation for the grand celebration of Holi.

## Significance of Holashtak

Holashtak has deep roots in Hindu traditions, mythology, and astrology. It is considered an unfavorable time for starting any new ventures. The planetary positions during this period are believed to create instability and disturbances in people's lives. However, it is also a time of devotion, purification, and penance leading up to Holi.

## Mythological Significance

Holashtak is associated with the legend of Prahlad and Hiranyakashipu, an essential story from Hindu mythology. Hiranyakashipu, a demon king, opposed his son Prahlad's devotion to Lord Vishnu. During Holashtak, Hiranyakashipu subjected Prahlad to severe trials and punishments to force him to abandon his faith. However, Prahlad remained steadfast, leading to the intervention of Lord Vishnu in the form of Narasimha, who ultimately destroyed Hiranyakashipu. The story highlights the triumph of good over evil and sets the stage for Holika Dahan, observed a day before Holi.

## Astrological Importance

Astrologically, Holashtak is considered an inauspicious period due to planetary transitions. It is believed that during these eight days, planets like the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, and Rahu undergo significant changes, leading to instability in people's lives. As a result, Hindus refrain from initiating important life events, such as weddings and business ventures, to avoid misfortune.

## Rituals and Observances During Holashtak

Despite its inauspicious nature, Holashtak is a time for spiritual activities, penance, and devotion. Here are some of the significant rituals observed during these eight days:

### Avoidance of Auspicious Ceremonies

- Hindus do not conduct weddings, engagement ceremonies, housewarming rituals, or any new ventures.



- Temples and priests discourage devotees from performing any new religious activities like Griha Pravesh (housewarming) or Mundan Sanskar (head tonsuring ceremony for children).

### Holika Danda Sthapana

- On the first day of Holashtak, a wooden pole, known as Holika Danda, is planted at a designated place in villages or towns.
- This pole symbolizes Holika, the demoness who was burnt in the fire during Holika Dahan.
- People start accumulating wood and combustible materials around this pole for the bonfire to be lit on the eve of Holi.

### Fasting and Charity

- Devotees observe fasts during Holashtak, especially those seeking spiritual growth and inner peace.
- It is considered highly meritorious to donate food, clothes, and money to the needy.
- Performing Annadanam (offering food) and Gau Seva (serving cows) are also common practices.

### Bhajan and Kirtan

- People engage in devotional singing, bhajan, and kirtan to seek divine blessings.
- Many temples organize Holi Satsangs, where saints and spiritual leaders deliver

discourses on the significance of Holi and devotion.

### Preparation for Holika Dahan and Holi

- Holashtak marks the beginning of Holi preparations.
- Families start gathering colors, sweets, and festive items for the grand celebration.
- Markets become vibrant with various colors, water guns, and sweets like gujiya, malpua, and thandai ingredients.

### Regional Variations of Holashtak

While Holashtak is mainly observed in North India, some regions have unique ways of marking this period:

#### Uttar Pradesh and Bihar

- In Varanasi and Mathura, Holashtak is observed with special religious rituals.
- Devotees perform Radha-Krishna bhajans and prepare for the grand Lathmar Holi in Barsana.

#### Rajasthan

- The state celebrates Holashtak with vibrant folk performances and fairs.
- In towns like Pushkar, people participate in traditional Phoolon Ki Holi (Holi with flowers).

#### Punjab

- In Punjab, Sikhs observe Holi Mohalla, a tradition started by Guru Gobind Singh.
- The festival includes martial arts displays, kirtan, and community gatherings.

#### West Bengal

- Though Holashtak is not strictly observed, Bengal celebrates Dol Purnima, a festival dedicated to Lord Krishna.

### Scientific Perspective on Holashtak

From a scientific point of view, Holashtak coincides with the seasonal transition from winter to summer. This period often brings changes in temperature and weather patterns, which may lead to physical and mental unrest. Some experts suggest that avoiding major life decisions during this time may have originated as a precautionary measure to ensure stability and well-being.

Holashtak is an important period in Hindu tradition that precedes the festival of Holi. While it is considered inauspicious for new beginnings, it is also a time of spiritual reflection, devotion, and preparation for the grand festivities. The observances during these eight days reinforce the message of faith, patience, and the ultimate victory of good over evil. As Holika Dahan and Holi approach, Holashtak serves as a reminder of the rich cultural and mythological heritage that continues to be celebrated with devotion and enthusiasm.

## SOUTH AISA DIARY

## Pakistan orders Afghan Citizen Card holders to leave country by March 31

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** The Pakistan government has set March 31 as the deadline for Afghan Citizen Card (ACCs) holders to leave Pakistan voluntarily as part of a plan to repatriate all illegal foreigners, according to an official document.

The document, purportedly leaked to the media on March 7 night, indicated that the ACC holders staying in Islamabad and Rawalpindi would be moved out and sent back to Afghanistan as part of a multiphase relocation plan for Afghan migrants, including those awaiting resettlement in third countries.

