



We wish our readers a
Happy 77th Republic Day of India

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Massive winter storm spanning 40 states threatens US with snow, extreme cold

235 million brace for weekend winter weather; Travel disruptions inevitable
More than 8000 flights canceled; Air India cancels New York, Newark flights



Strong winds kick up snow in Lowville, New York, on January 23, 2026.

-Photo Credit: AP

**JANUARY 23, 2026
DALLAS/ NEW YORK (TIP):**

Freezing rain fell in parts of Texas on Friday, January 23, as a huge, days long winter storm began a trek that threatened to bring snow, sleet, ice, bone-chilling temperatures and extensive power outages to about half the US population. Forecasters warned that catastrophic damage, especially in areas pounded by ice, could rival that of a hurricane.

Schools in Chicago and other Midwestern cities called off classes, airlines cancelled thousands of weekend flights, churches moved Sunday services online and the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee, decided to hold its Saturday night radio

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Thousands march through downtown Minneapolis protesting against ICE as state workers hold general strike

**ORGANIZERS DEMAND ICE LEAVE STATE AND AGENCY BE INVESTIGATED FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL VIOLATIONS**



100 clergy arrested at Minneapolis-St. Paul airport during ICE protest

**JANUARY 23, 2026
MINNEAPOLIS (TIP)**

Tens of thousands of Minnesotans marched in Minneapolis and otherwise participated in an economic blackout on Friday to protest against the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) surge in the state.

About 100 clergy members were arrested by police during the action, video footage showed.

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US regulator seeks to bypass Indian government to serve Adani summons

SEC ALLEGES A FRAUD AND BRIBERY SCHEME INVOLVING \$265 MILLION.



Indian Billionaire Gautam Adani

**JANUARY 22, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission has asked a U.S. court for permission to personally email summons to Indian billionaire Gautam Adani and group executive Sagar Adani over alleged fraud and a \$265 million bribery scheme, filings show.

The SEC said that India has previously refused two requests to serve the summons.

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'Melania', a film documenting US First Lady's life, set for global release on Jan 30

FIRST LADY TO HOST A PRIVATE WHITE HOUSE SCREENING ON SATURDAY



Grabs from the movie trailer of 'Melania', which is based on US President Donald Trump's wife. -Source: YouTube/@AmazonMGMStudios

**JAN 23, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

First lady Melania Trump will host a private White House screening on Saturday, January 24, of a new film documenting her life in the 20 days leading up to President Donald Trump's second inauguration, an adviser said. The movie, "Melania", is set for a global release on

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COMMENT

India at 77: The Republic's Journey, Its Promises, and Its Tests

INDRAJIT SALUJA



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On January 26, 2026, India will mark the 77th anniversary of its Republic—a moment not merely of celebration, but of reflection. Republic Day is not about pomp alone; it is a reminder of a constitutional promise made to nearly one-sixth of humanity. It invites Indians and friends of India to ask a fundamental question: How far has the Indian Republic traveled, and how faithfully has it adhered to the ideals enshrined in its Constitution?

The Indian Republic was born not out of conquest or revolution, but out of reasoned deliberation. On January 26, 1950, India chose to govern itself under a Constitution that was democratic, federal, secular, and transformative. It was a bold experiment—perhaps the boldest democratic experiment the world had ever seen—given the country's poverty, illiteracy, social stratification, and sheer diversity at the time of independence.

THE FOUNDATIONAL VISION : The principal architect of India's Constitution, B. R. Ambedkar, was acutely aware of the enormity of the task. Having studied law and political science at Columbia University, Ambedkar was deeply influenced by Western constitutionalism, particularly the principles of liberty, equality, and due process embedded in American democracy. Yet, he also understood India's unique civilizational context, where social hierarchies were far more entrenched than in most Western societies.

In his famous Constituent Assembly speech on November 25, 1949, Ambedkar warned: "Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy." This insight remains as relevant today as it was then.

EARLY REPUBLIC: STABILITY AGAINST THE ODDS : When India became a Republic, its challenges were staggering. Life expectancy hovered around 32 years, literacy was under 18 percent, and the economy was fragile. Yet, unlike many post-colonial states, India did not lapse into authoritarianism. It held regular elections, respected judicial independence, and upheld parliamentary supremacy.

Between 1950 and the late 1960s, the Indian Republic laid strong institutional foundations: a functioning Election Commission, an independent judiciary, a professional civil service, and a robust Parliament. The democratic transition occurred peacefully—an achievement unmatched in scale.

Economic growth, however, was modest. The so-called "Hindu rate of growth" averaged about 3-3.5 percent annually until the 1980s. Centralized planning, excessive regulation, and state dominance limited enterprise. Yet, this period also saw the building of core national assets—public sector industries, scientific institutions, and higher education centers—that later generations would rely upon.

THE TURNING POINT: REFORM AND EXPANSION : A decisive shift came in 1991 with economic liberalization. Market reforms dismantled the license raj, opened India to global trade, and unleashed private entrepreneurship. The results have been transformative. India today is the world's fifth-largest economy by nominal GDP and among the fastest-growing major economies.

Poverty has declined significantly. According to World Bank estimates, extreme poverty fell sharply from over 45 percent in the early 1990s to well below 10 percent in recent years. Literacy rates have crossed 77 percent, life expectancy has doubled since independence, and a vast middle class has emerged.

Democracy, too, has deepened in some respects. The right to vote is universal, participation in elections remains high, and marginalized groups have gained greater political representation through affirmative action and grassroots democracy.

THE PRESENT REPUBLIC: STRENGTHS AND STRAINS : At 77, the Indian Republic stands stronger than many believed possible in 1950—but it also faces new and serious challenges.

On the positive side, India enjoys political continuity, rising global influence, and technological advancement. Its digital public infrastructure, from Aadhaar to digital payments, has improved

service delivery at a scale few countries can match. India is increasingly seen as a key voice of the Global South.

However, concerns persist regarding institutional balance, freedom of expression, and social cohesion. The concentration of executive power, pressures on federalism, and growing political polarization raise questions about the health of democratic checks and balances. Inequality—economic and social—remains sharp, with wealth concentration accelerating even as overall prosperity grows.

Ambedkar's caution about social democracy is particularly relevant. While legal equality exists, social inequities based on caste, religion, and gender continue to test the Republic's moral foundations.

COMPARING TWO DEMOCRACIES: INDIA AND THE UNITED STATES : A comparison between the Indian Republic and American democracy is instructive—not to elevate one above the other, but to understand democratic diversity.

The United States Constitution, drafted in 1787, emphasized negative liberties—freedom from state interference. The Indian Constitution, framed in the mid-20th century, went further by embracing positive rights: equality, affirmative action, socio-economic justice, and directive principles aimed at uplifting the disadvantaged.

While American democracy evolved gradually over two centuries, often denying rights to minorities well into the 20th century, India adopted universal adult franchise from day one—an unprecedented move. In this sense, India was, paradoxically, more radical at birth than older democracies.

Yet, the U.S. system benefits from a long tradition of institutional restraint, judicial precedent, and decentralization. India's challenge has been to uphold similar restraints amid mass politics and developmental pressures.

Both democracies today confront populism, polarization, and distrust in institutions—reminding us that democracy is not a destination, but a continuous process.

PLUSES AND MINUSES: A BALANCED ASSESSMENT : The pluses of the Indian Republic are undeniable: constitutional resilience, peaceful transfers of power, social mobility, and economic progress. Few nations of India's size and diversity have managed to remain democratic for so long.

The minuses lie in uneven development, institutional stress, and periodic erosion of civil liberties. The gap between constitutional ideals and everyday reality remains a work in progress.

Importantly, India has corrected itself in the past—after the Emergency of 1975-77, for instance, when democratic rights were restored through the ballot. This capacity for self-correction remains one of the Republic's greatest strengths.

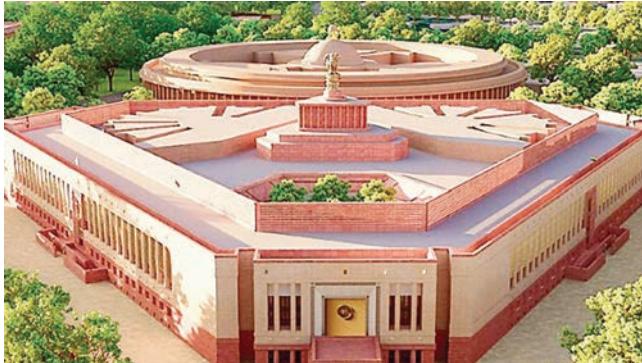
A REPUBLIC STILL IN THE MAKING : As India celebrates its 77th Republic Day, patriotism must be accompanied by introspection. The Constitution is not a mere document; it is a living covenant between the state and its citizens. Ambedkar described it as "a vehicle of life," capable of growth but also vulnerable to misuse.

For the common citizen, the message is simple yet profound: the Republic survives not because of rulers, but because of institutions—and institutions endure only when citizens defend them.

The Indian Republic, like American democracy, is imperfect but invaluable. Its journey from 1950 to 2026 is a testament to human aspiration, collective effort, and democratic faith. The task ahead is not to rewrite the constitutional promise, but to realize it more fully—so that liberty, equality, and fraternity remain not just words in a Preamble, but lived realities for every Indian.

At 77, the Indian Republic does not ask for uncritical applause. It asks for informed participation, moral courage, and renewed commitment—precisely what a true Republic deserves.

Happy 77th Republic Day of India!





THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA AT 77 IN THE EYES OF THE INDIAN PANORAMA READERS

For Indians who migrated to the United States a few years ago—particularly those in their thirties and beyond—India is not a distant idea but a lived reality. They have grown up with its sights and sounds, absorbed its contradictions, and

carried its memories across continents. Though settled abroad, they continue to follow the social, political, and economic journey of the land of their birth with keen interest. It is therefore natural for them to celebrate India's national days—

Independence Day and Republic Day with the same warmth and emotion as their religious and cultural festivals such as Diwali, Vaisakhi, Pongal, Onam, Holi, Lohri, Chhath and many others. Each national day rekindles patriotic feelings and invites

reflection on the state of the nation. On the occasion of the 77th Republic Day of India, The Indian Panorama invited its readers of Indian origin to share their views. We are pleased to present a selection of their thoughtful reflections here.



AMIT VERMA
COUNTRY HEAD,
US OPERATIONS
STATE BANK OF
INDIA, NEW YORK

As the tricolor unfurls across India on its 77th Republic Day, I join the Indian diaspora in the United States in celebrating the triumph of our Constitution and the spirit of our resilient democracy. I salute every Indian who carries forward our rich heritage while contributing to global progress. May this day inspire us to strengthen the ties between India and USA and work together for a brighter future.

Jai Hind!



VK RAJU, MD
PRESIDENT, EYE FOUNDATION
OF AMERICA
MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA

When INDIA became independent from British rule in 1947 and began a pioneering post-colonial experiment in democratic nation building, many sages had shaken their heads not giving exciting new experiment any chance to last long. INDIA has defied such dire predictions.

On India's 77th Republic Day, I reflect as someone born in India (got stellar medical education almost for free) post graduate training and education in Ophthalmology in UK and long settled in United States. There are no two democracies (both are British colonies) like India - the largest, and the United States - the most powerful. If these two nations can build true Maitri (friendship) rooted in restraint, respect, and compassion they can still help bend history towards peace. In an age of growing violence, the real test of democracy is whether it can protect the future of our children.

Today we the people of the world pray for peace and worship war heroes. It sounds paradoxical, doesn't it? As Bhrihadaranyakopanishad says - can we move from darkness to light, from division to understanding and from fear to compassion?

May there be peace in all within us and around us!



DR. SATISH K SHARMA
FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE DAV
COLLEGES MANAGING
COMMITTEE (CMC), NEW DELHI
LUDHIANA

On the eve of Republic Day, I offer you my heartiest congratulations!

On January 26, 76 years ago, our founding document, the Constitution of India, came into effect.

Republic Day is indeed a matter of collective joy and pride for all of us. Today, we should first recall the brave souls who made great sacrifices to free the motherland from the shackles of foreign rule.

The Constitution has become a living document. It binds us together as a family. Today, let us humbly express our gratitude to Dr. Ambedkar, who chaired the Drafting Committee and other distinguished members of the Constituent Assembly, who worked hard and bequeathed us this most wonderful document.

The 76 years of the Constitution are marked by an all-round progress of a young republic. Today, India is taking leadership positions in international forums. This transformation would not have been possible without the blueprint laid down by our Constitution.

Our brothers and sisters living abroad have taken the best of our culture and civilization to different parts of the globe and have made us proud with their achievements in diverse fields.

The key to our future is our youth and especially the young women. Their dreams are molding the India of tomorrow. They have the potential to contribute greatly in the realization of aim of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Let me once again congratulate you all on the occasion of Republic Day.

My best wishes to you in all your endeavors.

Thank you, Jai Hind!



ANU JAIN
REAL ESTATE BROKER
LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK

Today's Bharat is growing and changing very quickly. As an NRI living in the USA, we visit from time to time and also observe Bharat from another country, which makes me feel proud of its progress. Life in Bharat has become easier because of mobile phones, the internet, and online payment systems. Roads, airports, and cities are improving, and more people are getting access to good education and better job opportunities.

At the same time, Bharat continues to preserve its rich culture. Festivals like Diwali, Holi, and Eid are celebrated with great joy, not only in India but also across the world. Indian regional foods and traditions are now being recognized globally. Respect for elders, strong family values, and cultural traditions remain an important part of daily life. This balance between modern development and traditional values makes India truly special.

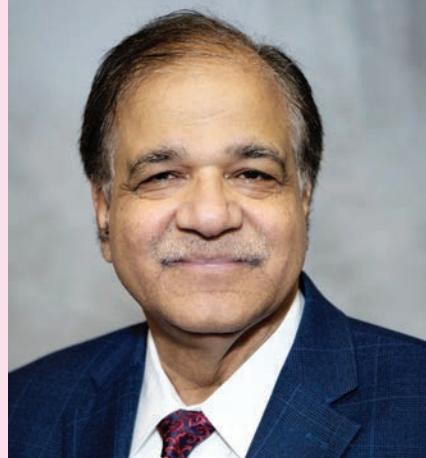
The youth of India play a very important role in shaping the country's future. They are energetic, hardworking, and eager to learn new skills. Many Indian students and professionals are successful in other countries, which makes Indians living abroad feel proud of their roots.

India still faces challenges such as pollution, traffic, and poverty. These issues will take time, planning, and collective effort to overcome. Even so, today's India is full of hope. It is moving forward with confidence while staying connected to its traditions and cultural values.



**ASHOK ARORA**
LL.M US LAWS
NEW YORK

We the people of India constituted India into sovereign socialist secular democratic republic to secure to all citizens: Justice social economic and political, and also fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual. Unfortunately, many of those having taken oath to ensure achieving of this noble mission, have been ignoring it with utmost impunity. Sant Kabir always evokes us with his famous couplet; 'Barda hua to kya hua-', which means; so what if you are big if no one is benefitted by your wealth. Five trillion economy is meaningless if a common man is at number 136 of poverty index, and also at the bottom of human rights, happiness, women safety, judicial independence, and freedom of press index, respectively. Sahir Ludhianvi stirred our souls in film Payasa, with his song; 'Zara mulq ke rehbaron ko bulao-', which meant please call the rulers and show them the pitiable condition of the poor. However, unfortunately, the Political class has been totally insensitive and irresponsible, especially during the last eleven years. Millions of dollars are spent on advertisements, and celebrations of Republic Day. We must make sincere efforts to achieve the real mission to secure Justice for all, instead of going through the ritual every year.

**AVINASH GUPTA, MD**
LAKEWOOD, NJ

As India celebrates its 77th Republic Day, we pause to reflect with pride on how far our great nation has come. From the challenges of a newly independent country to becoming one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, India's journey has been remarkable. Our achievements in science and technology, space exploration, digital innovation, infrastructure, healthcare, and global diplomacy stand as testimony to the resilience and talent of our people.

Yet, this is only a milestone-not the destination. The road ahead calls for a stronger, more inclusive, and self-reliant India. Becoming Aatmanirbhar must remain a national mission that empowers our youth, strengthens manufacturing, fosters innovation, and ensures economic security. On this day, let us all pledge to work collectively toward Viksit Bharat by 2047. Equally important is our moral responsibility to treat all 1.4 billion Indians with dignity and equality, and to include every citizen on the path of development so that growth is both inclusive and just.

Having spent four decades in the United States, I sincerely hope that India and America continue to nurture a strong, friendly, and strategic partnership. Together, these two great democracies can help lead the world toward peace and shared prosperity, truly embodying India's timeless philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam-the world is one family.

A very Happy Republic Day to all the readers of The Indian Panorama.

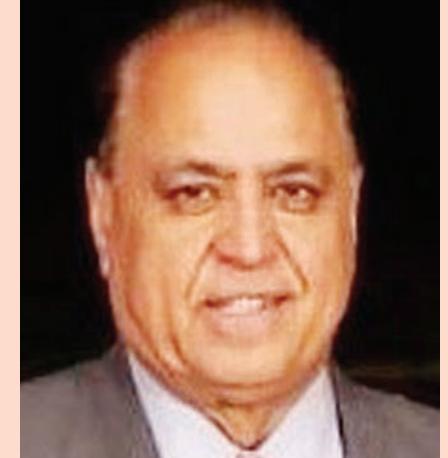
**DAVE MAKKAR**
SOCIAL & POLITICAL ACTIVIST
NEW JERSEY

As India marks 77 years of independence, its democratic foundations face profound erosion. Critics describe a transition to an elected autocracy, sustained by an oligarchy of state-made billionaires. This elite has thrived on acquiring public assets-natural resources, spectrum, infrastructure-at concessional rates, financed by public-sector bank loans.

Social inequality now exceeds British-era levels. Public investment in healthcare, education, and employment remains inadequate, while spending on monumental statues and temples garners focus. Minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians, along with marginalized castes, report escalating persecution.

The nation faces a severe environmental crisis, hosting the world's highest number of polluted cities and widespread water insecurity. Concurrently, a perceived lack of governmental accountability contrasts with displays of political opulence. The republic stands at a precipice, its democratic promise challenged by centralization of power, rising majoritarianism, and acute socio-economic disparity.

At 77, India no longer functions as a full democracy but as an elected autocracy sustained by an oligarchic alliance. Political power is concentrated, institutions are weakened, and accountability has steadily eroded. India's billionaires are largely state-made, having accumulated extraordinary wealth through preferential access to public assets-land, natural resources, minerals, oil, gas, spectrum, and infrastructure built with public funds-often acquired at throwaway prices and financed by massive loans from public-sector banks funded by citizens' savings. Inequality today exceeds even that of the British Raj. Despite this, there is no comparable national investment in education, healthcare, or employment generation; public money flows instead toward grand statues, spectacles, and temple projects. Minorities-especially Muslims and Christians-as well as lower-caste Hindus face open discrimination and violence with little consequence. India hosts some of the world's most polluted cities, unsafe drinking water, and deep environmental stress. Meanwhile, rulers live in opulence unprecedented even under colonial rule, detached from the lived reality of most citizens.

**GOBIND BATHIJA**
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF
THE HINDU COMMUNITY
CENTER IN HICKSVILLE
NEW YORK

On this proud occasion of India's 77th Republic Day, I extend my warmest greetings and heartfelt congratulations to our entire community. January 26 is more than a date in history-it is a reminder of the values, sacrifices, and vision that shaped the world's largest democracy. It is a day that honors the Constitution of India, a document that enshrines justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity for all.

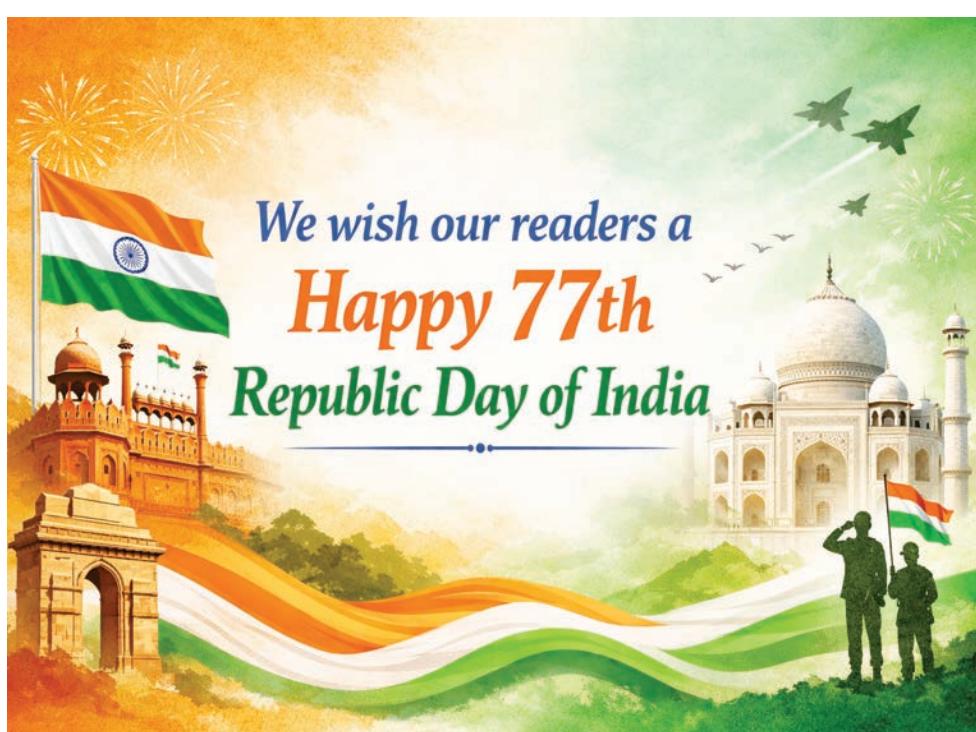
As we celebrate this important milestone, we also reflect on the remarkable journey of the Indian diaspora. Whether in India or across the globe, our community continues to uphold the spirit of unity, cultural pride, and service. Here in the United States, we remain deeply connected to our heritage while contributing meaningfully to the social, cultural, and economic fabric of this nation.

Republic Day inspires us to renew our commitment to these shared ideals. It reminds us that progress is built through collective effort, mutual respect, and a dedication to the greater good. Let us continue to support one another, celebrate our traditions, and pass on our rich cultural values to the next generation.

Today, we honor the visionaries who drafted the Constitution, the brave individuals who defended our freedoms, and the countless citizens who continue to strengthen India's democratic foundation.

May this Republic Day bring pride, unity, and renewed purpose to every member of our community.

Jai Hind.





GUNJAN P RASTOGI
CHAIRWOMAN - NATIONAL
INDO-AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION FOR SENIORS
(NIAASC)
VICE PRESIDENT - NATIONAL
FEDERATION OF INDIAN
ASSOCIATIONS (NFIA)

Republic Day of India is celebrated every year on 26th January to mark the adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950. For me, this day holds a very special meaning because my father served in the Indian Air Force. Growing up in a defense family made me deeply respect the discipline, courage, and sacrifices of our armed forces.

From 8th grade until my second year in college, I always went to watch the beautiful Republic Day parade. We lived close to India Gate, where the parade concluded, so being there felt truly magical. The atmosphere was filled with patriotism, pride, and excitement. While the marching contingents and tableaux were impressive, my favorite part was the air show. Watching the fighter planes fly in perfect formation across the sky filled me with awe and pride, especially knowing my father was part of the Air Force.

Republic Day reminds me not only of our Constitution but also of the dedication of those who protect our nation.



HEMA VIRANI
LICENSED ASSOCIATE BROKER
UNIQUE PROPERTIES, GLOBAL
CONNECTIONS

A Daughter's Heartfelt Tribute from Across the Ocean

On January 26, 1950, India embraced its destiny as a sovereign republic, guided by a Constitution born from sacrifice and vision. Seventy-seven years later, that spirit still pulses through every Indian heart-at home and abroad.

Though I now live in the U.S., India remains my soul. I was born there, but it was my father-who came from Gujarat with just \$50 and pumped gas in the freezing Chicago winter-who gave us a future here. India is my Mother. The U.S. is my Father. Both shaped me.

Each Republic Day, we gather with our Indian community-dressed in tricolor, singing the national anthem, sharing food and stories that keep our roots alive. Nostalgia fills the air: memories of school parades, jalebis, and patriotic songs.

At 77, India may not be perfect, but she is strong. Her legacy lives in all of us who carry her in our hearts, no matter where we are.

Jai Hind.



JYOTI GUPTA
NEW YORK

Janam Bhumi and Karam Bhumi

India is our janam bhumi-the land of our birth, values, and identity. The United States is our karam bhumi-the land where we work, grow, and build our future. As NRIs, we carry India in our hearts while contributing sincerely to the country that has given us opportunities.

On 26th January, we proudly celebrate 77 years of India as a Republic. This historic day reminds us of the Constitution, democracy, and the sacrifices of our freedom fighters. Across many counties in the USA, the Indian tricolor is hoisted with honor, and cultural programs fill the air with patriotic songs and vibrant dances, keeping our traditions alive even miles away from home.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all Indians and to Indian Panorama for their special edition celebrating this occasion.

***Hey janam bhumi Bharat,
hey karam bhumi Bharat,***

***hey vandaniya Bharat,
abhinandaniya Bharat***



NILIMA MADAN
AIA NATIONAL PRESIDENT 2026
& 2027

On behalf of the Association of Indians in America (AIA), and as the National President, I extend warm congratulations to the people of Indian origin on the occasion of India's Republic Day. We wish India continued growth rooted in peace, unity, and progress. The Constitution of India remains a powerful foundation for the world's largest democracy and its expanding global leadership.

Founded in 1967, the Association of Indians in America is the oldest National Organization of Asian Indians in the United States. For nearly six decades, AIA has provided a unified voice for Indian Americans, strengthening their integration into American society while maintaining Bharatiya (Indian) heritage and American commitment through cultural, educational, charitable, and development initiatives.

As Bharat marks Republic Day 2026 with the theme of 150 years of Vande Mataram, we reaffirm our hope for a strong and forward-looking partnership between Bharat and America. We urge leaders of both nations to move beyond symbolism and usher deeper cooperation by advancing shared prosperity, security, innovation, and people-to-people ties while addressing global challenges with resolve and purpose.



PRABHJOT SINGH
SENIOR JOURNALIST
TORONTO

Would you believe that in 1947, the price of gold in India was around ₹88 per 10 grams, while silver was ₹107 per kg? Petrol sold for about ₹0.25-0.27 per liter, rice for ₹0.12 per kg, milk for ₹0.12 per liter, and potatoes for approximately ₹0.25 per kg.

The 24C gold price per 10 gm from 1940 to the present day reflects our fiscal management. Do we have any explanation for the surge between 2010 and 2025? Starting with 1940, it was Rs 36; 1950-Rs 98; 1960-Rs 112; 1970-Rs 185; 1980-Rs 1300; 1990-Rs 3200; 2000-Rs 4400; 2010-Rs 18500; 2020-Rs 48000; 2025-Rs 150000 (as of October 2025).

These figures, taken from the web, have a story to tell. Are we happy with the progress we have made since we became a republic? Many would argue about what gold prices have to do with

the progress the country has made. True, gold prices are not the sole criterion for judging a country.

While gold reserves depict the fiscal health of a nation, marketable crude or fuel indicates the energy available to the people of a nation to progress. Gold has gone up from Rs 88/10 gm, and petrol has, during the same period, reached Rs 100/liter. Does it make an argument?

In 77 years, we as a nation are still not able to claim that we have made quality or potable drinking water available to our population. Water, unlike gold or crude, is a necessity. You can survive without gold or even crude, but not without drinking water. Then how do we measure the progress we have made since Independence, especially when potable water is still out of reach of a substantial section of the population, especially in rural and

remote areas? Women in remote and rural areas walk several km to bring home a bucket full of water from the nearest unregulated source.

Do the changes in nomenclature or new names to old historic cities or the rechristening of the laws make a meaningful change to the lifestyle of people? Does it help people get better and affordable healthcare or quality and affordable education at their doorstep?

We need to do a lot of introspection and focus on common man-related issues rather than talking big. Yes, we may soon be the third-largest growing economy, and we must not forget that problems grow with the population. We will soon be the world's most populous nation! And like providing potable drinking water, we have also failed to check the growth of our population.



TIRLOK MALIK
EMMY NOMINATED
FILMMAKER
NEW YORK

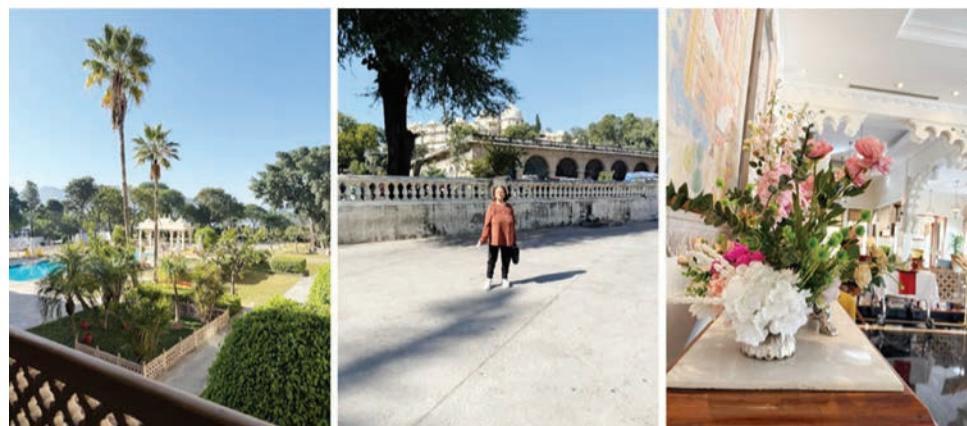
The 77th Republic Day is not only a celebration of India's past but also a reminder of its responsibilities for the future. As the nation progresses in areas such as technology, economy, education, and social development, Republic Day inspires citizens to uphold democratic ideals and contribute to building a strong, inclusive, and self-reliant India.

Republic Day stands as a symbol of national pride, unity in diversity, and the enduring spirit of the Indian Constitution.

As a child I remember my parents in Delhi will take me to watch India Republic day parade at India Gate. I will watch the parade and feel proud watching colorful parade, floats from various states, marching bands playing Vande Matram and other patriotic songs and displays of India's military strength and inspiring slogans for loving India.

As an Indian living in New York, Republic Day holds a special place in my heart. Though far from India. Celebrating this national day allows me to reconnect with my roots, honor the sacrifices of our freedom fighters, and cherish the values India represents.

In conclusion, celebrating Republic Day as an NRI is a heartfelt blend of nostalgia, pride, and gratitude. It allows me to honor my roots while sharing the beauty of Indian culture with others. Each year, this day serves as a reminder that no matter where life takes me, the spirit of India will always be a part of who I am. Together, as a community of Indians abroad, we cherish the ideals of our nation and proudly proclaim, I love you India and Jai Bharat.



Images of The Claridges Hotel in Delhi (L to R): Dining with Chinese cuisine, Reception area, Christmas décor-glory of diverse India -By Angela Anand

Rooted in Tradition, Moving with Time: My Return to Visit India After Nine Years

After nine years, India welcomed me back with familiar sights and warmth, but I also noticed digital changes like QR codes at tea stalls and app-based autos. The trip showed how India adapts while preserving its essence, blending tradition with modern ease. My journey started in Delhi, where historic sites blend with modern technology. Monuments coexist with metro lines and digital payments are widespread among street vendors. Ride-hailing apps make navigating the city's lively streets easier. Delhi's transformation builds on tradition rather than replacing it, and while the roads are cleaner, potholes persist. I visited restaurants, hotels, and ate home-cooked family meals served with care and love and appreciated them immensely. Most hotels had Christmas decorations and were packed with visitors.

I visited Udaipur, Rajasthan, and noticed that history and modernity blend seamlessly. The city's historic lakes and palaces coexist with digital conveniences-online maps and e-tickets replace traditional methods, while local businesses use technology to support crafts. A puppet show, now held in a

theater with music and dance, demonstrates efforts to preserve a fading art by appealing to tourists. Visiting the king's palace and an auto museum with vantage cars and vehicles was informative. Hotels in India offer comfort, wonderful service, and a great variety of cuisines. India has untamed natural beauty and is dealing with change.

Further north, Mohali-Chandigarh presents a calmer, organized atmosphere rooted in tradition. Wide roads and quiet

neighborhoods contrast with Delhi's pace, and technology is smoothly integrated for practical use. Rest stops offer free meals to drivers as an incentive, and the region balances innovations with family values. Elderly care is notable, with families and semi-skilled workers ensuring seniors' well-being. Visiting elderly family members was both humbling and commendable, as their home care was efficiently managed. Families enjoy meeting and celebrating special events.

INDIA WILL SHOCK THE WORLD WITH ITS LARGEST, YOUNGEST AND EDUCATED POPULATION

India is targeted to become the third global economy behind the USA and China in the next 3 to 5 years. India could easily become the second economy within ten years.

INDIA IS THE YOUNGEST IN THE WORLD

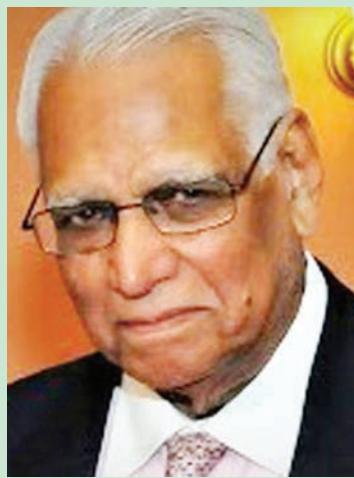
50% of India's 1.5 billion is under age 25. 65% are under 35. Compare this with shortage of babies in China, USA, and Western Europe.

India graduates 1.5 million engineers yearly against 200,000 in the USA. Currently, many educated Indians are underemployed and unemployed. Most enterprising and well to do Indians go abroad.

India also graduates a large number of management professionals. I cannot believe the present Dean of Harvard School of Business has degree from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and no foreign degree. What does this tell you?

Technological revolution has been creating many opportunities for educated and qualified professionals to seek opportunities. As most of the work is done or processed thru computers there is no requirement that professionals attend office or should be in a particular location. This is going to create huge opportunities for the educated unemployed in India. Why do you think Google, Microsoft, Amazon and Matta have decided to invest \$100 billion dollars combined for AI storage in India?

I anticipate India will become the world's headquarters for delivering products, processes and services based on high technology.



VEN PARAMESWARAN
FORMER U.N. DIPLOMAT
SCARSDALE, NY

IMPACT OF 40 MILLION INDIAN DIASPORA ON INDIAN ECONOMY

India has been leading in foreign remittances. This is helping India's foreign exchange position. I expect more and more Indians will be immigrating to Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, Germany, U.K., U.S.A., Russia, China, Japan, Middle Eastern Arab countries, and others.

Guyana has a sizeable Indian population. After it struck oil, it has started attracting foreign manpower. Guyana is a great opportunity for Indians to invest and settle down. Guyana pretty soon will be a rich country

because of oil.

Indians should be learning foreign languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, Korean, Russian, German, French so that it will be easier for them to seek immigration.

FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH INDIA'S NEIGHBORS

It is important India creates most friendly relations with all its neighbors: Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

As we embark on the 77th Republic Day of India I am most optimistic about India's future. I am convinced developed populations are a great asset.

Ven Parameswaran, a former Indian diplomat and CEO, First Asian Securities Corporation, NYC came to the USA in 1954 on Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit Scholarship. He is a graduate of Columbia U Business School.

Mumbai marked the end of my journey-a city defined by constant motion and change. While digital tools and remote work have altered routines, Mumbai's spirit endures in shared moments, kindness, and relentless ambition. Reuniting with family across cities revealed India's evolving warmth, with technology connecting generations and traditions adapting alongside progress. The blend of ancient and modern is everywhere-temples beside billboards, rituals continuing amid new systems. Here, growth means balance, not replacement. For me, returning after nine years was personal. I saw echoes of my own journey in India's evolution: tradition persists even as we embrace the new. I left with renewed admiration for a nation moving forward confidently, honoring its past and embracing the future. Rediscovering India became rediscovering me-growth without losing essence.

(Angela Anand is Vice Chair of AAUC Board, Past President of AAUC, President of South Asian Women's Network (SAWN), & Former President of National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA)

WHY INDIA'S RISE HASN'T WON IT FRIENDS

NEW DELHI DOES NOT HAVE DEEP POCKETS WITH SURPLUS FUNDS LIKE CHINA TO POSITIVELY IMPACT POLICIES OF OTHER COUNTRIES

"THE ABSENCE OF A POWER LEVERAGE EXPLAINS THE COZING UP OF BANGLADESH WITH PAKISTAN DESPITE DHAKA KNOWING WELL THE PITFALLS OF NEGLECTING ITS BIG NEIGHBOR WHICH HELPED IT GET INDEPENDENCE. WE NOW HAVE ANOTHER BORDER TO TEND AND IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHICH PARTY COMES TO POWER IN THE FORTHCOMING NATIONAL ELECTIONS."

India's neighborhood has become complex. Setting aside PR rhetoric, to say that New Delhi has no true friends on its borders (barring Bhutan) would not be wrong. By any yardstick, the political power of a nation with a \$4-trillion economy (fourth largest in the world) should catalyze relations with its neighbors to its advantage. That it is not exactly so needs a clinical assessment.

Pakistan as an adversary is a no-brainer and so too is China - notwithstanding the handshakes in public between PM Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting in September 2025.

While Islamabad would be feeling hurt considering the statement made by the Indian Air Force on May 10, last year, with its deadly pan-Pakistan precision strikes on military installations, it would also be planning to get back - not necessarily through a kinetic engagement; one is already seeing some increased terrorist activity in the Valley.

Relations with China are more complex since we are dependent on it in more ways than one in non-military areas and yet, militarily, have to match them 24x7 - man for man, tank for tank on our northern borders. With Beijing aiming for a multiple aircraft carrier navy, it would not be long before a PLAN

carrier group makes a foray in the Indian Ocean, mandating another front for New Delhi to address.

But what about the others with whom India shares land and maritime contiguity? A color-coded map of India's neighborhood friends would have more shades of red than blue. The osmotic effects of New Delhi's economic, military and cultural positioning, that should have translated to positive influence around us, are conspicuous by their absence.

Writing on what constitutes power, strategist George Friedman has termed it an intangible entity; the ambiguity that real power exudes about the likely future course of action (deterrent or kinetic) is what gives it the coercive

independence. We now have another border to tend and it would be interesting to see which party comes to power in the forthcoming national elections.

In Nepal, the Chinese have already made inroads through infrastructure projects (rail, roads, energy) and digital technology programs. Their tourist inflows have also increased substantially with direct air and road connectivity. Indian media has not helped with its intrusive behavior as the scenes of 'Indian media go back' witnessed in the 2015 earthquake were seen again during the Gen-Z uprising.

The story has been similar in the Maldives and Sri Lanka when new governments took office. Luckily, the

AIR VICE MARSHAL MANMOHAN BAHADUR (RETD.)



without factoring in the \$3.25-billion Rafale import coming up soon.

A GDP of \$4 trillion is excellent, but the per capita GDP where India is 143rd in world rankings, is the true determinant of a nation's economic depth. With millions still below the poverty line requiring succor, New Delhi does not have deep pockets with surplus funds like China to positively impact policies of other countries.

The worldwide upheaval due to Trump's arm-twisting edicts has shown what real economic power can do - the Venezuela regime change has hardly created any condemnation and the usurping of Greenland, if it happens, would be another validation of the analysis of Thucydides in 404 BCE: "The



Where lies the problem when India has been ferrying items as basic as water to the Maldives? / ANI

quotient. A nation has to reach that standing in the power matrix to enable it to sway sentiment in its favor without going kinetic.

Have we, instead of nursing relationships with our neighbors, jumped the starter's gun and started expecting deference that automatically accrues to real power?

In 2011, cautioning against mistaking influence and weight with power, India's then NSA Shiv Shankar Menon had said that "For a considerable amount of time, India will be a major power with several poor people. Power is the ability to create and sustain outcomes - weight we have, our influence is growing, but our power remains to grow and should first be used for our domestic transformation."

The absence of a power leverage explains the cozing up of Bangladesh with Pakistan despite Dhaka knowing well the pitfalls of neglecting its big neighbor which helped it get

downturn seems to be reversing - but there is still a fair distance to cover. Myanmar has to be watched, considering the deep Chinese inroads there and our unsettled and volatile North-East.

Despite these unhelpful vibes, the Budget allocates developmental assistance to many of these neighbors since we share centuries-old cultural ties and are mindful of social sensitivities of our own border communities as well. So, where lies the problem when India has always been helpful, even ferrying items as basic as water to the Maldives?

The answer lies in the question posed earlier - "have we jumped the starter's gun and are confusing influence and weight with power?"

On the hard power matrix, despite a welcome increase in defense exports, the growth of our military industrial complex has yet to impact India's unenviable position as the second largest arms importer in the world - this,

strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."

China too is no exception - the use of its monopoly on rare earths to keep the US tariffs at bay is an example.

So, even as our diplomats burn the midnight oil working their charm, let us continue on the path of an economic surge that has been the vision of all governments since Independence.

If our endeavors for a Viksit Bharat by 2047 are to remain focused, then amicable relations with neighbors are a sine qua non.

Till then, to avoid being 'the ugly Indian' and frittering away goodwill in our neighborhood, our talk and actions should heed the Margaret Thatcher view that "Being powerful is being like a lady; if you have to say you are, you aren't."

(Air Vice Marshal Manmohan Bahadur Retd is Ex-Addl Director General, Centre for Air Power Studies)

The 'Donroe doctrine', a broken international order

It is a mixed bag as far as the global outlook for 2026 is concerned, marked by an updated version of the U.S.'s 'shock and awe' tactics

The new year began with a stark reminder that the over 200-year-old 'Monroe Doctrine' is not merely alive but has been given a fresh dimension, in keeping with the personality of United States President Donald Trump. In a swift operation as 2026 unfolded, U.S. airborne troops abducted Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife and incarcerated them in the U.S. on charges of undermining the security of the U.S. This action is being sanctified as the new 'Donroe Doctrine'.

ACTIONS UNDER THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Protests worldwide against the U.S.'s action in violating the sovereignty of Venezuela have, however, been rather muted. This seems to convey the belief that the post-1945 international order is dead, and what exists now is a 'free for all' in the global commons. Voices are also being heard 'sotto voce', that the latest action by the U.S. might well become a prelude for similar actions by nations such as China and Russia to lay claim to countries and regions falling within their zone of influence - China's claim to Taiwan being one.

The action carried out has been characterized by Mr Trump himself as a modern version of the (1823) Monroe Doctrine, viz., that the U.S. is the sole guarantor of security in the Western Hemisphere and would not brook any interference by powers outside the Hemisphere. A careful reading of President Trump's latest U.S. National Security Strategy, or NSS (November 2025) - which unequivocally states that after years of neglect, the U.S. expects to reassert its pre-eminence in the Western Hemisphere, denying non-Hemispheric competitors the ability to position forces or threaten U.S. vital assets in the Hemisphere - would suggest that the Venezuelan operation was a carefully thought through maneuver, and an updated 21st century version of 'US shock and awe' tactics. There is even an implicit threat of actions similar to Venezuela against Cuba, Colombia and Mexico. There is again an implicit reference to taking control of Greenland which is viewed by the U.S. as a security necessity.

From a U.S. perspective, it would seem that 2026 could see significant changes in different regions of the globe. Europe, for instance, which has come in for sharp criticism in the NSS document, has been excoriated on the ground that it had lost most, if not all, its sheen, alongside the suggestion that the U.S. could help Europe regain its former greatness if it backed patriotic European parties and 'genuine democracy'. The NSS document wants Europe to assume 'primary responsibility for its own defense', alongside a veiled reference to achieving strategic stability with Russia.

Going beyond Mr. Trump's NSS, realistically speaking, it would seem that the conflict in Ukraine, which appears stalemated at present, could move toward resolution, but which could be unsatisfactory to both sets of

antagonists. The alternative, according to U.S. policymakers, appears to be that otherwise, it could lead to further escalation, alongside fears that it would engulf more regions of Europe.

THE SITUATION CLOSER TO INDIA

The situation in West Asia, it would seem, is beginning to resemble the proverbial curate's egg, good in parts. Israel's pogrom has come to an end for the present, but peace in the regime remains highly elusive. The situation in Gaza, in particular, remains highly sensitive and violence seems for the most part just round the corner.

gained a fresh lease of life, with the U.S. embracing it as an ally, promising a fresh tranche of state-of-the-art weapons, and in some ways being perceived as 'the most favored nation of the US' in this part of the world. Meantime, uncertainty about the future of democracy will continue to prevail in the highly troubled state of Bangladesh, notwithstanding the promise of fresh elections and restoration of an elected government.

For China, 2025 seemed like a good year. While China-U.S. rivalry appeared to intensify, Beijing successfully withstood the tariff barrage unleashed by Mr. Trump, and even seemed to turn it

Marshal Munir and the lifting of restrictions on arms supplies to Pakistan is also not helping. Despite this, there have been some positive developments with regard to an expansion of India-U.S. cooperation in some areas. Several ministerial initiatives, such as the I2U2 (India, Israel, the U.S., the UAE) and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor appear to be progressing.

As of now, Washington's foreign policy calculus and Beijing's disinterested approach to India are putting India at a disadvantage in political and economic terms, especially the latter. China's tactical advantage in trade and tariff



"There seems to be a belief that what exists now is a 'free for all' in the global commons"

-Photo Credit: AFP

Meantime, the growing violence and unrest that have engulfed Iran and the Khamenei regime is acting as a catalyst for a fresh round of conflict in and across the region. Iran is witnessing widespread internal violence, and the declared that it is "fighting on four fronts, viz., an economic war, a psychological war, a military war against the US and Israel, and a war on terrorism". The West has responded with warnings of imposing additional sanctions on Iran. Implicit in all this, is that both Israel and the U.S. see an opportunity to complete the unfinished conflict of 2025, and ensure that it reaches a 'satisfactory conclusion' in undermining the Khamenei regime in Iran.

Northwest Asia, specially Afghanistan, is meanwhile, set to confront more troubles this year. The Tehreek-e-Taliban and other Afghan terrorist groups appear, of late, to have gained a fresh lease of life, and this spells problems for Pakistan as well. The Afghanistan-Pakistan border will, hence, continue to remain troubled during much of this year. So, 2026 is again, not likely to be a good year for democracy in Pakistan, with the military taking firmer control of the country's affairs and Field Marshal Asim Munir eclipsing the importance of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, striking another blow to the country's democratic trajectory. However, Pakistan does appear to have

to its advantage. China raised the value of its manufacturing and also demonstrated its hold over global supply chains.

China's restrictions on rare earth exports in the tussle with the U.S., seemed to enhance its ability to not only withstand U.S. pressures but also to convert the situation in its favor. While there were few opportunities for a trial of strength in the Pacific, China's growing presence in Southeast Asia is adding to China's importance in Asian and world affairs. It is increasingly becoming apparent as well that the Eastern Pacific is no longer a U.S. bailiwick. China's presence in the Indian Ocean is also growing and represents not only a major threat to nations bordering the Indian Ocean but, more importantly, also a challenge to U.S. supremacy here.

NOTES FOR NEW DELHI

As 2026 progresses, India appears to stand at the crossroads, unsure as to where it stands. There has been no letup in Mr. Trump's tirade against India for continuing to import subsidized Russian oil, notwithstanding the fact that India is inclined to side with the U.S. on most matters. An implicit coldness in India-U.S. relations seems to be affecting India's relations with many other countries, resulting in New Delhi's relative isolation when it comes to conflict zones such as West Asia. Mr. Trump's public endorsement of Field

disputes leaves little room or scope for India to hedge against U.S. threats to further raise tariffs on trade, thus aggravating current anxieties. For India, there is again little room for comfort in the fact that China's economic growth has not picked up of late, or that its domestic consumption remains stagnant. All this is notwithstanding an improvement in India-China ties following the Tianjin meeting of Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping in 2025. A further stabilization of India-China ties does not, however, appear likely in 2026.

Overall, 2026 may not have any great prospects for India. It may not, however, face any major terror attack during the year, but terrorism will remain an ever-present reality. West Asia having just undergone a sustained military campaign by Israel may be spared major terror attacks, but the upheaval in Iran and the attempt by Israel and the U.S. to wade into troubled waters could instigate some terror attacks. The Islamic State and al Qaeda seem better positioned in Africa as of now, but this is no reason to let one's guard down, as, overall, more attacks by insurgent and terrorist entities can be anticipated in Asia, West Asia and Africa. Terrorism could, hence, be regarded as a critical national security threat during 2026.

(M.K. Narayanan is a former Director, Intelligence Bureau, a former National Security Adviser, and a former Governor of West Bengal)

M K
NARAYANAN





Trump's Peace Board raises old questions

As India ponders Trump's invite to join the Board of Peace, here's a recall of Vajpayee's refusal to send troops in support of Iraq invasion.

"Trump is far more ambitious than Bush, a different creature altogether. Diplomacy has no place in his narcissistic schemes. It is not too late for India to find its voice, just as the Vajpayee government did two decades ago, to stand up to Trump and say no to his new plan to reshape the world in his image. In doing so, India may even inspire others to call out the plan for what it is and decline the invitation categorically."

The Board of Peace established by US President Donald Trump has so far found few takers. Invitations have reportedly gone out to 60 countries, asking them to join "an international organization that seeks to promote stability, restore dependable and lawful governance, and secure enduring peace in areas affected or threatened by conflict." Quite clearly, it is not the same Board of Peace that was envisaged in Trump's facile 20-point Gaza peace plan. That one was to be a transitional body, headed by Trump, to supervise a proposed interim, technocratic Palestinian committee for the day-to-day running of Gaza. The UNSC endorsed the idea and gave the Board a two-year mandate.

This one is entirely different. Trump sees it as a free-range body, unrestricted by national boundaries or questions of sovereignty, to intervene in situations of conflict around the world, all under his leadership. With his offer of "permanent seats" to countries that will pay a membership fee of \$1 billion, Trump does not see the body as bound by any UN rules, much less the UNSC's two-year mandate that is due to end in November 2027.

France has let on that it does not intend to join this latest of Trump's many unilateral moves to reshape the world in his image. Canada's PM Mark Carney has said he was prepared to consider it "on principle", but he will not pay for membership.

India has received the invitation, too, and is reported to be weighing its options, like most other nations facing this googly. It is worth remembering that this is not the first time that India has been invited to join a US-led coalition to carry out the agenda of the president-in-office at the time.

The pressure the US brought to send soldiers to Iraq in 2003 is no secret. Admittedly, today's US under its current President is unrecognizable from the one 22 years ago, and the geopolitics is far more complex today. But then, so was India not half the country it is today, nor did its leadership flaunt itself as

Vishwaguru. The story of how Delhi held its nerve during those tense months serves as a useful reminder of a time when Raisina Hill was able to stiffen its back and hold its own in tough circumstances.

When George W Bush invaded Iraq on the double lie that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and that he was in cahoots with Osama bin Laden, the US-India romance was in its early stages.

On March 19, 2003, without explicit authorization from the Security Council, the US and the UK carried out what they called a "pre-emptive" attack on Iraq. Earlier, in an effort to build an

and therefore would take the "middle path" - saw US diplomacy swing into action.

The US envoy in India, Robert Blackwill, who enjoyed enormous goodwill and access in Delhi, and other especially dispatched Bush emissaries worked on the government. In an interview to The Hindu, Blackwill spoke of a "major role" for India on the "inner board of directors" that would be in charge of security in Iraq during its transition to democracy. Blackwill projected that India's role on the security side would also give it influence on the political and diplomatic aspects of the transition.

tougher.

Finally, on July 14, 2003, India announced it would not send troops to Iraq without a UN mandate. "The Government of India has given careful thought to the question of sending Indian troops to Iraq. Our longer term national interest, our concern for the people of Iraq, our long-standing ties with the Gulf region as a whole, as well as our growing dialogue and strengthened ties with the US have been key elements in this consideration.

India remains ready to respond to the urgent needs of the Iraqi people for stability, security, political progress and economic reconstruction. Were there to



Diplomacy has no place in his narcissistic schemes. / Reuters

international "coalition of the willing" for the war, the US had asked 50 countries - India was not in this list - to assist it in the endeavor, hoping in this way to build international legitimacy.

Only 30 responded, and apparently 15 others wanted their names to not be listed publicly. Britain sent 45,000 troops, while Australia and Poland also sent small numbers of ground forces. Others gave assistance in a non-combat capacity.

It was only weeks after Bush declared in May 2003 that the US mission in Iraq had been accomplished that the US approached India for a division of troops (around 18,000 soldiers) to work under the overall command of the two occupying powers, the US and the UK, and help "stabilize" the situation.

The Indian Parliament had "deplored" (rather than the stronger "condemned") the invasion of Iraq and called the US military action "unacceptable". The Vajpayee government's response to the US request for assistance - that it had good relations with both the US and Iraq,

When Home Minister LK Advani visited the US in early June, President Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld spoke to him on the subject of India sending soldiers to Iraq. Advani made no commitment. His visit was followed by the arrival of Pentagon officials in India. The strategic community was divided. Those who supported sending troops said it would help India break out of its "South Asia box" and increase its standing in the world.

The late B Raman, who retired as head of the counter-terrorism division of the Research and Analysis Wing, warned of dire consequences. "Indian troops will get sucked into a bloody counter-insurgency operation as the surrogates of the U.S., losing whatever goodwill India had earned in Iraq and the rest of the Arab world in the past," Raman wrote warning that "a new breed of jehadi terrorists born out of the Iraq war" would start targeting India, making the domestic counter-terrorism challenge even

be an explicit UN mandate for the purpose, the Government of India could consider the deployment of our troops in Iraq."

India refused to send troops even after the October 2003 UNSC Resolution 1511, "authorizing a multinational force under unified command to take all necessary measures to contribute to the maintenance of security and stability in Iraq." Delhi said it could not send troops due to the situation in Kashmir, but pledged \$10 million for Iraqi reconstruction.

Trump is far more ambitious than Bush, a different creature altogether. Diplomacy has no place in his narcissistic schemes. It is not too late for India to find its voice, just as the Vajpayee government did two decades ago, to stand up to Trump and say no to his new plan to reshape the world in his image. In doing so, India may even inspire others to call out the plan for what it is and decline the invitation categorically.

(Nirupama Subramanian is a senior journalist)

NIRUPAMA
SUBRAMANIAN





Makar Sankranti Celebrated with Great Enthusiasm by BJANA and Bihar Foundation USA (ETZ) at Toms River Temple

JANUARY 21, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)

Despite challenging weather conditions across New Jersey-with heavy snowfall in several areas and milder conditions near the venue-the spirit of unity and tradition remained strong as the Bihar Jharkhand Association of North America (BJANA), in collaboration with members of Bihar Foundation USA - East Zone (ETZ), celebrated Makar Sankranti at the sacred Shri Siddhivinayak Temple, Toms River, NJ.

More than 150 community members attended the celebration, demonstrating deep commitment to cultural traditions, togetherness, and community bonding.

The newly elected BJANA President (2026-2027), Ms. Priti Kashyap, warmly connected with attendees and expressed heartfelt gratitude to all participants. She also acknowledged the dedication of her committee members and the BJANA Advisory Board for their continued guidance and support.

A POWERFUL EXAMPLE OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT

A touching moment was shared by Nidhi from Jersey City (originally from Patna) and her husband Raghavendra Singh (from Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh). Although the temple was more than an hour's drive from their home, they chose to attend their first BJANA event. They shared that the experience helped them truly understand how organizations like BJANA foster cultural connection, togetherness, and the spirit of selfless service.



President BJANA: Ms. Priti Kashyap



Community members joined the celebration

Several new members traveled long distances-including attendees from Philadelphia and locations over 100 miles away-reflecting the growing strength and reach of the BJANA community.

CULTURAL & CULINARY HIGHLIGHTS

The celebration was enriched with traditional flavors and authentic delicacies, including:

Chura-Dahi; Tilkoot directly sourced from India; Khichdi served with special homemade curd prepared in traditional earthen (soil-crafted) utensils; Refreshing special chai prepared by the BJANA team

Children thoroughly enjoyed the festive atmosphere and food, while seniors deeply appreciated the warmth, hospitality, and nostalgic taste of traditional cuisine.

The event became even more soulful when Nidhi Mishra and other community members led folk songs, devotional prayers, and bhajans, creating a deeply emotional and cultural environment.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP REFLECTIONS

Temple Trustee Dr. Geeta Gupta thanked all attendees and emphasized that such cultural gatherings strengthen unity and help preserve cultural roots within the diaspora.

Community leaders including Past President Shashi Sinha, Anurag Kumar, and Immediate Past President Sanjeev Singh encouraged members to continue working collectively to strengthen BJANA and uplift the community.

Alok Kumar, Chairman of Bihar Foundation USA - ETZ, expressed his happiness at seeing strong participation despite difficult weather conditions-especially the enthusiastic presence of children. He emphasized that communities must continue to support those in need, celebrate together, and build long-term unity.



President Priti Kashyap, Dr. Geeta Gupta, Lata Shree , Vandana Vatsayan, Sushma Himanshu, Komal Sharan, Priti Singh, Tripti Singh and Piu Banerjee



Sanjeev Singh, Rama Mishra, Pankaj Sharan, Alok Kashyap, Alok Kumar, Abhishek Kumar, Sushant Krishen, Shashi Shankar, Pankaj P., Uttam Gupta, Shashi Sinha , Anurag Kumar, Dipen, Priti Kashyap, Dr. Geeta Gupta, Komal Sharan and Priti Singh, Anupam and Narendra ji

EVENT ORGANIZATION & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The successful event was organized by the BJANA leadership team, consisting of Sushant Krishnan (Vice President), Rakesh Roy (Treasurer), Bishwanath Sharma (Secretary), Dipen, Priya Ranjan Ji, along with the entire BJANA volunteer team.

Their collective dedication made it possible to experience an authentic and memorable Makar Sankranti celebration in New Jersey-preserving tradition while strengthening diaspora bonds.

(Based on a press release issued by Alok Kumar)

NYC MAYOR'S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS OPPOSES FEDERAL ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION TO END HAITIAN TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS



JANUARY 21, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)

The NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) Commissioner Manuel Castro, on January 21, issued a statement opposing the February 3rd termination of Temporary Protected Status for Haitian nationals living in the United States.

"The Trump administration's decision to terminate Haitian Temporary Protected Status (TPS) protections puts tens of thousands of New York families at risk of separation and economic hardship", Commissioner Manuel Castro said in his statement.

The Statement reads: "The Trump administration's decision to terminate Haitian Temporary Protected Status (TPS) protections puts tens of thousands of New York families at risk of separation and economic hardship. TPS is a vital humanitarian protection that allows Haitian immigrants to live and work legally while conditions in Haiti remain unsafe.

We call on federal leaders to redesignate TPS for Haiti and provide clear, timely guidance so families can plan for their futures without fear. TPS brings stability not only to Haitian families, but to New York's economy and cultural

life. Haitian TPS holders contribute more than \$3.4 billion to our nation's economy. When we defend these protections, we strengthen our city and our country. New York City is home to one of the largest Haitian communities in the world. Haitian New Yorkers are our neighbors, small business owners, caregivers, essential workers, and faith leaders who power the economic and cultural heartbeat of our City and State every day."

The Mayor, MOIA Commissioner and the City of New York will always stand by and support Haitian New Yorkers."



58-year-old Indian-origin man gets 30-month jail in US for illegal export of aviation parts to Russia

JANUARY 17, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)

A 58-year-old Indian national was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison in the US for conspiring to illegally export controlled aviation components from Oregon to Russia.

In the judgement pronounced earlier this week, US Attorney for the District of Oregon Scott Bradford said Sanjay Kaushik's actions were deliberate and profit-driven.

"It was a calculated, profit-driven scheme involving repeated transactions, substantial gains, and coordination with foreign co-conspirators, including sanctioned Russian entities. This defendant sought, on multiple occasions, to undermine safeguards critical to US national security and foreign policy for his own personal gain," he said.

The court sentenced Kaushik from Delhi to 30 months in federal prison and 36 months of supervised release for conspiring with others to export controlled aviation components and a navigation and flight control system to end users in Russia, in violation of the Export Control Reform Act.

"Those who scheme to circumvent US export control laws - especially when it involves technologies with military applications - will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," Assistant Attorney General for National Security John Eisenberg said.

"The security of the United States demands that perpetrators of deceitful schemes like this one are held accountable for their actions," he said.

According to court documents, beginning in early September 2023, Kaushik conspired with others to unlawfully obtain aerospace goods and technology from the US for entities in Russia.

The goods were purchased under the pretext that they were meant for Kaushik and his Indian company, when in fact they were destined for Russian end users, the Justice Department said in a statement on Friday. Kaushik and his co-conspirators purchased an Attitude and Heading Reference System (AHRS), a device that provides navigation and flight control data for aircraft, from an Oregon-based supplier.

Components such as the AHRS require a license from the Department of Commerce to be exported to certain countries, including Russia.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Family Alleges Lack of Due Process Led to Suicide of Indian-origin Medical Student Vaibhav Duggal

JANUARY 20, 2025
EL PASO, TX (TIP)

The death of medical student Vaibhav Duggal, who died by suicide in July 2025, has resurfaced in public discourse after his family released a detailed video alleging serious failures in how Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC) handled a complaint against him.

Duggal was a third-year medical student at TTUHSC's School of Medicine. According to his family, he was an academically accomplished student - a summa cum laude graduate of Texas A&M University with a 4.0 GPA - and was deeply committed to becoming a physician.

In the video, Duggal's parents allege that their son was accused of an "egregious breach of professionalism" following an unverified complaint from a female patient during an OB/GYN clinical rotation. They claim he was removed from clinical duties without a fair investigation, supporting evidence, or an opportunity to meaningfully respond to the allegation.

The family asserts that there were red flags and inconsistencies in the complaint that were ignored. According to their account, the patient provided Duggal with her Instagram handle after the appointment and later claimed she was unable to take screenshots of allegedly inappropriate messages because he had blocked her - something the family says is not technically accurate on the platform.

The video further alleges administrative misconduct and bias, citing internal email exchanges in which



a senior official suggested Duggal be removed from clinical duties before he was even interviewed. The family claims the university proceeded with disciplinary actions while key facts remained unclear, prioritizing institutional reputation over fairness.

A pivotal moment described in the video is a meeting held on July 28, 2025, during which a university official allegedly informed Duggal that he would be barred from patient interactions and school events, and warned that he could face dismissal from medical school. According to the family, the official also told him the situation could negatively affect his residency prospects. Despite Duggal repeatedly asserting his innocence and asking him to explain his side, the family says his appeals were

dismissed.

The parents allege that these actions caused severe psychological distress and reputational harm. They point to a late-night email sent at 11:36 p.m., in which Duggal was instructed to prepare for a remedial professionalism plan - which the family describes as effectively declaring him guilty before any investigation was completed.

In the video, the family characterizes the episode as an institutional failure marked by a breakdown of due process, lack of duty of care, and absence of a trauma-informed response. They also raise concerns about what they describe as gender bias in how allegations against medical students are handled.

The family has drawn parallels between Duggal's case and that of Katie Meyer, the Stanford University soccer captain who died by suicide in 2022 following a university disciplinary process. They argue both cases illustrate the potentially devastating consequences of high-stakes academic discipline carried out without sufficient safeguards or mental-health support.

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center has not publicly addressed the family's detailed allegations, citing student privacy protections. No independent investigative findings or court rulings have been released at this time.

The family says they shared the video to seek accountability and to warn other institutions about the risks of disciplinary processes that fail to prioritize student well-being. "If even one person had intervened," they state, "our son would still be alive."

Indian American Filmmaker Geeta Gandbhir Earns Two Academy Award Oscar Nominations



JANUARY 22, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)

Indian American filmmaker Geeta Gandbhir has received two Academy Award nominations for the 98th Oscars, announced on January 22, 2026, marking a major milestone in her career and a rare achievement in documentary filmmaking.

Gandbhir is nominated for Best Documentary Feature for *The Perfect Neighbor*, which she directed, and for Best Documentary Short Film for *The Devil Is Busy*, which she co-directed with Christalyn Hampton. According to industry reports, Gandbhir is the first Indian woman to receive two Oscar nominations in the same year.

The Perfect Neighbor examines racial

tensions within a U.S. community and centers on a fatal shooting, using documentary storytelling to explore themes of race, power, and justice. The film has been widely noted for its urgency and depth, drawing attention for its unflinching look at a deeply divided neighborhood.

The Devil Is Busy, co-directed with Hampton, earned its nomination in the documentary short category and further underscores Gandbhir's strength in non-fiction storytelling across formats and lengths.

Gandbhir is already an established name in documentary cinema, with a body of work that includes multiple Emmy Awards and Peabody Awards. Her earlier projects include *I Am Evidence*, which focused on the backlog of untested rape kits in the United States, and *Lownes County and the Road to Black Power*, a historical documentary tracing grassroots Black political organizing.

The dual Oscar nominations place Gandbhir among a small group of filmmakers recognized in multiple documentary categories in the same year, while also highlighting the growing presence of Indian American voices in global nonfiction cinema.



Indian American motel operator couple in Virginia charged with drug trafficking, prostitution

JANUARY 19, 2026
VIRGINIA (TIP)

A married Indian American couple who operated a motel in Northern Virginia have been accused by federal authorities of profiting from drug trafficking and prostitution allegedly carried out on their property, according to court documents unsealed this week.

Kosha Sharma, 52, and her husband Tarun Sharma, 55, appeared in federal court following their arrest in connection with a wide-ranging investigation into criminal activity at the Red Carpet Inn in Dumfries.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



Indian woman, 3 relatives shot dead by husband during family dispute in US

Consulate General of India in Atlanta confirms shooter's arrest, extends assistance to bereaved family

JANUARY 23, 2026
ATLANTA, GA (TIP)

An Indian national was among the victims of a shooting incident linked to an alleged family dispute in the US state of Georgia, according to the Indian mission in Atlanta.

The shooting left four people dead early Friday, January 23, morning while three children were inside the home during the incident in Lawrenceville city, local media reported.

The Consulate General of India in Atlanta, expressing grief over the shooting, said the alleged shooter has been arrested and all possible assistance was being extended to the bereaved family.

"We are deeply grieved by a tragic shooting incident linked to an alleged family dispute, in which an Indian national was among the victims. The alleged shooter has been arrested, and all possible assistance is being extended to the bereaved family," it said on X.



The suspect was identified as Vijay Kumar, 51, of Atlanta, Fox5 Atlanta reported.

The victims have been identified as Kumar's wife Meemu Dogra, 43, Gourav Kumar, 33, Nidhi Chander, 37, and Harish Chander, 38, according to Gwinnett County police.

The suspect was charged with four counts of aggravated assault, four counts of felony murder, four counts of malice murder, one count of cruelty to children in the 1st degree, and two counts of cruelty to children in the 3rd degree, the report said.

The police responded to a call at about 2.30 am (local time) on Friday in the 1000 block of Brook Ivy Court. Upon arrival, officers discovered the bodies of four adults inside the residence, all of whom had sustained fatal gunshot wounds, the report said.

Police officials said that three children were present when the shooting began. To protect themselves, the children hid in a closet.

One of the children managed to call 911, providing critical information that allowed officers to reach the scene within minutes, investigators said. The children were unharmed and have since been picked up by a family member.



Indian-origin Ludhiana-based Baldev (Sunny) Singh wins MP ticket in South Australia

JANUARY 20, 2026
SYDNEY (TIP)

Baldev (Sunny) Singh, a resident of Moti Nagar, Ludhiana, has made the city proud. From being a simple 10+2 pass-out from Ludhiana to getting nominated as a candidate by the Liberal Party for the South Australian state seat of Giles in the upcoming 2026 state elections, his journey is a remarkable success story of a common man.

Talking to media over the phone from Australia, Sunny Singh shared that he moved to Australia on a study visa along with his wife Soni in 2008. "It has been a long journey. I moved as a normal migrant and initially worked as a taxi driver. After a lot of hard work, I was promoted as the manager of the same company where I worked as a driver, and today I own the company," said Singh with pride.

Baldev (Sunny) Singh currently serves as an elected member (councilor) of the Port Augusta City Council in South Australia. Actively involved in local community development, he represents residents at the city council and is well known for his commitment to community service in Port Augusta-a regional city at the head of Spencer Gulf. He has worked extensively on issues related to multicultural representation and community cohesion and has often spoken about celebrating Indian culture within the broader community.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



Indian-origin Tech Professional Who Recently Moved to US Killed in North Carolina Crash

JANUARY 21, 2025
RALEIGH, NC (TIP)

An Indian tech professional from Hyderabad, Arun Kumar Sandram, 35, was killed in a road accident late Sunday night in Raleigh, according to local authorities and media reports.

The fatal incident occurred around 10:50 p.m. on Interstate 40 East, near the interchange with I-440. Police said Sandram was outside his vehicle on the highway when he was struck by another car. The circumstances under which his vehicle stopped and why he was on the roadway are still under investigation.

The driver of the other vehicle was not seriously injured. Authorities said alcohol or drugs are not believed to have been factors in the crash.

Sandram had recently moved to the United States with his wife to pursue career opportunities in the technology sector. Friends and members of the Indian American community described his death as a devastating loss, particularly given that the couple had only just begun their life together in the U.S. Beyond his professional life, Sandram was well known in the local cricket community in North Carolina. He actively played in local leagues, and teammates remembered him as warm, jovial, and deeply passionate about the sport.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



Indian-origin Vikrant Thakur admits killing wife, denies murder charge in Australian court

JANUARY 20, 2026
ADELAIDE (TIP)

An Indian-origin man has admitted responsibility for the death of his wife in Australia but has denied committing murder, telling a court that he should instead be held liable for manslaughter.

Vikrant Thakur, 42, appeared via video link from custody before the Adelaide Magistrates Court, where he formally acknowledged causing the death of his wife, Supriya Thakur. However, following legal advice from his lawyer, James Marcus, Thakur stated that he was not guilty of murder. "I plead for manslaughter, but not guilty for murder," he told the court, according to Australian media reports.

The case will return to court in April, after which Thakur is expected to be arraigned before South Australia's Supreme Court for trial. Prosecutors are continuing their investigation and are awaiting key forensic evidence, including DNA analysis and the post-mortem report.

The incident occurred on December 21 at the couple's home in Northfield, an inner northern suburb of Adelaide. Police were called to the property around 8.30 pm following reports of a disturbance.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



INDIAN-ORIGIN KIRTIDA MEKANI, SINGAPORE'S 'TREE LADY', DIES AT 66

JANUARY 22, 2026
SINGAPORE (TIP)

Kirtida Mekani, who came from Karnataka and became one of Singapore's most influential champions of environmental sustainability, community service and cultural heritage, has passed away after suffering a massive heart attack at home.

A recipient of the President's Award for environment work and an inductee of the Singapore Women's Hall of Fame in 2024, Mekani's legacy is woven into the island's green spaces, community gardens, educational institutions and cultural landmarks, reported online tabloid, *tabla!*

The sudden passing of "Tree Lady", as she was affectionately called, on January 19 has left a profound void in Singapore's environment, arts, and civic communities and circles she shaped quietly yet decisively for more than three decades.

Mekani's lifelong love for nature began in childhood on her family's farm in Karnataka. A simple yet transformative moment discovering how a "smelly" compost pit turned into fertile soil opened her eyes to nature's regenerative power.

That early lesson stayed with her, shaping a philosophy that nature, if understood and respected, could teach humanity how to live sustainably.

When she moved to Singapore with her husband Bharat Mekani in 1990, she was immediately struck by the greenery along the drive from the Changi Airport. That image, she often recalled, planted a seed that would later blossom into one of Singapore's most successful citizen-led environmental initiatives.

In 1993, Mekani became the founding executive director of the Singapore Environment Council, where she spent four years designing and implementing more than 50 environmental protection and education programs for schools, businesses, and communities.

Even after stepping down, she remained deeply involved in grassroots environmental education, mentoring young leaders, and advising organizations.

Her proudest achievement was the Plant-A-Tree Program, launched in 2007 in partnership with Singapore's National Parks Board under the Garden City Fund here.

The idea initially faced skepticism, with doubts over whether the public would participate. Mekani persisted convinced that Singaporeans would respond if given the chance to connect personally with nature. She was right.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

FIA - New England organized Free Healthcare Camp to honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the MLK Day weekend

The camp organized at the Academy of Creative Arts in Burlington, Massachusetts, drew people from all walks of life



JANUARY 19, 2026
BURLINGTON (TIP)

The Foundation of Indian Americans (FIA) - New England along with all its partner organizations held a free community health camp at the Center of Creative Arts in Burlington, Massachusetts, to commemorate MLK Day, by honoring the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. through community service.

Over 300 members of the community were served with medical, dental and vision checks at no cost, thanks to several healthcare professionals of Indian origin, including: Dr. Anahita Dua, Director of the Vascular Laboratory and Associate Leader of Advanced Vascular Surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital; Mr. Ravindra Zende of Jatan Foundation for Inclusion (Social worker with focus on vision care); Dr. Shivkumar, Senior Psychiatrist and Dementia Specialist; Dr. Sapna Agarwal, Primary Care Physician;

Dr. Nirav Patel, USCIS-Designated Civil Surgeon; Dr. Bijal Patel, Cardiologist; Dr. Sarju Ganatra, Cardio-Onco-Metabolic Medicine Physician; Dr. Ram Yadav, Dentist; Dr. Shezan Fouzdar; Dr. Radha Bansal; Dr. Sweschha Bhatt; Mrs. Shalu Yadav, Physical Therapist; Mrs. Punithavathy, Clinical Dietitian; and Mrs. Pooja Arorra, Attorney specializing in Estate Planning, Wills & Trusts.

The event was emceed by Mrs. Jyoti Singh (FIA-Director) with brief description of Dr. Martin Luther



king Jr. and his legacy for the pursuit of equality and social harmony. Mrs. Sahana Purohit, a social worker, was the chief guest of the event.

Mr. Sanjay Gokhale, Vice President of FIA - New England, welcomed all the Physicians and other volunteer healthcare workers, and explained the motivation and agenda for the medical camp.

Mr. Abhishek Singh, President of FIA - New England said, "we are inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior's dream of equality and social harmony, and wanted to honor his memory by organizing free community healthcare camp with free vision checks and dispensing of reading glasses at no cost".

FIA - New England was blessed by the presence and support of many prominent community leaders at this healthcare camp, including Mr. Nilesh and Mrs. Deepa Agarwal and Mr. Dipak Garg of the India Association of Greater Boston; Mr. Devendra Patil, Owner of The Treasury/Rassa/Bombay Launch Restaurant Chain; Mr. Rakesh and Mrs. Aditi Soni, Prominent entrepreneur and Saheli Executive; Mr. Hetal and Mrs. Java Joshi, Founders of the Academy of Creative Art; Mrs. Manisha Jain, Executive Director of Ekal Vidyalaya; Mr. Mohan Nannapannei, Founder & President of Team Aid; Mr. Vikas Deshpande of HSS; Dr. Monie and Mr. Arun Malhotra; Dr. Ranjani and Mr. Anil Saigal, Founders of Lokvani; Mr. Rakesh and Mrs. Deepa Kavasari and Mr.

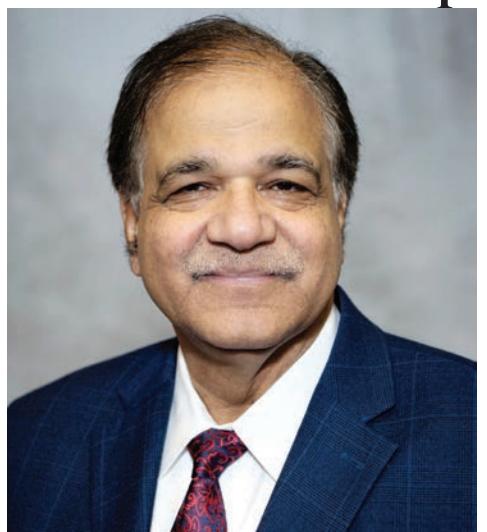


Anand Sharma, FIA-NE Executives; and Mrs. Sonal Limbachia.

The healthcare camp was successful due to the tireless effort of our young volunteers including Mr. Mitesh Soni, Mr. Mahesh Chilka, Mr. Rasik Mehta, Ms. Tisha Singh, Ms. Saisa Sharma, Ms. Pragna Kavasari, Mr. Abhuday Singh and Mr. Ranuday Singh

Mr. Amol Penshanwar and Mrs. Shova Sharma thanked all the partners, including Jatan foundation, RestoringVision, Academy of Creative Arts, The Treasury, Lynn & Woburn Urgent Care & Happy Life Adult Day Care, as well as all the participating healthcare professionals, supporters and volunteers for making this healthcare camp a grand success.

Dr. Avinash Gupta of Lakewood, NJ, Achieves Board Certification in Lifestyle Medicine



Dr. Avinash K Gupta has been board-certified by the American Board of Lifestyle Medicine (ABLM)

JANUARY 17, 2026
LAKEWOOD, NJ (TIP)

Dr. Avinash C. Gupta, MD, FACC, a senior cardiologist practicing in Lakewood, New Jersey, has been board-certified by the American Board of Lifestyle Medicine (ABLM), marking a significant milestone in his commitment to preventive and holistic patient care.

Lifestyle Medicine is an evidence-based medical specialty that focuses on the treatment, reversal, and prevention of chronic diseases—including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity—by addressing their root causes. It emphasizes six interconnected pillars: optimal nutrition, regular physical activity, restorative sleep, stress management,

social connectedness, and avoidance of risky substances. Research shows that lifestyle medicine interventions can positively impact up to 80% of chronic diseases, offering patients sustainable, long-term health benefits.

Dr. Gupta is already board-certified in Cardiovascular Diseases, Nuclear Cardiology, and Lipidology, and has practiced cardiology in Lakewood for over 30 years. He currently serves as Chief of Cardiology at Monmouth Medical Center-Southern Campus (MMC-SC) and is a past President of the Medical Staff.

Deeply committed to community service, Dr. Gupta serves as Chairman of the Shree Siddhivinayak Temple in Toms River, Regional Director of the American Association of Physicians of

Indian Origin (AAPI), and past President of the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA), BJANA, and MOCAAPI. He is also the Director of PRAN-BJANA clinics, which have conducted over 100 charitable health clinics in India, treating thousands of underserved patients. In recognition of his public health leadership, he has been appointed to the Ocean County Board of Health.

Dr. Gupta expressed enthusiasm about his new certification, stating that he looks forward to integrating the principles of Lifestyle Medicine into his own life, his family, his community, and his patients' care, reinforcing his lifelong mission of promoting health, prevention, and wellness.



AAPi's Landmark Odisha Global Health Summit

Forging Partnerships, Celebrating Achievements, and Shaping the Future

AJAY GHOSH
JANUARY 19, 2026
BHUBANESWAR (TIP)

The American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPi) organized its 19th annual Global Health Summit (GHS) from January 9-11, 2026, in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, which was attended by over 100 Physician leaders from the United States, along with nearly 500 participants from India.

Organized for the first time in the state of Odisha under the leadership of AAPi President Dr. Amit Chakrabarty, the Summit brought together leading physicians, researchers, educators, and public health experts from India and the United States, united in their mission to advance medical innovation, global partnerships, and community impact. Held across the Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), Mayfair Lagoon, and Swosti Premium, the summit showcased groundbreaking medical developments and collaborative initiatives aimed at strengthening healthcare delivery in India.



with AAPi: "KIIT is one of India's leading private universities, known for its academic excellence, world-class infrastructure, and impressive placement records." He lauded AAPi, which represents over 100,000 Indian American physicians, playing a vital role as a bridge between India and the US through academic collaboration, research, knowledge sharing, and

Prof. CBK Mohanty, Pro Vice Chancellor of KIMS; Dr. Atashu Nayak, President, Odisha Physicians of America; Dr. Ajit K Mohanty, Chair of GHS Host Committee.

Rabi N. Samanta, Director of the GHS Host Committee, stated, "We are extremely happy to have the esteemed delegates of AAPi from the United States, join us here in Odisha with the objective of enhancing healthcare

gala for his support in organizing the GHS.

"Our community programs reflect AAPi's heart. Beyond CMEs and conferences, we are committed to protecting and empowering the next generation," emphasized Dr. Meher Medavaram, President-Elect of AAPi. "Our workshops and community collaboration are designed to strengthen frontline decision-making. These are the skills that save lives in the golden hour,"

CLINICAL EXCELLENCE AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Under the leadership of Dr. Chakrabarty, GHS prioritized youth engagement and medical education, drawing participants from both India and the United States. A diverse lineup of activities for medical students, residents, and early-career clinicians included poster presentations and hands-on skills workshops.

Among the summit's highlights, the AAPi-IMG Section Update provided a vital lifeline for international medical graduates. "We want to demystify the process for those seeking U.S.



SETTING THE STAGE FOR GLOBAL COLLABORATION

Dr. Amit Chakrabarty opened the summit by highlighting its transformative potential of the Summit: "Global Healthcare Summit 2026 reflects AAPi's unwavering commitment to elevating global health standards. When experts from two of the world's most dynamic healthcare systems come together, the impact extends far beyond conference halls-it reaches communities, hospitals, and future generations."

India's Minister for Health, Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda, in a video message at GHS, commended AAPi's role as a bridge between India and the United States: "AAPi stands as a powerful symbol of professional excellence, global leadership and dedicated service to humanity, representing over 100,000 Physicians of Indian origin practicing in the United States. Through sustained academic collaboration, knowledge exchange and capacity building, AAPi has significantly strengthened healthcare systems in both nations. Service beyond borders is the highest form of leadership."

Dr. Achyuta Samanta, Founder of KIIT, emphasized the university's partnership

capacity building.

Welcoming AAPi delegates, Prof. R C Das, Dean and Principal of KIMS, said, "A hearty welcome to AAPi delegates to the Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences, which has redefined healthcare services in Odisha and neighboring states, anchored on a genuine desire to promote a healthy society and provide advanced medical care."

Others who addressed the audience during the inaugural ceremony were

delivery in India."

During the gala on the first day of the GHS, AAPi recognized and honored Dr. Sita Kanta Dash for his contributions to society both in the USA and Odisha. Dr. Dash is the Chairman of Kalinga Hospital, a part-sponsor of this year's GHS. Dr. Dosh rose from rural Odisha to global acclaim through education and innovation in the field of Probiotics.

Dr. Santosh Dora, CEO of Kalinga Hospital, was also honored during the

residencies-guidance on applications, interview strategies, and what to expect in a new healthcare system," said Dr. Amit Chakrabarty, President of AAPi.

"We aimed to create an inclusive and interactive learning environment, including the much sought after AAPi's Poster Contest, where over 150 students could showcase their research, practice clinical skills, and network with global experts," shared Dr. Priyanka Kolli, President of AAPi's Medical Students, Residents, and Fellows section.

"These workshops and mentoring sessions are investments in our collective future," explained Dr. Abhishek Kashyap, co-coordinator of the student activities.