The decision comes amidst deteriorating ties between Islamabad and Kabul over the issue of terrorism and it may impact over 800,000 documented Afghan refugees holding Afghan Citizen Cards and are included in the category of documented refugees, contrary to hundreds and thousands of undocumented ones. It stated that the Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Programme (IFRP) has been implemented since November 1, 2023 and in "continuation to the government's decision to repatriate all illegal foreigners, the national leadership has now decided to also repatriate ACC holders."

"All illegal foreigners and ACC holders are advised to leave the country voluntarily before March 31, 2025; thereafter, deportation will commence with effect from April 1, 2025," it warned. It highlighted that sufficient time has already been granted for their dignified return and emphasised that no one will be maltreated during the repatriation process and arrangements for food and healthcare for returning foreigners have also been put in place. It concluded by saying that Pakistan has been a gracious host and continues to fulfil its commitments and obligations as a responsible state. (PTI)

## Sri Lanka's police chief evades arrest as own force hunts him over shooting case

**COLOMBO (TIP):** Deshabandu Tennakoon, theoretically still the island nation's police chief, is being treated as a fugitive and his team members are on a trail to arrest him, police spokesman Buddhika Manathunga said here on March 6.

A warrant has been issued for arresting Tennakoon, under suspension since July 2024 and is on the run, and the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) has been tasked with locating him. The Magistrate's court in the southern town of Matara had last week ordered Tennakoon be arrested over a shooting incident in the southern resort town of Weligama, about 150 kilometres southeast of Colombo, on December 30, 2023. Tennakoon, as the inspector general, had sent police officers from the Colombo Crime Division (CCD) to the resort hotel in Weligama for a raid in connection with illegal drugs. However, the Weligama police, unaware of the undercover operation, opened fire at the CCD vehicle killing an officer.

Manathunga told reporters that the court ruled that the undercover operation was illegal and eight police officers, including Tennakoon, must be arrested.

Tennakoon, who was suspended by the highest court, is absconding and raids have been carried out since last week at locations where Tennakoon was likely to be. The court has issued a travel ban on him. "We seek public support to arrest him. We treat him as a suspect," Manathunga said. Tennakoon was appointed as the police chief in November 2023 despite him being found guilty of torturing a person in custody by the Supreme Court in a fundamental rights petition. Tennakoon was suspended in July 2024 from functioning by the Supreme Court, which also ordered a hearing on the legality of his appointment. (PTI)

## Myanmar junta chief says general election will be held by January 2026

**BANGKOK (TIP):** Myanmar's junta chief said the country would hold an election in December or January, the first in the war-torn nation since the military staged a coup in 2021.

"We are planning to hold the election in December 2025 or... by January 2026," General Min Aung Hlaing was quoted as saying in the state-run newspaper Global New Light of Myanmar published Saturday.

The vote would be "free and fair," he said on Friday during a state visit to Belarus, adding that 53 political parties had "submitted their lists" to participate.

"We also invite observation teams from Belarus to come and observe" the slated election, he said during a meeting with Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko in Minsk. The Myanmar military seized power in 2021, making unsubstantiated claims of massive electoral fraud in 2020 polls won resoundingly by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD). It has since unleashed a bloody crackdown on dissent and as fighting ravages swathes of the country had repeatedly delayed plans for fresh polls that critics say will be neither free nor fair.

In 2022, the junta-stacked election commission announced that Suu Kyi's NLD would be dissolved for failing to re-register under a tough new military-drafted electoral law.

Junta-appointed foreign minister Than Swe in December told delegates from five neighbouring countries at a meeting in Bangkok that "progress was being made" towards an election in 2025.

The junta in January extended an already-prolonged state of emergency by six months, eliminating the possibility of long-promised polls until the second half of the year at the earliest. (AFP)

## CONTD FROM PAGE 1

## Trump warns Russia of sanctions, tariffs until Ukraine ceasefire deal reached

"To Russia and Ukraine, get to the table right now, before it is too late," he added.

Meanwhile, according to Al Jazeera, Ukraine and the United States have indicated they will meet in Saudi Arabia next week to discuss a framework for ending Russia's war.

Zelenskyy said on Thursday he would travel to Saudi Arabia on Monday for a meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman before bilateral talks with US officials.

US envoy Steve Witkoff confirmed he would meet Ukrainian officials in Saudi Arabia, signaling that he would discuss an "initial ceasefire" and a "framework" for a longer agreement, as per Al Jazeera.

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the talks would take place in the Red Sea city of Jeddah.

Notably, after a fiery exchange with his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on March 1, Trump suspended military aid and intelligence sharing with Kyiv.

Trump used some strong words during his media interaction with Zelenskyy, telling the visiting leader that he "does not have the cards" and is not "acting thankful" for the support the United States has provided to Ukraine in its war with Russia, which began in February 2022.

In the explosive media interaction with Trump, Ukraine's President had emphasized the need for security guarantees and noted that the Russian President Vladimir Putin had continued with his actions against his country even during Trump's first term as President.