The Scientific Forum featured high-impact CME sessions, addressing metabolic syndrome (Dr. Prasun K. Jalal), advances in hemoglobinopathy treatment (Dr. Arun Panigrahi), healthcare gaps in India (Dr. Lokesh Edara), and cervical cancer updates (Dr. Bhagyalaxmi Nayak). The sessions on PSA Tightrope Balancing (Dr. Amit Chakrabarty), New Data and Techniques in Management of Carotid Stenosis (Dr. Uttam Tripathi) and Navigating the



CONT'D ON PAGE 16



AAPi Delegation Champions Unity and Healthcare Collaboration in Gujarat

Historic Meetings Advance Shared Vision for Medical Excellence in India and Beyond

AJAY GHOSH
JANUARY 22, 2026
AHMEDABAD (TIP)

The American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPi) reaffirmed its commitment to unity and healthcare advancement during a series of pivotal engagements in Gujarat, India. At the heart of these meetings was the message that unity is the cornerstone of AAPi's impact both within its membership and in its partnerships with Indian healthcare leaders.

During the Indian Medical Association (IMA) convention in Ahmedabad, an AAPi delegation led by President Dr. Amit Chakrabarty met with the Honorable Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Bhupendra Rajnikant Patel. The delegation presented a comprehensive memorandum addressing critical healthcare challenges, including "the urgent need to expand postgraduate training slots in emergency medicine and the importance of structured training programs for first responders and EMTs," a priority strongly advocated by Dr. Lokesh Edara, former Chair of the AAPi Board of Trustees.

Dr. Hetal Gor, AAPi Chairwoman, eloquently shared AAPi's mission and objectives in Gujarati, emphasizing the organization's dedication to enhancing healthcare across India. "Our vision is to collaborate, innovate, and uplift the standards of care in every community we touch," Dr. Gor stated. The Chief Minister



responded with deep appreciation, requesting that the IMA, in collaboration with AAPi, prepare and submit a formal memorandum to his office for further action.

The delegation's visit to the iconic Statue of Unity served as a powerful symbol of their message. Reflecting on the legacy of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Iron Man of India, the group drew inspiration from his pivotal role in uniting the nation. "Standing before this monumental tribute, we were reminded that unity is not just a word—it is the very foundation upon which

greatness is built," remarked Dr. Chakrabarty.

Patel's achievements resonated with AAPi's ongoing efforts. "Patel's legacy teaches us that when diverse voices come together under shared principles, no challenge is insurmountable. Division weakens, but unity empowers," Dr. Chakrabarty emphasized. He called upon all AAPi members to "stand shoulder to shoulder, celebrate our shared identity, and carry forward the torch of solidarity."

Unity, the delegation stressed, remains

AAPi's "greatest power." It is the force that "gives us credibility in the halls of power, amplifies our service to patients and communities, and ensures that AAPi continues to rise as a beacon of excellence, dignity, and heritage."

Another highlight of the Gujarat visit was the historic meeting with IMA leadership during the organization's centennial conference. The gathering culminated in the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between AAPi and IMA, laying the groundwork for future collaborative events that will blend Indian and American medical expertise. "This meeting was not just about agreements—it was about building bridges, fostering trust, and envisioning a future of collaboration," said Dr. Chakrabarty.

AAPi members actively participated in the conference, delivering lectures and engaging in vibrant exchanges of ideas. The event underscored "the importance of dialogue in shaping evidence-based practices that serve patients with compassion and clarity."

Dr. Chakrabarty concluded, "AAPi is our collective home, our shared voice, and our enduring strength. Just as Patel refused to let India fragment, we must refuse to let discord dilute our mission." As AAPi and its partners continue to build bridges and uplift communities, their unity remains the guiding light for a future of medical excellence and service to humanity.

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Embassy of India in Romania Organizes B2B on Information Technology & Communications

Thin Red Line in The ED & ICU (Dr. Ajit Kayal).

Live robotic and minimally invasive surgical demonstrations, broadcast live from the United States by internationally renowned experts exemplified advances in surgical technology. The session on "Cutting Edge Developments in Urology" was chaired by Dr. Ashok Hemal and was Co-Chaired by Dr. Amit Chakrabarty.

A parallel breakout star studded session on Ayurveda Consortium was headed by Dr. Amit Shah and Dr. Arti Prasad, which featured luminaries, including Mr. Rajesh Koticha (Secretary, Union Ministry, AYUSH, India) and Dr. Charles Elder, Executive Director, Maharishi International University.

The session on Physician, Heal Thyself: Mental Health, Suicide Risk, and the Implementation of Prevention Programs, presented by Dr. Tarak Vasavada highlighted the very important concerns experienced by the medical fraternity around the world.

A large-scale Mass CPR Training Event for students under the leadership of Dr. Vemury Murthy reinforced AAPi's dedication to community empowerment.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMERGENCY CARE INNOVATION

This Summit spotlighted Artificial Intelligence in Medicine, with a

pioneering session on "AI in Global Medical Practices," and was led by Dr. Suresh Reddy, and Dr. Inderpal Chhabra. Panelists, Kinjal Saxena (CTO, AIG), Dr. Vidhur Mahajan (CEO, CARPL.AI), Dr. Suvrankar Datta, and Dr. Priyaa Jain shared insights into the transformative role of AI.

"AI is transforming medicine at a pace we've never seen before. AAPi is committed to ensuring that Indian and U.S. physicians lead this transformation with responsibility and vision," said Dr. Seema Arora, Secretary of AAPi.

The Resuscitation & Emergency Medical Care Workshop, led by Dr. Vemury Murthy and Dr. Anjali Gulati, covered the 2025 AHA Resuscitation Guidelines, sudden cardiac arrest research, and the National Emergency Life Support Program, with hands-on simulations and AI-based clinical case discussions.

Dr. Krishan Kumar, President-Elect of AAPi noted, "A major objective of the GHS has been providing education on current trends in medicine, cutting edge technologies and on relevant policies. These discussions are not just academic, they are actionable. Our goal is to bring evidence-based solutions to the forefront of India's healthcare landscape."

Recognizing the dire need for an increased donor pool amongst people of Indian origin across the globe, the Stem Cell Donor Drive in the United States was launched in 2024, by Dr. Satheesh Kathula, the immediate past president of AAPi. This noble initiative achieved remarkable success under the leadership of Dr. Shahi Kuppala, Chair of the Stem

Cell Drive.

With the objective of enhancing the stem donor pool, Dr. Chakrabarty launched the Stem Donor Drive during the Global Healthcare Summit in Odisha, in collaboration with the Global Association of Indian Medical Students.

"We received 238 Stem Donors who registered at our Stem Donor Registry during the Global Healthcare Summit," said Dr. Sashi Kuppala. "To put it in context, we would have had to do 20 drives to get those many registrations in the United States. Thanks to Dr. Amit Chakrabarty, we successfully launched the project in India."

Dr. Chakrabarty expressed his "deep gratitude to the many AAPi members, and the students and staff at Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences, who have overwhelmingly supported and participated at AAPi's Stem Cell Drive during the GHS in Orissa."

Prof. R C Das, Dean and Principal of KIMS stressed the importance and urged the medical students at KIM to come forward and register for Stem Donorship. The students were then led to pledge and commit to encourage Stem Donorship among the patient population they are committed to serve.

Parallel CME collaborative educational forum focused on TB elimination, led by Dr. Manoj Jain, and Dr. Smita Joshi: Diabetes and Obesity, led by Dr. Dibyajiban Mohapatra; and, Critical Care Skills, led by Dr. Kalpalatha Guntupalli and Dr. Siddhatha Mishra.

"GHS 2026 was truly memorable. The hosts were exceptional, setting a gold

standard for collaboration and hospitality," said Dr. Soumya Neravetla, Treasurer, AAPi. "This summit strengthened Indo-U.S. partnerships, inspired young clinicians, and advanced community impact."

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

The final day centered on women's leadership in medicine, with the Women in Healthcare CME co-chaired by Dr. Kalpalatha Guntupalli, and Dr. Tapti Panda. Sessions addressed gender equity, leadership pathways, and the evolving role of women in global healthcare. "The Real and the Reel," led by Dr. Priya Abraham (Director, ICMR-National Institute of Virology), celebrated the story behind India's COVID-19 vaccine, Covaxin, with panelists Pallavi Joshi and Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri discussing the intersection of science and storytelling.

"From Pitch to Policy" honored four visually challenged cricket champions from Odisha, members of India's victorious women's blind cricket team at the inaugural Blind Women's T20 World Cup 2025 in Colombo.

Other community health initiatives during the GHS included the launching of the first AAPi-HPV Vaccination Drive India at the MKCG Medical College, where 100 girls were vaccinated. Dr. Chakrabarty said, "The HPV Project by AAPi will continue for the next several years with the objective of vaccinating 5,000 girls."

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news



Embassy of India in Romania Organizes B2B on Information Technology & Communications



Ambassador H.E. Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra addressing the gathering



**JANUARY 16, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)**

The Embassy of India successfully organized a Business-to-Business (B2B) meeting on Information Technology & Communications (IT&C) with Romanian companies to explore avenues for collaboration and partnership in the IT sector. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from the Romanian IT industry and served as an important platform for strengthening India-Romania cooperation in the technology domain.

Two eminent industry leaders from India participated as lead speakers: Mr. Sandeep Narula, Chairman (Global Outreach), and Mr. Gurmeet Singh, Director & CEO of the Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC India). Their presence added significant value to the discussions and provided industry-driven insights into India's rapidly growing IT ecosystem.



Presentation shown during the B2B

The B2B meeting was held in a physical format, with more than 30 potential Romanian IT companies participating actively and demonstrating strong interest in exploring partnerships with Indian counterparts. The session commenced with special remarks by the Ambassador of India to Romania, Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, who highlighted the robust growth of India's IT sector and its emergence as a global technology and innovation hub. The Ambassador also expressed his appreciation to the special guests who travelled from India to participate in the B2B meeting and formally honored them for their contributions.

Addressing the participants, Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra emphasized India's strengths in IT services, software development, digital innovation, and skilled human resources. He expressed confidence that Romanian companies would explore concrete trade and investment opportunities with Indian firms. The Ambassador reiterated India's position as a reliable global partner in the IT sector and encouraged Romanian companies to consider sourcing, collaboration, and joint ventures with Indian IT enterprises. Indian companies, in turn, invited Romanian firms to visit India to gain firsthand exposure to their IT infrastructure and facilities. Impressed by the presentations and discussions, several Romanian companies expressed keen interest in visiting India.

During the session, Mr. Sandeep Narula briefed participants on the rapid expansion of India's IT industry, driven by key Government of India initiatives and digital transformation projects that are positioning the country at the forefront of global technology development. He delivered a detailed presentation on the achievements and role of ESC India in promoting electronics and software exports with strong government support. He also addressed numerous questions raised by Romanian IT companies and extended a formal invitation to the Romanian IT industry to participate in India Soft 2026, a major international technology exhibition scheduled for March 23-25 in New Delhi, to experience Indian IT capabilities firsthand and forge concrete partnerships.

Mr. Gurmeet Singh highlighted the sustained growth trajectory of India's IT sector and its potential to emerge as one of the leading global IT hubs in the years to come.



Questions were answered by the lead speakers of the event

He emphasized the opportunities available for international collaboration and underlined ESC India's commitment to facilitating partnerships between Indian and Romanian companies.

One of the enthusiastic participants from ANIS Romania (@ANIS_RO), Mr. Edward Creescu, President, addressed the gathering and shared data-driven insights highlighting the robust and rapidly expanding Romanian IT sector. He expressed strong interest in visiting India to gain firsthand exposure to India's dynamic IT ecosystem and conveyed his keen willingness to participate in India Soft 2026 (March 23-25, New Delhi), further strengthening avenues for India-Romania collaboration in the technology sector.



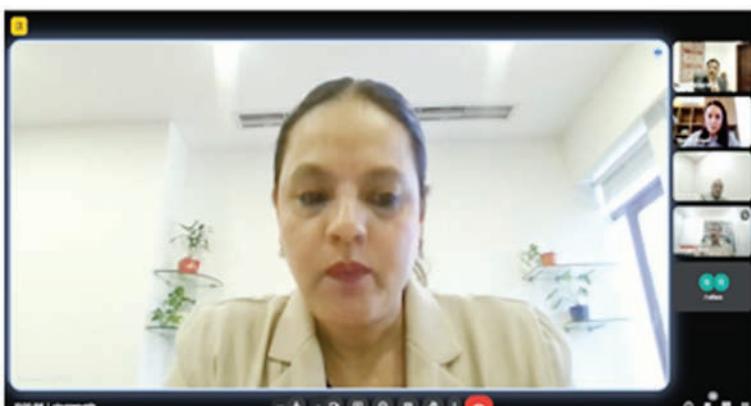
A group photo taken during the event

The Embassy of India reaffirmed its continued commitment to strengthening economic and commercial ties between India and Romania, particularly in priority sectors such as information technology and communications. The Embassy assured participants of its full support in facilitating future engagements, exchanges, and business collaborations between stakeholders from both countries.

The event concluded with productive and forward-looking discussions, reflecting strong mutual interest and laying the groundwork for deeper cooperation in the IT & Communications sector between India and Romania.

(Based on a Press Release issued by the Embassy of India in Bucharest, Romania)

Embassy of India in Romania Organizes Virtual B2B on Home Appliances



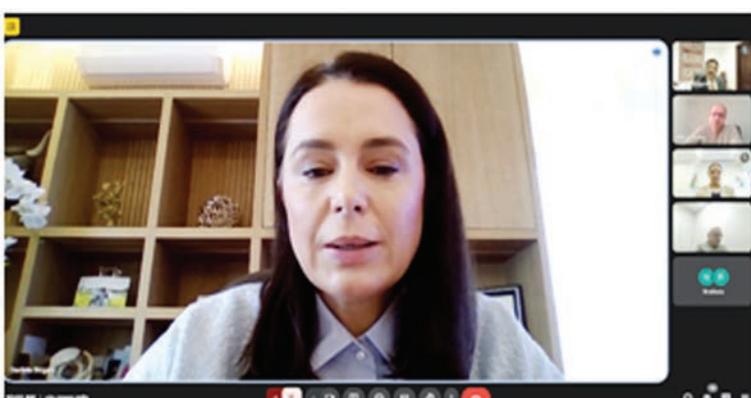
Opening remarks by Ms. Bavleen Kaur, Sr. Director, FICCI



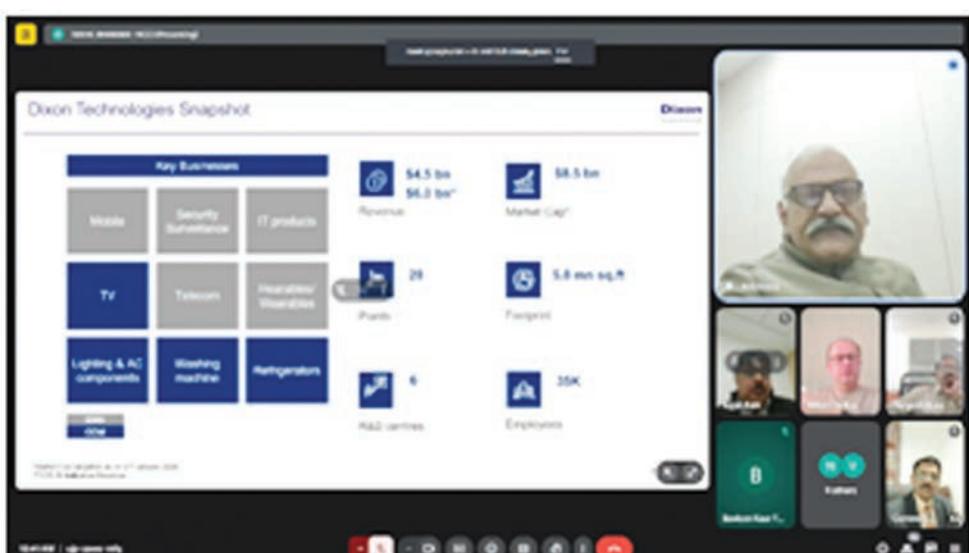
Remarks by Ms. Mihai Chelbi, Com Director, Marelvi Impex SRL

**JANUARY 16, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)**

The Embassy of India organized a Virtual B2B Meeting on Home Appliances between a Romanian company and four leading Indian companies - IFB, Dixon Technologies, Crompton Greaves, and Havells India. The meeting witnessed active and enthusiastic participation from the Indian side and was organized in coordination with Ms. Bavleen Kaur, Senior Director, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).



Remarks by Ms. Mihai Chelbi, GM, Marelvi Impex SRL



Presentation by Mr. Anil Arora, VP, Dixon Technologies

The meeting was organized in a virtual format as the Romanian company, Marelvi Impex SRL, is located in Suceava County, approximately 500 kms from Bucharest. This virtual engagement followed the visit of Ambassador of India, Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, to Suceava County, during which he met with the

company's management. During this interaction, the Romanian company expressed strong interest in establishing trade relations with India. Consequently, the Embassy facilitated this virtual B2B meeting with potential Indian companies that are already exporting globally and are keen to expand their presence in the Romanian market.

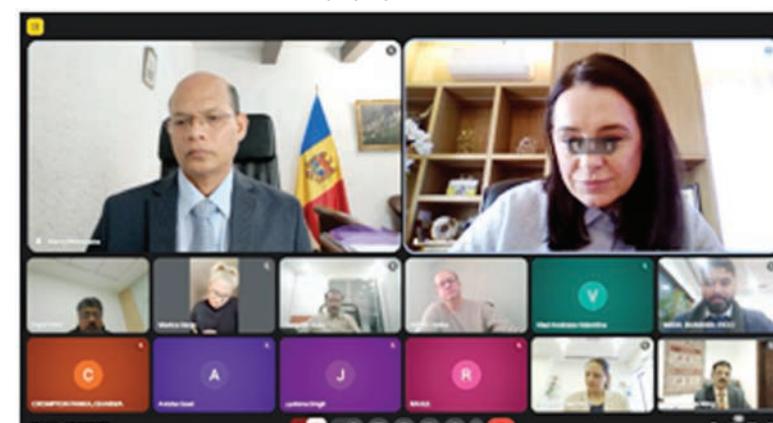
The meeting commenced with opening remarks by Ms. Bavleen Kaur, Senior Director, FICCI, who highlighted the importance of institutional support in facilitating international business partnerships. This was followed by presentations from Marelvi Impex SRL and the participating Indian companies, which led to constructive and meaningful discussions.

Addressing the participants, Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra highlighted India's strengths and capabilities in the home appliances sector and expressed confidence that Marelvi Impex SRL would explore concrete trade opportunities with India. The Indian companies also invited the Romanian company to visit India to gain firsthand exposure to their manufacturing facilities. The Romanian company, impressed by the presentations, expressed keen interest in visiting India. The Ambassador reiterated India's position as a global manufacturing hub for high-quality products and encouraged Romanian companies to explore sourcing and partnership opportunities with Indian firms.

The Embassy of India reaffirmed its continued commitment to strengthening economic and commercial ties between India and Romania, particularly in priority sectors such as home appliances and manufacturing, and



H.E. Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra Ambassador of India, gives his remarks



H.E. Ambassador Dr. Mohapatra and Ms. Mihai Chelbi, GM, Marelvi Impex SRL engage in the discussion

assured participants of its support in facilitating future engagements. The event concluded with a fruitful discussion.

(Based on a Press Release issued by the Embassy of India in Romania)



Ambassador Dr. Manoj Mohapatra Strengthens India-Moldova Ties During Official Visit to Chisinau

JANUARY 15, 2026

BUCHAREST (TIP)

Dr. Manoj Mohapatra, Ambassador of India to Romania and concurrently accredited to the Republic of Moldova, concluded a highly productive official visit to Chisinau from January 11 to 13, 2026. Amid a dynamic series of high-level meetings, the Ambassador fortified bilateral relations across agriculture, finance, infrastructure, environment, culture, energy, education, economy, and labor sectors. These engagements aligned seamlessly with shared Global South priorities, signaling a new chapter in India-Moldova cooperation as both nations navigate geopolitical shifts and economic opportunities in Eastern Europe.



Ambassador meets with Moldovan Education Minister Dan Perciun

The visit commenced on a high note with a resounding cultural event at the Medical University of Chisinau. This gathering illuminated India's rich, multifaceted heritage, from classical music to contemporary expressions, while solidifying cultural diplomacy. Key programs included structured student engagements, all designed to enhance understanding of their concerns, amplify soft power, and weave enduring people-to-people bonds.



Ambassador meets with Moldovan Economy Minister Eugeniu Osmochescu

Turning to economic and financial pillars, discussions with Secretary General Mr. Sergiu Gherciu of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, and State Secretary Mr. Ion Gumene of the Ministry of Finance, yielded a comprehensive roadmap. Highlights encompassed technology transfers for sustainable farming practices, Moldovan exports of premium plums and wines to the vast Indian market, and joint ventures tackling food security challenges. Financial



Ambassador meets with Moldovan Labor Minister Natalia Plugaru accords further enabled co-financed development projects, digital payment interoperability, and robust investment protections, positioning Moldova as a strategic gateway for India's expanding footprint in Central European markets and fostering economic resilience.



Ambassador meets with Moldovan Deputy PM Vladimir Bolea

Infrastructure, energy, and environmental dialogues proved equally transformative. With Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure Mr. Vladimir Bolea, State Secretary for Environment Ms. Aliona Rusnac, and Minister of Energy Mr. Dorin Junghietu, commitments emerged for discussion and studies on road-rail links, smart city initiatives, and Moldova's integration into India's International Solar Alliance.



Ambassador meets with Moldovan Culture Minister Cristian Jardan

These pacts promised renewable technology infusions, grid modernization, and Indian firm participation in Moldovan renewable projects, diversifying energy sources, combating climate vulnerabilities, and advancing shared green stewardship.

Cultural, educational, and human capital exchanges rounded out the agenda. Meetings with Minister of Culture Mr. Cristian Jardan, Minister of Education and Research Mr. Dan Perciun, and State Secretary for Labour Ms. Felicia Bechtoldt expanded scholarships and film co-productions on shared histories; frameworks for mutual degree recognition, AI-driven research hubs, and teacher exchanges; plus mobility partnership agreements, skilling academies inspired by India's Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), and streamlined remittances, equipping Moldovan youth for global success and nurturing future bilateral leaders.



Ambassador meets with Moldovan Energy Minister Dorin Junghietu

The economic crescendo came in talks with Minister of Economy Mr. Eugeniu Osmochescu, who endorsed ambitious trade targets through e-commerce platforms, SME linkages, tariff eliminations, and dedicated forums in IT and pharmaceuticals. The visit



Ambassador meets with Moldovan Labor State Secretaries

culminated in dynamic interactions with potential investors and business houses, where reflections on India's robust growth story underpinned invitations for Moldovan ministerial visits and joint participation in premier Indian trade fairs.

This visit exemplifies the maturing India-Moldova strategic partnership, translating diplomatic goodwill into actionable, high-impact collaborations that promise sustained prosperity, security, and cultural enrichment for generations ahead.

(Based on a Press Release issued by the Embassy of India in Bucharest)

India and Romania to host Regional Hindi Conference at Romanian American University

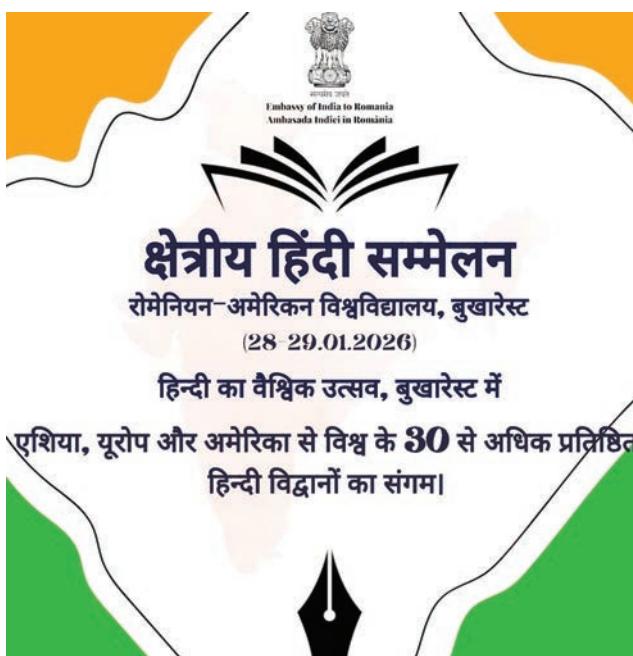
JANUARY 22, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)

The Embassy of India in Bucharest, in collaboration with the Romanian American University, will organize a Regional Hindi Conference on 28-29 January 2026 at the Romanian American University (RAU), Bucharest. The two-day academic and cultural event will bring together eminent Hindi scholars, academics, and experts from across Asia and Europe to deliberate on the growing global relevance of the Hindi language and its role in strengthening international cultural and academic cooperation.

The Conference aims to provide a high-level platform for intellectual exchange and scholarly dialogue, fostering new ideas and future pathways for cooperation in the promotion and study of Hindi at regional and global levels. A delegation led by Smt. Anju Ranja, Joint Secretary, RRB-I&T, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, will also participate in the event, reflecting India's strong commitment to the promotion of Hindi and cultural diplomacy in Europe and beyond.

The Conference will feature a series of thematic panel discussions, focusing on key contemporary and strategic dimensions of Hindi and its global outreach. The major discussion topics include:

- "Hindi: Global Identity and Cultural Unity",



- highlighting Hindi as a unifying cultural and linguistic force across regions;
- "Hindi Bhasha Vigyan ki Vastavik Samasyaen" (Contemporary Linguistic Challenges of Hindi), examining structural, pedagogical, and usage-

- related issues of the language; "Hindi Bhasha Sikhane ke Tarike" (Methods of Teaching Hindi), focusing on innovative and effective approaches to Hindi language instruction; and
- "Hindi, AI, and the Indian Workforce in Romania: New Frontiers of Cooperation", exploring the intersection of Hindi, emerging technologies, and India-Romania professional and educational collaboration.

The Opening Ceremony of the Conference will be held on 28 January 2026 at 10:00 AM in the Senate Room, while the Closing Ceremony will take place on 29 January 2026 at 7:00 PM in the Aula Magna of the Romanian American University. The Closing Ceremony will also feature cultural performances by artists from Romania and Moldova, showcasing the shared appreciation of Indian culture in the region.

The Regional Hindi Conference is expected to serve as an important milestone in strengthening India-Romania academic and cultural cooperation, particularly in the fields of language, literature, higher education, and people-to-people exchanges.

(Based on a Press Release issued by Embassy of India in Bucharest)

Embassy of India and Global Logitech Host Successful AI Pre-Event in Brasov



At the AI for All pre-event of AI Impact Summit, the Ambassador addressed participants

JANUARY 16, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)

The Embassy of India in Bucharest, in collaboration with Global Logitech, an innovative Indian company based in Braov, organized a dynamic pre-event on 14 January 2026 at the prestigious University of Transylvania in Braov, Romania. This forum served as an inspiring prelude to the upcoming AI Summit in India, scheduled for February 2026.

The event gathered leading innovators, policymakers, industry experts, and academicians from Romania and beyond to delve into cutting-edge advancements in artificial intelligence. Discussions centered on ethical AI deployment, robust digital infrastructure, and sustainable innovation, highlighting AI's transformative role in driving economic growth and societal progress. Key highlights included keynote addresses, insightful panel discussions, and hands-on interactive workshops that sparked collaborative ideas.

A standout moment featured Mr. Costin Badici, who delivered a



Costin Badici of GlobalLogic addressed participants during the AI Impact Summit pre-event.

compelling presentation on "AI for All," illuminating the future applications of AI for humankind's benefit, from enhancing everyday accessibility to solving global challenges.

Dr. Manoj Mohapatra, Ambassador of India to Romania, inaugurated the proceedings. He underscored India's pioneering role in AI through flagship initiatives like the India AI Mission, which aims to democratize technology for inclusive development. "This partnership with Global Logitech

exemplifies the deepening India-Romania ties in emerging technologies," the Ambassador remarked. "As we prepare for the AI Summit in India, gatherings like this lay the groundwork for groundbreaking joint ventures that will forge a brighter, tech-driven future for both nations."

Global Logitech representatives reaffirmed their dedication to bridging Indo-Romanian tech ecosystems. They announced promising opportunities for

research and development (R&D) partnerships, talent exchange programs, and co-innovation hubs. Over 100 participants, including startups, university researchers, and government officials, engaged in lively exchanges on critical topics such as AI for smart cities, healthcare diagnostics, and cybersecurity resilience.

The event culminated in a captivating showcase of Indian innovation, with live demonstrations of AI-enabled solutions developed by Global Logitech. These displays reinforced the strong technological affinities between India and Romania, blending cutting-edge expertise with shared visions for progress.

The Embassy of India remains committed to nurturing such collaborative platforms that advance bilateral relations. It extends a warm invitation to stakeholders to join the forthcoming AI Summit in India for even deeper engagements and opportunities.



The participants at the pre-event of AI Impact Summit during the speech of the Ambassador

(Based on a Press Release issued by the Embassy of India in Bucharest)

Indian Consulate hosts India-Canada AI Dialogue 2026 ahead of India AI Impact Summit

JANUARY 20, 2026
TORONTO (TIP)

The Consulate General of India in Toronto hosted the 'India-Canada AI Dialogue 2026' in partnership with the University of Waterloo, Canada India Tech Council, and Zoho Inc, as a precursor to one of the biggest AI Summits in Global South - the 'India AI Impact Summit 2026'



The attendees. (Left to Right): Elissa Strome (Member of Canada's AI Advisory Council & ED, CIFAR); Diane Gutw (VP & Global AI Research Lead, CGI and Co-chair of Canada's advisory Council on AI); Kundan Joshi (CEO, Canada India Tech Council); Ramprakash Ramamoorthy (Director of AI Research, Zoho); Jeff Nankivell (CEO, Asia Pacific Foundation of India); Honorable Victor Fedeli (Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation & Trade, Ontario); Mr. Dinesh K. Patnaik (High Commissioner of India to Canada); Honorable Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, Canada); Prof. Vivek Goel (President & VC, University of Waterloo); Sanjeev Gill (AVP Innovation & Executive Director, WatSPEED); Mr. Kapidhwaja Pratap Singh (Acting Consul General of India in Toronto); Paul Samson (President, CGI); Julien Billot (CEO, Scale AI); Mary Wells (Member of Canada's AI Taskforce)

The event gathered over 600 leaders from industry, academia, and government to advance bilateral AI collaboration, focusing on responsible, ethical, and impact-driven technology ahead of the upcoming India AI Impact Summit 2026.



A Panel discussion

Honorable Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, Canada) was the Keynote Speaker. The high level dialogue was addressed, among others, by Mr. Dinesh K. Patnaik (High Commissioner of India to Canada), Mr. Kapidhwaja Pratap Singh (Acting Consul General of India in Toronto), Honorable Victor Fedeli (Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation & Trade, Ontario), Prof. Vivek Goel (President & VC, University of Waterloo) and several distinguished speakers and leaders across the AI ecosystem.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford sent a message that framed the dialogue within a broader relationship across trade, investment and research.

"India and Canada share a deep and longstanding partnership, one built on robust trade and investment, people-to-people ties and research partnerships in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence," said Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, Canada.

Ford also addressed the consulate's convening role in Toronto.



Another Panel Discussion

"Many thanks to the Consulate General of India in Toronto for convening this important gathering and for its continued leadership in fostering collaboration between our jurisdictions," said Ford.



Yet another panel discussion

The discussions focused on ethical, inclusive AI for societal benefit, with potential partnerships in MedTech, logistics, and operations, as highlighted by Aliza Lakhani and LinkedIn users.



A view of the gathering

The event aimed to bridge the Canadian research ecosystem with India's data scale to drive AI innovation.

The organizers said the dialogue set out themes for continued bilateral work and that the Canadian delegation expected to travel to the New Delhi summit and co-chair a working group on science.

(Based on a Press Release issued by the Indian Consulate General in Toronto)



BC delegation talks more business and less politics

JANUARY 17, 2026
TORONTO (TIP)

A high-powered British Columbia delegation led by Premier David Eby has been concentrating on business and technological cooperation with India rather than getting trapped in politics and straying away from its main objective of ensuring the standard of living of its people is not impacted by the U.S. trade war.

Midway on its six-day Indian sojourn, David Eby and his team members may be patting their backs at the grounds they have covered by advancing key partnerships with government and business leaders in Bengaluru, Karnataka, India's largest innovation Center, to attract investment, foster collaboration in innovation, and build long-term relationships.

These partnerships will help B.C.'s technology and life-sciences sectors pursue joint opportunities that leverage B.C.'s research excellence and Karnataka's deep pools of engineering talent, entrepreneurship and global scale. In Bengaluru, a letter of intent (LOI) was signed between the Province and the state government of Karnataka. The LOI expresses mutual interest to collaborate in life sciences, biotechnology, medical technology, medical devices and digital health.

"B.C.'s technology and life sciences businesses are second to none, and in the face of U.S. tariffs, we are strengthening our economy by deepening trade and investment relationships with diverse, reliable partners," Kahlon said. "Bengaluru is the tech capital of India. Its rapid growth and innovation ecosystem make it an important partner for B.C.'s emerging sectors. These relationships create new opportunities for collaboration, investment and shared success."

After meeting with officials in Bengaluru, it was agreed to share research and collaboration between Bengaluru and B.C. companies, and foster relationships and investments between Bengaluru and B.C. In addition, a delegation from Bengaluru agreed to explore travelling to Web Summit Vancouver 2026.

Critics of the trade mission have been skeptical of a warming relationship with India, years after former prime minister Justin Trudeau talked in the House of Commons about credible allegations that Indian agents were linked to an extrajudicial killing of Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil in 2023.

Nijjar was a known advocate for an independent Sikh state called Khalistan. Back home, pro-Khalistan groups of Sikhs accused Eby of choosing trade interests over justice for Nijjar in a statement before he left for India. India's government has denied ordering extrajudicial killings in Canada. Four men, all Indian nationals who arrived in Canada several years ago, have been accused of carrying out the killing of Nijjar.

Eby expressed support for the trial process currently underway in that case, saying there was a need to ensure justice for Nijjar and for the community.

Amid a spike in extortion-related crimes in B.C.'s Lower Mainland in the first two weeks of 2026 - with 16 reports of extortion in Surrey in the first fortnight of the New

Year - Eby also said that the province's extortion task force would provide an update to the community next week. He said there have been important developments in dealing with the rash of extortions - including deportations, an arrest in India and co-operation between Canadian and Indian law enforcement agencies. "But bluntly, we need better results. We need to see more arrests, and whatever we can do to support the police to be able to get the job done, we will do so," he told the media in Mumbai.

"At the same time, we can't sit around while our standard of living is eroded and our economy is eroded by the decisions of the president of the United States," Eby said, in reference to the U.S. trade war. "India is going to be the third largest economy in the world, and Canadians and British Columbians will only benefit from a close relationship with India," said David Eby at a media conference.

The BC Government had claimed ahead of the Indian trip that B.C.-origin goods exports to India were worth \$1.3 billion in 2024, while Kahlon said B.C. had "the highest share of exports to India of any province." David Eby and Ravi Kahlon will be in India till January 17, making stops in New Delhi and Chandigarh to meet with government and business leaders.

The president and CEO of the Business Council of British Columbia, Laura Jones, says India is a big market that could help diversify growth in the local economy.

Ravi Kahlon, during his meetings with business and industry leaders, strengthened partnerships in Karnataka, India's Silicon Valley, to advance collaboration in life sciences, technology and innovation. Roundtables with B.C. and Indian companies identified opportunities for trade and investment, and the promotion of Web Summit Vancouver 2026 positioned B.C. as a global tech hub. He advanced key partnerships with government and business leaders in Bengaluru, Karnataka, India's largest innovation Center, to attract investment, foster collaboration in innovation, and build long-term relationships.

These partnerships will help B.C.'s technology and life-sciences sectors pursue joint opportunities that leverage B.C.'s research excellence and Karnataka's deep pools of engineering talent, entrepreneurship and global scale. In Bengaluru, a letter of intent (LOI) was signed between the Province and the state government of Karnataka. The LOI expresses mutual interest to collaborate in life sciences, biotechnology, medical technology, medical devices and digital health.

"B.C.'s technology and life sciences businesses are second to none, and in the face of U.S. tariffs, we are strengthening our economy by deepening trade and investment relationships with diverse, reliable partners," Kahlon said. "Bengaluru is the tech capital of India. Its rapid growth and innovation ecosystem make it an important partner for B.C.'s emerging sectors. These relationships create new opportunities for collaboration, investment and shared success."

India's scale, talent pool and fast-growing technology sector create major opportunities for joint innovation that complements B.C.'s world-class strengths in life sciences and technology. Together,

B.C. and Karnataka offer highly compatible innovation ecosystems that can accelerate growth for both regions.

"Global collaboration drives commercial success in life sciences," said Wendy Hurlburt, president and CEO, Life Sciences BC. "Strengthening trade and investment ties with high-growth markets like India, one of the world's largest economies, is critical to accelerating innovation, scaling our companies internationally and ensuring the long-term competitiveness of Canada's life-sciences sector."

In Bengaluru, Kahlon met with Sharath Kumar Bache Gowda, chairman of Karnataka State Electronics Development Corporation Limited (KEONICS). Discussions focused on expanding economic collaboration between B.C. and Karnataka's life sciences, technology and innovation ecosystems.



B.C. Premier David Eby, seen here at a news conference in India during his week-long trade mission. -Photo / Courtesy Government of B.C.

Kahlon also held roundtables with B.C. companies doing business in India, including Telus Digital Services, Lululemon, Earth Daily Analytics and Yactraq Online, to discuss accomplishments, opportunities and challenges to operating in India, and potential supports from the Province. Kahlon also called on Indian technology companies to position B.C. as a global hub for innovation and technology, and to promote Web Summit Vancouver 2026 as a gateway for international collaboration. The discussion further strengthened ties with India's fast-growing technology sectors, and showcased B.C.'s strengths in academic-industry leadership, government support programs and innovation ecosystems.

It was agreed to share research and collaboration between Bengaluru and B.C. companies, and foster relationships and investments between them. In addition, a delegation from Bengaluru agreed to explore travelling to Web Summit Vancouver 2026.

The agenda of the visit supports British Columbia's Look West industrial and economic plan, and aligns with its trade diversification strategy, which focuses on delivering major projects more quickly, diversifying markets and growing targeted sectors, such as technology, life sciences, aerospace, marine, artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum, agriculture and construction innovation.

B.C. is home to a thriving innovation ecosystem, including more than 12,000 tech companies and leadership in AI, quantum computing and clean technology. Information technology is B.C.'s top investment sector in India. Leading B.C. companies, such as TELUS, Lululemon and Pani Energy, operate in Bengaluru,

PRABHJOT SINGH



creating more than 1,400 high-paying jobs. B.C. currently has four trade and investment offices in India, attached to Canadian missions in New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chandigarh.

The "Silicon Valley of India" Bengaluru, contributes more than 43% to Karnataka's economy and hosts more than 40% of India's Global Capability Centres. Its economy is driven by information technology, biotechnology, aerospace and electric-vehicle manufacturing. The letter of intent commits the governments to: Life sciences and biotechnology collaboration. Facilitating collaboration in biotechnology, biopharma, medical technology, medical devices, digital health and related emerging areas through exchanges, partnerships and ecosystem linkages.

Innovation, trade and investment linkages: Encouraging two-way trade, investment and industry development by supporting business-to-business connections and startup engagement, as well as participation in relevant innovation and technology events.

Knowledge exchange and ecosystem engagement: Promoting knowledge-sharing through workshops, delegations, policy dialogues and institutional linkages between innovation ecosystems, research institutions, startups and industry stakeholders in both regions

David Eby says that finding new trade partners is critical to ensure British Columbians' standard of living doesn't deteriorate amid the U.S. trade war.

Eby spoke to India's energy minister, giant conglomerates like Tata and Reliance, and oil companies like Indian Oil and Hindustan Petroleum. "I'll have to say the big winner so far has been [B.C.'s] mining sector. The belle of the ball, really," he told reporters. "There hasn't been a meeting with one of these companies that hasn't included an extensive discussion about the mining opportunities in the province, the more than 20 mines that are in various stages of development."

The premier added that the province's energy sector - and ongoing attempts to expand liquefied natural gas (LNG) production - was also being received well in India. He said that every company and politician were convinced that India would continue to grow at seven or eight per cent annually, and would become the world's third-largest economy. "That means they need dramatic and increased amounts of energy," the premier argued. B.C. Premier David Eby is making a big sales pitch in India while trying to find new customers outside the U.S. for the province's natural resources, especially minerals.

"They're doing a huge internal push to reduce reliance on imported petroleum products like oil and gas and diesel and so on," he added. "But in the meantime, they are looking strongly to LNG as one of their major ways of reducing carbon intensity as well as reducing smog in the country."

Eby said that the Woodfibre LNG project in Squamish, LNG Canada Phase 2 in Kitimat and the Kxi Lisims project near Prince Rupert are among those with interest from Indian investors.

(Prabhjot Singh is a Toronto based senior journalist. He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)

Netaji's daughter seeks return of his mortal remains from Japan

The Centre on Friday, January 23, organised 'Parakram Diwas-2026' to mark the 129th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, as his daughter Anita Bose Pfaff renewed her appeal for bringing the freedom fighter's remains from Japan to India.

In a statement, Anita said Netaji, who spent much of his life in forced exile while fighting for India's freedom, would have been deeply distressed that his remains continue to lie outside the country more than 80 years after his death and 78 years after Independence.

"As Netaji's daughter, I invite the Indians of today who still revere him to support his posthumous return from exile; to support the transfer of his mortal remains to India for a final and fitting disposal," she said.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Culture is organising 'Parakram Diwas-2026' from January 23 to 25 in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, along with events at 13 other iconic locations associated with Netaji's life and legacy.



President Droupadi Murmu pays tribute to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Friday.

Cong plans Kerala poll strategy, plays down Tharoor's absence

NEW DELHI (TIP)

With the Kerala Assembly elections approaching, the Congress leadership on Friday held a strategy meeting with senior leaders from the state to fine-tune its poll roadmap, strengthen coordination within the United Democratic Front (UDF) and project unity ahead of the high-stakes contest expected in April.

The meeting, chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge at his residence, was attended by Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and most members of the party's top leadership from Kerala.

However, the absence of senior leader and Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor triggered speculation about possible discontent within the state unit. The Congress leadership dismissed such suggestions, saying Tharoor had informed the party well in advance about his inability to attend due to prior

Anti-corruption vow in Tamil Nadu, a Sabarimala promise in Kerala: Modi draws battle lines ahead of polls

MADHURANTHAKAM (TIP)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, January 23, embarked on a high-octane campaign across Kerala and Tamil Nadu, intensifying outreach, targeting incumbent state governments and highlighting National Democratic Alliance (NDA)-led initiatives in the two poll-bound states where the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is seeking to make inroads. Modi kicked off his southern tour from Thiruvananthapuram, launching an all-out attack on the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government and the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF), accusing them of trapping Kerala in a web of "corruption, misgovernance and dangerous politics of appeasement".

"Their flags and symbols may be different, but their politics and agenda remain the same... You have to choose a new pro-people and pro-good governance administration," he said during a rally at the Putharikandam Maidan after holding a roadshow.

During his Kerala visit, Modi also flagged off four new trains and unveiled a slew of development projects at an event attended by chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan and governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar. He also laid the foundation stone for a CSIR-NIIST Innovation, Technology and Entrepreneurship Hub and launched the PM SVANidhi Credit Card — a UPI-linked, interest-free revolving credit facility.

Modi accused the CPI(M)-led ruling alliance of creating hurdles in the implementation of central government schemes to serve its own interests.



"They are obstructing the implementation of the next phase of the PM Awas Yojana (Urban) and causing delays in the provision of piped water... They are preventing underprivileged children from accessing modern schools... Such anti-poor actions by the LDF warrant a strong response," the PM said. He also attacked the chief minister Vijayan-led government over the Sabarimala gold case, accusing it of tarnishing the traditions of Lord Ayyappa. "Gold has been stolen from God. As soon as a BJP government is formed, the culprits will be put in jail. This is Modi's guarantee," he said.

In his address, Modi referred to the Congress as "MMC" -- Muslim League Maoist Congress -- and said it was important to remain vigilant against it. "The Congress party lacks a developmental agenda. Today, it has adopted positions that are more Communist than those of the Maoists and more communal than the Muslim League. In Kerala, the Congress is actively promoting hardline elements," he alleged.

The BJP has historically struggled in Kerala's electoral landscape, which is

dominated by the LDF and the UDF. Its lone assembly election victory was in Nemom constituency in 2016. It won its first Lok Sabha seat from Thrissur in 2024. It has fared relatively better in local body elections, with its most significant victory coming this year in the Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation, which it won for the first time. Modi alluded to the BJP's victory in Thiruvananthapuram, saying it would serve as a catalyst for the party's growth in the state. He recalled that the BJP's rise to power in Gujarat started with winning the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in 1987 and said the same will happen in Kerala. "Our journey began in one city in Gujarat, and similarly, in Kerala, our beginnings have started with a single city. I believe this demonstrates that the people of Kerala are beginning to place their trust in the BJP, connecting with us in the same way Gujarat once did," the PM said.

The CPI(M) and Congress rejected Modi's charges. Vijayan accused BJP affiliates of attacking principles of the Constitution. "Across India, the secular fabric of our nation is under sustained attack. This coordinated attempt to undermine constitutional democracy and impose the Sangh Parivar's communal politics must be firmly resisted. The Congress accused the BJP of trying to polarise Kerala. "Yet another speech where it became clear that PM Modi and BJP don't understand Kerala and are desperately struggling to find relevance... He resorted to his usual communal drivel, in a failed attempt to polarise a state proud of its pluralism," senior Congress leader KC Venugopal said.



Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge in New Delhi.

commitments. Party leaders said discussions centred on election preparedness, campaign messaging, alliance management within the UDF and consolidating gains made in recent local body elections. Those present included

AICC general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal, Kerala in-charge Deepa Dasmunshi, senior observers Sachin Pilot and K J George, former state Congress president Ramesh Chennithala, Leader of the Congress Legislature Party V D

Satheesan and newly appointed Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president Sunny Joseph.

Chennithala said that seat-sharing within the UDF was discussed and cited the alliance's performance in recent panchayat elections as indicative of public support. He rejected reports of internal discord, stating that Tharoor had prior engagements in Kozhikode, which he had communicated earlier.

He also criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the Sabarimala gold loss issue, alleging inaction by the Centre.

Party sources, however, said certain developments in recent weeks had contributed to perceptions of Tharoor's dissatisfaction. Earlier this month, Rahul Gandhi did not acknowledge Tharoor on stage at a public event in Kochi. However, Tharoor's office reiterated that his absence was solely due to his participation in the Kerala Literature Festival in Kozhikode.



Faridabad man kills daughter over homework, arrested after wife informs police

What began as a routine homeschooling session ended in tragedy in Faridabad, where a man allegedly beat his four-year-old daughter to death after she failed to write numbers up to 50, police said on Friday, January 23.

The accused, Krishna Jaiswal (31), was arrested following a complaint at the Sector 58 police station. He was produced before a city court and sent to one-day police remand, according to news agency PTI. Jaiswal, a native of Kheratiya village in Uttar Pradesh's Sonbhadra district, was living in a rented house in Faridabad with his family.

Police said both Jaiswal and his wife were employed in private companies. While the mother went to work during the day, Jaiswal stayed back at home to look after the children and oversee his daughter's studies.

The incident took place on January 21. Investigators said Jaiswal asked the child to write numbers from one to 50. When she could not complete the exercise, he allegedly lost his temper and assaulted her, causing fatal injuries.

The case surfaced in the evening when the mother returned from work and found the girl lying dead at home. She immediately alerted the police. A team from the local police station reached the spot and took the body into custody.

Armed forces to project joint strike power on Republic Day

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Republic Day Parade, a 90-minute spectacle, will feature a tableau depicting strikes on terror camps in Pakistan during Operation Sindo, while showcasing India's technological prowess and cultural diversity. The event also carries diplomatic significance in a fast-changing global order, with the European Union's top political leadership in attendance.

The armed forces will present a tri-service tableau, 'Operation Sindo: Victory through Jointness', at the 77th Republic Day Parade on Kartavya Path on January 26.

European Council President António Luís Santos da Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will be the chief guests. India and the EU, both recalibrating ties amid shifting US policies under President Donald Trump, are expected to conclude a free trade agreement on January 27.

The Operation Sindo tableau represents India's evolving military doctrine, marking a decisive transition towards precision, integration and indigenous capability. It signals India's embrace of joint, self-reliant and decisive military power.

The opening segment highlights naval maritime dominance, asserting control over the seas and denying adversaries operational freedom. This transitions to the Army's firepower, with M777 Ultra-Light Howitzers delivering calibrated strikes, backed by the Akash air defence



Army's Him Yodha contingent marches during rain-affected full-dress rehearsal for the Republic Day Parade at Kartavya Path in New Delhi. TRIBUNE PHOTO

system symbolising a layered aerial shield.

At the core of the tableau is the strike narrative — rapid response, controlled escalation and precision. A loitering munition neutralises an enemy air defence radar, followed by a Rafale fighter launching SCALP missiles against terror infrastructure. The sequence intensifies as a Sukhoi-30 MKI fires a BrahMos supersonic cruise missile to destroy hardened aircraft shelters.

The finale features the S-400 air defence system executing a long-range engagement at 350 km to neutralise an enemy airborne early-warning platform — underscoring India's doctrine: detect first, decide first and destroy first, the Ministry of Defence said.

For the Indian Air Force, a special attraction will be a composite flypast formation named 'Sindo', comprising Rafale, Sukhoi-30 MKI, MiG-29 and Jaguar fighters. A helicopter will carry the Operation Sindo flag. *Source: TNS*

AI smart glasses, 30,000 personnel to secure Delhi on Republic Day

NEW DELHI (TIP)

More than 30,000 police personnel and over 70 companies of paramilitary forces will be deployed across Delhi to secure Republic Day celebrations, officials said on Friday, January 23.

In a first, security forces will use AI-enabled smart glasses equipped with facial recognition system (FRS) and thermal imaging technology.

The Indian-made smart glasses will be linked in real-time to a police database of criminals, suspected and proclaimed offenders. This will allow personnel on the ground to identify individuals in crowded areas instantly.

"The wearable devices will connect to mobile phones used by police officers, giving them access to the criminal database," Additional Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Devesh Kumar Mahla said.

He explained that a green box appears on the device if a person has no criminal history, while a red box signals a criminal record.



The security grid includes multi-layered barricading and six layers of checking and frisking. Thousands of CCTV cameras, including those with FRS, have been installed in the National Capital. Mobile vehicles equipped with FRS will also be deployed at various points. "Delhi Police is well prepared to tackle any kind of situation," Mahla said, adding that mock drills are being conducted with multiple security agencies. Of the total deployment, 10,000 personnel will be stationed specifically in the New Delhi.

The DCPs of all districts are properly briefed about the security arrangements. Police officers would remain on high alert and promptly report any suspicious activity immediately, he said.

Another officer said approximately 4,000 rooftop security points have been identified across the New Delhi, North and Central districts. About 500 high-resolution AI cameras are being installed along the parade route and surrounding areas. All attendees of the Republic Day parade will be provided with security stickers.

Deputy Commissioners of Police (DCPs) have completed route surveys and anti-sabotage checks. Vigilance has been increased in high-footfall areas such as bus stops, railway station and popular markets.

Preventive measures currently underway include tenant and servant verification drives across the city. Police are also holding "eyes and ears" awareness sessions with auto-rickshaw and taxi drivers, vendors, and local service providers. *Source: TNS*

Stir over Guv walkout rocks assembly session

Proceedings in the state legislative council and assembly witnessed repeated disruptions on Friday as the ruling Congress and the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party launched sustained attacks on each other over governor Thaawarchand Gehlot's refusal to deliver the full customary address prepared by the state government and subsequent walkout from the inaugural sitting of the joint session on Thursday.

On Friday, BJP MLCs demanded the immediate suspension of Congress MLC BK Hariprasad, who attempted to stop the governor from leaving the session on Thursday.

Leader of Opposition in the council, Chalavadi Narayanaswamy urged the chair to act in that regard. "We will not tolerate this hooliganism. Insult to the governor is an insult to the Constitution," he said. Addressing allegations by the Congress that the governor showed disrespect to the national anthem, Narayanaswamy claimed that the anthem was not being played at the time of the governor's exit.

India in history this Week

JANUARY 23 TO JANUARY 29

23 JANUARY



1897 India's freedom fighter Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was born in Cuttack, Odisha.
 1926 Bal Thackeray, Indian politician and founder of Shiv Sena was born.
 1966 Indira Gandhi became the third Prime Minister of India.
 1977 Janata Party was formed.
 2009 The ban on smoking scenes in film and television programs is over.

24 JANUARY

1950 On this day, the Constituent Assembly elected the first President of the country. Apart from this, the National Anthem was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 24 January 1950.



1966 Air India's Boeing 707 crashes near the summit of Monblaw in the hills of the Alps. 117 people died in it.
 1950 Jana Gana Mana was accepted as the national anthem.
 1857 University of Calcutta was established.



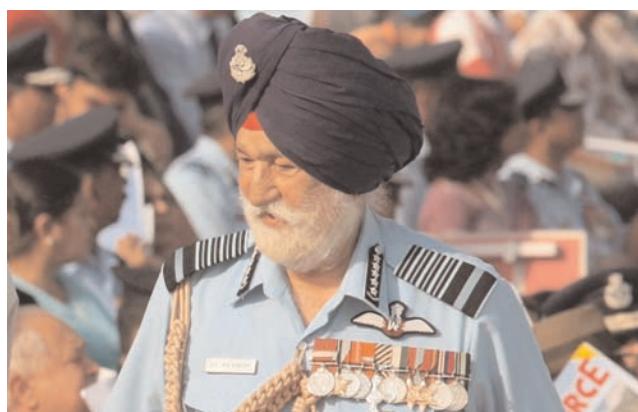
1950 Dr. Rajendra Prasad became the first President of independent India.
 1951 Prem Mathur became India's first female

commercial pilot in 1951.

1952 The first International Film Festival was held in Bombay in 1952.
 2002 The Indian satellite INSAT-3C successfully orbited in 2002.

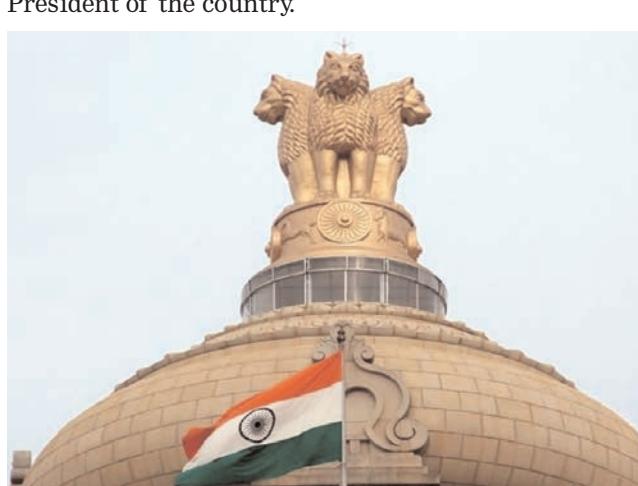
25 JANUARY

1971 Himachal Pradesh came into existence as a state.
 1980 The Indian Brahmo Samaj was started in 1880 by the famous social reformer Keshav Chandra Sen.
 1980 After a gap of three years, in 1980, Padma Vibhushan, Bharat Ratna, etc. civil honors started being awarded again.
 1980 The famous philanthropist Mother Teresa was awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1980.
 2002 In 2002, Arjan Singh became the first Air Marshal of the Indian Air Force.



26 JANUARY

1956 In the year 1956, Humayun, son of Mughal emperor Babur, died.
 1930 Swaraj Day was celebrated for the first time in India under British rule.
 1931 Mahatma Gandhi was released for talks with the British government during the 'Civil Disobedience Movement'.
 1949 The Constitution of India was prepared on this day.
 1950 India is declared a sovereign democratic republic and the Constitution of India comes into force.
 1950 Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the first and last Governor General of independent India, resigned from his post and Dr. Rajendra Prasad became the first President of the country.



1950 Ashoka Pillar was adopted as the national emblem.
 1963 The Government of India declared it a national bird on 26 January due to the peacock's amazing beauty.
 1972 The National Memorial Amar Jawan Jyoti was established at India Gate in Delhi.
 1981 Keeping in mind the ease of air traffic in Northeast India, Air service Vayudoot started.

1950 The Constitution of India was implemented at 10.18 minutes on 26 January 1950.
 1955 The first parade of Republic Day took place on 1955 at Rajpath in Delhi.
 1930 The Indian Constitution was implemented on 26 January keeping in mind the full Swaraj Day (26 January 1930).

27 JANUARY

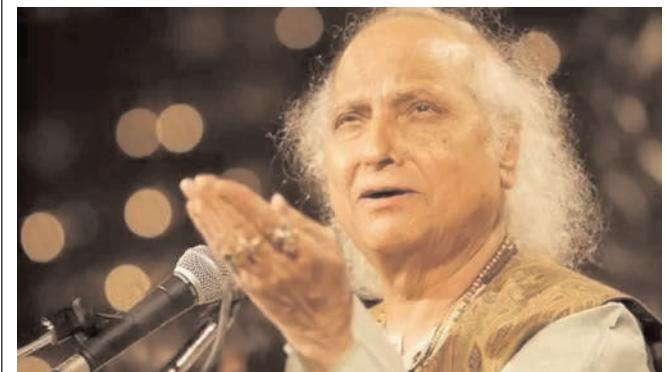
2008 Bird flu spread in 13 districts of West Bengal.
 1974 President VV Giri dedicated the Nehru Memorial Museum at Teen Murti in New Delhi to the nation.
 1988 In 1988, the helicopter postal service was inaugurated for the first time.



1992 Famous Indian actor Bharat Bhushan passed away in 1992.
 2009 The eighth President of India, R. Venkataraman (Ramaswamy Venkataraman) died in 2009.

28 JANUARY

2009 Calcutta Medical College started in West Bengal.
 1928 King Ramanna, the leading physicist of the country, was born.



1930 The classical singer Pandit Jasraj, who belonged to Mewati Gharana, was born.
 1999 Lamb was born from a protected embryo for the first time in India.
 2007 Famous musician OP Nayyar died.
 1961 The first factory of HMT watches was started in 1961 in Bangalore.
 1988 The accused in the 'Rajiv Gandhi murder case' were given the death penalty.

29 JANUARY

1597 Maharana Pratap was born.
 1780 India's first English newspaper Bengal Gazette was first published.
 1780 Publication of the country's first newspaper Hikki Gazette or Bengal Gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser from Calcutta (now Kolkata) began.
 1994 Government of India repealed the Air Corporation Act 1953.

March of Democracy: India's 77th Republic Day

REPUBLIC DAY IS A REMINDER OF THE PROMISE MADE BY "WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA" TO UPHOLD DEMOCRACY, CELEBRATE DIVERSITY, AND MOVE FORWARD AS ONE NATION. AS INDIA MARKS ITS 77TH REPUBLIC DAY ON JANUARY 26, 2026, IT IS AN APT MOMENT TO REVISIT THE MANY DIMENSIONS OF THIS HISTORIC DAY AND REFLECT ON THE REPUBLIC'S JOURNEY SO FAR.

On January 26, 1950, India took a leap that stunned the world. Barely three years after independence, scarred by Partition, poverty and illiteracy, the nation chose to govern itself not through gradual experiments or restricted participation, but through universal adult franchise. In one stroke, millions-peasants, laborers, women, the marginalized-were declared equal citizens of a republic. It was an audacious act of faith, one that placed trust not in privilege or pedigree, but in the collective wisdom of the people.

More than seven decades later, India stands as the world's largest electoral democracy. Its journey from a fragile post-colonial state to a confident republic is not a straight line of triumphs, but a complex march-marked by resilience, reinvention, disruption and debate.

The Republic Is Born: Democracy for All

India's democratic experiment began under daunting conditions. With widespread illiteracy and entrenched social hierarchies, many doubted whether democracy could survive, let alone flourish. Yet the framers of the Constitution were uncompromising in their belief that political equality must precede social transformation, not wait for it.

The first general elections of 1951-52 were nothing short of historic. Over 170 million citizens were eligible to vote, many for the first time in their lives. Ballot boxes travelled by foot, camel and boat to reach the remotest corners of the country. The elections did more than choose a government-they validated the idea that the republic belonged to its people. In the early decades, democracy was shaped by strong institutions and a dominant political consensus. Parliament emerged as the primary forum of debate, the judiciary began asserting its constitutional role, and a free press took root. The republic found its footing.

Federalism and Identity

One of the earliest tests of Indian democracy came with the question of identity and governance. The linguistic reorganization of states in the 1950s and 1960s redefined federalism.

Instead of suppressing regional aspirations, the republic accommodated them within the constitutional framework. This decision proved crucial. By recognizing linguistic and cultural identities, India strengthened national unity rather than weakening it. Democracy became more representative, closer to the people, and better aligned with local realities. The process underscored a defining feature of Indian democracy-its capacity to adapt without fragmenting.



The Emergency: Democracy on Trial

The gravest challenge to India's democratic ethos came during the Emergency (1975-77). Civil liberties were suspended, opposition leaders jailed, the press censored, and constitutional norms strained. For the first time, the republic witnessed how fragile democratic freedoms could be.

Yet, the aftermath revealed democracy's deeper strength. In 1977, the electorate decisively rejected authoritarianism, restoring democratic governance through peaceful means. The episode left a lasting imprint-reinforcing the importance of constitutional safeguards, judicial independence, and vigilant citizenship.

The Emergency remains a cautionary chapter, reminding India that democracy must be defended, not assumed.

Coalition Politics and the Rise of Regional Voices

The late 1980s and 1990s marked a significant shift. The era of one-party dominance gave way to coalition politics, reflecting India's growing social and political diversity. Regional parties emerged as powerful actors, giving voice to local aspirations and marginalized communities. Coalition governments were often criticized as unstable, but they also deepened democracy. Decision-making became more consultative, federalism more pronounced, and representation more inclusive. Power was no longer centralized-it was negotiated.

This phase demonstrated that democracy could function through consensus as effectively as through command.

Economic Liberalization

The economic liberalization of 1991 transformed India's democratic landscape in profound ways. As markets opened and growth accelerated, citizens' expectations from the state evolved. Democracy was no longer judged solely by political rights, but by governance outcomes-jobs, infrastructure, education and welfare.

This period saw the expansion of civil society, activism, and public interest litigation. Citizens increasingly used democratic spaces beyond elections to demand accountability. The republic matured from a procedural democracy into a more participatory one.

The Digital Turn

In the new millennium, Indian democracy entered the digital age. Technology reshaped governance, campaigning, and civic engagement. Elections became more technologically managed, welfare delivery more digitized, and public discourse more immediate.

Social media amplified voices and democratized expression, but also introduced new challenges-misinformation, polarization, and echo chambers. The speed of communication often outpaced deliberation, testing the quality of democratic debate.

The digital republic, while more connected, has also become more contentious.

Achievements and Fault Lines

India's democratic achievements are undeniable. Regular elections, peaceful transfers of power, an independent

judiciary, and a vibrant civil society have sustained the republic against formidable odds. Democracy has endured across wars, economic crises, and social upheavals.

Yet, challenges persist. Voter participation fluctuates, political polarization deepens, and questions of institutional autonomy and democratic accountability grow sharper. Inequality, both economic and social, continues to test the promise of equal citizenship.

The task before the republic is not merely to celebrate its democratic survival, but to strengthen its democratic substance.

The March Continues

India's 75-plus years as a republic tell a story of constant negotiation between ideals and realities. Democracy here has never been perfect, but it has been persistent. It has stumbled, corrected itself, and moved forward-often noisily, always passionately.

The march of democracy is ongoing. It lives in election queues and court verdicts, in protests and parliamentary debates, in the everyday assertion of rights and responsibilities. Ultimately, the future of the republic rests not just in institutions, but in citizens who continue to believe that self-governance-however imperfect-is worth defending.

As India looks ahead, the question is not whether democracy will survive, but how deeply it will be nurtured. For in the life of this republic, democracy is not an event of the past-it is a commitment renewed every day.

The Constitution of India: Supreme Law of Republic

The Constitution of India is the supreme law of the nation, providing the foundational framework for governance. It defines the fundamental political principles of the state and lays down the structure, procedures, powers, rights, duties, and responsibilities of government institutions. India follows the principle of constitutional supremacy, not parliamentary supremacy, because the Constitution was neither created nor enacted by Parliament. It was framed by a Constituent Assembly and adopted by the people themselves, as solemnly proclaimed in the Preamble. As a result, Parliament does not possess the authority to override or supersede the Constitution.

The Indian Constitution is recognised as the longest written constitution in the world. At the time it came into force, it consisted of 395 Articles organised into 22 Parts and 8 Schedules. With nearly 145,000 words, it is among the most comprehensive constitutional documents ever drafted and is currently regarded as the second-largest active constitution globally. Over the decades, through amendments and constitutional evolution, it has expanded to include a Preamble, 25 Parts, 12 Schedules, 5 Appendices, 448 Articles, and 101 Amendments, reflecting its adaptive and living character.

Historical Context

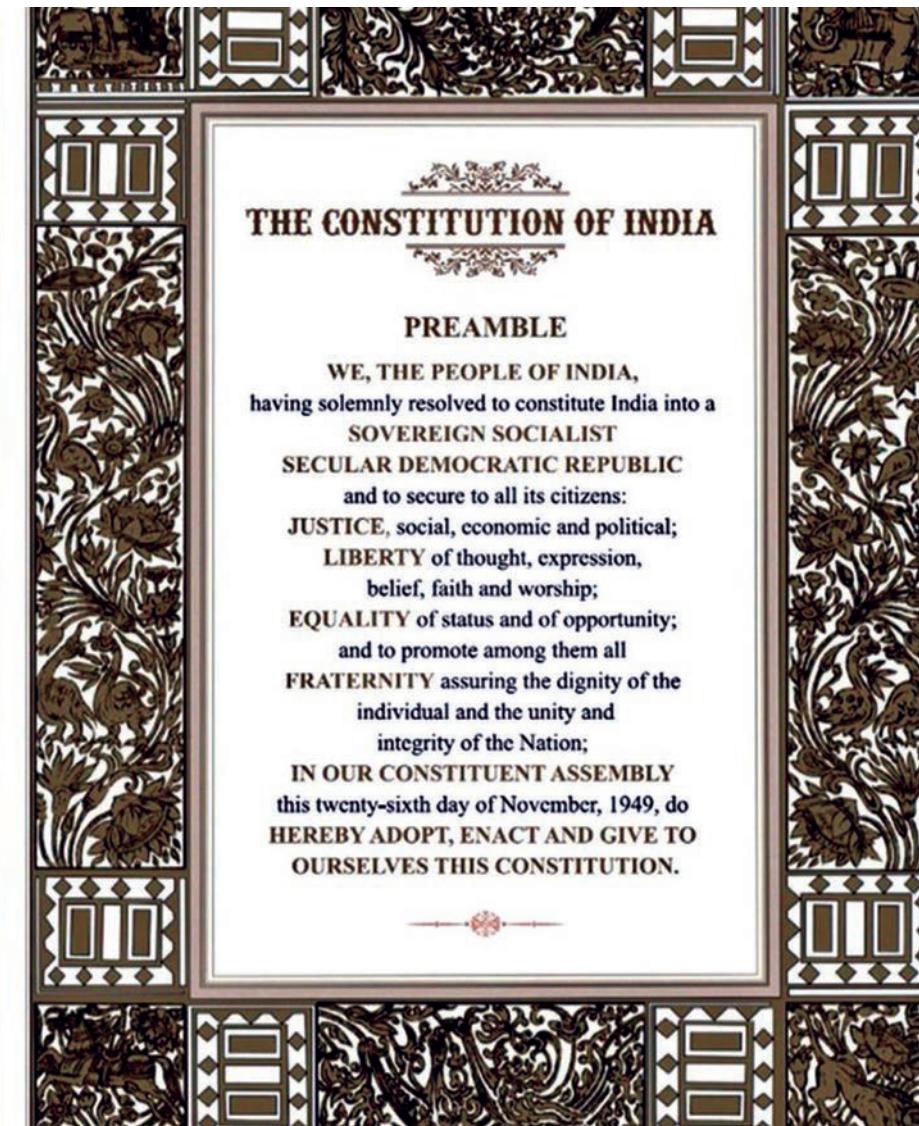
The Constitution of India was formally adopted on November 26, 1949, but it came into effect on January 26, 1950—a date chosen for its historical significance. Since then, January 26 has been celebrated annually as Republic Day, marking India's transformation into a sovereign democratic republic.

The Constitution was adopted by the Constituent Assembly, with Dr B. R. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee, widely acknowledged as the principal architect of the Constitution. With its enforcement, the Union of India formally emerged as the modern Republic of India, replacing colonial governance with constitutional rule.

Before Independence in 1947, the Indian subcontinent was divided into two major political entities: British India, comprising 11 provinces, and the Princely States, which were ruled by Indian princes under the British policy of subsidiary alliances. Following Independence, these entities were integrated to form the Indian Union. Despite this political unification, many administrative and institutional systems established during British rule continued to shape governance in independent India.

The origins and development of the Indian Constitution can therefore be traced to a series of regulations, reforms, and legislative measures enacted during the colonial period, which gradually introduced representative institutions and legal frameworks.

India adopted a parliamentary system of democracy, under which the executive is accountable to the legislature. The Parliament consists of two Houses—the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. The structure of governance is federal, with separate



executives and legislatures at the Centre and the States, complemented by systems of local self-governance at the grassroots level.

Many of these democratic and administrative arrangements draw heavily from British constitutional practices. Understanding the Indian Constitution thus requires an examination of its historical background and its gradual constitutional development over time.

Regulating Act of 1773

The first step was taken by the British Parliament to control and regulate the affairs of the East India Company in India.

It designated the Governor of Bengal (Fort William) as the Governor-General (of Bengal).

Warren Hastings became the first Governor-General of Bengal.

Executive Council of the Governor-General was established (Four members). There was no separate legislative council.

It subordinated the Governors of Bombay and Madras to the Governor-General of Bengal.

The Supreme Court was established at Fort William (Calcutta) as the Apex Court in 1774.

It prohibited servants of the company from engaging in any private trade or accepting bribes from the natives.

The Court of Directors (the governing body of the company) should report its revenue.

Pitt's India Act of 1784

Distinguished between commercial and

political functions of the company.

Court of Directors for Commercial functions and Board of Control for political affairs.

Reduced the strength of the Governor General's council to three members.

Placed the Indian affairs under the direct control of the British Government.

The company's territories in India were called "the British possession of India".

Governor's councils were established in Madras and Bombay.

Charter Act of 1813

The Company's monopoly over Indian trade was terminated; Trade with India was open to all British subjects.

Charter Act of 1833

Governor-General (of Bengal) became the Governor-General of India.

The First Governor-General of India was Lord William Bentick.

This was the final step towards centralization in British India.

The beginning of a Central legislature for India as the act also took away legislative powers of Bombay and Madras provinces.

The Act ended the activities of the East India Company as a commercial body and it became a purely administrative body.

Charter Act of 1853

The legislative and executive functions of the Governor-General's Council were separated.

6 members in the Central Legislative Council. Four out of six members were appointed by the provisional governments of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, and Agra.

It introduced a system of open competition as the basis for the recruitment of civil servants of the Company (Indian Civil Service open for all).

Government of India Act of 1858

The rule of the Company was replaced by the rule of the Crown in India.

- The powers of the British Crown were to be exercised by the Secretary of State for India
- He was assisted by the Council of India, having 15 members
- He was vested with complete authority and control over the Indian administration through the Viceroy as his agent
- The Governor-General was made the Viceroy of India.
- Lord Canning was the first Viceroy of India.
- Abolished Board of Control and Court of Directors.

Indian Councils Act of 1861

It introduced Indian representation in institutions like the Viceroy's executive and legislative council (non-official). 3 Indians entered the Legislative Council.

Legislative councils were established in centers and provinces.

It provided that the Viceroy's Executive Council should have some Indians as non-official members while transacting the legislative businesses.

It accorded statutory recognition to the portfolio system.

Initiated the process of decentralization by restoring the legislative powers to the Bombay and the Madras Provinces.

India Council Act of 1892

Introduced indirect elections (nomination). Enlarged the size of the legislative councils.

Enlarged the functions of the Legislative Councils and gave them the power to discuss the Budget and address questions to the Executive.

Indian Councils Act of 1909

This Act is also known as the Morley-Minto Reforms.

Direct elections to legislative councils; first attempt at introducing a representative and popular element.

It changed the name of the Central Legislative Council to the Imperial Legislative Council.

The member of the Central Legislative Council was increased to 60 from 16.

Introduced a system of communal representation for Muslims by accepting the concept of a 'separate electorate'.

Indians for the first time in the Viceroy's executive council. (Satyendra Prasanna Sinha, as the law member)

Government of India Act of 1919

This Act is also known as the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms.

The Central subjects were demarcated and separated from those of the Provincial subjects.

The scheme of dual governance, 'Dyarchy', was introduced in the Provincial subjects.

Under the dyarchy system, the provincial subjects were divided into two parts

From page 27

– transferred and reserved. On reserved subjects, the Governor was not responsible to the Legislative council.

The Act introduced, for the first time, bicameralism at the center.

Legislative Assembly with 140 members and Legislative Council with 60 members.

Direct elections.

The Act also required that three of the six members of the Viceroy's Executive Council (other than Commander-in-Chief) were to be Indians.

Provided for the establishment of the Public Service Commission.

Government of India Act of 1935

The GoI Act of 1935 provided for the establishment of an All-India Federation consisting of the Provinces and the Princely States as units, though the envisaged federation never came into being.

Three Lists: The Act divided the powers between the Centre and the units into items of three lists, namely the Federal List, the Provincial List, and the Concurrent List.

The Federal List for the Centre consisted of 59 items, the Provincial List for the provinces consisted of 54 items and the Concurrent List for both consisted of 36 items

The residuary powers were vested with the Governor-General.

The Act abolished the Dyarchy in the Provinces and introduced 'Provincial Autonomy'.

It provided for the adoption of Dyarchy at the Centre.

Introduced bicameralism in 6 out of 11 Provinces.

These six Provinces were Assam, Bengal, Bombay, Bihar, Madras, and the United Province.

Provided for the establishment of the Federal Court.

Abolished the Council of India.

Indian Independence Act of 1947

It declared India as an Independent and Sovereign State.

Established responsible Governments at both the Centre and the Provinces.

Designated the Viceroy India and the provincial Governors as the Constitutional (normal heads).

It assigned dual functions (Constituent and Legislative) to the Constituent Assembly and declared this dominion legislature as a sovereign body.

Salient features of Constitution

Indian constitution, one of the utmost admired constitutions in the world was enacted after 'ransacking' all the known constitutions of the world at that time. This constitution that we have enacted has stood the test of times. Though provisions were borrowed from other constitutions, the constitution of India has several salient features that distinguish it from constitution of other countries

Some of its salient features are discussed below:

Lengthiest written constitution

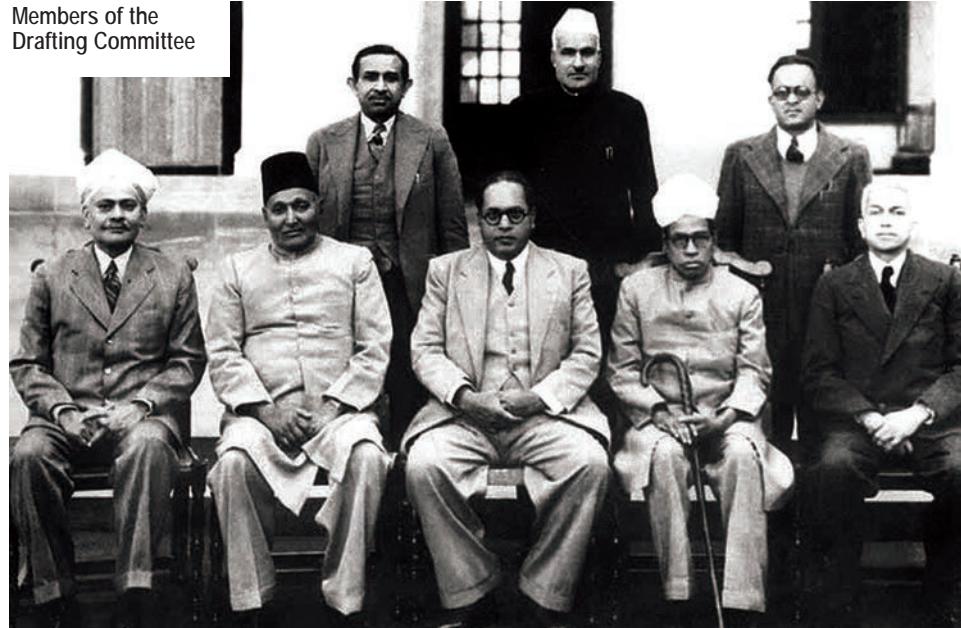
Constitution can be classified into written constitution such as that of America or unwritten constitution such as that UK.

The constitution of India is a written constitution which happens to be the lengthiest written constitution in the world.

It is comprehensive, elaborate and a detailed document

The factors that have contributed to this

Members of the Drafting Committee



phenomenon are: geographical factors (vastness of country and diversity), Historical factors (Influence of GoI, 1935), Single constitution for both centre and state and dominance of legal luminaries

Drawn from various sources

It has borrowed most of its provisions from the constitution of various other countries as well as from the Government of India act, 1935. Ex: structural part from GoI, 1935, independence of judiciary from USA, Fundamental Rights from USA etc

Though it is borrowed, the Indian constitution-makers made sure the borrowed features were made suitable to Indian conditions. Ex: Though we borrowed cabinet form of governance from UK, the cabinet is not all-supreme as in the case of UK.

Preamble of the constitution

The Preamble consists of the ideals, objectives and basic principles of the Constitution.

The salient features of the Constitution have developed directly and indirectly from these objectives which flow from the Preamble

It asserts India to be a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic and a welfare state committed to secure justice, liberty and equality for the people and for promoting fraternity, dignity the individual, and unity and integrity of the nation.

The Preamble is the nature of Indian state and the objectives it is committed to secure for the people.

Democratic system

The authority of the government rests upon the sovereignty of the people. The people enjoy equal political rights.

Free fair and regular elections are held for electing governments

India is a republic

The Preamble declares India to be a Republic.

India is not ruled by a monarch or a nominated head of state. India has an elected head of state (President of India) who wields power for a fixed term of 5 years.

After every 5 years, the people of India indirectly elect their President.

Union of states

Article I of the Constitution declares, that 'India that is Bharat is a Union of States.'

Fundamental Rights and duties

The Constitution of India grants and

guarantees Fundamental Rights to its citizens.

The constitution of India confirms the basic principle that every individual is permitted to enjoy certain basic rights and part III of the Constitution deals with those rights which are known as fundamental right. The Six FR include- Right to Equality; Right to Freedom; Right Against Exploitation; Right to Freedom of Religion; Cultural and Educational Rights and Right to Constitutional Remedies (Art. 32).

The fundamental rights are justiciable and are not absolute. Reasonable constraints can be imposed keeping in view the security requirements of the state. A new part IV (A) after the Directive Principles of State Policy was combined in the constitution by the 42nd Amendment, 1976 for fundamental duties.

Directive Principles of State Policy

A unique aspect of the Constitution is that it comprises of a chapter in the Directive Principles of State Policy.

These principles are in the nature of directives to the government to implement them to maintain social and economic democracy in the country.

Parliamentary System:

The Constituent Assembly decided to espouse Parliamentary form of government both for the Centre and the states.

In Indian parliamentary system, distinction is made between nominal and real executive head.

The Council of Ministers is responsible before the Lok Sabha, The lower house of union parliament. There are close relations between executive and legislature.

Federal structure of government

A federal state is a state where a country is divided into smaller regions and the government is functioning at two levels

The Indian Constitution has envisaged a federal structure for India considering the geographical vastness and the diversity of languages, region, religions, castes, etc.

Written Constitution, supremacy of the Constitution, division of powers between Union and States, bicameral Legislature, independent Judiciary, etc. are the features of Indian federation.

Scholars describe India as a 'Quasi-Federation' (K.C. Wheare) or as a federation with a unitary bias, or even as a Unitarian federation.'

Universal adult franchise

All men and women enjoy an equal right to

vote. Each adult man and woman above the age of 18 years has the right to vote.

All registered voters get the opportunity to vote in elections.

Single integrated State with Single Citizenship:

India is the single Independent and Sovereign integrated state.

All citizens enjoy a common uniform citizenship.

They are entitled to equal rights and freedoms, and equal protection of the state.

Integrated Judicial system

The Constitution provides for a single integrated judicial system common for the Union and the states.

The Supreme Court of India works at the apex level, High Courts at the state level and other courts work under the High Courts.

Independent Judiciary

It is necessary to secure the philosophical foundations of the rule of law and democracy

Firstly, the Constitution makers created a separate Judiciary independent of Legislature and Executive.

Secondly, the Constitution has ensured complete independence of Judiciary in the matters of administration and finances.

Amending the Constitution of India

Amending the Constitution of India is the procedure of making modifications to the nation's fundamental law or supreme law.

The procedure of amendment in the constitution is laid down in Part XX (Article 368) of the Constitution of India.

This procedure guarantees the sanctity of the Constitution of India and keeps a check on uninformed power of the Parliament of India.

Judicial Review

The judiciary has significant position in Indian Constitution and it is also made independent of the legislature and the executive.

The Supreme Court of India stands at the peak of single integrated judicial system

It operates as defender of fundamental rights of Indian citizens and guardian of the Constitution.

Basic Structure doctrine

The basic structure doctrine is an Indian judicial norm that the Constitution of India has certain basic features that cannot be changed or destroyed through amendments by the parliament.

The basic features of the Constitution have not been openly defined by the Judiciary.

At least, 20 features have been described as "basic" or "essential" by the Courts in numerous cases, and have been incorporated in the basic structure. In *Indira Gandhi v. Raj Narayan* case and also in the *Minerva Mills* case, it was witnessed that the claim of any particular feature of the Constitution to be a "basic" feature would be determined by the Court in each case that comes before it.

Secularism

In no other country of the world so many religions co-exist as in India. In view of such diversity the Constitution guarantees complete freedom of religion to all.

The citizens of our country are free to follow any religion and they enjoy equal rights without any distinction of caste, creed, religion or sex.



'We, the People': The Making of India's Constitution

On November 26, 1949, in the grand halls of New Delhi, a document unlike any other in the colonial world was solemnly adopted. It did not merely announce the birth of a new legal order—it articulated a moral vision for a civilization emerging from centuries of subjugation. With the words "We, the People of India", the Constitution declared that sovereignty would rest not with a monarch, not with Parliament, and not with any single leader, but with the collective will of a diverse and unequal society determined to refashion itself as a democratic republic.