US Vice President JD Vance also expressed his disapproval of Zelenskyy's remarks, saying it is "disrespectful to come to the Oval Office of the United States of America and attack the administration that is trying to prevent the destruction of your country."

Trump emphasized the need for a deal to bring peace and prevent killings and told Zelenskyy, "if you didn't have our military equipment, this war would have been over in two weeks". (Source: ANI)

## US pushes for grand trade pact with India, wants access to agri market

"Now, how do you do that? And the scale by which you do that? Maybe you do quarters. Maybe do limits. You can be smarter when you have your most important trading partner on the other side of the table. You can't just say...it's off the table. That's just not an attractive way of doing business," US Commerce Secretary Lutnick said.

The right way to do business is to put everything on the table, but do it smartly and do it thoughtfully, he said. Lutnick also said that countries like India have one of the highest tariffs in the world, and that is why US President Trump is talking about imposing reciprocal tariffs.

US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick has asked India to shift defense equipment purchases from Russia to the US. "India has historically bought significant amounts of its military equipment from Russia, and we think that is something that needs to end," he said.

India is looking to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers with the US and strengthen trade in the goods and services sector through the multi-sector bilateral trade agreement that is in the works, the MEA said.

## Trump creates task force to prepare for 2026 World Cup

nations. "Tension's a good thing." The task force, which Trump will chair, will coordinate the federal government's security and planning for the tournament, which is expected to draw millions of tourists to the United States, Canada and Mexico.

"It's a great honor for our country to have it," Trump said about the World Cup after meeting officials from FIFA, the international soccer governing body. He said

he'd like to attend multiple games.

Preparations are ramping up across the continent alongside tensions between the United States and its neighbors as Trump has repeatedly threatened to impose tariffs before backing off, spooking markets and leading to fears of a trade war and economic downturn. He also speaks pejoratively of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and muses about Canada becoming a US state, which has boosted national pride north of the border.

For 2026, the World Cup will expand to 48 teams playing 104 matches across three nations, the first time the tournament will be split between countries. Seventy-eight of 104 matches will be played in the US, with 13 games each in Mexico and Canada, and as many as six matches a day. The final will be played July 19 at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino said the task force would ensure that each of the visitors who will travel from around the world "feels safe, feels happy and feels that we are doing something special."

"So we're here to create and to make the best show on the planet ever," Infantino said.

He gave Trump a personalized game ball and unveiled an elaborate trophy that will go to the winner of the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup, which will pit top soccer clubs against each other this summer ahead of next year's matchup of national teams.

Trump later brought Infantino to show off the trophy at the start of a White House cryptocurrency summit. The United States, where soccer has grown in popularity but remains a niche sport, represents a major growth area for soccer, he said.

Infantino likened producing the World Cup to holding three Super Bowls daily for a month, a dizzying security and logistical challenge for the host governments.

The Trump administration will face a second test on the global sports stage in 2028, when the summer Olympics will be held in California, the first time the Games will have been in the US since Salt Lake City hosted in 2002. (Source: AP)

**CALL FOR ALL YOUR LIFE INSURANCE NEEDS!**  
"MAKING FRIENDS THROUGH SERVICE"



**SHIV KUMAR SAHANI**

Agent, New York Life Insurance Co.  
**646-644-0174**

**OUR TEAM OF AGENTS ARE READY TO HELP!**

**PRIYA SAHANI - (917) 723-6684**

**RAVI SURTI - (614) 578-7070**

**ARISH K. SAHANI - (718) 271-0453**

**SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1972**

## Indian Visa Center

VISA / OCI PIO / PASSPORT  
APPLICATION ASSISTANCE CENTER  
349 S. Broadway, Hicksville, NY 11801

**DEEPAK BANSAL**

Email: [deepakbansalny@gmail.com](mailto:deepakbansalny@gmail.com)

Cell: 516.304.8808 Fax: 516.218.8009



**BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY**

Join our team and

**Build Your Own Business**  
In Financial Services domain

- \* No Investment
- \* Part-time and full-time opportunity
- \* Extensive Training & Support

**Call Now**

901.335.7521

[FinFreeServicesLLC@gmail.com](mailto:FinFreeServicesLLC@gmail.com)



**Do you want to succeed in a very rewarding career?**

NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY  
**IS HIRING**

Do you want to capitalize on your ability to produce?