Behind this historic assertion stood nearly three years of intense deliberation within the Constituent Assembly of India, where law met philosophy, idealism encountered pragmatism, and the aspirations of millions were debated clause by clause. The Constitution that finally emerged was not a borrowed text, but a carefully negotiated compact—deeply Indian in spirit, yet universal in its values.

The Constituent Assembly

The Constituent Assembly first met on December 9, 1946, at a time when India was still under British rule and the future of the subcontinent remained uncertain. Its members were not elected by universal adult franchise, but indirectly by provincial legislatures under the Cabinet Mission Plan. Despite this limitation, the Assembly evolved into a remarkably representative body.

Originally comprising 389 members, the Assembly was reduced to 299 after the Partition of India. It included representatives from British Indian provinces and princely states, cutting across regions, religions, castes, professions, and ideological persuasions. Lawyers sat alongside social reformers, academics alongside freedom fighters, conservatives alongside radicals.

Importantly, the Assembly included 15 women members, a significant presence for its time. Figures such as Hansa Mehta, Durgabai Deshmukh, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, and Begum Aizaz Rasul ensured that questions of gender justice, minority rights, and social equality were not marginal concerns but central to constitutional thinking.

The Assembly functioned not as a rubber stamp, but as a sovereign deliberative body, holding 11 sessions over 2 years, 11 months, and 18 days, and engaging in nearly 165 days of debates—all meticulously recorded for posterity.

Debates That Defined a Nation

The Constituent Assembly debates were not abstract legal exercises; they were deeply political, ethical, and emotional. Members wrestled with the legacy of colonialism, the trauma of Partition, and the challenge of holding together a society fractured by language, religion, caste, and region.

Parliamentary Democracy vs. Alternatives

One of the central debates revolved around the choice of a parliamentary system over a presidential one. Critics feared excessive concentration of power in the executive, while others doubted the stability of parliamentary democracy in a newly independent country. Ultimately, the Assembly opted for a parliamentary model rooted in collective responsibility, believing it best suited India's plural and federal character.

Fundamental Rights vs. Social Transformation

Another intense area of discussion concerned Fundamental Rights. While there was broad consensus on civil liberties, disagreements arose over property rights, preventive detention, and the extent of state power in pursuing social reform. The final compromise balanced individual freedoms with the state's obligation to ensure justice—an uneasy but deliberate equilibrium.

Federalism with a Unitary Bias

The trauma of Partition deeply influenced debates on federalism. While India adopted a federal structure, the Constitution vested strong powers in the Centre. Many



members argued that national unity and stability demanded a robust central authority, at least in the republic's formative years.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar: The Architect with a Moral Compass

At the heart of the drafting process stood Dr B.R. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee. A jurist of formidable intellect and a social revolutionary shaped by lived experience of caste discrimination, Ambedkar brought to the Constitution both technical mastery and ethical urgency. Ambedkar consistently reminded the Assembly that political democracy would be hollow without social and economic democracy. His forceful advocacy for Fundamental Rights, constitutional morality, and safeguards for historically oppressed communities gave the Constitution its transformative character.

He was also a realist. While personally sceptical of Indian society's readiness for democracy, Ambedkar nevertheless placed his faith in constitutional institutions, famously warning that the Constitution could only be as good as the people who worked it.

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Philosopher of the Republic

If Ambedkar was the Constitution's chief architect, Jawaharlal Nehru was its philosophical voice. His Objectives Resolution, introduced in December 1946, laid the ideological foundation of the Constitution, articulating the commitment to justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Nehru envisioned the Constitution as a living document—flexible enough to adapt, yet anchored in democratic values. His speeches in the Assembly reflected a deep awareness of India's civilisational depth and modern aspirations, advocating secularism not as hostility to religion, but as equal respect for all faiths.

Rajendra Prasad: The Steady Hand

As President of the Constituent Assembly, Dr Rajendra Prasad played a crucial role in maintaining balance and dignity during often-heated debates. His leadership ensured that differences were resolved through dialogue rather than division. A man of consensus, Prasad embodied the Assembly's commitment to accommodation and patience—qualities that deeply influenced the tone of the constitutional process.

Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar

Among the unsung architects of the Constitution was

Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, a distinguished jurist whose legal clarity shaped several foundational provisions. A strong advocate of constitutionalism, Ayyar emphasised the supremacy of the Constitution over parliamentary sovereignty, marking a decisive break from British traditions.

His interventions during debates on judicial review, federalism, and the rule of law helped craft a framework where democracy would be governed not by transient majorities but by enduring principles.

Hansa Mehta and the Voice of Equality

Hansa Mehta, a freedom fighter and social reformer, left an indelible imprint on the Constitution's commitment to gender equality. She famously argued against limiting rights to "men," insisting on language that recognised women as equal citizens. Her influence extended beyond semantics. Mehta championed universal adult franchise and equal civil rights at a time when many democracies still denied women full political participation. Her presence in the Assembly ensured that the Constitution spoke not just of freedom, but of inclusive freedom.

Consensus Through Difference

What makes the Indian Constitution remarkable is not the absence of disagreement, but the presence of consensus despite deep differences. Ideological opponents listened, amended, and accommodated. Compromises were forged not in secrecy, but in open debate.

The Assembly drew upon global constitutional experiences—from the United States to Ireland, from Canada to Australia—but refused to replicate any one model. Instead, it synthesised ideas into a framework responsive to India's unique historical and social conditions.

A Living Testament to 'We, the People'

When the Constitution came into force on January 26, 1950, it was more than a legal charter. It was a declaration of collective resolve—a promise that India would govern itself through reason, debate, and justice. More than seven decades later, the Constituent Assembly debates continue to resonate. They remind us that the Constitution was not handed down by a single leader or party, but shaped by a chorus of voices—diverse, argumentative, and deeply committed to the idea of India. In that sense, "We, the People" is not just an opening phrase. It is the enduring spirit of the Constitution itself.

Dr BR Ambedkar: Architect of Constitutional morality

Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar occupies a singular place in India's intellectual and moral history. He is often remembered as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, a brilliant jurist, and a tireless crusader against caste oppression. Yet to confine Ambedkar to biography is to miss his most enduring contribution: a philosophy of constitutional morality that sought to remake Indian society from its deepest foundations.

Ambedkar did not see the Constitution merely as a legal document or a framework for governance. For him, it was a moral instrument, designed to transform a deeply hierarchical, unequal society into one governed by liberty, equality, and fraternity. More than seven decades after the Constitution came into force, his ideas—his warnings, hopes, and anxieties—remain uncannily relevant.

Beyond Political Democracy: The Idea of Social Democracy

Ambedkar repeatedly warned that political democracy without social democracy is a contradiction. In his final speech to the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949, he famously observed that India was entering "a life of contradictions"—political equality through universal adult franchise on one hand, and social and economic inequality on the other.

For Ambedkar, democracy was not merely the act of voting or changing governments. It was a mode of associated living, rooted in mutual respect and shared dignity. He defined social democracy as a way of life that recognised liberty, equality, and fraternity as inseparable principles. Remove one, and the entire democratic edifice collapses.

This idea remains profoundly relevant today. While India has sustained electoral democracy, Ambedkar's question still haunts the republic: Can a society structured by caste hierarchy truly sustain democratic values? His insistence that democracy must penetrate social relations—not just political institutions—remains one of the most radical challenges he posed to the nation.

Constitutional Morality: A Check on Power and Passion

One of Ambedkar's most original and forward-looking ideas was constitutional morality—a term he borrowed from the British historian George Grote but infused with Indian urgency.

Constitutional morality, for Ambedkar, meant respect for constitutional processes, restraint in the exercise of power, and loyalty to institutions rather than individuals. He feared that in a society accustomed to hierarchy and obedience, democracy could easily degenerate into authoritarianism if citizens and leaders alike failed to internalise constitutional values.

Ambedkar was acutely aware that a



Constitution, however well drafted, could be subverted by bad faith. That is why he emphasised that constitutional morality had to be cultivated through education, public reason, and ethical conduct. Laws alone, he argued, could not save democracy; the people working the Constitution had to believe in its spirit.

In an era of polarised politics, institutional strain, and personality-driven leadership, Ambedkar's insistence on constitutional morality serves as a powerful reminder that democracy survives not just on majorities, but on restraint.

Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity: The Trinitarian Ideal

Ambedkar's vision of India rested on a triad he regarded as indivisible: liberty, equality, and fraternity. He borrowed these ideals from the French Revolution, but reinterpreted them through the lens of India's social realities.

Liberty, for Ambedkar, was not merely freedom from colonial rule, but freedom from social bondage—especially the tyranny of caste.

Equality meant not formal equality alone, but substantive equality that addressed historical injustice and structural discrimination.

Fraternity was the emotional and moral glue of democracy—a sense of common belonging without which liberty and equality would remain fragile.

Ambedkar considered fraternity the most difficult to achieve in India, precisely because caste thrived on

graded inequality. Without fraternity, he warned, democracy would be reduced to a mechanical arrangement, devoid of moral unity.

The inclusion of fraternity in the Preamble of the Constitution stands as one of Ambedkar's most profound contributions—a recognition that democracy is as much a moral project as a political one.

A Warning Against Hero-Worship

Among Ambedkar's most quoted—and most ignored—warnings is his caution against hero-worship in politics. He argued that in a democracy, blind reverence for leaders is a "sure road to degradation and eventual dictatorship."

This warning stemmed from his deep understanding of Indian society, where social hierarchy and religious traditions often encouraged unquestioning obedience. Ambedkar feared that such tendencies, if transferred to democratic politics, could hollow out institutions and concentrate power in individuals.

Hero-worship, he believed, undermined critical thinking and constitutional accountability. In modern India, where charismatic leadership and personality-driven politics often overshadow institutions, Ambedkar's caution sounds less like a historical footnote and more like a prophetic alarm.

Law Minister and Reformer: Translating Ideas into Action

As independent India's first Law Minister, Ambedkar sought to translate constitutional ideals into concrete social reform. His most ambitious effort was

the Hindu Code Bill, which aimed to radically reform Hindu personal law by granting women equal rights in marriage, inheritance, and property.

The fierce opposition the Bill faced—from conservative lawmakers and social elites—exposed the limits of India's commitment to social equality. Ambedkar saw the resistance not merely as political disagreement, but as evidence of society's reluctance to abandon patriarchal and caste-based privilege.

Disillusioned, he resigned from the Cabinet in 1951, delivering a scathing critique of the government's lack of will to pursue social reform. His resignation underscored a lifelong truth: Ambedkar was willing to relinquish power, but never principle.

Hollow Freedom and Persistent Inequality

Ambedkar was deeply sceptical of celebrations of independence that ignored the lived realities of the oppressed. He warned that freedom without equality could become hollow, benefiting elites while leaving structural injustice intact.

His critique resonates in contemporary debates on economic disparity, social exclusion, and access to justice. Ambedkar's insistence that rights must be meaningful—not merely symbolic—continues to inform struggles for dignity across caste, gender, and class.

Ambedkar's Vision of a Just India

Ambedkar's ultimate vision was of an India where dignity was not inherited, but guaranteed; where citizenship was not graded by birth; and where democracy extended beyond Parliament into everyday life.

He placed his faith not in tradition, but in reason; not in inherited authority, but in constitutional institutions. Yet he was no naïve idealist. He understood that democracy was fragile, always vulnerable to social prejudice, political ambition, and moral complacency.

That is why Ambedkar's legacy is not merely constitutional—it is ethical and unfinished.

Why Ambedkar Matters Today

To read Ambedkar today is to confront uncomfortable truths about Indian society and democracy. His ideas challenge complacency, question power, and demand accountability. He reminds us that the Constitution is not self-executing, that liberty requires vigilance, and that equality demands courage.

In an age when democracy is often reduced to electoral arithmetic, Ambedkar calls us back to its moral core. He asks not only how India is governed, but what kind of society India chooses to be.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar was not just the architect of the Constitution. He was the architect of constitutional morality—a legacy that remains as urgent today as it was at the birth of the Republic.

Republic Day Parade: Power, pageantry and purpose

Every year on January 26, as the winter sun rises over New Delhi, Kartavya Path transforms into a grand stage where the Indian Republic performs itself before its citizens and the world. The Republic Day Parade is at once a military ceremony, a cultural festival, and a political statement-carefully choreographed, deeply symbolic, and richly layered with meaning.

Far more than a display of pomp, the parade is a living narrative of India's journey as a nation: its hard-won sovereignty, its civilization diversity, its defense preparedness, and its evolving place in global affairs. Beneath the marching boots, swirling folk dances, and thunderous flypasts lies a profound story of power balanced with purpose.

The Constitutional Context:

Why January 26 Matters

Republic Day marks the day in 1950 when the Constitution of India came into force, completing the transition from colonial rule to sovereign self-governance. The parade is therefore not a celebration of independence alone, but of constitutional democracy.

Every ritual—from the unfurling of the Tricolour to the President taking the salute—reinforces the idea that authority flows from the Constitution. The President of India, as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, presides over the ceremony, symbolizing civilian control over the military—an essential pillar of democratic governance.

Military Might as Deterrence, Not Aggression

The opening segments of the parade are dominated by the Armed Forces—the Army, Navy, and Air Force—along with the paramilitary forces. Precision drills, disciplined marching contingents, and displays of weapon systems underline India's defense preparedness.

Yet the symbolism here is subtle. The parade does not glorify conquest; it projects deterrence and readiness. In a volatile geopolitical neighborhood, the military display reassures citizens and signals to the world that India is capable of defending its sovereignty while remaining committed to peace.

The inclusion of indigenously developed weapons and platforms also reflects the strategic goal of self-reliance in defense, reinforcing the link between national security and technological capability.

Tableaux: Federalism on Wheels

Perhaps the most visually arresting feature of the parade is the procession of tableaux, representing states, Union Territories, and central ministries. Each tableau tells a story of history, folklore, development, ecology, or innovation.

These moving exhibits are a powerful metaphor for India's federal spirit. Distinct identities roll past on a shared avenue, asserting regional pride while participating in a national celebration. The competitive selection process ensures that tableaux reflect contemporary



priorities, aligning local narratives with national themes. In their evolving design—moving from static cultural motifs to dynamic, issue-based storytelling—the tableaux mirror India's transition from heritage consciousness to future-oriented governance.

Folk Traditions and Cultural Continuity

The parade's cultural segments showcase classical and folk dance forms, tribal traditions, and regional music. These performances are not ornamental interludes; they reaffirm India's civilization continuity.

In a country where modernity often coexists uneasily with tradition, the Republic Day Parade offers a rare synthesis. Folk artists perform on the same stage as advanced military hardware, suggesting that cultural rootedness and technological progress are not opposing forces, but complementary strengths. This celebration of pluralism reinforces the constitutional promise of unity in diversity—not as a slogan, but as a lived reality.

Children, NCC, and the Idea of Citizenship

The participation of schoolchildren,

National Cadet Corps (NCC) contingents, and youth performers carries symbolic weight. These segments emphasize the idea of citizenship as responsibility, not just entitlement.

Their presence reflects the Republic's investment in future generations, highlighting discipline, service, and national integration as civic virtues. The message is clear: democracy is sustained not only by institutions, but by citizens trained in constitutional values.

Air Power and the Modern Republic

The parade's aerial finale—the Air Force flypast—is among its most anticipated moments. Aircraft formations slicing through the sky symbolize speed, surveillance, and strategic reach.

Yet the flypast also serves a psychological purpose. It reminds citizens that the Republic's sovereignty extends beyond land and sea into the skies—a modern assertion of comprehensive national power.

The Chief Guest: Diplomacy in Ceremonial Form

One of the parade's most scrutinized elements is the choice of Chief Guest, typically a foreign head of state or government. This tradition, begun in the early years of the Republic, transforms the parade into an instrument of ceremonial diplomacy.

The Chief Guest's presence signals India's strategic priorities, partnerships, and geopolitical outlook. It reflects India's self-image as a nation confident enough to project its identity while engaging the world on equal terms.

In this sense, the Republic Day Parade functions as a form of soft power—a carefully curated message of India's democratic values, cultural depth, and global aspirations.

Evolving Themes, Enduring Purpose

Over the decades, the parade has evolved in form and emphasis. Themes now foreground issues such as sustainability, women-led development, indigenous innovation, and inclusive growth. Digital projections and contemporary storytelling techniques coexist with traditional rituals.

Yet the core purpose remains unchanged: to reaffirm the ideals of the Constitution and renew the social contract between the state and its citizens.

Power with Purpose

The Republic Day Parade is often described as spectacle, but its true significance lies in its symbolism. It is power without belligerence, diversity without disunity, tradition without stagnation.

In showcasing soldiers and folk artists, states and citizens, heritage and innovation, the parade performs a quiet act of constitutional reaffirmation. It reminds India—and the world—that the Republic is not just a political arrangement, but a shared civilizational project.



India's federal system is often described as quasi-federal-a term that captures both its constitutional complexity and political reality. Neither rigidly federal nor purely unitary, India's Constitution envisions a delicate balance between a strong Centre and empowered States, designed to hold together an extraordinarily diverse nation while enabling democratic governance at multiple levels.

Over seven decades, this balance has been tested, recalibrated, and renegotiated. From fiscal arrangements and legislative authority to language, identity, and regional aspirations, centre-state relations remain among the most dynamic and contested aspects of the Indian Republic.

Constitutional Design: Federal in Form, Unitary in Spirit?

The Constitution of India establishes a federal structure with a strong central bias. Unlike classical federations such as the United States, Indian federalism was shaped by the imperatives of national unity, post-Partition insecurity, and uneven regional development.

The Seventh Schedule divides legislative powers into three lists:

- Union List: Defense, foreign affairs, currency, communications, and other matters of national importance.
- State List: Public order, police, health, agriculture, and local governance.
- Concurrent List: Education, forests, labor, criminal law, and social welfare-areas requiring shared responsibility.

While this division appears balanced on paper, the Constitution grants Parliament overriding powers in several circumstances, including during national emergencies, President's Rule, and when implementing international obligations. This reflects the framers' belief that unity must precede autonomy in a fragile, newly independent nation.

The Role of States: Governance Closest to the People

Despite centralizing tendencies, Indian States play a crucial role in shaping citizens' everyday lives. Health, education, law and order, agriculture, and welfare delivery-areas that most directly affect people-are primarily state responsibilities.

Over time, States have emerged as laboratories of policy innovation, experimenting with welfare models, industrial strategies, and social reforms. This has strengthened the case for greater decentralization, particularly in a diverse country where one-size-fits-all solutions often fail.

Regional political parties, especially since the 1990s, have further altered the federal balance, ensuring that State interests find stronger representation at the national level.

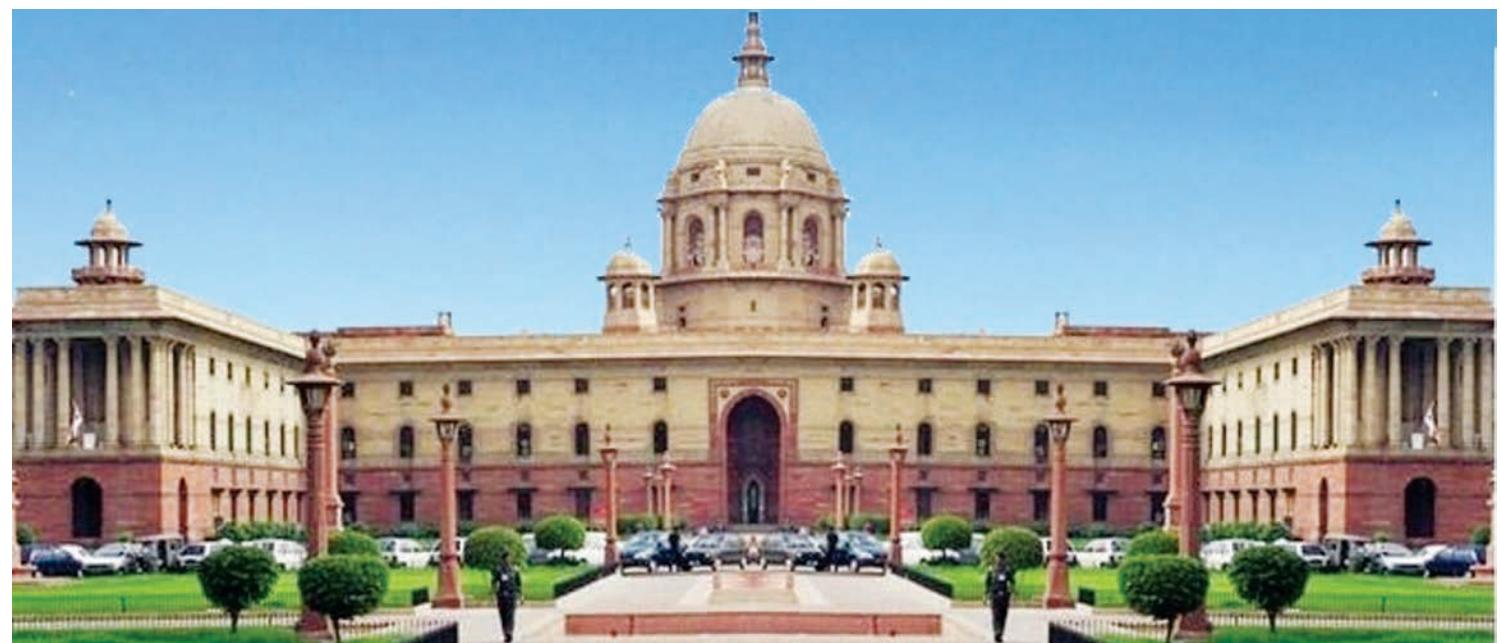
Fiscal Federalism: Sharing Resources, Sharing Power

At the heart of centre-state relations lies fiscal federalism-the question of who raises revenue and who spends it.

The Finance Commission

The Finance Commission, a constitutional body, is tasked with

Federal India: Centre-state relations in a dynamic republic



recommending the distribution of tax revenues between the Centre and States, as well as among States themselves. Its role is not merely technical; it reflects competing visions of equity, efficiency, and federal fairness.

Debates often arise over criteria such as population, income distance, and performance-based incentives, especially between more and less developed States. These tensions highlight the challenge of balancing redistributive justice with regional autonomy.

The GST Council

The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) marked a significant shift in India's fiscal architecture. By subsuming multiple state and central taxes into a unified system, GST aimed to create a common national market.

The GST Council, where the Centre and States jointly decide tax rates and rules, represents a new experiment in cooperative federalism. While it has streamlined taxation, it has also sparked debates over revenue autonomy, compensation to States, and decision-making power-underscoring the trade-offs inherent in shared sovereignty.

Cooperative and Competitive Federalism

In recent years, Indian federal discourse has increasingly invoked the twin concepts of cooperative and competitive federalism.

Cooperative federalism emphasizes collaboration between the Centre and States in achieving national goals-whether in infrastructure, health, or social welfare.

Competitive federalism encourages States to compete for investment, innovation, and governance efficiency, fostering policy experimentation and economic growth.

Institutions such as NITI Aayog were conceived to replace top-down planning with partnership-based policymaking. Yet critics argue that competition can exacerbate regional inequalities if not accompanied by adequate fiscal support and institutional fairness.



Autonomy, Language, and Identity

Federalism in India is not merely administrative; it is deeply intertwined with questions of identity and culture. Linguistic reorganization of States in the 1950s demonstrated the Constitution's flexibility in accommodating regional aspirations.

Language policies, education, and cultural expression continue to be sensitive areas, often triggering debates over central overreach versus regional self-determination. These debates reveal that Indian federalism is as much about recognition and respect as it is about power-sharing.

Resource Distribution and Environmental Federalism

Control over natural resources-land, water, minerals, and forests-has become an increasingly contentious aspect of centre-state relations. States often argue that they bear the environmental and social costs of resource extraction while receiving limited benefits.

As climate change and sustainability gain prominence, environmental federalism-the coordination of responsibilities between Centre and States-has emerged as a critical frontier. Balancing development, conservation, and local rights requires cooperative

mechanisms that respect federal principles.

Tensions and Trust Deficits

Centre-state relations are not immune to political friction. Issues such as the use of central agencies, imposition of President's Rule, and allocation of funds often generate accusations of partisan bias and erosion of federal norms.

Such tensions underscore Ambedkar's warning that constitutional provisions alone cannot guarantee harmony; constitutional morality and political restraint are equally essential.

A Federalism in Motion

India's federal system is best understood not as a fixed arrangement, but as a negotiated process-shaped by history, politics, economics, and social change. Its resilience lies in its capacity to adapt, absorb dissent, and recalibrate power.

The challenge ahead is not to weaken the Centre or absolutise State autonomy, but to cultivate trust, dialogue, and institutional respect. In a republic as diverse as India, federalism is not a choice-it is a necessity.

As India's democracy matures, the strength of the Union will ultimately depend on the vitality of its States, and the success of its States on a Centre that listens as much as it leads.



The Indian Constitution does not imagine citizenship as a one-way relationship in which the State merely grants freedoms and the individual passively receives them. Instead, it conceives citizenship as a reciprocal moral contract—a balance between rights that empower individuals and duties that sustain the collective. This equilibrium finds expression in Part III, which guarantees Fundamental Rights, and Part IV-A, which enumerates Fundamental Duties.

Together, they form the ethical spine of Indian democracy: rights that protect liberty and dignity, and duties that nurture civic consciousness. In an age of expanding freedoms and intensifying contestation, this balance has become more critical than ever.

Fundamental Rights: The Shield of the Citizen

Enshrined in Part III of the Constitution, Fundamental Rights were designed as enforceable guarantees against arbitrary state power. Drawing from global constitutional traditions but shaped by India's social realities, these rights aim to transform subjects into citizens.

The Right to Equality

Articles 14 to 18 establish equality before the law and prohibit discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. They also abolish untouchability and titles, striking at the heart of inherited privilege.

Judicial interpretation has given equality a dynamic meaning. Courts have held that equality is not mere formal sameness, but substantive fairness, allowing affirmative action to correct historical injustice. This evolving understanding reflects the Constitution's commitment to social justice rather than mechanical uniformity.

The Right to Freedom

Articles 19 to 22 protect core civil liberties—speech and expression, peaceful assembly, association, movement, residence, and profession. These freedoms are the lifeblood of democratic participation.

Yet the Constitution tempers liberty with reasonable restrictions in the interests of sovereignty, public order, and morality. Contemporary debates on free speech—especially in digital spaces—revolve around this delicate balance between individual expression and collective harmony.

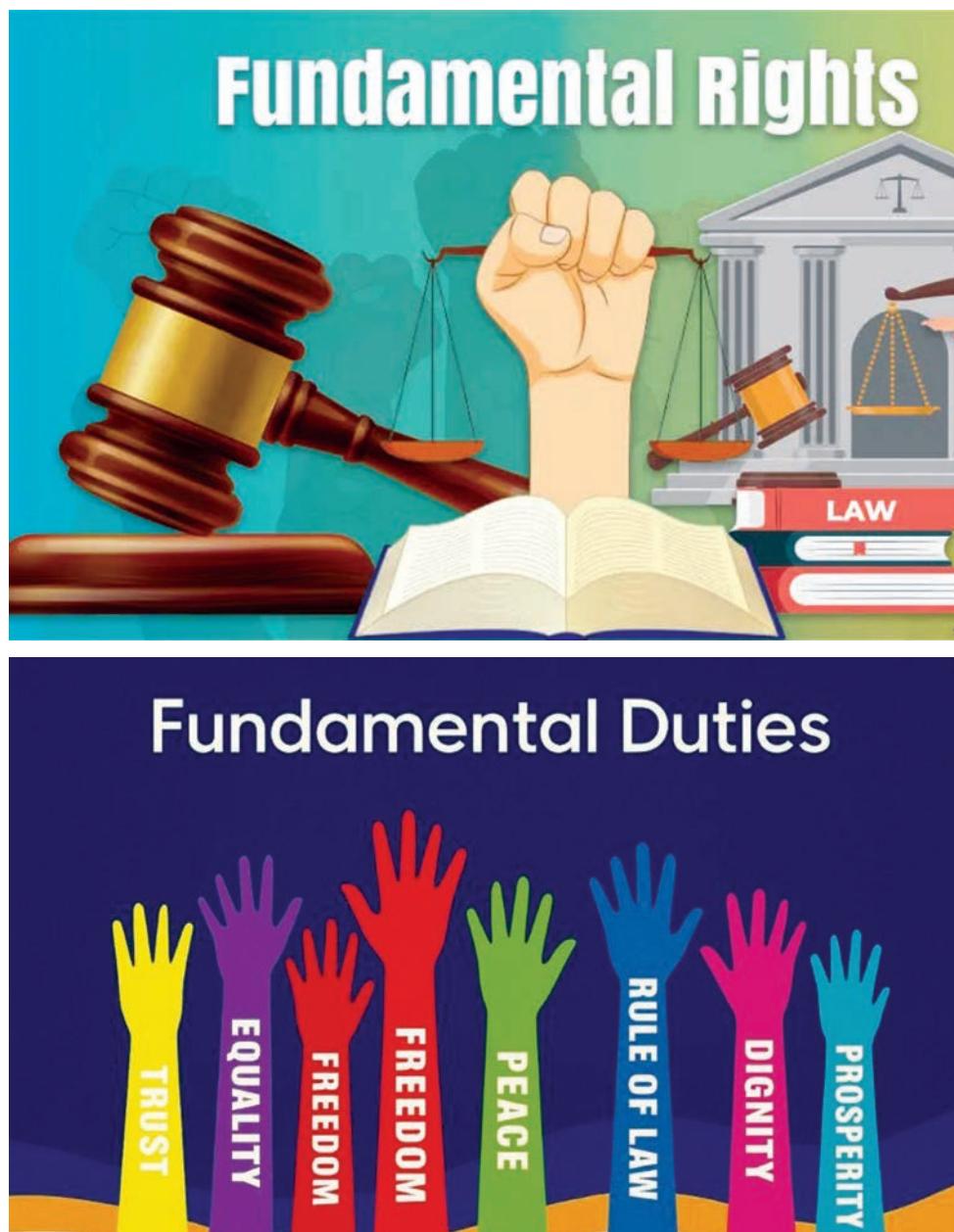
Judicial rulings have consistently affirmed that dissent is not disloyalty, and that free speech includes the right to criticize the state—an essential safeguard against authoritarian drift.

The Right against Exploitation

Articles 23 and 24 prohibit human trafficking, forced labor, and child labor in hazardous industries. These provisions reflect the Constitution's moral stance against economic coercion and social degradation.

In interpreting these articles, courts have expanded the meaning of exploitation to include practices that

Fundamental rights and duties: Two pillars of citizenship



deny dignity, linking economic justice with fundamental rights.

The Right to Freedom of Religion

Articles 25 to 28 guarantee freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice, and propagate religion. Crucially, these rights are subject to public order, morality, and health, reflecting India's model of principled secularism—equal respect for all faiths rather than strict separation.

Landmark judgments have clarified that religious freedom protects belief, not practices that violate constitutional values, reinforcing the primacy of individual rights over institutional authority.

Cultural and Educational Rights

Articles 29 and 30 protect the rights of minorities to conserve their language, script, and culture, and to establish educational institutions. These provisions embody the Constitution's pluralist ethos, recognizing diversity as a strength rather than a threat.

The Right to Constitutional Remedies

Article 32, described by Dr B.R. Ambedkar as the "heart and soul" of the

Constitution, empowers citizens to directly approach the Supreme Court for enforcement of Fundamental Rights. This right transforms constitutional promises into lived realities by making justice accessible.

Expanding Horizons: Privacy and Dignity

The Constitution's framers did not explicitly mention the right to privacy, but judicial interpretation has recognized it as intrinsic to liberty and dignity. In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court affirmed privacy as a Fundamental Right, reshaping debates on surveillance, data protection, and personal autonomy.

This evolution illustrates the Constitution's living character—capable of responding to new challenges while remaining anchored in core values.

Fundamental Duties: The Ethical Counterbalance

Introduced by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976), Part IV-A enumerates the Fundamental Duties of citizens. Though non-justiciable, these duties reflect the belief that democracy cannot survive on rights alone.

They call upon citizens to:

- Respect the Constitution, the National Flag, and the National Anthem
- Uphold unity and integrity
- Promote harmony and the spirit of brotherhood
- Protect the environment and public property
- Develop scientific temper, humanism, and a spirit of inquiry

These duties echo the ideals of fraternity and civic responsibility, reminding citizens that freedom carries obligations.

Duties and the Courts: Moral, Not Coercive

While Fundamental Duties are not directly enforceable, courts have increasingly referenced them to interpret laws and assess civic behavior. Environmental jurisprudence, in particular, has drawn upon citizens' duty to protect nature.

This approach reflects a constitutional philosophy where moral persuasion, not coercion, is the primary means of nurturing responsible citizenship.

Rights without duties? A democratic dilemma

One of the enduring critiques of modern democracy is the tendency to emphasize entitlements while neglecting responsibilities. In public discourse, rights are often invoked as absolute claims, divorced from their social context.

The Constitution anticipates this danger. By placing Duties alongside Rights, it affirms that liberty flourishes only in a culture of mutual respect. Free speech, for instance, loses its democratic value when used to incite hatred or undermine social trust.

Citizenship as a Shared Project

The relationship between Fundamental Rights and Duties reflects a deeper constitutional insight: democracy is not sustained by laws alone, but by civic virtue. Rights empower individuals to challenge injustice; duties encourage them to act in the public interest.

As India navigates complex debates on speech, privacy, equality, and identity, this balance becomes increasingly vital. A rights-conscious but duty-blind society risks fragmentation, while a duty-bound but rights-starved society courts authoritarianism.

Two Pillars, One Republic

Fundamental Rights and Duties are not opposing forces, but complementary pillars of citizenship. One safeguards freedom; the other nurtures responsibility. Together, they give substance to the constitutional promise of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity.

In remembering this balance, citizens reaffirm the spirit of the Constitution—not as a static text, but as a living commitment to democratic life.



Judiciary and republic: Guardian of Constitution

In the architecture of the Indian Republic, the judiciary occupies a position of quiet but formidable authority. Lacking the power of the purse or the command of the sword, the courts derive their strength from the Constitution itself. As the final interpreter of the Constitution, the Indian judiciary has emerged as a central pillar of democracy-protecting rights, arbitrating federal disputes, and acting as a check on legislative and executive excess.

Yet this role has never been static. Over seven decades, India's courts have evolved in response to social change, political pressures, and constitutional crises. Their journey reveals a constant tension between activism and restraint, independence and accountability.

Constitutional Foundations:

Power Rooted in Law

The Constitution establishes an independent judiciary under Part V and Part VI, with the Supreme Court at the apex and High Courts in the states. Judicial independence is safeguarded through security of tenure, fixed salaries, and a rigorous removal process.

Most significantly, the judiciary is vested with the power of judicial review—the authority to examine the constitutionality of laws and executive actions. This power, though not explicitly named, flows from Articles 13, 32, and 226, and forms the bedrock of constitutional supremacy.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar described Article 32—the right to constitutional remedies—as the "heart and soul" of the Constitution, underscoring the centrality of courts in making rights meaningful.

Judicial Review: The Check

on Majoritarian Power

Judicial review has enabled courts to strike down laws that violate Fundamental Rights or transgress constitutional limits. In doing so, the judiciary has often stood as a counter-majoritarian institution, protecting minorities and individuals against the will of transient majorities.

The most transformative articulation of this power came with the Basic Structure Doctrine, which held that Parliament cannot alter the Constitution's core features. This doctrine redefined constitutional sovereignty, ensuring that democracy, secularism, federalism, and judicial independence remain beyond the reach of political convenience.

Public Interest Litigation: Justice Beyond the Courtroom

Perhaps the most distinctive contribution of the Indian judiciary is the evolution of Public Interest Litigation (PIL). Beginning in the late 1970s and 1980s, courts relaxed procedural barriers, allowing citizens and social activists to seek redress on behalf of the marginalised.

PIL transformed courts into spaces of



social intervention—addressing bonded labor, prison conditions, environmental degradation, and access to food and shelter. Judicial creativity expanded the meaning of the right to life, infusing it with dignity, livelihood, health, and education.

While PIL democratized access to justice, it also blurred the line between adjudication and governance—a tension that continues to animate debates on judicial overreach.

Landmark Verdicts and Constitutional Meaning

Over time, a series of landmark judgments have shaped India's constitutional identity:

- Expansion of Article 21, recognizing dignity, privacy, and personal autonomy as intrinsic to life and liberty
- Affirmation of secularism, ensuring equal respect for all faiths
- Strengthening of federalism, through limits on arbitrary central intervention
- Recognition of individual rights in matters of identity, expression, and belief

These verdicts demonstrate the judiciary's role not merely as an interpreter of text, but as a guardian of constitutional values.

The Emergency and Judicial Introspection

No assessment of the judiciary can ignore its most serious moment of failure—the Emergency (1975-77). During this period, the courts largely deferred to executive power, with lasting consequences for civil liberties.

The episode prompted deep judicial introspection. In subsequent years, courts consciously expanded rights jurisprudence and reinforced judicial independence, treating the Emergency as a cautionary tale of what happens when constitutional guardians fall silent.

Appointments, Independence, and Transparency

Judicial independence has also generated controversy, particularly over the appointment of judges. The evolution of the collegium system, where senior judges play a decisive role in appointments, was driven by the desire to insulate the judiciary from political interference.

However, critics argue that the system lacks transparency and accountability. Calls for reform highlight the need to balance independence with openness without compromising the judiciary's autonomy.

Judicial Backlog and Access to Justice

One of the most pressing challenges facing the Indian judiciary is judicial delay. Millions of cases remain pending across courts, eroding public confidence and undermining the promise of timely justice. Backlog reflects systemic issues—insufficient judges, infrastructural constraints, procedural complexity—and raises a fundamental question: Can rights be meaningful without speedy remedies?

Efforts at digitisation, alternative dispute resolution, and judicial reform seek to address this crisis, but structural change remains essential.

Activism vs. Restraint:

The Delicate Balance

Judicial activism has often filled governance gaps, especially when legislative or executive action has been absent. Yet excessive intervention risks transforming courts into unelected policymakers. The challenge lies in maintaining judicial restraint without abdication—intervening to protect constitutional values while respecting the domain of elected institutions. This balance is central to the judiciary's legitimacy.

The Judiciary's Moral Authority

Ultimately, the judiciary's strength lies not merely in its constitutional powers, but in its moral authority. Public trust is sustained when courts act with fairness, consistency, and transparency.

In a democracy marked by social inequality and political contestation, the judiciary often serves as the last refuge of the citizen. Its credibility, therefore, is inseparable from the health of the Republic itself.

Guardian, Not Governor

The Indian judiciary was never meant to govern. It was meant to guard—to protect the Constitution from erosion and ensure that power remains accountable to law. As India's democracy navigates new challenges—technological change, social polarization, and institutional strain—the role of the judiciary remains as vital as ever. Its enduring task is to remain faithful to the Constitution, mindful of its limits, and courageous in defense of liberty.

Elections and the people: World's largest democratic exercise

When India goes to the polls, democracy ceases to be an abstract idea and becomes a living, breathing public ritual. From icy Himalayan hamlets to remote island settlements, from megacities buzzing with digital chatter to forest villages accessible only on foot, the Indian election is not merely a political event-it is a civilization exercise in collective choice. With nearly a billion eligible voters, multiple phases stretching across weeks, and a logistical apparatus unrivaled anywhere in the world, Indian elections represent the largest democratic exercise ever attempted-and sustained-by humankind.

Yet, beyond the scale lies a deeper story: of institutions that safeguard the vote, technologies that inspire debate, citizens who repeatedly renew faith in the ballot, and persistent challenges that test the integrity of the process. Indian electoral democracy is both a triumph and a work in progress.

The Architecture of the Ballot:

India's Election Machinery

At the heart of India's electoral democracy stands the Election Commission of India (ECI), a constitutional authority envisaged by the framers of the Constitution as the impartial guardian of free and fair elections. Entrusted with the conduct of elections to Parliament, state legislatures, and the offices of the President and Vice-President, the ECI operates with remarkable autonomy in a deeply contested political environment.

Every general election sets in motion an administrative exercise of staggering complexity. Electoral rolls must be updated; polling personnel-often numbering in the millions-are trained and deployed; security forces are mobilised; and polling stations are established in some of the most inhospitable terrains on earth. There are polling booths for nomadic tribes, booths in dense forests to ensure that even a single voter is not disenfranchised, and booths in disaster-prone regions where elections become exercises in resilience.

The guiding principle remains simple yet profound: no voter should be left behind.

Technology and Trust: EVMs, VVPATs, and the Digital Turn

Few aspects of India's elections generate as much debate as the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). Introduced to curb booth capturing, reduce invalid votes, and speed up counting, EVMs have fundamentally altered the mechanics of voting. Their defenders argue that they have enhanced efficiency, inclusivity, and environmental sustainability by eliminating paper ballots. Their critics question transparency and demand greater verifiability.

To address concerns and strengthen voter confidence, the ECI introduced the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) system, which allows voters to see a paper slip displaying their chosen candidate before it is securely stored. The VVPAT represents a compromise between technological efficiency and democratic reassurance-a symbolic acknowledgement that trust must be constantly earned, not assumed.

Beyond voting machines, technology now permeates every stage of the electoral process. Online voter registration, mobile applications for election monitoring, GPS tracking of polling materials, live turnout data, and social media outreach have transformed how elections are managed and experienced. India's democracy has entered the digital age-but not without friction.

The Voter as Citizen: Awareness, Participation, and Inclusion

Perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of Indian elections is not administrative or technological, but social. Despite poverty, illiteracy, and deep social



divisions, voter participation in India has remained robust, often surpassing that of many advanced democracies.

Over the decades, sustained voter awareness campaigns-from the iconic "Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation" (SVEEP) program to grassroots mobilization by civil society-have helped embed the idea that voting is both a right and a duty. Symbols on ballots once enabled illiterate voters to participate; today, awareness campaigns target first-time voters, urban apathy, women's participation, and marginalized communities.

Women voters, in particular, have emerged as a decisive force in recent elections, often outnumbering men in turnout percentages. For Dalits, Adivasis, minorities, migrants, and persons with disabilities, the vote remains a powerful assertion of citizenship-an equalizer in a deeply unequal society.

Elections as Social Theatre: Identity, Aspiration, and Power

Indian elections are never merely about governance; they are arenas where identities, aspirations, and historical grievances converge. Caste, religion, language, region, and class intersect with issues of development, welfare, nationalism, and leadership charisma. Campaigns blend policy promises with symbolism, spectacle, and emotion.

The election season reshapes public life. Streets are plastered with posters; rallies turn into carnivals of political expression; social media timelines become ideological battlegrounds. For many citizens, elections are the only moment when power visibly reaches them-when leaders seek their approval rather than dispense authority.

In this sense, elections function as a periodic redistribution of political attention, forcing the state to listen, however briefly, to the many rather than the few.

The Shadow Side: Money Power and Misinformation

Yet, the grandeur of India's electoral democracy is accompanied by troubling distortions. Money power remains one of the gravest challenges to electoral integrity. Despite spending limits and monitoring mechanisms, elections have become increasingly expensive, raising concerns about corporate influence, opaque political funding, and the marginalization of candidates without financial muscle.

Equally disruptive is the rise of misinformation and disinformation, particularly through digital platforms.

Social media has democratized political communication, but it has also enabled the rapid spread of fake news, deepfakes, communal rumors, and targeted propaganda. Algorithms often amplify outrage over reason, emotion over evidence.

The Election Commission has responded with model codes of conduct, content monitoring cells, and partnerships with technology companies. However, regulating political speech without curbing democratic freedoms remains one of the most delicate balancing acts of contemporary democracy.

Media, Platforms, and the Battle for Narrative

Traditional media-print, television, radio-once acted as gatekeepers of political discourse. Today, they coexist with influencers, WhatsApp forwards, meme pages, and independent digital outlets. The result is a fragmented information ecosystem where truth competes with virality.

While investigative journalism and election reporting continue to play a crucial role in informing voters, concerns over sensationalism, partisanship, and corporate ownership persist. Social platforms, meanwhile, have become both tools of mobilization and sites of manipulation.

In this contested terrain, the voter must navigate an overwhelming flow of information, exercising discernment as a democratic skill.

Democracy in Motion: Meaning

Beyond the Mandate

Indian elections do not offer perfection-but they offer persistence. They demonstrate that democracy can survive scale, diversity, poverty, and polarization. Every election is a reaffirmation of the constitutional promise that sovereignty resides with the people, not with institutions or individuals.

The act of standing in line, pressing a button, and seeing one's vote recorded-whether through a symbol, a screen, or a paper trail-is a quiet yet radical assertion of equality. In a world where democracies are retreating or eroding, India's elections remain a powerful reminder that the ballot, however contested, still commands faith.

The world's largest democratic exercise is not merely about choosing governments. It is about renewing the social contract-again and again-between the state and its citizens. In that renewal lies the enduring strength, and the continuing challenge, of Indian democracy.

When India chose to become a Republic in 1950, it did more than replace colonial rule with self-governance—it made a bold moral commitment. In one decisive stroke, the Constitution declared Indian women equal citizens, entitled to the same political rights, freedoms, and opportunities as men. In a society long structured by patriarchy, this was a radical constitutional leap, not a cautious reform.

Over seven decades, the journey of women in India's democracy reflects both the strength of that founding promise and the distance still to be travelled. From freedom fighters to lawmakers, from village councils to the highest offices of the state, Indian women have steadily transformed constitutional ideals into lived political power.

Freedom Before Franchise: Women in the National Movement

Women did not enter the Republic as political novices. Long before constitutional guarantees were written, they had claimed public space through the freedom struggle. The nationalist movement became a crucible in which women's political consciousness was forged.

Leaders such as Sarojini Naidu, poet and nationalist who later became India's first woman Governor; Aruna Asaf Ali, whose defiant leadership during the Quit India Movement made her a symbol of resistance; Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, who blended nationalism with social reform; and Begum Rokeya, who challenged both colonialism and gender orthodoxy, redefined women's roles in public life.

Millions of unnamed women marched, picketed, courted arrest, spun khadi, sheltered revolutionaries, and sustained the moral backbone of the movement. Their participation ensured that independence was imagined not as male emancipation alone, but as a collective national liberation.

The Constitutional Promise: Equality as a Birthright

The Indian Constitution stands among the most gender-progressive charters of its time. It did not treat women's rights as aspirational goals but as enforceable guarantees.

- Equality before the law (Article 14)
- Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex (Article 15)
- Affirmative action for women (Article 15(3))
- Equal opportunity in public employment (Article 16)
- Universal adult franchise from the outset

This last provision was especially transformative. At a time when many democracies still restricted women's voting rights, India enfranchised all adult women without conditions of education, property, or marital status.

Women members of the Constituent Assembly, notably Hansa Mehta and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, were instrumental in ensuring that constitutional language did not invisibilise women under abstract

Women and the Republic: From constitutional promise to political power



notions of equality. Their interventions helped secure a vision of citizenship that was both universal and gender-aware.

Early Republic: Representation Without Proportion

Despite constitutional equality, women's presence in legislatures during the early decades of the Republic remained limited. Parliament and state assemblies continued to be dominated by male politicians, reflecting deep social barriers—restricted mobility, domestic responsibilities, limited access to resources, and entrenched political networks.

Yet women who did enter legislative spaces made their voices count. They shaped debates on education, health, labour welfare, family law, and social justice. The rise of Indira Gandhi as India's first woman Prime Minister in 1966 marked a historic moment, though her leadership did not immediately translate into broader gender parity in politics.

The gap between constitutional promise and political participation became increasingly evident.

Grassroots Power: Panchayati Raj and Democratic Deepening

The most significant breakthrough for women's political participation came with the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, which institutionalized Panchayati Raj and urban local bodies with one-third reservation for women, later increased to 50 percent in many states.

This reform reshaped Indian democracy from the bottom up. Millions of women—many from Dalit, Adivasi, and

backward communities—entered elected office for the first time. Village councils and municipal bodies became training grounds for leadership, negotiation, and governance.

Despite challenges such as proxy representation and social resistance, women leaders gradually asserted authority, prioritizing issues often neglected in male-dominated politics: drinking water, sanitation, school attendance, nutrition, healthcare, and protection from domestic violence.

Panchayati Raj demonstrated a crucial democratic truth: when women govern, governance priorities expand.

Law as a Tool of Democratic Inclusion

Political participation was accompanied by a steady evolution of laws aimed at strengthening women's rights and dignity. Landmark legislations addressing dowry, domestic violence, sexual harassment at the workplace, maternity benefits, and inheritance rights reflected the Republic's growing commitment to substantive equality.

Reforms such as equal inheritance rights for daughters and legal recognition of violence within the home marked a shift from viewing women's issues as private matters to treating them as public and constitutional concerns. Women legislators, judges, activists, and mass movements played a decisive role in shaping these legal milestones.

The law became not just a shield, but a lever for social change.

Women in Leadership: Shaping Policy and Power

Over the decades, Indian women have increasingly occupied positions of high authority—as chief ministers, cabinet ministers, speakers, governors, judges, and President of India. Leaders such as Pratibha Patil, Jayalalithaa, Mayawati, Sheila Dikshit, Mamata Banerjee, Vasundhara Raje, and Nirmala Sitharaman have influenced governance, economics, welfare policy, and national discourse.

Women's leadership has also broadened the understanding of power itself. While women leaders are as diverse in ideology and style as their male counterparts, their presence has challenged the notion that politics is inherently masculine and adversarial.

Increasingly, women are not symbolic representatives—they are policy architects.

Representation Debates and the Road Ahead

The long-pending demand for women's reservation in Parliament and state legislatures underscored a central tension in Indian democracy: equality of opportunity does not automatically ensure equality of outcome. Structural barriers often require structural remedies.

The eventual passage of women's reservation legislation signalled a renewed commitment to the Constitution's transformative vision—recognising that democratic fairness sometimes demands deliberate correction.

Women as Voters, Not Just Candidates

Today, women constitute one of the most decisive forces in Indian elections. Female voter turnout has risen steadily, often matching or surpassing that of men. Political parties increasingly frame policies and campaigns around women's education, health, livelihoods, safety, and financial inclusion.

From self-help groups to social movements, from local governance to national policymaking, women are reshaping how democracy is practiced and experienced.

The Republic Transformed

The story of women in India's Republic is not merely about inclusion—it is about transformation. From freedom fighters to constitution-makers, from village sarpanches to national leaders, women have expanded the moral and political boundaries of Indian democracy.

The constitutional promise of equality was the beginning, not the conclusion. Each election, law, and leadership milestone brings the Republic closer to its founding ideal: a democracy where women are not passive recipients of rights, but active authors of the nation's political future.

In that ongoing journey lies the true strength of the Indian Republic.

Youth, republic and the future of democracy

India's Republic stands at a unique crossroads of history and demography. As the world's largest democracy, it is also home to one of the youngest populations on the planet. Nearly two-thirds of Indians are below the age of 35, and more than half are under 25. This is not merely a statistical fact—it is a profound political reality. The future of Indian democracy will be shaped less by constitutional text alone and more by how this vast generation of young citizens interprets, engages with, and defends the Republic.

Youth in India are not just inheritors of democracy; they are its most critical stakeholders.

A Republic Inherited

The Indian Constitution was framed by leaders who had lived under colonial subjugation and mass displacement. Their vision of democracy was rooted in sacrifice, struggle, and moral urgency. Young Indians today inhabit a very different world—one defined by economic liberalization, digital connectivity, global mobility, and constant political communication.

Yet the core ideals of the Republic—justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity—remain the compass of democratic life. The challenge before India's youth is to translate these ideals into contemporary realities: economic opportunity, social inclusion, freedom of expression, and institutional accountability.

Democracy survives not because it is written down, but because each generation chooses to practice it.

India's Demographic Advantage: Opportunity and Obligation

India's youthful population is often described as a "demographic dividend," promising economic growth, innovation, and global influence. But demography is not destiny. Without education, employment, and political inclusion, a dividend can easily turn into disillusionment.

For democracy, this youth bulge presents both opportunity and risk. An engaged, informed, and hopeful youth strengthens institutions and public life. A frustrated, excluded, or apathetic youth can weaken democratic legitimacy and social cohesion.

The Republic's success will depend on whether young Indians feel they have a meaningful stake in its future.

Political Participation: From Voters to Change-Makers

Young Indians today are participating in democracy in ways that go far beyond voting. While voter registration among first-time voters has increased steadily, youth engagement increasingly expresses itself through movements, campaigns, and issue-based politics.

Student politics, historically a training ground for national leadership, continues to shape democratic discourse. University campuses remain spaces where constitutional values, nationalism, social justice, and state



authority are debated and contested. From movements for affordable education and academic freedom to protests against discriminatory policies, student activism has often served as democracy's early warning system.

However, declining faith in political parties and conventional leadership has also led many young people to disengage from formal politics. Rebuilding trust requires opening political institutions to youth voices, leadership pathways, and internal democracy.

Digital Democracy: Power, Participation, and Peril

India's youth are the most digitally connected generation in the country's history. Smartphones and social media platforms have transformed political communication, making young people both consumers and creators of political narratives.

Digital spaces have democratized expression—allowing young citizens to question authority, mobilize support, expose injustice, and participate in national conversations irrespective of geography or social background. Climate action campaigns, gender justice movements, and civic awareness drives have all gained momentum through digital mobilization.

At the same time, digital democracy carries serious risks. Misinformation, fake news, algorithm-driven polarization, and online harassment distort public debate. Emotional outrage often replaces reasoned discussion. The responsibility on young citizens is therefore greater than ever: to verify, question, and engage ethically in the digital public sphere. Digital literacy has become a democratic skill.

Aspirations, Employment, and Democratic Faith

Economic opportunity is central to youth engagement with democracy. Education has expanded aspirations, but employment generation has struggled to keep pace. Many young Indians face job insecurity, underemployment, and a growing gap between qualifications and opportunities.

This disconnect shapes political attitudes. When democratic systems are perceived as unable to deliver dignity and livelihoods, frustration turns into protest—or worse, political cynicism. Conversely, when institutions respond to youth aspirations through skill development, entrepreneurship support, and fair economic policies, democratic trust deepens.

Employment, therefore, is not merely an economic issue—it is a democratic one.

Civic Engagement Beyond Politics

Democracy is sustained not only in legislatures or election rallies, but in everyday civic life. Across India, young people are increasingly participating in community service, volunteerism, social entrepreneurship, and grassroots problem-solving.

From disaster relief and environmental conservation to public health campaigns and local governance initiatives, youth-led efforts demonstrate a shift from protest alone to participation through service. Such civic engagement builds social trust, strengthens local democracy, and reinforces the idea that citizenship is active, not passive.

These everyday acts of responsibility are as vital to the Republic as electoral participation.

Youth and Institutions

A healthy democracy requires institutions that command public trust—courts, legislatures, the media, civil services, and regulatory bodies. Globally, young people are increasingly skeptical of institutions, often viewing them as distant, opaque, or partisan.

In India too, youth engagement with institutions is marked by both scrutiny and aspiration. Many young citizens demand transparency, accountability, and fairness, while also aspiring to enter these institutions as civil servants, judges, journalists, entrepreneurs, and lawmakers.

The democratic challenge is to ensure that institutions remain open, responsive, and representative—so that youth see them not as obstacles, but as

platforms for public service.

Fraternity and the Ethics of Coexistence

Among the Constitution's ideals, fraternity is perhaps the most fragile—and the most essential. In an era of sharp political polarization, identity-based mobilization, and online hostility, young citizens play a decisive role in shaping the tone of democratic life.

India's diversity is both its strength and its challenge. How young Indians engage with differences of religion, caste, language, gender, and ideology will define the Republic's moral future. Choosing dialogue over demonization, dissent over violence, and constitutional values over tribal loyalties is an everyday democratic act. Fraternity is not enforced by law; it is sustained by civic culture.

Education, Political Literacy, and Democratic Capacity

For youth to sustain democracy, education must go beyond employability. Civic education, constitutional awareness, critical thinking, and ethical reasoning are essential democratic skills. Understanding how institutions function, how rights are protected, how laws are made, and how power is exercised equips young citizens to participate meaningfully rather than react emotionally. Democracies weaken when citizens are informed only by slogans; they strengthen when citizens understand systems. Investing in political literacy is investing in democratic resilience.

From Demographic Strength to Democratic Leadership

India's young population will not automatically guarantee democratic success. Numbers must be matched by values, participation, and responsibility. Youth energy can either renew democracy or exhaust it—depending on how it is channeled.

Political parties, educational institutions, media, and civil society all have roles in nurturing young leadership. But ultimately, the responsibility rests with young citizens themselves—to question authority without rejecting democracy, to demand reform without abandoning institutions, and to imagine progress without erasing constitutional values.

The Republic's Next Generation of Custodians

Every Republic is only as strong as the generation that sustains it. India's youth stand at a decisive moment—not as spectators of history, but as its authors.

The Constitution begins with "We, the People." Today, that collective voice is unmistakably young. Whether Indian democracy deepens, adapts, and endures will depend on how this generation chooses to engage—with courage, conscience, and commitment. In the hands of its youth lies not just the future of governance, but the very soul of the Republic.

Diversity as strength: Unity in Indian Republic

India's Republic rests on a daring idea: that a nation does not have to be culturally uniform to be politically united. When the Constitution of India came into force in 1950, it sought to bind together an ancient civilization marked by extraordinary diversity of language, religion, ethnicity, region, and social structure-into a single democratic framework. This was not a coincidence of history but a conscious political choice. India chose pluralism not as a weakness to be managed, but as strength to be preserved.

The Indian Republic is thus not merely a territorial entity; it is a constitutional promise that diversity can coexist with unity, difference with belonging, and disagreement with democracy.

India's Civilisational Plurality:

A Long Historical Continuum

Pluralism in India predates the modern nation-state. For centuries, the subcontinent has been a crossroads of cultures, faiths, trade routes, and ideas. Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Islamic, Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian, and indigenous traditions evolved not in isolation, but in dialogue and sometimes tension with one another.

Empires and kingdoms ruled over diverse populations by negotiation rather than assimilation. Languages flourished side by side, and regional cultures retained distinct identities. This historical experience shaped a societal instinct for coexistence—even if imperfect—that later informed the Republic's constitutional imagination.

The trauma of Partition, however, revealed how fragile coexistence could become when political identity hardened into exclusion. For the framers of the Constitution, the violence of 1947 was a warning: unity achieved through homogeneity would come at an unbearable human cost. The Republic would have to be built differently.

The Constitutional Design:

Pluralism by Law

The Indian Constitution is one of the most comprehensive attempts to institutionalize diversity within a democratic framework. Rather than privileging a single language, religion, or culture, it created multiple layers of accommodation.

Fundamental Rights and Cultural Freedom

The Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, belief, and association, enabling citizens to express diverse identities without fear. Cultural and educational rights protect minorities' ability to preserve language, script, and traditions, ensuring that national unity does not demand cultural erasure.

Secularism: Equal Respect, Not Erasure

India's secularism differs from strict separation models. The state maintains principled distance from all religions, recognizing their presence in public life while refusing to endorse any single faith. This approach reflects India's lived reality, where religion is deeply woven into social and cultural life.

Federalism as Accommodation

India's federal structure allows regional identities to flourish within the Union. States possess significant autonomy over language, culture, and governance, while national institutions provide coherence and stability. This balance has repeatedly absorbed identity-based demands without fracturing the Republic.

Language and Democracy: Many Tongues, One Polity

India's linguistic diversity is among the richest in the world. The Constitution recognizes multiple scheduled languages and allows states to choose their own official



languages. Hindi and English serve as link languages, facilitating communication without imposing uniformity.

The linguistic reorganization of states stands as a landmark democratic compromise. Rather than suppressing linguistic aspirations, the Republic restructured its internal boundaries to reflect them. This decision transformed potential unrest into democratic legitimacy and strengthened national unity. Language, in India, became a means of political participation rather than a marker of exclusion.

Religion and Coexistence in the Republic

Religious diversity in India is not incidental; it is foundational. The Republic's challenge has been to create a civic identity strong enough to accommodate deeply held faith-based identities.

The Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice, and propagate religion. At the same time, it subjects religious practices to public order, morality, and health-affirming that faith cannot override constitutional values.

Maintaining this balance has been one of India's most delicate democratic tasks. Periods of harmony have alternated with moments of tension. Yet the constitutional framework remains a stabilizing force, offering legal remedies where social trust falters.

Caste, Social Diversity, and the Pursuit of Justice

India's diversity is not only cultural; it is deeply hierarchical. Caste divisions historically denied dignity and opportunity to millions. The Republic confronted this reality through constitutional abolition of untouchability, guarantees of equality, and affirmative action.

Reservations in education, employment, and political representation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes sought to transform diversity from a source of oppression into a foundation for inclusion. These measures were not merely welfare policies but instruments of national integration-acknowledging that unity cannot exist without justice.

Debates around affirmative action continue, but their constitutional purpose remains clear: to ensure that the Republic belongs equally to all its citizens.

Regional Identities and Federal Balance

India's regions differ sharply in culture, cuisine, history, and political traditions. Federalism allows these identities to express themselves through state governments, regional parties, and local governance structures.

Rather than weakening the nation, regional assertion has often strengthened democracy by decentralizing power and broadening representation. The presence of regional parties in national coalitions reflects the Republic's capacity to negotiate diversity through democratic means.

Unity in India has rarely meant centralization; it has meant accommodation.

Cultural Exchange and Shared Imagination

Despite its differences, India sustains a powerful shared cultural imagination. National symbols, constitutional values, sports, cinema, literature, and festivals create overlapping spaces of belonging. Cultural exchange softens boundaries that politics sometimes hardens.

From multilingual cinema to inter-regional migration, everyday interactions continue to weave connections across communities. These lived experiences often do more to sustain unity than formal institutions alone.

Contemporary Challenges to Pluralism

Pluralism is not self-sustaining. Economic inequality, political polarization, identity-based mobilization, and digital misinformation strain social harmony. Social media amplifies both solidarity and suspicion, often rewarding outrage over understanding.

In such times, the Republic's pluralist ethos depends on responsible leadership, independent institutions, and an engaged citizenry. Diversity becomes a strength only when managed through dialogue, law, and empathy.

Fraternity: The Ethical Core of Unity

Among the Constitution's ideals, fraternity remains the most vital and the most fragile. It asks citizens to see beyond identities without denying them-to recognize shared citizenship amid difference.

Fraternity is practised not through slogans, but through everyday democratic behavior: how disagreements are handled, how minorities are treated, how dissent is respected.

An Ongoing Constitutional Experiment

India's unity has never been static. It has been negotiated, debated, and reaffirmed across generations. Diversity has tested the Republic, but it has also deepened it-forcing democracy to grow more inclusive, flexible, and resilient.

The Indian Republic endures not because it solved the problem of diversity, but because it chose to live with it constitutionally.



As India celebrates its 77th Republic Day, it stands at a defining threshold. It is no longer the hesitant postcolonial state imagined by skeptics in 1950, nor is it a fully realized constitutional utopia. It is a confident, complex, and contested democracy marked by impressive achievements, deep anxieties, and ambitious aspirations. The Indian Republic at 77 is a nation simultaneously looking back at an extraordinary democratic journey and forward to an uncertain yet hopeful future. This moment calls not for slogans, but for reflection.

From Fragile Beginnings to Democratic Continuity

The survival of the Indian Republic itself remains its greatest achievement. Few believed a country of India's size, poverty, illiteracy, and diversity could sustain democracy. Yet the Constitution endured wars, insurrections, economic crises, coalition politics, and social upheaval.

India institutionalized universal adult franchise from the outset, allowing the poorest citizen an equal vote. Power transferred repeatedly through elections, not coups. Even during moments of democratic stress, the Republic ultimately corrected its course-demonstrating an internal resilience that remains rare in the postcolonial world. This continuity has given India something invaluable: constitutional memory-the habit of resolving conflict through institutions rather than force.

India in the World: From Non-Alignment to Strategic Autonomy

India's global role has evolved dramatically. Once a moral voice for decolonisation and Third World solidarity, India today is a strategic power navigating a multipolar world. It maintains relationships across ideological divides, balancing national interest with global responsibility.

India's growing influence is visible in:

- Leadership roles in multilateral forums
- A strong and politically engaged diaspora
- Contributions to global peacekeeping
- Expanding footprint in digital public infrastructure, climate action, and development partnerships

However, global leadership comes with scrutiny. International perceptions of India are increasingly shaped by its domestic democratic health. The Republic's global credibility remains inseparable from its commitment to constitutional values.

Economic Transformation: Growth, Modernization, and Uneven Outcomes

Economically, the Republic has undergone a remarkable transformation. From state-led planning and scarcity, India moved towards liberalization, innovation, and global integration. Digital governance, financial inclusion, start-up ecosystems, and infrastructure expansion have redefined the economic landscape.

Yet growth has not been evenly shared. Inequality has widened, informal employment persists, and agrarian distress remains unresolved. For millions



of young Indians, economic opportunity defines their faith in democracy more than abstract ideals.

The Republic's economic challenge is now clear: to convert macroeconomic strength into everyday security and dignity.

Social Change: Expanding Rights, Contested Identities

Socially, the Indian Republic has broadened the circle of citizenship. Literacy, life expectancy, women's participation, and representation of marginalized communities have improved significantly. Panchayati Raj brought democracy to the grassroots. Welfare policies expanded the state's reach to the most vulnerable.

At the same time, identity politics has intensified. Debates around religion, language, caste, gender, and nationalism have become sharper and more polarised. Social media has amplified both empowerment and exclusion.

The Republic's test lies in managing identity without eroding equality-recognizing difference without undermining fraternity.

Democracy Under Pressure: Institutions, Freedoms, and Trust

India's democracy is not in collapse, but

it is under pressure. Institutions designed to check power face unprecedented scrutiny. Questions around independence, transparency, and accountability have entered public discourse.

Freedom of expression, press autonomy, and civil society space have become areas of concern for many citizens. At the same time, digital platforms have expanded participation while distorting public debate through misinformation and outrage.

A confident Republic must be able to tolerate criticism. Democratic strength is measured not by the absence of dissent, but by how it is accommodated.

Governance: Efficiency Versus Democratic Deliberation

Governance in contemporary India reflects a tension between speed and scrutiny. Technology-driven service delivery has improved efficiency and access. Citizens expect faster decisions, visible outcomes, and responsive leadership.

Yet democracy demands deliberation, decentralization, and institutional balance. Centralization of power risks weakening federalism and local governance-both essential to India's democratic architecture.

The Republic must reconcile

administrative effectiveness with constitutional restraint.

Inclusion as the Republic's Moral Compass

At 77, inclusion remains the Republic's most urgent moral question. Economic growth, political stability, and global influence mean little if large sections of society feel excluded or unheard.

Inclusion is not limited to welfare or representation; it encompasses dignity, equality before the law, cultural recognition, and trust in institutions. A Republic that fails to include risks losing legitimacy at home and respect abroad.

The Constitution's promise of social justice remains the Republic's unfinished work.

Youth, Technology, and the Republic's Next Phase

India's future is unmistakably young and digital. Youth aspirations, technological disruption, and climate challenges will shape the Republic's next quarter-century.

Young citizens demand opportunity, fairness, and voice. Their engagement will determine whether democracy deepens or becomes procedural. Technology can either strengthen transparency and participation-or centralise power and surveillance.

The Republic's task is to harness youth energy and technological capacity without hollowing out democratic values.

Aspirations for the Next 25 Years

As India approaches its centenary as a Republic, a clear set of aspirations emerges:

- Democratic renewal through stronger institutions and accountability
- Inclusive economic growth that generates jobs and reduces inequality
- Social harmony rooted in constitutional fraternity
- Federal balance that respects regional diversity
- Global leadership anchored in democratic credibility

These are not optional goals. They are essential for the Republic's long-term survival.

The Republic as a Living Contract

The Indian Republic is not a static achievement; it is a living contract between the state and its citizens. At 77, it stands resilient but restless-confident yet questioning.

Its greatest strength has always been its capacity for self-examination. The Constitution did not promise perfection; it promised a framework for progress. Whether that promise is fulfilled will depend not only on governments and institutions, but on citizens themselves.

Between achievement and anxiety lies aspiration. In that aspiration lives the enduring spirit of the Indian Republic.

India's Republic & world: Democratic diplomacy

When India adopted its Constitution on January 26, 1950, it did more than inaugurate a new political system—it articulated a philosophy of engagement with the world. The Indian Republic entered international affairs not merely as a postcolonial nation seeking security or development, but as a constitutional democracy committed to pluralism, peaceful coexistence, and moral restraint in the exercise of power.

In the decades since, India's foreign policy has evolved with shifting geopolitical realities, yet its democratic foundations continue to shape its global identity. As India emerges as a major economic and strategic power in the 21st century, the idea of "democratic diplomacy"—the blending of national interest with constitutional values—has become central to how the Republic sees itself and is seen by the world.

The Constitutional Roots of India's Foreign Policy Vision

India's approach to world affairs cannot be understood without reference to its Constitution. The Directive Principles of State Policy explicitly encourage the promotion of international peace, just relations between nations, respect for international law, and peaceful settlement of disputes.

These principles were not ornamental. They reflected the lived experience of colonial subjugation, where the abuse of power and denial of rights were justified in the name of empire. Independent India sought to construct a foreign policy that rejected domination and embraced dignity—both at home and abroad.

Universal adult franchise, secularism, and federalism became not just domestic commitments but markers of India's international personality: a nation willing to govern diversity through dialogue rather than force.

Non-Alignment: Democratic Autonomy in a Polarized World

In the early decades of the Republic, India confronted a deeply divided international system shaped by the Cold War. While many countries aligned themselves militarily or ideologically with competing blocs, India advanced the principle of Non-Alignment, rooted in democratic autonomy.

This was not neutrality in the passive sense. Rather, it was an assertion that independent judgment was essential for a sovereign democracy. India refused to mortgage its foreign policy to external powers, arguing that peace could not be secured through rigid alliances.

Non-Alignment gave India credibility as a mediator and moral voice. It allowed the Republic to engage with rival powers without surrendering its independence—a diplomatic posture that continues today under the language of strategic autonomy.

Champion of Decolonization and Racial Justice

India's democratic diplomacy found



powerful expression in its support for anti-colonial movements across Asia and Africa. As a Republic born from a mass freedom struggle, India viewed colonialism not only as political domination but as a moral failure of the international system.

India played an active role in:

- Supporting African liberation movements
- Opposing apartheid in South Africa
- Advocating racial equality in global forums
- Defending the sovereignty of newly independent states

Its stance was rooted in the belief that democracy could not flourish in a world structured by imperial hierarchies. India's voice carried particular weight because it had chosen democracy despite poverty, illiteracy, and immense diversity—conditions many argued were incompatible with democratic governance.

The Global South and South-South Cooperation

India's leadership within the Global South remains one of the most enduring features of its democratic diplomacy. Rather than positioning itself as a patron, India has consistently framed itself as a partner—one nation among many seeking equitable development.

India's engagement with developing nations emphasizes:

- Capacity-building over dependency
- Technology transfer and education
- Infrastructure without political conditionalities
- Respect for domestic priorities

This approach reflects India's own constitutional experience: development rooted in self-determination rather than external control.

Multilateralism and the Quest for Democratic Global Governance

India's deep faith in institutions extends

beyond its borders. As the world's largest democracy, India has been a staunch supporter of multilateralism and rule-based international order.

At the United Nations, India has:

- Advocated reform of global institutions
- Demanded greater representation for developing nations
- Contributed consistently to peacekeeping missions
- Emphasized international law over unilateral action

India's long-standing demand for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council is framed not merely as a claim to status, but as a democratic imperative. A world order that excludes major democracies, India argues, lacks legitimacy.

Peacekeeping: Democracy in Action

India's contribution to UN peacekeeping is one of the most tangible expressions of its constitutional values in global practice. Indian peacekeepers have served in conflict zones across Africa, the Middle East, and Asia—often at great personal risk. Peacekeeping reflects India's belief that:

- Security must serve humanity, not domination
- Military force should be governed by international consent
- Peace is a collective responsibility

This commitment enhances India's moral authority and reinforces its identity as a Republic that uses power with restraint.

G20 Leadership and the Ethics of Global Responsibility

India's G20 presidency marked a turning point in its global role. As host, India positioned itself as a bridge between developed economies and the developing world, foregrounding issues often marginalized in elite global forums. India's agenda focused on:

- Inclusive growth

- Digital public infrastructure as a democratic tool
- Climate justice and sustainable development
- Debt relief for vulnerable nations

The language of consensus and cooperation echoed the spirit of India's own constitutional processes—negotiation, accommodation, and respect for diverse interests.

Democracy, Development, and Soft Power

India's democratic identity also finds expression through soft power. Its diaspora—deeply embedded in democratic societies worldwide—acts as an informal ambassador of India's plural ethos.

Cultural diplomacy through yoga, cinema, literature, and education reinforces India's image as a civilization comfortable with difference. This cultural confidence enhances India's diplomatic influence, especially among younger populations globally.

Realpolitik and the Limits of Democratic Idealism

India's democratic diplomacy operates within a complex world of strategic competition. Engagements with non-democratic regimes, security partnerships, and economic imperatives sometimes strain the coherence between ideals and interests.

Yet India's approach has generally avoided ideological rigidity. Instead, it seeks issue-based alignments, maintaining democratic identity while pursuing pragmatic cooperation. This flexibility reflects the reality of a democracy navigating an imperfect world.

Domestic Democracy and Global Credibility

In the contemporary era, India's global democratic standing is increasingly linked to domestic developments. Questions of civil liberties, institutional independence, and social harmony shape international perceptions.

For India's democratic diplomacy to remain persuasive, constitutional values must be visibly protected at home. The strength of a Republic's global voice ultimately depends on the vitality of its domestic democracy.

A Republic with a Global Conscience

As India approaches its centenary as a Republic, its role in the world is undergoing a profound transformation. No longer merely a moral voice from the margins, India is now a central actor in shaping global outcomes.

The challenge before the Republic is clear: to wield power without abandoning principle, to lead without dominating, and to demonstrate that democracy—rooted in constitutional values—can coexist with global ambition.

In a fractured world, India's democratic diplomacy offers a compelling proposition: that the legitimacy of power lies not only in strength, but in restraint; not only in interests, but in ideals; and not only in national success, but in shared human progress.

R-Day through decades: How Jan 26 has evolved

Every year, as dawn breaks on January 26, India pauses—not merely to celebrate a date, but to revisit an idea. Republic Day is not a festival of conquest or coronation; it is a commemoration of choice—the choice to govern ourselves through a Constitution, through law rather than lineage, through citizenship rather than subjects.

Yet Republic Day has never remained static. From the austere solemnity of the early years to today's grand spectacle infused with cultural assertion, strategic messaging, and digital outreach, January 26 has evolved alongside the Republic itself. The changing form, tone, and meaning of Republic Day celebrations reflect India's political maturity, social churn, economic aspirations, and national self-image.

1950s: Birth of the Republic and Constitutional Reverence

The first Republic Day in 1950 was marked more by gravity than grandeur: India was a young nation, scarred by Partition and economic fragility, yet animated by constitutional idealism. The parade was modest, the crowds disciplined, and the emphasis unmistakably institutional.

Dr Rajendra Prasad's oath as the first President symbolised the transition from colonial rule to constitutional governance. The Constitution—rather than any leader—was the true protagonist of early Republic Days.

Themes during this decade revolved around:

- National unity after Partition
- Civil services and armed forces as pillars of the Republic
- Democratic legitimacy through institutions

Public participation was largely urban and elite, reflecting the limited reach of media and infrastructure. Republic Day was less spectacle, more civic ritual.

1960s: Assertion Amid Uncertainty

The 1960s were marked by political instability, wars, and economic stress. The optimism of the Nehruvian era collided with harsh geopolitical realities—China in 1962, Pakistan in 1965, and the death of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Republic Day parades grew more militarized in tone, subtly reflecting national anxieties and the need to project strength. Defense preparedness became central to the visual vocabulary of January 26.

At the same time, cultural tableaux from states began gaining prominence, reinforcing the message that unity was sustained through diversity.

The mood of the Republic was no longer idealistic alone—it was defensive, resilient, and self-questioning.

1970s: Power, Protest, and Paradox

The 1970s were among the most turbulent decades in India's republican journey. Economic hardship, political centralization, and the Emergency (1975-77) left deep marks on public consciousness. Republic Day during the Emergency years



was paradoxical. Even as democratic freedoms were suspended, the Republic Day parade continued—disciplined, orderly, and symbolic—raising uncomfortable questions about the gap between constitutional ideals and political reality.

After the Emergency, Republic Day acquired a renewed democratic charge. The return of electoral politics infused the celebrations with a sense of constitutional recovery. This decade revealed that Republic Day was not immune to politics—it was deeply intertwined with it.

1980s: National Pride and New Aspirations

The 1980s witnessed a gradual shift in Republic Day's tone—from austerity to assertion. India sought to project itself as a cohesive, confident nation amid regional tensions, insurgencies, and social churn.

Technological achievements, scientific progress, and infrastructure development began appearing more prominently in tableaux. The parade increasingly became a narrative of national capability.

Television transformed Republic Day into a mass experience. For millions, January 26 became a shared national moment, watched collectively across villages and cities. The Republic was learning to speak not only through law, but through imagery.

1990s: Liberalization and a Changing Republic

Economic liberalisation in 1991 altered the Republic's self-image profoundly. India

was no longer a closed economy or inward-looking polity—it was opening to the world. Republic Day celebrations reflected this transition:

- Economic growth narratives entered the parade
- Private enterprise and innovation gained symbolic space
- Cultural confidence replaced defensive nationalism

At the same time, coalition politics and social justice movements reshaped public discourse. Republic Day became a site where competing visions of India—market-driven growth and social equity—coexisted uneasily. The Republic was diversifying, economically and politically.

2000s: Global Recognition and Strategic Confidence

The new millennium brought a heightened sense of global aspiration. India's nuclear tests, IT boom, and growing diplomatic footprint infused Republic Day with strategic confidence.

The presence of foreign chief guests became increasingly significant, turning Republic Day into a diplomatic stage. The parade route became a visual statement of India's global standing. Security arrangements intensified after terrorist attacks, subtly altering the open, celebratory nature of public participation. Republic Day was now as much about international messaging as domestic celebration.

2010s: Identity, Digital India,

and Mass Participation

The 2010s marked a decisive shift in Republic Day's character. Social media, 24/7 news cycles, and digital governance transformed public engagement.

Republic Day themes increasingly foregrounded:

- Cultural nationalism
- Development narratives
- Welfare delivery and infrastructure
- Women's empowerment and social inclusion

Public participation expanded through digital campaigns, hashtags, and live streaming. Republic Day was no longer confined to Rajpath—it entered smartphones and social platforms.

At the same time, debates around nationalism, dissent, and constitutional values intensified, making Republic Day a contested space of meaning rather than a consensual ritual.

2020s: A Republic in Reflection

As India entered the 2020s, Republic Day acquired a reflective, even introspective tone. The COVID-19 pandemic, economic disruption, and global uncertainty prompted a rethinking of resilience and governance. The renaming of Rajpath to Kartavya Path symbolized a conscious attempt to reframe the Republic's civic ethos—from entitlement to duty. Republic Day parades became more curated, thematic, and narrative-driven, emphasizing:

- Indigenous innovation
- Cultural rediscovery
- Strategic autonomy
- Digital public infrastructure

Public participation, though sometimes restricted, became more intentional and symbolic.

Republic Day as a Mirror of the Nation

Across decades, Republic Day has served as a mirror-reflecting India's triumphs, tensions, and transitions. Its evolution tells a story of a Republic constantly renegotiating its identity.

What began as a solemn constitutional commemoration has grown into a complex national performance—part celebration, part assertion, part introspection.

Yet beneath changing themes and formats, the core remains unchanged: January 26 is a reminder that India's legitimacy flows not from power alone, but from the consent of its people and the supremacy of its Constitution.

January 26, 2026: Looking Ahead

As India approaches its centenary as a Republic, Republic Day faces a quiet but profound question: can ritual continue to inspire reflection? Can spectacle coexist with substance? The answer lies in remembering that Republic Day is not merely about displaying strength or culture—it is about renewing a promise. A promise made in 1950, revisited every January 26, that the Republic belongs to its people—and that its future will be shaped by how faithfully it honors that commitment.

150 Years of Vande Mataram: The soul of a nation takes centre stage at Republic Day 2026

The Republic Day celebrations in 2026 promise to be a unique and meaningful national event, bringing together history, patriotism, culture and modern India's progress. Organised by the Ministry of Defence, the celebrations will be held at Kartavya Path in New Delhi on January 26, 2026.

This year's programme will highlight the 150-year legacy of India's national song 'Vande Mataram' while also showcasing the country's military capabilities and cultural diversity.

Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh outlined the broad plans for Republic Day Celebrations 2026.

From a special theme centred on Vande Mataram to large-scale public participation and cultural performances, the event is designed to reflect the spirit of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and Atmanirbhar Bharat.

WHO WILL BE THE CHIEF GUESTS AT REPUBLIC DAY PARADE 2026?

The President of the European Council, António Costa, and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, will be the Chief Guests at the Republic Day Parade 2026. Their presence highlights India's growing global partnerships and diplomatic engagement with Europe.

'150 YEARS OF VANDE MATARAM' THEME EXPLAINED

The central theme of the Republic Day Parade 2026 will be "150 Years of Vande Mataram".

Paintings illustrating the verses of Vande Mataram, created in 1923, will be displayed along Kartavya Path. Cultural and musical performances inspired by the national song will be organised across the country between January 19 and 26, 2026.

Floral decorations, invitation cards, videos and tableaux will also reflect this theme.

From a poem penned in colonial Bengal to a rallying cry of resistance, Vande Mataram has travelled through history as both literature and lived emotion. Its selection as the thematic anchor for Republic Day 2026 signals a conscious return to the cultural roots of Indian nationalism-roots that nourished the constitutional Republic long before it was formally born.

A Song Older Than the Republic

Composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in 1876, Vande Mataram first appeared in his novel *Anandamath*. At a time when India was still under British rule, the song imagined the motherland as a living, divine presence-worthy of love, sacrifice, and devotion.

Long before January 26, 1950, Vande Mataram had already become a political force. It was sung in protest marches, whispered in prison cells, and shouted



in defiance at colonial authority. The song's invocation of the motherland transformed patriotism into an emotional bond, not just a political aspiration. That the Republic of India later accorded Vande Mataram the status of National Song reflects its foundational role in shaping the spirit of freedom that made constitutional democracy possible.

Why 150 Years Matters

The 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram arrives at a moment when India is reassessing its civilization narrative and national symbols. The theme offers an opportunity to trace the evolution of nationalism-from cultural awakening to constitutional sovereignty.

Unlike symbols born of state power,

Vande Mataram emerged organically from society. Its endurance over a century and a half speaks to its ability to adapt, inspire, and provoke debate-hallmarks of a living democratic culture.