**COME CHECK IT OUT!**

CALL MR. ROHAN HANDA **718-286-1132 | 516-435-6120**

Rohan Handa  
Executive Partner  
New York Life

Conveniently located at:  
95-25 Queens Blvd., 4th Floor  
Rego Park, N.Y. 11374



**INDO US EXPRESS, INC.**

Worldwide Couriers / Freight Forwarders  
Domestic Rush Delivery / Import / Export  
Custom Clearance / Trading Consultant

Gurinder Singh  
CEO

**SALES OFFICE**

224 West 30th St., #604, New York, NY 10001  
Mail: P.O. Box 7304, Hicksville, NY 11802

Office: 212.447.5720 Fax: 516.932.3750  
Delhi: 98.1849.0552  
Mumbai: 92.2453.1807  
New York: 347.538.7041

Visit US Online: [www.indousexpress.com](http://www.indousexpress.com)  
Email: [indousexpress@gmail.com](mailto:indousexpress@gmail.com)

Get  
to the  
Point



*The* INDIAN PANORAMA  
EVER TRUTHFUL

A DELIGHTFUL READING EVERY WEEK

**Widest Coverage**

Your Trusted Partner in Business

**The Indian Panorama**

P.O. Box No. 190067, South Richmond Hill, NY 11419, Tel: 646-247-9458  
Dallas Edition - P.O. Box 121695, Arlington, TX 76012

[www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news)

# Hola Mohalla: The Sikh festival of martial spirit and brotherhood

**H**ola Mohalla is one of the most vibrant and significant festivals celebrated by Sikhs around the world. This festival is observed annually, typically a day after Holi, and holds deep cultural, historical, and religious significance. It is marked by grand processions, displays of martial arts, poetry recitations, and devotional music. Unlike Holi, which is a festival of colors and joy, Hola Mohalla emphasizes valor, discipline, and community service, reflecting the martial and spiritual ethos of Sikhism.

## Historical Background

Hola Mohalla traces its origins back to the late 17th century, during the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru. It was first celebrated in 1701 in the town of Anandpur Sahib in present-day Punjab, India. Guru Gobind Singh initiated this festival as a response to the prevalent socio-political conditions in the region. At that time, Sikhs were facing oppression from Mughal rulers, and the Guru sought to prepare his followers both spiritually and militarily.

The term Hola is derived from Holi, the Hindu festival of colors, whereas Mohalla means an organized procession. Unlike Holi, where people throw colors at each other, Hola Mohalla was conceptualized as a military exercise, where Sikhs could showcase their warrior skills and engage in mock battles to strengthen their combat readiness.

## Significance of Hola Mohalla

The festival holds a profound significance in Sikh culture and tradition. It embodies key values of Sikhism, including:

- **Martial Spirit:** The festival serves as a reminder of the importance of self-defense and the warrior heritage of the Khalsa Panth (the collective body of baptized Sikhs).
- **Spiritual Growth:** Devotional activities such as kirtan (spiritual hymns), katha (religious discourse), and prayer sessions help Sikhs reaffirm their faith.
- **Community Service:** The festival promotes seva (selfless service), where Sikhs prepare and distribute langar (free community meals) to thousands of devotees and visitors.
- **Unity and Brotherhood:** The event brings together Sikhs from all walks of life, fostering a sense of unity and collective identity.
- **Historical Remembrance:** Hola Mohalla serves as a living memory of the Sikh struggle against tyranny and their commitment to justice and righteousness.

## Celebrations at Anandpur Sahib

The epicenter of Hola Mohalla



celebrations is Anandpur Sahib, the historic town where Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa in 1699. The festivities last for three days and include a variety of activities:

### Nagar Kirtan (Religious Processions)

The celebrations commence with a grand Nagar Kirtan, a religious procession led by the Panj Pyare (the five beloved ones) carrying the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of Sikhism. Devotees sing hymns and chant prayers as they march through the streets.

### Gatka Performances

One of the most thrilling aspects of Hola Mohalla is the demonstration of Gatka, a traditional Sikh martial art. Practitioners showcase their expertise with swords, spears, and other weapons, reenacting battle techniques that have been passed down through generations.

### Mock Battles and Horse Riding Stunts

Sikh warriors, known as Nihangs or

Akalis, participate in mock battles, military drills, and horse riding stunts. The Nihangs, recognized by their distinctive blue attire and tall turbans, are known for their valor and are often the main participants in these displays. They perform breathtaking stunts such as tent pegging, sword fighting on horseback, and spear-throwing contests.

### Spiritual and Cultural Programs

Several spiritual discourses and kirtan sessions are held, where scholars and religious leaders discuss Sikh teachings and history. Poets and storytellers also recite vaars (ballads) that narrate heroic tales from Sikh history. These performances keep the legacy of Sikh warriors and martyrs alive.

### Langar Seva (Community Kitchen)

A key highlight of the festival is the langar, where thousands of volunteers prepare and serve free meals to all attendees, regardless of caste, creed, or religion. This reflects the Sikh principle

of equality and selfless service. The scale of the langar is massive, with thousands of kilograms of food being prepared daily during the festival.

### Mass Gatherings and Devotional Assemblies

Throughout the festival, large congregations gather at the various gurdwaras (Sikh temples) in Anandpur Sahib. Devotees listen to religious discourses, participate in meditation sessions, and engage in collective prayers, reinforcing their spiritual connection.

### Hola Mohalla Beyond Anandpur Sahib

While Anandpur Sahib remains the main hub of celebrations, Hola Mohalla is also observed in other parts of Punjab and by Sikh communities worldwide. Cities like Amritsar, Ludhiana, and Patiala hold local festivities, including religious gatherings and martial arts displays. In Western countries with significant Sikh populations, such as Canada, the UK, and the US, Sikh communities organize processions and cultural events to keep the spirit of Hola Mohalla alive. These events often include Gatka demonstrations, musical performances, and charity drives to promote Sikh values and traditions.