By foregrounding this milestone at the Republic Day parade, India links its modern republican identity to the cultural and emotional currents that sustained its freedom struggle.

MILITARY DISPLAY AND BATTLE ARRAY HIGHLIGHTS

For the first time, the Indian Army will showcase a Battle Array Formation during the parade. The military display will include marching contingents, mechanised columns, modern weapons systems, drones, tanks and missile platforms.

The flypast by the Indian Air Force will feature aircraft and helicopters in various formations, marking the grand finale of the parade.

A special veterans' tableau by the Indian Air Force will also be part of the parade, honouring the contribution of former service personnel.

SPECIAL GUESTS AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Around 10,000 people from different walks of life will attend the parade as Special Guests. These include farmers, scientists, entrepreneurs, students, sportspersons, women self-help group members, artisans, workers, volunteers and beneficiaries of various government schemes.

Their presence reflects the government's focus on inclusive participation and recognising grassroots contributors.

TABLEAUX, CULTURAL PERFORMANCES AND OTHER KEY EVENTS

A total of 30 tableaux from States, Union Territories, Ministries and Departments will roll down Kartavya Path, showcasing India's culture, heritage, innovation and self-reliance.

Around 2,500 artists will take part in the cultural performance during the parade. Other major events linked to Republic Day 2026 include Bharat Parv at Red Fort, the National School Band Competition, Project Veer Gatha 5.0, and the PM's NCC Rally.

Facilities such as e-tickets, free metro travel, park-and-ride services and citizen-friendly arrangements will be provided to ensure smooth access for visitors. Republic Day Celebrations 2026 aim to blend tradition with modern India's aspirations. With the theme of 150 years of Vande Mataram, strong military displays, vibrant cultural performances and large-scale citizen participation, the event seeks to celebrate India's unity, diversity and progress on a global stage.

List of chief guests at the Delhi R-Day parade

Since 1950, India has been hosting head of state or government of another country as the state guest of honor for Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi.

During 1950-1954, Republic Day celebrations were organized at different venues (like Irwin Amphitheatre, Kingsway, Red Fort and Ramlila Maidan). It was only starting 1955 when the

Republic Day parade in its present form was organized at Rajpath, now Kartavya Path.

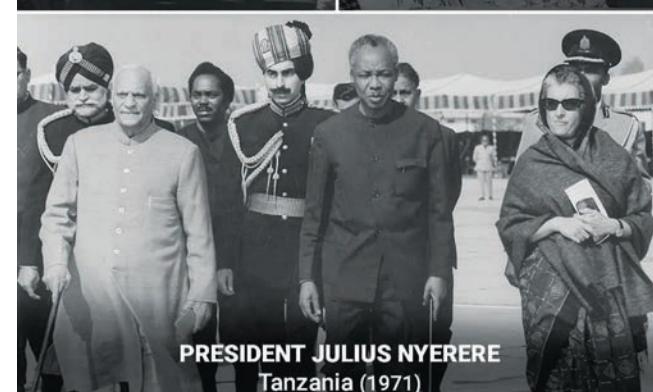
The guest country is chosen after a deliberation of strategic, economic and

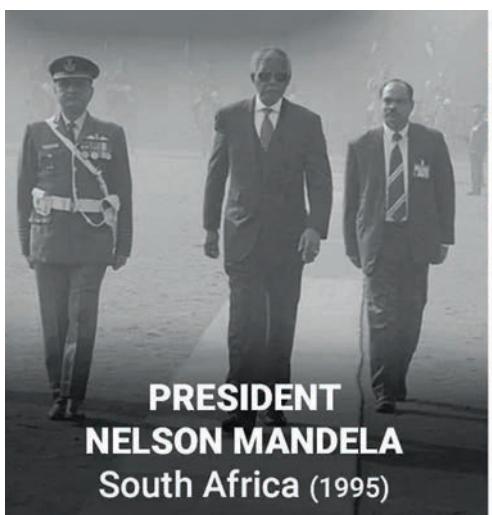
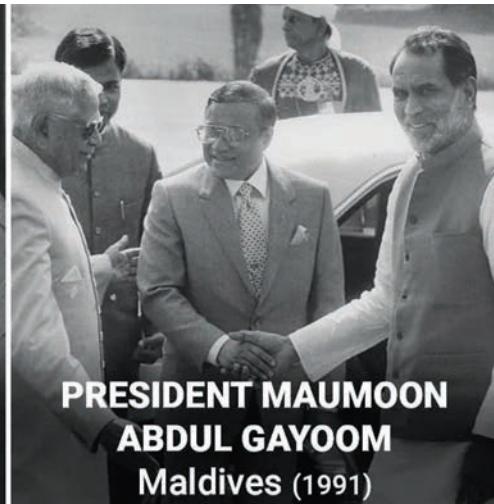
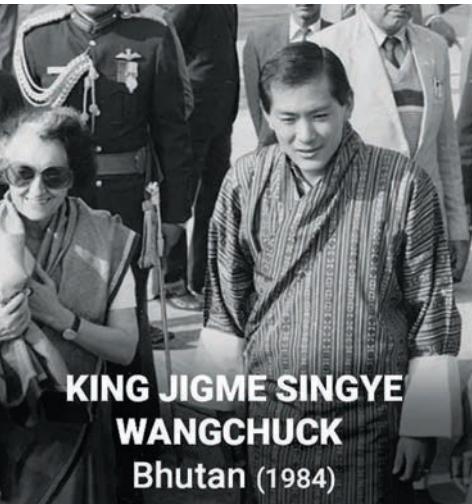
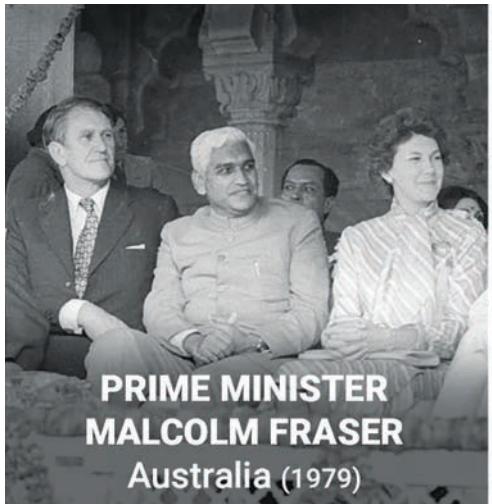
political interests. During 1950s-1970s, a number of Non-Aligned Movement and Eastern Bloc countries were hosted by India. In 1968 and 1974, India played host to two countries on the same Republic Day.

Year	Chief Guest of Republic Day	Country	2000	President Olusegun Obasanjo	Nigeria	Ratwatte Dias Bandaranaike Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka
2025	President H.E. Prabowo Subianto	Indonesia	1999	King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev	Nepal	1973 President Mobutu Sese Seko Zaire
2024	President Emmanuel Macron	France	1998	President Jacques Chirac	France	1972 PM Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Mauritius
2023	President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi	Egypt	1997	Prime Minister Basdeo Panday	Trinidad and Tobago	1971 President Julius Nyerere Tanzania
2022	-	-	-	-	-	1970 King of the Belgians Baudouin Belgium
2021	Prime Minister Boris Johnson	UK	1996	President Fernando Cardoso	Brazil	1969 PM of Bulgaria Todor Zhivkov Bulgaria
2020	President Jair Bolsonaro	Brazil	1995	President Nelson Mandela	South Africa	1968 PM Alexei Kosygin, Prez Josip Tito USSR, Yugoslavia
2019	President Cyril Ramaphosa	South Africa	1994	Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong	Singapore	
2018	Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Prime Minister Najib Razak, President Htin Kyaw, Rodrigo Roa Duterte, Halimah Yacob, Prayuth Chan-ocha, Nguyen Xuan Phuc Brunei, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam		1993	Prime Minister John Major	UK	1967 King Mohammed Zahir Shah Afghanistan
2017	Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed	UAE	1992	President Mário Soares	Portugal	1966 No invitation No invitation
2016	President François Hollande	France	1991	President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom	Maldives	1965 Minister Rana Abdul Hamid Pakistan
2015	President Barack Obama	United States	1990	Prime Minister Anerood Jugnauth	Mauritius	1964 Lord Louis Mountbatten UK
2014	Prime Minister Shinzo Abe	Japan	1989	General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh	Vietnam	1963 King Norodom Sihanouk Cambodia
2013	King Jigme K Namgyel Wangchuck	Bhutan	1988	President Junius Jayewardene	Sri Lanka	1962 Prime Minister Viggo Kampmann Denmark
2012	Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra	Thailand	1987	President Alan García	Peru	1961 Queen Elizabeth II United Kingdom
2011	President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono	Indonesia	1986	Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou	Greece	1960 President Kliment Voroshilov USSR
2010	President Lee Myung Bak	South Korea	1985	President Raúl Alfonsín	Argentina	1959 Duke of Edinburgh Prince Philip United Kingdom
2009	President Nursultan Nazarbayev	Kazakhstan	1984	King Jigme Singye Wangchuck	Bhutan	1958 Marshall Ye Jianying China
2008	President Nicolas Sarkozy	France	1983	President Shehu Shagari	Nigeria	1957 Minister of Defence Georgy Zhukov USSR
2007	President Vladimir Putin	Russia	1982	King Juan Carlos I Spain		1956 R. A. Butler, Kotaro Tanaka UK, Japan
2006	King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud	Saudi Arabia	1981	President José López Portillo	Mexico	1955 Malik Ghulam Muhammad Pakistan
2005	King Jigme Singye Wangchuck	Bhutan	1980	President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing	France	1954 King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck Bhutan
2004	President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva	Brazil	1979	Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser	Australia	1953 No invitation -
2003	President Mohammed Khatami	Iran	1978	President Patrick Hillary	Ireland	1952 No invitation -
2002	President Cassam Uteem	Mauritius	1977	First Secretary Edward Gierek	Poland	1951 King Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah Nepal
2001	President Abdelaziz Bouteflika	Algeria	1976	Prime Minister Jacques Chirac	France	President Sukarno Indonesia
			1975	President Kenneth Kaunda	Zambia	
			1974	President Josip Broz Tito, Prime Minister Sirimavo		



From the archives: Glimpses of chief guests at R-Day parade







President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam along with Russian President, Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh during reception hosted on the occasion of 58th Republic Day celebrations in 2007.



In 2018, the entire Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leadership comprising 10 heads of states were present at the Republic Day parade.



Queen Elizabeth with the President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad going in a coach to witness Republic Day parade at Rajpath, in New Delhi on January 26, 1961.



Bhutan King Jigme Singye Wangchuck holds the distinction of being the chief guest twice - 1984 and 2005.



PRIME MINISTER
SHINZO ABE
Japan (2014)



PRESIDENT
BARACK OBAMA
United States (2015)



CROWN PRINCE SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN ZAYED
United Arab Emirates (2017)



PRESIDENT
CYRIL RAMAPHOSA
South Africa (2019)



PRESIDENT
JAIR BOLSONARO
Brazil (2020)



PRESIDENT ABDEL FATTAH AL-SISI
Egypt (2023)





Remembering the Father of the Nation— Mahatma Gandhi — on his death anniversary

ON JANUARY 30, INDIA DOES NOT MERELY REMEMBER A MAN WHO DIED — IT REMEMBERS
A MORAL FORCE THAT CONTINUES TO INTERROGATE ITS CONSCIENCE

Each year, as the nation observes Martyrs' Day on January 30, a profound stillness envelops India. At exactly 5:17 pm—the moment Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi fell to an assassin's bullets in 1948—sirens sound, people pause, and silence speaks louder than words. This ritual is not simply ceremonial; it is symbolic of a nation bowing before the ideals that shaped its freedom and identity. Remembering the Father of the Nation is an act of national self-reflection, urging India to measure its present against the values that guided its birth.

Gandhi: From Man to Mahatma

Born in Porbandar in 1869, Gandhi's journey from a shy barrister to the moral leader of a mass movement is one of history's most remarkable transformations. His years in South Africa were formative, where he encountered racial discrimination and forged the philosophy of Satyagraha—the insistence on truth through non-violent resistance. This philosophy was not passive submission but an active moral struggle, demanding courage, discipline, and faith in the innate goodness of humanity.

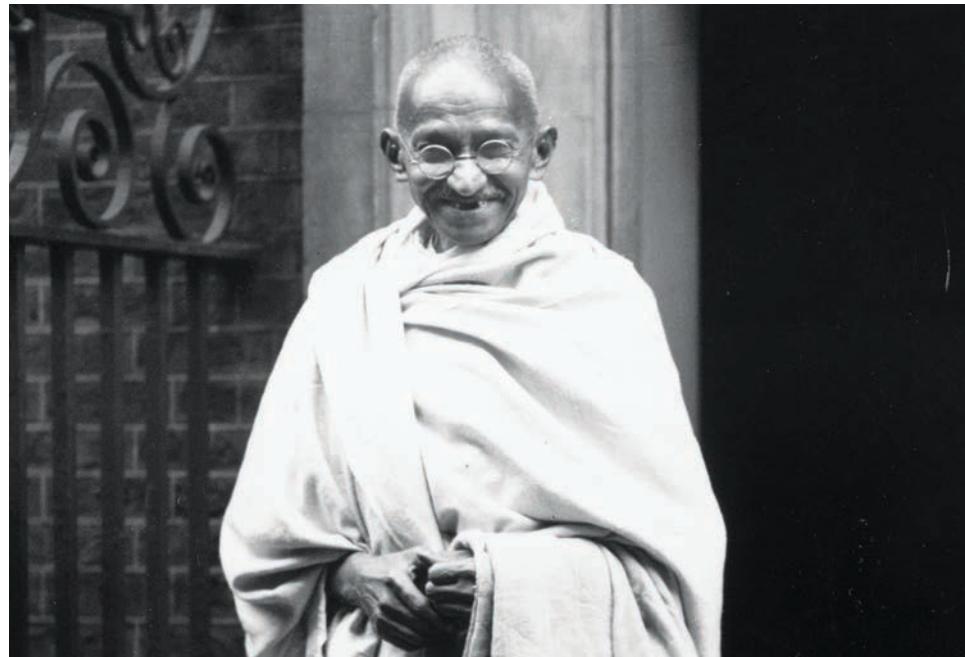
When Gandhi returned to India in 1915, he immersed himself in the lives of ordinary Indians—peasants, workers, women, and the marginalized. From Champaran and Kheda to Ahmedabad, he transformed local grievances into national movements. Unlike many leaders of his time, Gandhi believed that freedom was incomplete without social reform—the eradication of untouchability, empowerment of women, communal harmony, and self-reliance through swadeshi.

Political Context: Mass Movements and Moral Dilemmas

Gandhi's leadership coincided with a politically turbulent India. The early 20th century saw the rise of anti-colonial sentiment, economic hardship, and social unrest. Gandhi's approach was distinctive—he sought mass participation in the freedom struggle while remaining steadfastly committed to non-violence.

Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22)

The Non-Cooperation Movement was launched in response to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the repressive Rowlatt Act. Gandhi called on Indians to boycott British institutions, schools, and courts, and to refuse taxes. Millions joined, transforming political consciousness across villages and towns. Gandhi's challenge was to maintain discipline among a population eager for rapid change, balancing ethical adherence with political efficacy. When



violence erupted in Chauri Chaura, Gandhi called off the movement, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to principled action over expediency.

Salt March and Civil Disobedience (1930-31)

The Salt Satyagraha symbolized the fight against economic exploitation and colonial monopoly. Gandhi's 240-mile march to Dandi mobilized tens of thousands and captured the world's attention. Beyond its political symbolism, the movement tested Gandhi's ability to navigate moral dilemmas—encouraging defiance of unjust laws while avoiding confrontation that could lead to bloodshed. His strategy emphasized moral high ground, leveraging ethical conduct as a tool of political pressure.

Quit India Movement and World War II (1942-45)

During World War II, Gandhi faced the moral quandary of opposing British rule while the world battled fascism. The Quit India Movement demanded immediate independence, yet Gandhi remained cautious about the outbreak of communal violence and the fragile state of Indian society. Arrested along with the entire Congress leadership, he continued to guide the movement through letters and messages, stressing non-violence even in the face of repression.

Partition of India (1947)

Partition presented Gandhi with the most severe moral crisis. Communal riots between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs engulfed the subcontinent, claiming hundreds of thousands of lives. Gandhi undertook personal fasts, visited refugee camps, and appealed tirelessly

for peace, embodying the role of moral mediator in a politically and socially fractured nation. He confronted the painful reality that political independence alone was insufficient without social harmony, tolerance, and justice. His actions underscored the tension between idealism and political pragmatism—how to uphold non-violence and unity in the face of mass violence and political division.

Gandhi's writings from this period, including letters to Jinnah and Nehru, reflect his deep engagement with ethical dilemmas, balancing the demands of nationhood with the imperatives of moral responsibility. He consistently advocated for reconciliation and communal understanding, even when facing threats to his life.

January 30, 1948: A Shattered Moment

Gandhi's assassination came at a time when India was still grappling with the trauma of Partition. His death silenced a moral compass whose counsel was needed more than ever. Jawaharlal Nehru's words to the nation captured the collective grief: "The light has gone out of our lives, and there is darkness everywhere." Yet history would show that Gandhi's light was not extinguished; it dispersed, illuminating struggles for justice across the world.

Martyrs' Day: Commemoration and Conscience

Every year, tributes at Raj Ghat form the heart of official remembrance. The President, Prime Minister, and leaders from across political lines offer floral homage, while prayer meetings echo with interfaith readings and Gandhi's beloved bhajans. Across India, schools observe special assemblies, students recount episodes from Gandhi's life, and exhibitions display his writings, letters,

and photographs.

The two-minute silence observed nationwide is perhaps the most powerful tribute—a collective pause that transcends religion, language, and ideology. Yet Gandhi himself warned against hollow reverence. "My life is my message," he said, reminding the nation that remembrance must translate into action.

Gandhi's Global Legacy

Gandhi's influence extended far beyond India's borders. Leaders and movements across continents drew inspiration from his methods. Martin Luther King Jr. adapted Gandhian non-violence in the American civil rights movement, while Nelson Mandela acknowledged its impact on South Africa's struggle against apartheid. From environmental activism to peace movements, Gandhi's ideas continue to offer ethical frameworks for resistance.

In a world increasingly fractured by conflict, inequality, and climate crises, Gandhi's insistence on restraint, dialogue, and moral responsibility feels urgently contemporary. His vision of development—one that respects nature and prioritises human dignity—offers a counterpoint to unchecked consumerism.

Relevance in Contemporary India

Within India, Gandhi's legacy is both revered and contested. His ideals challenge modern society to confront uncomfortable truths—about intolerance, inequality, and the erosion of civil discourse. Gandhi believed that nationalism without compassion could become destructive, and that true patriotism lay in service, not supremacy.

On his death anniversary, the question is not whether Gandhi belongs to the past, but whether India is willing to live by his principles in the present. Truth in public life, respect for dissent, harmony amidst diversity—these were not abstract ideals for Gandhi, but daily practices.

An Unfinished Moral Journey

As the nation bows its head on January 30, remembering the Father of the Nation becomes an act of recommitment. Gandhi's life and death remind India that freedom is not a destination achieved once, but a continuous moral journey. His assassination marked the end of a life, but not the end of a legacy.

In remembering Gandhi, India is reminded that the strongest nations are not built on power alone, but on principles. And in that quiet moment of silence, the Mahatma's voice still whispers—to choose truth over convenience, peace over hatred, and humanity over all else.

Mahakumbh: A Mighty Event, A Mighty Book

"Mega events such as the Mahakumbh... bring upon us the realization that humankind has one unifying divine core," writes Yakub Mathew in his recently released coffee table book, 'Seeking the Infinite'.

BOOK REVIEW BY USHA AKELLA



Usha Akella- reviewer of the book

Photo / Courtesy Usha Akella

Mahakumbh as one of humanity's heritages, not solely Indian or Hindu.

The book draws our attention to water as a fundamental metaphor of purification, unity, and surrender. In its pages the Mahakumbh is recognized as a clarion call from India of the truth of one ultimate religion-humanity. As a reader you can position yourself on the shore of this book, and marvel at the timeless ripples of faith ignited by hope for a healed world.

IMMORTALIZING THE MAHAKUMBH IN A BOOK

'Dedicated to the journey within', Yakub Mathew's book aims to capture the gravitas of the Mahakumbh-a once in 144 years riverine confluence termed Triveni Sangam (reflected in the skies by a rare astronomical configuration of Jupiter, Sun and Moon/the orbital revolution of Jupiter around the sun) in Prayagraj that welcomed an estimated 640 million devotees in 2025. The three rivers whose waters become a single stream are read symbolically in various fashions but mostly as an emblem of unity. That one of these rivers is mythical (Saraswati) does not hamper faith. And that a gathering of such staggering numbers rolled off peacefully, across nearly two months, is a miracle. A coffee table book with stunning photographs laid across 246 pages and lit by luminous quotes and narratives, Seeking the Infinite has immortalized the Mahakumbh as never before.

The very dedication states the resolution and celebration of paradoxes-the outward pilgrimage is veritably the turning within to touch an ineffable shore we carry in our souls. The book in its scope, aim and production is a Mahakumbh of an undertaking unafraid to boldly go toward impeccable standards of production and embark on an archaeology of semantics of the event. Turning the pages of this book feels like mimicking the journey, by entering the preliminary waters of the first chapter of 'Blessings' by a mystic, Hindu yogis and a Cardinal (Sadhguru, Swami Avdeshanand Giri Maharaj, Maharaj Radhanath Swami and His Eminence Cardinal Oswald Gracias), onward to deeper waters of musings and explorations. Finally, the reader emerges refreshed by India's eternal reverberating spiritual current, and is reminded of a tenacious civilization that has neither been afraid to ask the deepest questions, nor hesitated to attempt to answer them. Answers that have buffeted along seemingly contradictory banks of form and formless, faith and agnosticism, ritual and dhyana-finally averring the human soul as the ultimate anthem of mystery. The overlapping waters of three rivers continue to transfer to the pages of this book asking for awakening from narrow and bigoted definitions of religion.

Yakub Mathew states his vision early on casting the Mahakumbh as an inter-national heritage not constrained by geographical borders. Though he describes himself as an accidental author, Mathew is not an accidental seeker. The journey undertaken by a

In our times, wherein one feels pressured to cast her/his lot with Left or Right-and other fractured polarities-and be damned either way, a bold book arrived shining and fearless at the IAAC (Indo-American Arts Council) Literary Fest 2025 last November to announce the possibilities of reconciliation-and harmony. A mighty event rooted in a myth of nectar, and a mighty book exploring the infinite, no less-Seeking the Infinite redefines the



Mahakumbh book release by Sadhguru at IAAC Literary Festival. Mathew (left) and Suhel Seth who moderated the panel discussion at the book launch

Syrian Christian New York-based banker with his beloved wife, and a bevy of 18 friends to celebrate his 60th birthday and life after a dire illness has spawned what will be an everlasting tribute to the Mahakumbh. That he sought such an experience to define a rite of passage in human life is an indicator of the predilections of his soul.



Sadhu blowing a conch: a picture from the book.

Photos / courtesy Yakub Mathew

YAKUB HAS STRADDLED TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL WORLDS

Raised by a mother widowed young in Delhi, his childhood is reminiscent with interactions and mentorship by Mother Teresa and His Holiness Bishop Paulos Gregorios. Perhaps the first seeds of faith were laid at this time. Also, raised by uncles (P.C. Alexander and P.M. Thomas) who were public servants brought Yakub into the ken of the political and powerful-thus the two worlds of temporal and spiritual spanned the orb of his growing years. Yakub Mathew was never to forget that a delicate balance of human and cosmic forces shapes a life. Schooled in St. Xavier's and St Stephen's College, a typical brand of Indian Christianity contoured by an Indian world view shaped his humanist values, and global perspective. After some world travels, he finally went on to navigate his worldly role as a banker in New York City, abiding also by his inner yearnings. A privileged life has not tainted his wonder of existence or barred his unceasing engagement with subtler mysteries.

The Kumbh till this visit was seared in his memory only as a theatrical event of human drama, but in 2025 it alchemized spiritually into an experiential landmark expressed as, "I was just an insignificant speck of dust on the soap bubble of universe." The riotous burgeoning of sounds and sights around him during the two days were not cacophony but the very pulsations of his own soul; as he dipped into the waters as one of the multitudes, he felt blessed for the opportunity to offer prayers for peace in this turbulent



Yakub Mathew with his book

world.' The mammoth spectacle of humanity and human endeavor brought forth an utterance, "Shakti in Bhakti!" from him, and the Mahakumbh translated into a riveting passage of transformation too deep for words-reaffirming the knowledge that the microcosm and the macrocosm vibrate together: My soul too sang along with the music of the spheres.

A delightful potpourri of profound impressions rooted in personal experience, literary penmanship, academic scholarship, and spiritual insight suffuse the book. The musings uncover multi dimensions of the Mahakumbh from mythic to astronomic by luminaries in various fields such as spirituality, fashion, religion, administration, medicine, journalism, business, politics, theater, academia, sports, film, art, and music.

THE SCINTILLATING WRITERLY ROSTER

The scintillating writerly roster of 55 names includes Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Ayaan Ali Bangash, Kabir Bedi, Harish Parvatheni, Satya Hinduja, Dr. Shashi Tharoor, George Mathew, Lord Meghnad Desai, Rev. Victor Lobo, Rev. Father Thomas V. Kunnukal, Dr. Navin Mehta, Farokh Engineer, Dr. Jagdish Bhagwati, Muzaffar Ali, Didi Krishna Kumari, Rakesh Kaul, Ashi Sonam Choden Dorji, Sadhvi Bhagwati Saraswati, Haji Syed Salman Chisty, Swami Swaroopananda, Anupam Kher, Swami Sarvapriyananda, Dr. Subramanian Swamy, Mokshapriya, Suhel Seth, Yograta Keiko Aikawa, Radhe Jaggi, Barkha Dutt, and Ustad Hidayat Khan.

Even technology played its part in the 2,750 AI driven CCTV cameras monitoring the festivities as we are reminded by Amitabh Kant. Dr. Dinesh Singh creatively interprets the legendary River Saraswati as the flow of humanity itself. Dr. Achintya Moulick brilliantly perceives his surgical work to be his own Mahakumbh-he understands it as another kind of confluence of science and faith where he has witnessed miracles; the 'hospital a temple, every heartbeat a mantra'. Such creative and profound writerly narratives mark the book as a treasure house of fresh insights.

MESSAGE OF UNITY IN DIVERSITY

But the book must not mistakenly be read as a page turner of the famous, high or mighty but rather viewed as the melding of voices to form one voice of homage to capture the mightiest sacred geo-astronomical occurrence in India-which in turn ignites a reexamination of India's role in the world, and her eternal/everlasting (Sanatan) message of unity in diversity.

Even though the tumult has quietened down, millions have returned home and the waters lap on in all those who dipped into the sangam. The pluralistic waters of the Mahakumbh are representative of the eternal seeking for the divine of various religious voices fired by the single current of yearning for the

CONT'D ON PAGE 74

International Day for a World Without Childhood Blindness to Be Commemorated at the House of Lords

JANUARY 23, 2026
LONDON (TIP)

Global leaders from health, policy, philanthropy, and youth movements will gather at the **House of Lords, London**, on **Saturday, January 31, 2026**, to commemorate the **International Day for a World Without Childhood Blindness (IDWWCB)**-a global observance dedicated to eliminating preventable childhood blindness worldwide.

The high-level commemoration marks **49 years of service to children since January 31, 1977**, when the first eye camp was conducted, launching a movement that has since transformed millions of young lives through prevention, treatment, and long-term systems of pediatric eye care across continents.

The event is led by the **Eye Foundation of America (EFA)** in collaboration with global partners and youth leaders, and is hosted at one of the world's most influential legislative institutions-underscoring the importance of integrating childhood vision care into **public health policy, education systems, and global development agendas**.

Childhood blindness remains one of the most preventable public health challenges. With over

90% of learning dependent on vision, unaddressed eye conditions significantly impact educational outcomes, economic opportunity, and lifelong well-being. The International Day aligns with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**, particularly **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being)** and **SDG 4 (Quality Education)**, reinforcing vision care as a critical enabler of equity and human potential.

The global movement was founded by **Dr. V. K. Raju**, an internationally respected ophthalmologist and humanitarian whose work



A World Without Childhood Blindness

spans India, Africa, the United States, and beyond. The commemoration is supported by **Lord Rami Ranger**, Member of the House of Lords and a longstanding advocate for global humanitarian causes.

The January 31 commemoration serves as a unified call to governments, multilateral agencies, corporate leaders, and civil society to accelerate collective action toward a future where no child is blind due to avoidable causes.

(Based on a Press Release)

Global UN Leader Siddharth Chatterjee to Deliver Keynote at House of Lords Commemoration of International Day for a World Without Childhood Blindness

JANUARY 21, 2026
LONDON (TIP)

The House of Lords will host a landmark global commemoration of the International Day for a World Without Childhood Blindness on January 31, 2026, marking 49 years of transformative, on-ground impact by the Eye Foundation of America (EFA) for children since 1977-largely across India and Africa.

Adding exceptional global gravitas to the occasion, Siddharth Chatterjee, United Nations Resident Coordinator in China, will join the commemoration and deliver a high-level keynote address, underscoring childhood blindness as a critical, solvable development challenge at the intersection of health, education, equity, and economic productivity.

Hosted at the House of Lords, the event brings together senior leaders from the United Nations system, global philanthropy, Rotary and Lions leadership, diplomats, policymakers, clinicians, CSR heads, and youth champions-united by a shared commitment to end preventable childhood blindness worldwide.

Mr. Chatterjee's address will highlight the urgency of integrated public health action, scalable partnerships, and outcomes-driven investment-calling for governments, multilaterals, and the private sector to accelerate proven models that protect sight early in life. His participation reflects the growing global consensus that vision is foundational to learning, human capital formation, and inclusive growth.

For nearly five decades, Eye Foundation of America



Siddhartha Chatterjee

The January 31 commemoration also reinforces a global call to action: institutionalize childhood blindness prevention within national health systems and CSR frameworks, and rally the world toward a future where no child is needlessly blind.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR A WORLD WITHOUT CHILDHOOD BLINDNESS

Observed on January 31, the Day mobilizes governments, multilaterals, civil society, and the private sector to advance solutions that eliminate preventable childhood blindness and secure every child's right to sight.

HIGH-LEVEL STATEMENT

Siddharth Chatterjee said
"A world without childhood blindness is not an aspiration-it is an achievable global development goal. When we protect a child's sight, we protect education, dignity, and the future of nations."

DISTINGUISHED GLOBAL PRESENCE

The commemoration at the House of Lords will also witness the presence of senior leaders and representatives from the Commonwealth Secretariat, Lions Clubs International, and Rotary International, reinforcing a powerful, cross-continental coalition committed to eliminating preventable childhood blindness worldwide.





A World Without Childhood Blindness

WHEN VISION BECAME A PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE

49 Years of the Eye Foundation of America
1977 – 2026

Commemoration & Global Launch
of
International Day for a
World Without Childhood Blindness

31 January 2026 | House of Lords | London

From one eye camp in India to a global movement for every child.



A World Without Childhood Blindness



A World Without Childhood Blindness



A World Without Childhood Blindness

Where It All Began

On 31 January 1977, a young ophthalmologist, Dr. V. K. Raju, conducted his first free eye camp in Vijayawada, India.

There were no institutions behind him. No funding pipelines. Only a simple belief: **blindness in children is preventable, treatable, and unacceptable.**

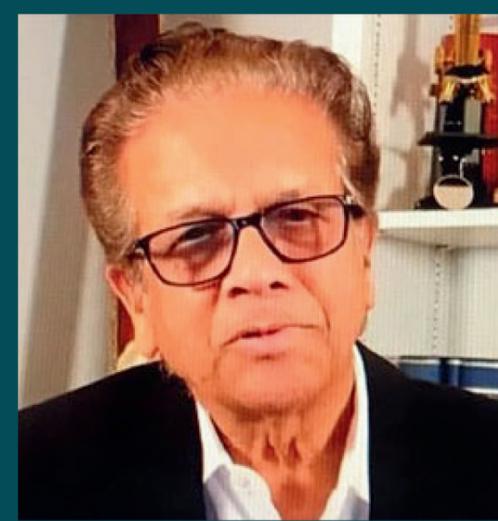
That single act of service became a lifelong mission.

From this beginning emerged the Eye Foundation of America — a global humanitarian movement restoring sight, dignity, education, and opportunity to children across continents.

“ —

“Every child deserves the right to sight. Vision is the gateway to learning, confidence, and opportunity.”

— Dr. V. K. Raju, Founder President





From Service to Systems. From Camps to Countries.

Over four decades, EFA has evolved from individual eye camps into sustainable eye-care ecosystems.

Global Impact Highlights

- Millions of children screened across India, the United States, Africa, Nepal, and underserved regions
- Global leadership in Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) prevention and care
- Low-cost, high-impact interventions with lifelong outcomes
- Integration of public health, education, and equity

Why Childhood Vision Matters

- Over 90% of a child's learning depends on vision
- One treated child changes the future of an entire family
- Vision care remains among the most cost-effective health interventions worldwide





A World Without Childhood Blindness

A Movement Led by Conscience

Dr. V. K. Raju

Founder President – Eye Foundation of America & UK
Global pioneer in childhood blindness prevention

Recognised internationally for his humanitarian leadership, Dr Raju has shaped policies, strengthened institutions, and mobilised partnerships across governments, academia, Rotary, Lions, & civil society.



*This gathering marks not just a commemoration,
but a collective moral commitment.*



A World Without Childhood Blindness

31 January - A Global Call

The International Day for a World Without Childhood Blindness (IDWWCB) is rooted in history — & driven by hope.

Why 31 January?

It marks the day in 1977 when a mission began — a mission proving that no child need be blind because of poverty or geography.

The Movement Aligns With

- SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being
- SDG 4 – Quality Education
- CSR and ESG priorities
- National health systems and global equity frameworks



IDWWCB transforms charity into responsibility — and vision into policy.



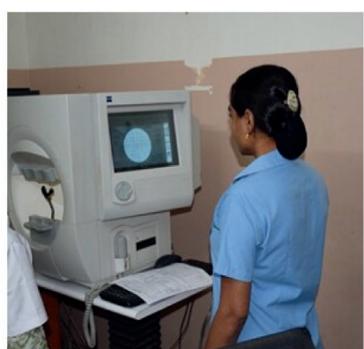
A World Without Childhood Blindness

Serving Children Since 1977

Founded in 1977 by Dr. V. K. Raju, the Eye Foundation of America (EFA) is a global non-profit dedicated to eliminating avoidable childhood blindness.

Guided by the vision of a world where every child has the right to sight, EFA delivers comprehensive eye-care solutions that combine prevention, treatment, education, and research.

Over the past four decades, EFA has served more than four million patients worldwide, performing 400,000+ sight-restoring surgeries, including interventions for over 2,000,000 children. Through sustainable programmes and partnerships, EFA continues to transform lives by restoring vision, dignity, and opportunity.



Join us

Be part of a meaningful moment that brings leaders, partners, and supporters together in shared purpose.

Your presence matters.



A World Without Childhood Blindness

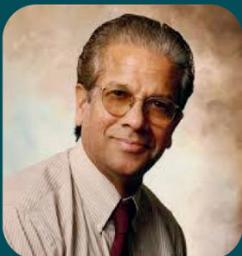
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR WORLD WITHOUT CHILDHOOD BLINDNESS

January 31, 2026

Historic Launch at the House of Lords, UK



Lord Rami Ranger
Parliament UK
Chair IDWWCB



Dr VK Raju
Founder President EFA
Co-Chair IDWWCB



Siddharth Chatterjee
United Nations China



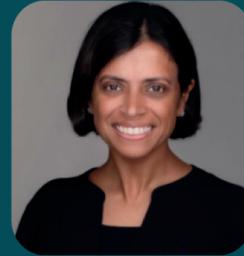
Padma Bhushan
KI Varaprasad Reddy
Patron EFA



Dr. Mukesh Batra,
Padma Shri
Founder-Chairman, Dr
Batra's Healthcare



Sam Maddula
Board Member EFA



Dr Leela V Raju
President EFA

"Alone We Can Do So Little. Together We Can Do So Much" ~Helen Keller



A World Without Childhood Blindness

A World Without Childhood Blindness *Is Possible*

As we gather at the House of Lords, we reaffirm a shared commitment:

- No child blinded by preventable causes
- Vision care embedded within public health systems
- Sight recognised as a birthright, not a privilege

Join the Movement

Governments | CSR Leaders | Foundations | Medical Institutions | Youth |
Global Citizens



#WorldWithoutChildhoodBlindness | #Jan31ForSight

info@eyefoundationofamerica.org



NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY CELEBRATES ITS ANNUAL LUNAR CONCERT IN THE YEAR OF THE HORSE

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

THE YEAR OF THE HORSE will be welcomed and celebrated by New Jersey Symphony (njsymphony.org) with its ninth annual Lunar New Year Celebration on Saturday, February 7, 2026, at 7:30 pm at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) in Newark. Seattle Symphony Associate Conductor Sunny Xia and Van Cliburn International Piano Competition Winner Haochen Zhang make their New Jersey Symphony debuts.

This festive tradition, perfect for families and first-timers, was introduced in 2019 by Music Director Xian Zhang, now in her 10th season with New Jersey Symphony.

This classical music fusion from the East and West features Li Huanzhi's "Spring Festival Overture," Franz Liszt's "Piano Concerto No. 1," Choi Sunghwan's "Arirang Fantasy," the traditional folk song "Hulunbuir Grassland" arranged by Anqi Wang, and Li Shutong's "Farewell Song" arranged by Nicholas Hersh. The performance also includes the "Voices of Spring" waltz by Johann Strauss, Jr., and Georges Bizet's energetic "Farandole" from "L'Arlésienne" and the cheerful children's chorus "Choeur des gamins" from "Carmen."

The concert includes special appearances from Starry Arts Group Children's Chorus, Peking University (PKU) Alumni Chorus, and a performance by the Edison Chinese School Lion Dance Team.

PRE-CONCERT CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Ticket holders are invited to attend a free pre-concert Cultural Exchange Festival in the Prudential Hall lobby featuring performances, artisans, and artifacts from the Shanghai Museum. Gates Open at 6 pm. This event is co-curated by the Shanghai Museum and the Eastern Culture Exchange Association and supported by the Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in New York.

PROGRAM

2026 Lunar New Year Celebration Celebration of the Year of the Horse

Sunny Xia conductor

Haochen Zhang piano

Peking University Alumni Chorus |
Emma Ge Yu, conductor

Starry Arts Group Children's Chorus |
Rebecca Xiaoxing Shen, director

Edison Chinese School Lion Dance Team

New Jersey Symphony

Li Huanzhi Spring Festival Overture

Franz Liszt Piano Concerto No. 1

Choi Sunghwan "Arirang Fantasy"

Traditional / Anqi Wang Hulunbuir Grassland

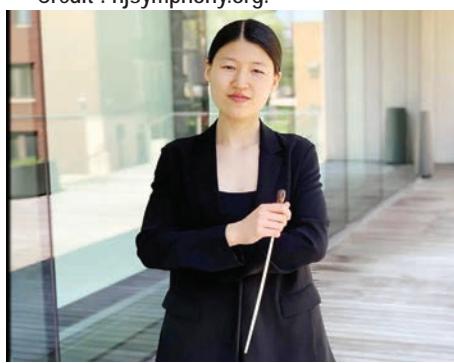
Li Shutong / Nicholas Hersh Farewell at Long Pavilion

Johann Strauss, Jr. Voices of Spring
Georges Bizet "Farandole" from L'Arlésienne

Georges Bizet "Choeur des gamins"



Lunar New Year celebration

-Credit : njsymphony.org.Pianist Haochen Zhang Credit : njsymphony.org.

Music Conductor Sunny Xia.

Credit : njsymphony.org.

from Carmen

Newark - Saturday, Feb 7, 2026, 7:30 pm, New Jersey Performing Arts Center

For the Event page, visit
https://njsymphony.org/program_notes/detail/program-notes---2026-lunar-new-year-celebration

TICKETS

For tickets to the Lunar Year Festival, visit njsymphony.org or 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

SUNNY XIA

Recognized for her innate musicality, compelling presence, and technical precision, conductor Sunny Xuecong Xia forges immediate and captivating connections with orchestras and audiences alike. These qualities have led to engagements across the globe. Xia joined the Seattle Symphony as the Douglas F. King Assistant Conductor at the start of the 2022-23 season and was quickly promoted to Associate Conductor. She leads the orchestra in a wide range of subscription, family, community, and education programs, collaborating with distinguished soloists such as Conrad Tao, Noah Geller, Mahani Teave, and Kerson Leong.

Equally at home in symphonic and contemporary repertoire, Xia has led works by Michael Abels, Katy Abbott, Quinn Mason, Gabriela Ortiz, Gabriella Smith, Tan Dun, and more. She has conducted ensembles such as the Cleveland Institute of Music New Music Ensemble, Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, MusicaNova Orchestra, and Seattle Symphony in dozens of world premieres.

Highlights of the 2025-26 season include subscription and special programs with the Seattle Symphony and this engagement with New Jersey Symphony. Learn more at sunny-xia.com.

HAOCHEN ZHANG

Since his gold medal win at the 13th Van Cliburn International Piano

Paul the Apostle and Carnegie Hall. In February 2019, the PKU Alumni Chorus appeared in New Jersey Symphony's first Lunar New Year concert, making this season its eighth consecutive year of collaboration.