### The Role of Nihangs in Hola Mohalla

The Nihangs, a warrior sect within Sikhism, play a crucial role in Hola Mohalla celebrations. These traditional Sikh warriors uphold the martial legacy of Guru Gobind Singh and are known for their distinctive blue robes, steel bracelets, and weapons. During the festival, Nihangs demonstrate exceptional skills in combat, horse riding, and weaponry, captivating audiences with their prowess.

Nihangs are also known for their unique lifestyle, which includes strict adherence to Sikh principles, celibacy, and an unwavering commitment to martial discipline. Their presence at Hola Mohalla is a living embodiment of Sikh warrior traditions.

### Evolution of Hola Mohalla Over Time

Over the centuries, Hola Mohalla has evolved while retaining its core essence. What began as a military exercise has transformed into a grand festival that combines religious devotion, martial arts, and community service. Today, it serves as a living testament to Sikh resilience, discipline, and unity.

Modern celebrations have incorporated technology and media, allowing people worldwide to participate virtually through live broadcasts and online interactions. Despite these changes, the festival remains deeply rooted in its historical and religious traditions.

# Chikmagalur, a picturesque hill station in Karnataka

Chikmagalur, a picturesque hill station in Karnataka, India, is known for its lush coffee plantations, misty hills, and serene landscapes. It's a paradise for nature lovers, adventure seekers, and those looking for a peaceful getaway.

The life-supporting rivers of Karnataka and other states - Tunga, Bhadra, Hemavati, Vedavati, Yagachi originate in the Western Ghat hills of the district. The district is a great attraction to all kinds of people - trekkers, pilgrims, travellers and tourists. This area is famous for the coffee estates in the vicinity and also known as the Coffee Belt of the South.

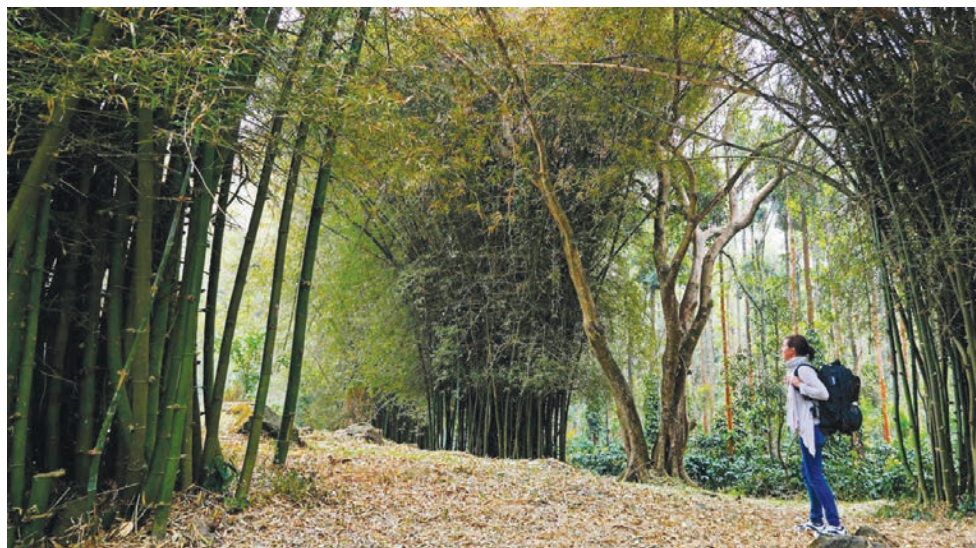
## COFFEE CULTURE

Perfect for a traveller who is happy sauntering between the thick undergrowth of the wild coffee bushes, eyes peeled for exotic birdlife and animals, Chikmagalur is the ideal pick. Most of the accommodations lie in the backdrop of coffee plantations, giving the traveller an opportunity to stay in the middle of a million shades of green. Coffee plantation walks organised by the owners are an essential orientation to understand the variety, seasons, wildlife around the area, history of coffee making, processes and what a planter's life might be like. Coffee plantations of Chikmagalur offer a brilliant atmosphere for both outdoor junkies and those who like to switch off and do nothing. Outdoor enthusiasts during their short hikes to the top of a plantation often make their way through forest streams and spot an array of local avian and animal occupants.

Birding enthusiasts should remember to carry their binoculars. For those who need to unwind without a packed itinerary or an activity should grab a book or an i-pod and sink into a lounging chair or a hammock, and succumb to the sound of nature around. Miles of stunning views, ludicrous amount of green and the whiff of coffee accompany the copious amount of mugs you can down.

## MOUNTAIN CIRCUIT

The main highlight of Chikmagalur for most travellers lies in covering the three main peaks of the town? Sheethalagiri, Baba Budan Giri and Mullayanagiri. Head towards Kaimara junction to start at the foothills of this loop and head first towards Sheethalagiri. This is an ancient temple whose history can be traced back to 1000 years and is dedicated to Mallikarjuna Swamy. The temple itself is not very elaborate but is worth your while for its history and the 'prasadam', a fistful of water from a natural trickle of waterfall inside. Next on the same route is Baba Budan Giri hill, also known as Dattagiri Hill Range or Inam Dattatreya Peetha after the famous saint who brought coffee to India. This small shrine is propped at 1895 m offering a



breathhtaking view of the valley below. The shrine is visited by people of all religions. The next stop is Mullayanagiri, the highest peak (1930 m) in the state of Karnataka. Predictably windy and bone chilling cold, it's apt to stay for a short time to enjoy the view. Many trekkers take on the mammoth mountain despite the winds and near invisible paths due to the mist. The trio are known as the Chandradrona Parvatha Shreni.

## KEMMANAGUNDI

Even though Kemmanagundi lies almost 500 m below the highest Karnataka peak, Mullayanagiri, the views from here are equally riveting as

the hills cascade down, draped in coffee bushes. It is more accessible than the higher mountain loop and is embellished by pit stops for tourists; an unimpressive rock garden and a government run children's park are part of Kemmanagundi area but can be avoided. This does not hamper dozens of camera happy tourists enjoying the lush green environs as a backdrop to perfect pictures. What is not to miss is the few spots from where you can see the clouds fill up the valley for a mesmerising view. This was the very reason King Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV chose this as a summer retreat. There are a handful of restaurants, viewing decks and even a

place to stay maintained by the Karnataka State Tourism Development Board. Raj Bhavan is one of the most popular viewing points of the hill top. If you're running short of time, stick with the Sheethalagiri-Baba Budan Giri-Mullayanagiri circuit and give this one a miss. The only veritable reason why one should visit Kemmanagundi, is because it is the only access point to Hebbe Falls. Local four wheel jeeps can be hired from here to get to the beautiful untouched waterfalls.

## HEBBE FALLS

Adventure lovers are promised a bone rattling yet thrilling drive of 13 km, through forested paths (sometimes no paths at all) from Kemmanagundi to Hebbe Falls. A four wheel experience is the only way to manoeuvre through the bumpy road. There are local jeeps available at the base of Kemmanagundi that charge anywhere around Rs 300-500 for a return trip on a sharing basis. After the 13 km ride, one has to reach the falls on foot, after crossing two shallow streams. The effort is absolutely worth your while as you watch the 551 ft drop from the base. There are two stages of the waterfall: Dodda Hebbe (Big Falls) and Chikka Hebbe (Small Falls). The white frothy water cascades down with gusto but even though it looks tempting to go stand under it, it is not recommended. The falls are slightly cut off and isolated. It is likely that no medical help can reach soon. It is recommended to remain at its fringes. This is most voluminous after or during monsoons, but this also means that the area is likely to be infested with swift leeches. Carry a small packet of salt to get rid of them soon.

## KALHATTI FALLS

Given that Chikmagalur has a large forest cover and entire hillsides covered with plantations, it is not uncommon to see many small and big waterfalls and rivulets around the area. One of the most popular amongst the religious travellers is the Kalhatti waterfall, even though it is far smaller than the nearby Hebbe Falls. From Kemmanagundi, the drive to Kalhatti is only 10 km. The spot can be recognised with a swathe of people, buses and cars on the main road itself. Stop here, and walk a short distance to the base of the falls. Even though it does not match up to the impression of Hebbe Falls, it makes for a great stop for those who like to tick things of the list when visiting a destination.

A temple of Lord Veerabhadra stands at the base of the 122 m drop. The falls are also known as the Kalahasti falls by the locals. There are a few local shops here where one can stop for a quick snack. The waterfall lies on the same loop of Mullayangiri, Baba Budan Giri and Seethalagiri hills along with Kemmanagundi.

# History This Week

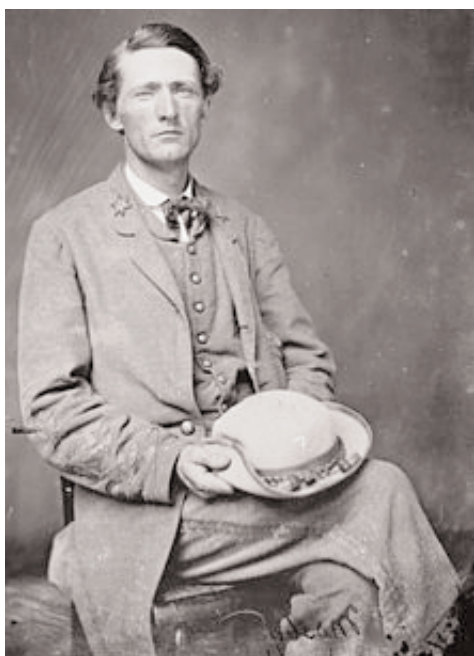
MAR 07 - MAR 13

## MARCH 7



Birthdays - Stephen Hopkins (1707-1785) was born in Providence, Rhode Island. He was the state's colonial governor and was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

## MARCH 8



March 8, 1863 - During the American Civil War, Confederate Colonel John Mosby, leader of Mosby's Rangers, captured Union General E.H. Stoughton at his headquarters in Fairfax County Courthouse, Virginia.

## MARCH 9



March 9, 1864 - Ulysses S. Grant was commissioned as a Lieutenant General

and became commander of the Union armies.



Birthdays - Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci (1451-1512) was born in Florence, Italy. He explored South America and the Amazon River, believing he had discovered a new continent. In 1507, a German mapmaker first referred to the lands discovered in the New World as America.



Birthdays - Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin (1934-1968) was born in Gzhatsk, Russia. On April 12, 1961, he became the first human in space, orbiting in a capsule 187 miles above the Earth's surface in a flight lasting 108 minutes. His space flight caused a worldwide sensation and marked the beginning of the space race as the U.S. worked to catch up to the Russians and launch an American into space. President John F. Kennedy later asserted the U.S. would land a man on the moon before the end of the 1960's.

## MARCH 10



March 10, 1862 - The first issue of U.S. government paper money occurred as \$5, \$10 and \$20 bills began circulation.

March 10, 1880 - The Salvation Army was founded in the United States. The social service organization was first founded in England by William Booth and operates today in 90 countries.



Birthdays - Politician and playwright Claire Boothe Luce (1903-1987) was born in New York City. She served in the House of Representatives from 1943 to 1947 and then became the first woman appointed as U.S. ambassador to a major country (Italy).

## MARCH 11



March 11, 1918 - The 'Spanish' influenza first reached America as 107 soldiers become sick at Fort Riley, Kansas. One quarter of the U.S. population eventually became ill from the deadly virus, resulting in 500,000 deaths. The death toll worldwide approached 22 million by the end of 1920.

March 11, 1941 - During World War II, the Lend-Lease program began allowing Britain to receive American weapons, machines, raw materials, training and repair services. Ships, planes, guns and shells, along with food, clothing and metals went to the embattled British while American warships began patrolling the North Atlantic and U.S. troops were stationed in Greenland and Iceland. "We must be the great arsenal of democracy," President Roosevelt declared concerning the fight against Hitler's Germany. The initial appropriation was \$7 Billion, but by 1946 the figure reached \$50 Billion in aid from the U.S. to its Allies.



Birthdays - British prime minister and statesman Harold Wilson (1916-1995) was born in Huddersfield, Yorkshire. As a young boy he once posed for a photo in front of 10 Downing Street, the residence he occupied 40 years later as head of the

Labour government.

## MARCH 12

March 12, 1609 - The island of Bermuda was colonized by the British after a ship on its way to Virginia was wrecked on the reefs.

March 12, 1888 - The Great Blizzard of '88 struck the northeastern U.S. The storm lasted 36 hours with snowfall totaling over 40 inches in New York City where over 400 persons died from the surprise storm.

March 12, 1938 - Nazis invaded Austria, then absorbed the country into Hitler's Reich.



March 12, 1994 - The Church of England ordained 32 women as its first female priests. In protest, 700 male clergy members and thousands of church members left the church and joined the Roman Catholic Church which does not allow women priests.

March 12, 1999 - Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic became full-fledged members of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) less than ten years after exchanging communist rule for democracy and ending their Cold War military alliances with Soviet Russia.



Birthdays - The founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938) was born in Salonika, Greece. Following World War I, he led the Turkish revolution and became Turkey's first president.

## MARCH 13

March 13, 1943 - A plot to kill Hitler by German army officers failed as a bomb planted aboard his plane failed to explode due to a faulty detonator.



Birthdays - Scientist and clergyman Joseph Priestly (1733-1804) was born in Yorkshire, England. He discovered oxygen and advanced the religious theory of Unitarianism.

CHAMPIONS TROPHY FINAL

# India, New Zealand to battle in title clash after 25 years

DUBAI (TIP)

India and New Zealand are set to clash in a major tournament final in white-ball cricket for the first time in 25 years. New Zealand secured their place in the Champions Trophy 2025 final with a dominant performance against South Africa in the second semi-final in Lahore on Wednesday, March 5. The Black Caps will now face familiar rivals India in the grand finale on Sunday, March 9, in Dubai.

India became the first team to book their spot in the final after defeating Australia by four wickets in Dubai on Tuesday. New Zealand, who lost their last Group A match against India, will now have the opportunity to avenge that defeat when they take on Rohit Sharma and his men at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

India and New Zealand have met twice before in ICC tournament finals. The last time they faced each other in a title match was in the 2021 ICC World Test Championship final in Southampton, where a Kane Williamson-led New Zealand outclassed India by eight wickets in a rain-affected contest that stretched over six days.

India secured a spot in the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy final by defeating Australia by four wickets in the semi-final held on March 4, 2025, at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

**Match Highlights:**

- Australia's Innings: After opting to



bat first, Australia posted a total of 264 runs. Steve Smith top-scored with 73 runs, and Alex Carey contributed 60 runs.

- India's Chase: Virat Kohli anchored India's response with a crucial 84 runs. Despite losing wickets at intervals, India successfully chased down the target in 48.1 overs, thanks to key contributions from KL Rahul (36 not out) and Hardik Pandya (28).

- Man of the Match: Virat Kohli was named Man of the Match for his pivotal innings.
- This victory propels India into their third consecutive Champions Trophy final, where they will face the winner of the second semi-final between New Zealand and South Africa.
- The final is scheduled for March 9, 2025, at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.



## England considering Ben Stokes for white ball captaincy

England's Test captain Ben Stokes is being considered as a potential replacement for Jos Buttler as the limited-overs skipper with ECB's director of men's cricket, Rob Key emphasising that it would be "stupid" not to explore the option, given his leadership qualities and the need to revive England's struggling white-ball setup.

Stokes, 33, has not played ODIs since the 2023 World Cup, where he reversed his initial decision to retire from the format.

His Champions Trophy return was marred by a second hamstring tear in six months, sustained during the third Test against New Zealand.

"I think nothing's off the table really," Key was quoted saying in ESPNcricinfo. "You look at every single option and you think, right, what is the best thing to do? How is that going to impact on other things?"

"Ben Stokes is one of the best captains I've ever seen. So it would be stupid not to look at him. It's just the knock-on effect of what that means.

Source: PTI

# India in top form ahead of Champions Trophy 2025 final in Dubai

DUBAI (TIP)

India enters the Champions Trophy 2025 Final in Dubai on Sunday in excellent form, having secured four wins in the tournament, as per the official website of ICC.

India's tournament opener saw them prevail in a tight contest against Bangladesh in Dubai, registering a sizzling six-wicket victory to begin their campaign on a winning note.

Pacer Mohammed Shami's impressive 5/53, combined with three scalps from Harshit Rana and two from Axar Patel, restricted Bangladesh to 228.

Shubman Gill's unbeaten 101\*, combined with stylish knocks from Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul, ensured smooth sailing for India as they reached the Tigers' total with 21 balls to spare.

In their high-voltage clash against arch-rivals Pakistan, India displayed their all-round prowess by chasing down 241 runs with six wickets in hand.

Kuldeep Yadav weaved his magic for the Indian side by taking three crucial wickets to bundle out Pakistan for 241 in 49.4 overs.

Shubman Gill (46) and Shreyas Iyer (56) came up with some crucial knocks, but the age-old rivalry was marked primarily by a Virat Kohli masterclass that saw him score an unbeaten 100 to steer India



to victory.

A different challenge for Rohit Sharma's side in the form of New Zealand, with the winner staying unbeaten at the tournament and earning the top spot in Group A. Though when these two sides met, they had both already qualified for the semi-final stage.

New Zealand's bowlers did well to restrict India's batting line-up, with Shreyas Iyer (79) and Hardik Pandya (45) leading the way as the Asian side posted a competitive total of 249/9 after they were sent in to bat first.

It was the Varun Chakravarthy show in reply, with the spinner claiming an impressive five-wicket haul to help bowl New Zealand out for just 205, as India progressed through to the final four with their unbeaten record intact.

India qualified for the Champions Trophy final by taking down another of their top rivals, Australia.

The bowlers applied pressure throughout the Aussies' batting innings, restricting them to 264 all out in the 50th over, consistently finding key wickets throughout. Mohammed Shami chipped in with three big wickets, while spinners Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja grabbed a couple.



## An Eye Institute in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh combatting avoidable blindness in children.

"On behalf of all my colleagues of the Wilmer Eye Institute in Baltimore, MD. I send my best wishes and congratulations to our friends in Goutami on this extremely important occasion. This beautiful facility will match the wonderful world class work of your doctors, nurses, and staff in preserving and restoring the vision of so many patients. We in the United States are inspired by your dedication and admire your tireless efforts to serve so many who need your skills and compassion. Best wishes, Peter"

**Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins**



**New Goutami Institute building to be constructed 2024**

**3.5 + million served**  
**325,000 + vision restoring surgeries**  
**30,000 + surgeries on children**

Services Include:

- Treating disease and vision problems
- performing free cataract surgeries
- distributing glasses and visual aids
- conducting community research
- providing education to physicians and the public

**Join our Vision.**  
**Give the gift**  
**of sight today.**

**Visit [eyefoundationofamerica.org](http://eyefoundationofamerica.org)**

695 WESTVIEW AVENUE, MORGANTOWN, WV 26505  
 TAX ID # 55-062-1735



In 2018 Prasanth, Sushanth and Nisanth were diagnosed and treated for Prematurity Retinopathy. An illness in premature babies which can cause blindness.

Luckily through GEMROP an initiative funded by EFA to screen premature babies throughout hospitals in India, the triplets were able to receive an expensive surgery free of charge. The boys are now the age of 4 with perfect vision.