STARRY ARTS GROUP CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Founded in 2015 by violin educator and choir conductor Ms. Rebecca Xiaoxing Shen, the Starry Arts Group Children's Chorus has become an active presence in the community and has earned wide praise for its performances. From 2019 to 2025, the chorus was invited for seven consecutive years to perform with the New Jersey Symphony at its annual Lunar New Year Concert. They also took part in the World Culture Festival in Washington, DC in 2023, and most recently won first prize in the group category at the US finals of the Global Elite Talent Competition.

EDISON CHINESE SCHOOL LION DANCE TEAM

The Edison Chinese School Lion Dance Team was founded in 2014 by Peter Shen with the goal of using lion dance as a cultural ambassador to share Chinese traditions with the community. Combining both dance and martial arts, the team regularly performs at significant events such as Chinese New Year celebrations, National Day, and other important occasions.

The team's coach, David Shen, is a professional dancer and martial artist. He has choreographed many pieces for youth performers, tailoring each to fit the specific event and the needs of the group. The team performs at a variety of venues, including libraries, parks, schools, and senior centers, bringing its rich cultural heritage to diverse audiences.

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

New Jersey Symphony is a GRAMMY and Emmy Award-winning orchestra. Under the direction of Music Director Xian Zhang, the Symphony performs more than 55 mainstage concerts across the state at venues in Newark, Princeton, New Brunswick, Red Bank, and Morristown, as well as at schools and public spaces statewide.

Programming at the Symphony reflects an unwavering commitment to diverse communities throughout the state, while providing students unparalleled opportunities to achieve musical excellence through its Youth Orchestra and other education programs.

In 2024, the Symphony announced it would continue to deliver its statewide activities from a new, permanent office, rehearsal, and concert space in Jersey City, set to open in 2027. For more information about the New Jersey Symphony, visit the website at njsymphony.org.

Connect with NJ Symphony

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

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

SOAK IN THE GIFT OF ENDLESSLY WATCHABLE AND LISTENABLE YO-YO MA

BY MABEL PAIS

"Music, like all of culture, helps us to understand our environment, each other, and ourselves. Culture helps us to imagine a better future. Culture helps turn 'them' into 'us.' And these things have never been more important." - Yo-Yo Ma

"Culture makes us human. It is how we create trust, wonder, faith, belonging. Culture helps us care for one another and for the world we share. It reminds us that nature is part of our humanity and that it contains an imagination greater than our own." - Yo-Yo Ma

"I believe that art, music, and the humanities help us fulfill unwritten contracts. They help us sympathize with the human condition and examine how we relate to one another. They help us receive the wisdom of the past, they help us understand today's problems, and they empower us to imagine a better world." - Yo-Yo Ma

YO-YO MA will give his fans the distinct honor of hearing him perform at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) on Thursday, February 5 at 7:30 P.M.

Technical prowess and emotional depth combine to make Yo-Yo Ma endlessly watchable and listenable. A United Nations Messenger of Peace since 2006, he uses those extraordinary musical gifts to bring people together across nations and cultures, always reinforcing our shared humanity. Despite the grandeur of the venue, this solo performance promises to be particularly intimate, with a curated selection of his favorite pieces.

Watch the video Earth Hymn - Filmed in the shadow of Iceland's Snæfellsnes glacier, "Earth Hymn" is a plea to the world from the edge of a changing planet - youtu.be/HVxoXv0DO8k

Yo-Yo has recorded more than 120 albums, is the winner of 19 Grammy Awards, and has performed for nine American presidents, most recently on the



Yo-Yo Ma in Iceland. -Credit: yo-yoma.com

occasion of President Biden's inauguration. He has received numerous awards, including the National Medal of the Arts, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the Birgit Nilsson Prize. He has been a UN Messenger of Peace since 2006, and was recognized as one of TIME magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2020.

The Washington Post has deemed him "the greatest cellist ever"

"...his forays into the outer limits of the classical repertory (and beyond) continue to refine what is at once his greatest and rarest gift, one recognized long ago by his peers at Juilliard: transcendence." - San Francisco Classical Voice

YO-YO MA - IN CONVERSATION ON LIVING CREATIVELY

In a 2025 audible podcast, Yo-Yo Ma in conversation with guests Jacob Collier, Jeremy Dutcher, Fabiola Gianotti, Jony Ive, Samin Nosrat, Maria Popova speaking of living creatively.

Listen @ <https://smarturl.it/YoYoMa-apple> or @ <https://music.youtube.com/channel/UCHWa5v6bbSxp>

ns7mUfC3e5g

Yo-Yo Ma was in his late forties when he decided he was truly happy being a musician. It was then he realized that he could use the cello to explore the world, to ask what it means to be human and how we can navigate the future together. Now, he has invited six friends to join him in answering these questions, to explore how they came to understand who they are, how they learned to love what they do in life, and how they would like to live in the world.

GUESTS

Musician Jeremy Dutcher, a tenor, anthropologist, and Wolastoqiyik member of the Tobique First Nation in Canada, shares how he listens to the past and sings for the future, carrying cultural wisdom and identity across generations.

Chef and author Samin Nosrat discusses finding joy and authenticity in everyday moments and building meaningful community.

Designer Jony Ive reflects on how we can bridge the concrete and the abstract, technique and intuition, to create work rooted in care for humanity.

Reader and writer Maria Popova talks about the search for meaning, the power of poetry, and the majesty of art and science.

Physicist Fabiola Gianotti, the Director-General of CERN, home to the world's largest and most complex scientific instruments, discusses how to build trust and collaboration in pursuit of the unknown.

Musician Jacob Collier explores how we can transcend technique to create remarkable human connection.

Learn more about Yo-Yo Ma @ yo-yoma.com.

TICKETS

To purchase tickets to see and hear Yo-Yo Ma, visit [NJPAC.org](https://njpac.org) or the NJPAC Box Office at 1 Center Street, Newark, New Jersey or call 888. GO.NJPAC (888.466.5722).

EXPERIENCE RIVETING RHYTHMS, BOLD BEATS, AND DYNAMIC ENERGY FROM DRUMLINE LIVE SHOWCASING THE UNIQUE HBCU EXPERIENCE



DRUMline performers. -Credit: njpac.org.

BY MABEL PAIS

DRUMline Live, international tour, celebrates the marching band tradition of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). They will perform at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) on Sunday, February 8th, at 7 p.m.

This electrifying stage show features riveting rhythms, bold beats, and dynamic energy, showcasing the unique HBCU experience. The performance includes original compositions as well as soul-infused interpretations of popular Top 40 hits.

The audience can expect captivating,

choreographed routines alongside powerful drum riffs and cadences. Get ready for an unforgettable experience filled with pounding percussion, vibrant brass, and dazzling dancers. You'll be tempted to sing and dance along to the catchy songs and rhythms. This eye- and ear-catching celebration is sure to be a hit with everyone!

TICKETS

Tickets for Drumline Live can be purchased by visiting [NJPAC.org](https://njpac.org) or the NJPAC Box Office at 1 Center Street, Newark, New Jersey or calling 888. GO.NJPAC (888.466.5722).

EXPERIENCE POWERFUL STORIES THAT MAKE NEWARK SHINE

BY MABEL PAIS

Lights, camera, Newark!

Come celebrate the powerful stories that make the city of Newark shine. Join the organizers for a special screening of the Newark Reel Stories Challenge finalists' short films, where local filmmakers bring the heart, soul and creativity of Newark to the big screen.

These compelling films — each under seven minutes — capture the real Newark experience through documentary, narrative and experimental storytelling. This year's finalists were challenged to spotlight the South Ward, weaving in its landmarks, streets and neighborhood gems to showcase the authenticity and spirit of the community we call home.

Show up, support local creatives and be inspired by stories rooted in Newark and told by Newark voices. Your presence helps uplift emerging filmmakers and celebrates the vibrant culture of Newark.

PROGRAM

WHAT: NEWARK REEL STORIES CHALLENGE

WHEN: Thursday, January 29, 2026 @ 6:00PM

WHERE: Gant-Gilbert Arts Collective
505 Clinton Avenue, Newark, NJ 07108

RSVP : RSVP is required to attend.
RSVP @



Newark Stories Challenge. -Credit: njpac.org.

<https://njpac.org/event/newark-reel-stories-challenge-film-screening/#register>

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJPAC)

Learn more at njpac.org or 888.GO.NJPAC (888.466.5722)

FOLLOW NJPAC ONLINE:

Website: njpac.org
Twitter: @NJPAC
Instagram: @NJPAC
Hashtag: #NJPAC
Facebook: facebook.com/NJPAC
YouTube: NJPACtv

FOLLOW NJPAC'S STANDING IN SOLIDARITY SERIES ONLINE

Website: njpac.org/takeastand
Hashtag: #NJPACTakeAStand
Youtube: Standing in Solidarity playlist

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



Oscars 2026: Homebound, India's official entry, snubbed; out of Foreign Film race

Homebound has missed out on a nomination in the Best International Feature Film category at the 2026 Oscars. The last film from India that made it to the Oscars nominations was Aamir Khan's Lagaan, back in 2002.

The films nominated in this category are The Secret Agent (Brazil); It Was Just an Accident (France); Sentimental Value (Norway); Sirat (Spain); The Voice of Hind Rajab (Tunisia).

Produced by Dharma Productions' Karan Johar, Apoorva Mehta and Adar Poonawalla, Homebound is based on a New York Times article by Basharat Peer, which was published in 2020. The film follows the story of two friends – Shoaib and Chandan – who come from oppressed backgrounds, and struggle to make their place in a society that is plagued by discrimination on a systemic level. The story follows them through the COVID-19 lockdown when they lose their livelihood and are left in a lurch, finding ways to come back home.

In the past, Indian films that have had Oscar campaigns, have spoken about the expenses associated with such campaigns. Karan, in an earlier chat with Peeping Moon, said that funding an Oscar campaign was a “bottomless pit” and an “uphill task” as they don’t know the end result. “You have to employ publicists and travel and make noise and do media abroad and screenings abroad. But Adar said Karan, this is a great opportunity and a great film, let’s do everything in our capacity. Let’s not think of profit and loss on this one. Let’s think of passion over any monetary benefit. That’s what we did. It is not a money making exercise for us. It is about credibility, we will do other films for survival, but Homebound was always a passion project. There is no monetary game in that film,” he said.

A few months ago, journalist-turned-author Puja Changoiwala initiated legal action against Homebound alleging that the makers had plagiarised her 2021 novel of the same name. Dharma Productions responded to her allegations and called them “baseless and unfounded.” “The allegations of copyright infringement are baseless and unfounded, and Dharma Productions categorically denies the same. Homebound is an officially licensed adaptation inspired by the New York Times article by Basharat Peer, with all requisite rights lawfully acquired and due credit duly provided,” they told HT.

Border 2 isn't a bad film, just not the Border we remember

Border 2 is a likeable film, but you can't quite love it. At three hours and 19 minutes, it stretches itself thin in places, asking for patience even when its intentions are sincere. It isn't careless, and not lazy either. But when a film carries a title as loaded as Border, effort alone doesn't suffice. Legacy demands something else entirely.

JP Dutta's Border (1997) was more than a war film, it was an emotional memory shared across generations. It arrived at a time when watching a film meant sitting in front of a bulky television set. The film allowed the battlefield to declare its patriotism. Its emotions rose organically from dust, fear, camaraderie and loss. Nearly three decades later, Border 2 inherits that memory, and struggles under its weight.

Sunny Deol remains the clearest bridge between the two films. At 68, his physicality is striking, his command unchanged. Whether in hand combat or scenes showcasing grief, he understands the grammar of this universe instinctively. In many ways, he carries the film on his shoulders, just as he did in 1997. But this time, he often stands alone.

Diljit Dosanjh offers solid support, bringing sincerity and restraint to his part. Varun Dhawan and Ahan Shetty are competent, serviceable, but not commanding. In a film so sharply shaped by memory, performances which are just fine feel insufficient. The original Border elevated its ensemble, making each soldier look like an inevitable force. Here, that collective force is missing. Legacy seems like a solitary act.

One of the film's biggest shortcomings lies in its music. The new soundtrack fails to leave a lasting impression. The emotional recall comes almost entirely from the original album: Sandese Aate Hain, Toh Chalo – songs that already carry decades of feeling within them. As beautiful and enduring as Sandese Aate Hain remains, it doesn't land the same way here. In fact, the scenes leading up to it feel designed to accommodate the song, not grow into it. The



dependence exposes the film's emotional gaps.

In Border 2, the narrative spends more time on personal lives and emotional backstories than on sustained battle sequences. The film is built around four major confrontations from the 1971 India-Pakistan war: Operation Changez Khan in the air, the Battle of Munawar Tawi in Jammu and Kashmir, the Battle of Basantar, and the INS Khukri naval battle. Four powerful stories, four leaders, immense real-life loss and valour. The intention to do justice to all of them is clear. But intention alone doesn't translate into immersion.

For a film of this length, the battle sequences feel fleeting, leaving you wanting more – an odd feeling for a war drama stretched across over three hours. The original Border made the battlefield feel intimate. Border 2 makes you aware of its scale, but rarely allows you to understand its depth.

Dhurandhar 2 brings back Vicky Kaushal as Major Vihaan Shergill of Uri: Report

Rumors of Akshaye Khanna having a fullfledged role in Dhurandhar 2 as Rahman Dakait could be untrue, but an emerging report suggests that Vicky Kaushal is all set to join the cast of Aditya Dhar's Dhurandhar 2 in an extended cameo. The actor will reportedly play Major Vihaan Shergill, his character from Dhar's 2019 blockbuster, Uri: The Surgical Strike.

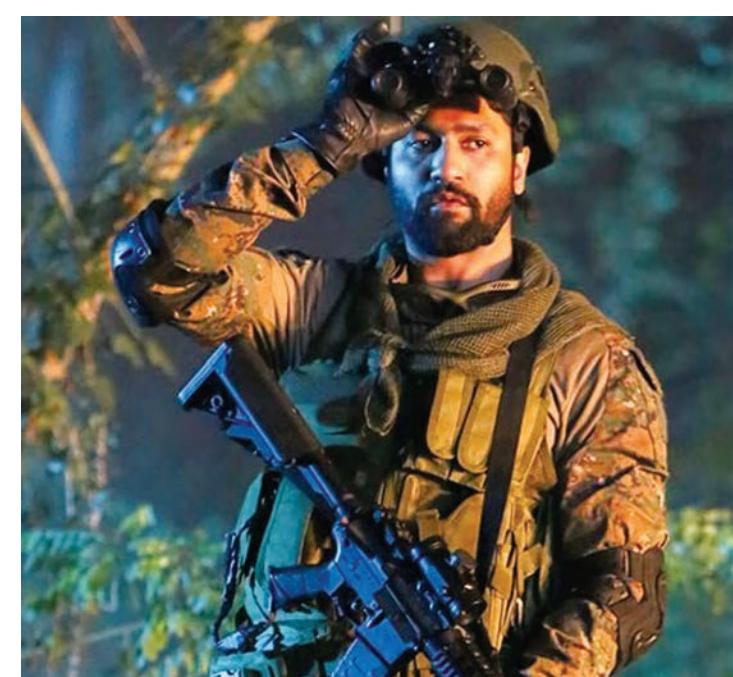
Industry sources say the entry of Vicky Kaushal's Major Vihaan Shergill in the world of Dhurandhar indicates a larger spy universe in the making, which will unite characters from Uri with those of the Ranveer Singh-starrer Dhurandhar.

“Aditya has been tightlipped about the star power he is adding to Dhurandhar 2. The director, who plans to build the Dhurandhar universe, has smartly woven in a track from Uri despite the difference in the two stories' timelines,” a source says, according to an unconfirmed report in Mid-Day.

Uri: The Surgical Strike is based on real incidents of September 2016, when the Indian Army crushed an attempted attack by a group of militants near the town of Uri. Vicky's character, Major Vihaan Shergill, leads the Indian military charge in the film that earned over Rs 341 crore against a budget of around Rs 42 crore upon release in January 2019.

Speaking about the possible presence of Vicky Kaushal's Uri character in Dhurandhar 2, the source says, “It remains unclear whether he and Ranveer's character cross paths,” adding: “The cameo includes a few action blocks.”

The possibility of Vicky Kaushal's presence in Dhurandhar 2 got a boost when a fan theory went viral on social media, stating that Uri had references that hinted at such a



connection.

In Dhurandhar, Ranveer Singh plays an Indian agent by the name of Hamza Ali Mazari who arrives in Karachi's notorious Lyari area to gather intelligence data for India. After a tense build-up sees Hamza witness the planning of execution of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, his name is revealed to be Jaskirat Singh Rangi at the end of the film.

Scarlett Johansson, Cate Blanchett join anti-AI push: Stealing our work is theft

Actors Scarlett Johansson, Cate Blanchett and Joseph Gordon-Levitt have united behind a new anti-AI campaign calling out the tech companies exploiting copyrighted work without permission. The campaign, comprising 700 artists, writers and creators, argues that "Stealing our work is not innovation. It's not progress. It's theft – plain and simple."

Johansson, Blanchett, and Gordon-Levitt are among the many artists emphasising that the battle for authorship safeguards both their personal rights and the broader US creative industry. This sector, which includes television, film, music, digital media, and publishing, "supports millions of jobs, fuels economic growth and projects cultural power globally," the statement read, as reported by Variety. That creative ecosystem faces a serious threat from AI developers who harvest original work. This process frequently occurs without the creators' permission, fair payment, or any level of clear transparency regarding how the data is being utilised.

"America's creative community is the envy of the world. But rather than respect and protect this valuable asset, some of the biggest tech companies – many backed by private equity and other funders – are using American creators' work to build AI platforms without regard for copyright law," the statement emphasises.

The initiative encourages organisations to establish formal content agreements or strategic partnerships, following the precedent set by several firms that have already adopted this collaborative approach. "A better way exists. It is possible to have it all. We can have advanced, rapidly developing AI and ensure creators'



rights are respected," the statement highlights.

Johansson has long been a prominent voice against the risks of artificial intelligence, actively resisting the unauthorised use of her image for years. In early 2024, she publicly denounced a viral clip that featured an AI-generated version of herself seemingly protesting anti-semitic remarks made by Kanye West. Her legal battles continued in late 2023 when she sued an AI application for utilising her name and appearance in digital ads without consent.

Additionally, in May 2024, the actor criticised OpenAI for basing their GPT-4o "Sky" voice on her performance in the 2013 film *Her* directed by Spike Jonze. The 41-year-old was last seen in the science-fiction action film *Jurassic World: Rebirth*.



Blanchett has also stressed the subject multiple times, most notably during the 2024 Toronto International Film Festival. While speaking with TIFF CEO Cameron Bailey, she emphasised the necessity of debating emerging technologies. She warned that society must approach these advancements with extreme care, noting that "innovation without imagination is a very, very dangerous thing."

In 2025, Blanchett and Levitt joined a coalition of 400 industry leaders—including actors, writers, musicians, and filmmakers—in signing an open letter to the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy. The group urged the Trump administration to uphold existing copyright laws and resist pressure from AI firms seeking to diminish these essential protections.

Elle: Reese Witherspoon's Legally Blonde prequel to release in July

Prime Video has announced that *Elle*, the prequel series to the *Legally Blonde* franchise, will premiere on July 1. The streamer has also confirmed that the show has been renewed for a second season, with production scheduled to begin in the spring.

The series is set during Elle Woods' high school years and explores the experiences that shaped her personality and ambitions before the events of the 2001 film. According to the official description, *Elle* "follows Elle Woods (Lexi Minetree) in high school as we learn about the life experiences that shaped her into the iconic young woman we came to know and love in the first *Legally Blonde* film."

Reese Witherspoon, who played Elle Woods in the original films and serves as an executive producer on the series, said the project offers a meaningful extension of the franchise. "Twenty-five years after the world met Elle Woods for the first time, it's a dream come true to share the story of how she became the unstoppable force we all fell in love with," Witherspoon said. She also praised lead actor Lexi Minetree, adding, "Discovering Lexi Minetree and watching her step into Elle's fabulous shoes has been one of the most gratifying experiences of my career."



Sony executives call Blake Lively terrorist, slam haircare launch

Internal emails from Sony Pictures, revealed through unsealed court documents, show senior studio executives privately criticising Blake Lively during the *It Ends With Us* controversy, even as the company publicly expressed support for the actor.

As reported by People, the emails include remarks from Sanford Panitch, president of Sony Pictures Motion Picture Group, who questioned Lively's future in Hollywood despite the film's commercial success. In one email, Panitch wrote that it was "quite ironic" that Lively had a film headed towards \$300 million at the global box office but "probably will never work again, or not for a while."

While another Sony executive suggested that public backlash would eventually subside, Panitch disagreed, stating, "She is done for. At least for a while. It's cooked." He attributed the backlash to Lively's own actions, writing, "She did it to herself."

Panitch also criticised Lively for failing to protect "the show", calling it a departure from established

industry norms. He further took issue with the timing of Lively's haircare brand launch, Blake Brown, which coincided with the controversy surrounding the film. Describing the move as "epic-level stupid", Panitch suggested it worsened the situation. A source, however, said the launch had been scheduled with retail partner Target months in advance, before production delays caused the overlap.

Sony chairman Tom Rothman also expressed concern in internal communications, describing the situation as "a f***ing disaster." He wrote that the focus had shifted away from questions of right or wrong, adding, "The mess is the story now, and it will define the film."

Additionally, he also said in an email that the actor "has so much – looks, money, fame, hunk husband, kids – that the instinct of the crowd is to tear her down. Like what happened to Anne Hathaway, and neither of them deserve it, even though she did bring it on herself by refusing to listen to advice, and by selling her products."



Iran denies Trump's claim that Tehran halted execution of 800 prisoners

Iran's top prosecutor has vehemently denied U.S. President Donald Trump's claim that his intervention halted the execution of 800 people detained in the nationwide protests, dismissing the comments as "completely false." The denial casts further doubt on the possibility of mass executions over the protests, even as officials confirm that some detainees face death penalty charges.

Mohammad Movahedi, quoted by the news agency of Iran's judiciary, Mizan, said, "This claim is completely false; no such number exists, nor has the judiciary made any such decision." The strong rebuttal comes as Trump has warned that mass executions and the killing of peaceful protesters are both red lines for a possible U.S. military strike on Iran.

Meanwhile, activists have revealed that the toll in Iran's bloody crackdown on nationwide protests has reached a staggering 5,000 people killed, with fears that many more have lost their lives as the most comprehensive internet blackout in the country's history crosses the two-week mark. The ongoing challenge in obtaining information from Iran persists due to authorities cutting off internet access on Jan. 8.

As the situation in Iran remains volatile, tensions between the United States and the Islamic Republic continue to escalate. An American aircraft carrier group is moving closer to the Middle East, a force that U.S. President Donald Trump described as an "armada" in comments to journalists late Thursday, January 22.

Toll in Iran's protest crackdown reaches at least 5,002 dead as Trump says US 'armada' approaching

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (TIP)

The toll in Iran's bloody crackdown on nationwide protests has reached at least 5,002 people killed, activists said Friday, January 23, warning many more were feared dead as the most comprehensive internet blackout in the country's history crossed the two-week mark.

The challenge in getting information out of Iran persists due to authorities cutting off access to the internet on Jan. 8, even as tensions rise between the United States and Iran as an American aircraft carrier group moves closer to the Middle East — a force U.S. President Donald Trump likened to an "armada" in comments to journalists late Thursday.

The U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency offered the death toll, saying 4,716 were demonstrators, 203 were government-affiliated, 43 were children and 40 were civilians not taking part in the protests. It added that more than 26,800 people had been detained in a widening arrest campaign by authorities.

The group's figures have been accurate in previous unrest in Iran and rely on a network of activists in Iran to verify deaths. That death toll exceeds that of any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades, and recalls the chaos surrounding Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iran's government offered its first death toll Wednesday, saying 3,117



people were killed. It added that 2,427 of the dead in the demonstrations that began Dec. 28 were civilians and security forces, with the rest being "terrorists." Iran's theocracy in the past has undercounted or not reported fatalities from unrest.

The Associated Press has been unable to independently assess the death toll, in part due to authorities cutting access to the internet and blocking international calls into the country. Iran also reportedly has limited journalists' ability locally to report on the aftermath, instead repeatedly airing claims on state television that refer to demonstrators as "rioters" motivated by America and Israel, without offering evidence to support the allegation.

The new toll comes as tensions remain high over Trump laying down two red lines over the protests — the killing of peaceful demonstrators and Tehran conducting mass executions. Iran's attorney general and others have called some of those being held "mohareb" — or "enemies of God." That charge carries the death penalty.

It had been used along with others to carry out mass executions in 1988 that reportedly killed at least 5,000 people.

The U.S. military meanwhile has moved more military assets toward the Mideast, including the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and associated warships traveling with it from the South China Sea.

A U.S. Navy official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military movements, said Thursday that the Lincoln strike group is currently in the Indian Ocean.

Trump said Thursday aboard Air Force One that the U.S. is moving the ships toward Iran "just in case" he wants to take action.

"We have a massive fleet heading in that direction and maybe we won't have to use it," Trump said.

Trump also mentioned the multiple rounds of talks American officials had with Iran over its nuclear program prior to Israel launching a 12-day war against the Islamic Republic in June, which saw U.S. warplanes bomb Iranian nuclear sites. He threatened Iran with military action that would make earlier U.S. strikes against its uranium enrichment sites "look like peanuts."

"They should have made a deal before we hit them," Trump added.

The United Kingdom's Defense Ministry separately said its joint Eurofighter Typhoon fighter jet squadron with Qatar, 12 Squadron, "deployed to the (Persian) Gulf for defensive purposes noting regional tensions."

Denmark PM goes to Greenland in show of support amid Trump crisis

NUUK (TIP)

Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen visited Greenland on Friday, January 23, in a show of support for the Arctic island that U.S. President Donald Trump wants to annex.

Walking off her plane at the airport in Greenland's capital Nuuk, Frederiksen was greeted by Greenlandic Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen. The two were seen embracing on the tarmac before driving away.

Frederiksen flew straight to Nuuk from Brussels after meeting with NATO chief Mark Rutte earlier in the day to discuss how the military alliance can boost security in the wider Arctic region.

Greenland is an autonomous territory of the Danish kingdom. The two governments say the island is not for sale and its sovereignty is not up for discussion, but they are open to talks on other topics, such as security and economic development.

"We are preparing the next steps," Frederiksen told reporters while walking alongside Nielsen in central Nuuk. "I'm first and foremost here to show our strong support for Greenland's people as a difficult time."

Trump said on Thursday, Jan 22, he had secured total and permanent U.S. access to Greenland after talks with



Rutte, who said allies would have to step up efforts to ward off threats from Russia and China. The U.S. military is already permitted wide access to Greenland under treaties, although Washington has scaled back its presence there since the Cold War to a single small base.

The island's future has prompted a crisis in transatlantic relations after Trump demanded Greenland become U.S. territory, refused to rule out military force to obtain it and announced new tariffs on

European countries that objected.

The crisis subsided after he lifted the threat to use force on Wednesday and withdrew the proposed tariffs on Thursday.

"We agree that NATO must increase its engagement in the Arctic. Defence and security in the Arctic is a matter for the entire alliance," Frederiksen said in a social media post, along with a photo of herself and Rutte in Brussels.

Rutte said he was working with the Danish leader to enhance deterrence and defence.

Denmark's foreign minister said on Friday that diplomats from Denmark and the United States had met in Washington on Thursday, establishing a plan for how to proceed.

"We will not communicate when those (future) meetings are, because what is needed now is to take the drama out of this... we need a calm process," Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said.

A source familiar with the matter said Rutte and Trump had agreed on further talks between the U.S., Denmark and Greenland on updating a 1951 agreement that governs U.S. military access and presence on the Arctic island.



EU has 'serious doubts' about Trump's 'Board of Peace'

European leaders have serious doubts about the scope of President Donald Trump's "Board of Peace" but are ready to work with the United States and the newly founded body in Gaza, EU chief Antonio Costa said Friday, January 23.

"We have serious doubts about a number of elements in the charter of the Board of Peace related to its scope, its governance and its compatibility with the UN Charter," the European Council president said after an EU leaders' summit in Brussels.

"We are ready to work together with the US on the implementation of the comprehensive Peace Plan for Gaza, with a Board of Peace carrying out its mission as a transitional administration".

The founding charter of Trump's body for resolving international conflicts has a \$1 billion price tag for permanent membership.

Although originally meant to oversee Gaza's rebuilding, the board's charter does not seem to limit its role to the Palestinian territory and appears to want to rival the United Nations.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez told reporters after the summit that his country had "declined" the invitation to participate in the body.

Police seek man wanted in fatal shootings of 3 in small Australian town

Police urged people in a small Australian town to stay indoors Friday as they looked for the man suspected of killing three people in a domestic violence-related shooting.

Julian Ingram, 37, was out on bail after being charged with domestic violence-related crimes, and a restraining order had been issued in December to protect one of the victims in Thursday's shooting, Sophie Quinn, who was 25 and pregnant.

The others shot to death in the isolated town of Lake Cargelligo in New South Wales state were Quinn's friend, John Harris, 32, and her aunt, Nerida Quinn, 50. A 19-year-old man who also was shot was hospitalized in serious but stable condition.

Ingram had a long criminal history including domestic violence and police had checked on him multiple times while he was out on bail, state Police Assistant Commissioner Andrew Holland said.

Ukraine-Russia-US hold talks in Abu Dhabi with territory as key issue

UAE (TIP)

Ukrainian and Russian negotiators held talks in the United Arab Emirates, with the key issue of territory dominating the agenda as the United States pushes for an agreement to end the nearly four-year war.

The discussions in Abu Dhabi on Friday were the first direct public negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv on a plan being pushed by US President Donald Trump's administration to end the conflict.

"The talks commenced today in Abu Dhabi and are scheduled to continue over two days, as part of ongoing efforts to promote dialogue and identify political solutions to the crisis," the UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said territorial disputes would be a central issue in the discussions but stressed that "the most important thing is that Russia should be ready to end this war, which it started".

In a statement shared on Telegram, Zelenskyy said he was in regular contact with the Ukrainian delegation, but it was too early to draw conclusions from Friday's talks.

"We'll see how the conversation goes tomorrow and what the outcome will be," he said.

The discussions in the Emirati capital came a day after Zelenskyy met with Trump at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland – and hours after US envoy Steve Witkoff held late-night talks with Russian leader Vladimir Putin at the



Kremlin. Reporting from the Russian capital Moscow, Al Jazeera's Yulia Shapovalova said the talks between Putin and Witkoff lasted nearly four hours but did not resolve the main sticking points to reaching a deal – namely, territorial disputes and security guarantees.

"Russia demands that the Ukrainian army leave the Donbas region, which is unacceptable to Ukraine," Shapovalova explained.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday that Russia's insistence on Ukraine yielding all of Donbas – including the 20 percent of Donetsk which is still under Ukrainian control – was "a very important condition".

Kremlin foreign affairs adviser Yury Ushakov, who participated in Putin's meeting with Witkoff, also said "it was

reaffirmed that reaching a long-term settlement can't be expected without solving the territorial issue".

Meanwhile, Russia's state-run TASS news agency reported that the discussions in Abu Dhabi included possible buffer zones and monitoring mechanisms.

For its part, Ukraine has demanded security guarantees from its Western allies, including the US, should a deal to end the war be signed, in order to deter Russia from invading again.

Ukrainians have faced widespread power outages this winter as Russian attacks on the capital Kyiv and other parts of the country target energy infrastructure, leaving thousands of families struggling to stay warm in freezing temperatures.

Xi urges 'central role' of UN in call with Lula

BEIJING (TIP)

Chinese President Xi Jinping called on countries to protect the "central role" of the United Nations in international affairs, urging his Brazilian counterpart on Friday to help safeguard international norms, state media reported.

The comments come after US President Donald Trump unveiled plans for his new "Board of Peace" at the World Economic Forum.

Although originally meant to oversee Gaza's rebuilding, the board's charter does not seem to limit its role to the Palestinian territory and has sparked concerns Trump wants to rival the United Nations.

While China and Brazil have both been invited to join Trump's new grouping, neither has confirmed participation.

Xi told President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva during their Friday morning phone call that in the current "tumultuous" international situation, China and Brazil "are constructive forces in maintaining world peace and stability," according to a readout



published by state broadcaster CCTV.

"They should stand firmly on the right side of history... and jointly uphold the central role of the United Nations and international fairness and justice," Xi said.

European leaders have expressed doubts over Trump's norm-busting proposal, with some viewing it as an attempt to potentially sideline or even replace the United Nations.

While in Davos, Switzerland, Trump said that once complete, the board "can do pretty much whatever we want," while adding that "we'll do it in conjunction with the United Nations."

Beijing's foreign ministry said on Wednesday that "no matter how the international situation changes, China

firmly upholds the international system with the United Nations at its core."

Brazil has also expressed skepticism about the Board of Peace, saying it could represent "a revocation" of the United Nations. Lula's special adviser Celso Amorim told Brazilian media that "we cannot consider a reform of the UN made by one country."

During Trump's global tariff onslaught last year, China and Brazil sought to present their countries as staunch defenders of the multilateral trading system.

Xi told Lula in August they could set an example of "self-reliance" for emerging powers.

China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, engages with the international body even as it has objected to what it terms internal interference. Advocacy groups like Human Rights Watch have accused China of seeking to undermine the United Nations by reducing contributions to the organization's rights budgets, establishing an alternative international mediation body and blocking activists from UN events.

India to bring back diplomats' families In Bangladesh amid security concerns

India has decided to withdraw the families and dependents of Indian officials posted in Bangladesh amid the security concerns following the increasing activities of extremist elements in the country.

The move comes weeks before parliamentary elections are to be held in Bangladesh.

"Given the security situation, as a precautionary measure, we have advised the dependents of our officials in the high commission and other posts to return to India," sources said. They further clarified that the mission and all posts in Bangladesh continue to remain open and operational.

A "non-family" posting is one of the most stringent security measures. These are generally imposed in a country or location deemed unstable or hazardous.

There is no clarity on when the families of the officials are expected to withdraw and whether they will return to India.

Apart from the high commission in Dhaka, India has diplomatic posts in Chattogram, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Sylhet.

India-Bangladesh relations have been strained ever since the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus came to power in 2024, following the collapse of the Sheikh Hasina regime. Both sides have increased security at their missions amid recent protests. Violence against Hindus in Bangladesh has also seen a spike ever since the death of student leader Sharif Osman Hadi on December 12.

India raised concerns over the violence and called on Bangladesh to firmly deal with communal incidents in the country.

"We continue to witness a disturbing pattern of recurring attacks on minorities as well as their homes and businesses by extremists," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

New Delhi highlighted the "troubling tendency" of Bangladesh to attribute such violence to personal rivalries, political differences, or extraneous reasons. Flagging this, Jaiswal said that "such disregard only emboldens the perpetrators" and further causes fear and insecurity among minorities. "We have repeatedly addressed this issue in earlier briefings and continue to see a disturbing pattern of recurring attacks on minorities, their homes, and businesses by extremists in Bangladesh," he added.

Motherland bleeding: Hasina seeks ouster of Yunus-led govt

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Bangladesh's ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Friday, January 23, warned that her country faces the threat of its territory and resources being "bartered away" to foreign interests, and called on citizens to unite and overthrow the interim government led by Mohammad Yunus.

In a veiled reference to growing foreign influence, including from the US, China and Pakistan, Hasina said, "Dangerously, there is a treacherous plot to barter away the territory and resources of Bangladesh to foreign interests."

Her recorded audio message, delivered in English, was played at an event titled 'Save Democracy in Bangladesh' in New Delhi. Invoking the 1971 Liberation War, she exhorted supporters to "overthrow the foreign-serving puppet regime of Yunus". Hasina, who was removed from power following mass protests in August 2024, accused Yunus of being a "murderous fascist, money launderer, plunderer and a corrupt, power-hungry traitor" who has "bled the nation dry".

She alleged that under the Yunus administration, violence, torture and sexual assault against women had gone unchecked, religious minorities faced persecution and "mob terror, mass looting, armed robbery and extortion" had become widespread — referring in particular to recent targeted attacks on the Hindu community.

"Bangladesh today stands at the edge of an abyss, battered and bleeding, navigating one of the most perilous chapters in its history," Hasina said,



describing recent developments as a "monstrous onslaught" by extremist communal forces and foreign perpetrators that had trampled the rights of women and minorities.

Calling the country "a vast prison, an execution ground and a valley of death," she accused Yunus of orchestrating her ouster through a "meticulously engineered conspiracy".

Hasina said Yunus' "false promises" had been replaced by chaos, violence, hatred and corruption. Elections are scheduled for February 12, though the Awami League has been barred from contesting. She issued a five-point call: removal of the "illegal" Yunus administration to restore democracy; an end to street violence; guarantees for the safety of religious minorities, women and vulnerable groups; an end to politically motivated legal action against journalists and opposition members; and a UN-led impartial investigation into events of the past year.

5 killed, 10 injured in suicide blast at wedding in Pakistan

At least five people were killed and ten injured in a suicide blast during wedding celebrations at the residence of a peace committee member in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Friday, January 23, night.

District Police Officer Dera Ismail Khan district, Sajjad Ahmed Sahibzada, confirmed that it was a suicide bombing that occurred during a wedding celebration at the residence of the peace committee chief Noor Alam Mehsud near Qureshi marr.

The guests were reportedly dancing when the attack happened. The blast caused the room's roof to collapse, hampering rescue operations and making it difficult to reach those trapped under the debris.

An emergency had been declared at the District Headquarter Hospital.

In a statement, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rescue 1122 spokesperson Bilal Ahmed Faizi said five bodies and 10 injured had been taken to the hospital.

He said that seven ambulances, a fire vehicle and a disaster vehicle reached the site of the incident soon after it was reported, adding that a rescue operation was underway.

Authorities cordoned off the area and launched an investigation into the incident. Initial reports said peace committee leader Waheedullah Mehsud, alias Jigri Mehsud, was among the dead.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi strongly condemned the blast and sought a report from the KP inspector general of police. He said that those responsible would be brought to justice.

Earlier this month, armed assailants had killed four members of a peace committee in KP's Bannu district.

Indus Waters Treaty suspension created unprecedented crisis: Pak envoy at UN

UNITED NATIONS (TIP)

Pakistan has sought to project India's decision to hold the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in abeyance as an "unprecedented crisis" for its water security, raising the issue at the United Nations months after New Delhi took the step in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack carried out by Pakistan-backed terrorists.

Addressing the Global Water Bankruptcy Policy Roundtable at the UN, Pakistan's Acting Permanent Representative Ambassador Usman Jadoon said India's decision last April to put the 1960 treaty in abeyance had impacted downstream water security and regional stability.

India had announced the move following the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 civilians, triggering a series of diplomatic and strategic measures against Pakistan.



The decision to suspend participation in the decades-old treaty was framed by New Delhi as part of a broader response to cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan. In his statement, Jadoon claimed that India's action, followed by what he described as disruptions in downstream flows and withholding of hydrological data, had created a crisis for Pakistan's water security. He asserted that the treaty remained legally intact and did not permit unilateral suspension, while accusing India of "weaponising" water.

Indian officials have underlined that the Indus Waters Treaty cannot be insulated from sustained acts of terrorism and hostile conduct, and that the April decision followed years of Pakistan's refusal to address India's concerns, even as New Delhi remained bound by a treaty that allocates a disproportionate share of waters to Pakistan.

Signed in 1960, the IWT allocates the western rivers — Indus, Jhelum and Chenab — to Pakistan and the eastern rivers — Ravi, Beas and Sutlej — to India, while allowing each side specified uses of rivers allocated to the other. Under the treaty framework, India is entitled to about 20 per cent of the waters of the Indus River System, with the remaining 80 per cent flowing to Pakistan.

Source: TNS

Whipped to perfection: Butter face masks for soft, radiant skin

In the world of skincare, sometimes the most effective solutions are also the most indulgent. Rich, creamy, and deeply nourishing, natural butters have quietly emerged as skincare superstars. Long used in traditional beauty rituals across Africa, Asia, and the tropics, butters like shea, cocoa, mango, and kokum are now finding their rightful place in modern face masks—offering intense hydration, repair, and a healthy glow.

You need

Making a butter face mask at home is a very simple process. All you need is some unsalted butter, banana, rosewater, and cucumber. In this article, we'll learn to prepare three different variations of the butter face mask using only these above-mentioned ingredients, right at the comfort of your home. The butter face mask is simply one of the best beauty care products you can easily accomplish at home with very little effort and it is also very beneficial for the skin at the same time. So, gather up all of the ingredients, and let's get going.

First Variation

To prepare the mask, you will need some unsalted milk and a banana. Peel off the banana and throw it in a bowl, then, mash the banana until it turns into something semi-liquid. Once it turns semi-liquid, heat some unsalted butter in a pan on medium to high flame and pour the melted butter into the bowl.

Mix both the ingredients well, the banana liquid and butter mixture should blend thoroughly. Leave the mixture and the bowl aside and let it rest for 10 minutes, and that's it. Our banana butter face mask is now ready.

Second Variation

To prepare this mask, we'll need some rosewater and our main ingredient, unsalted butter. Add both of them to a bowl, melt the butter before adding. Stir both of the ingredients properly until it turns into a thick paste. Once you achieve a thick paste-like substance, you're done. Your rosewater butter face mask is ready for facial application.

Third Variation

Now, for our third and last butter face mask variation recipe of this article, you will need cucumber alongside unsalted butter. Before adding both of them in a bowl,



we need to attain these in a liquid form first. In order to do so, cut the cucumber into 12-13 equal small pieces and add them into a juicer. Crush them until cucumber juice is produced. For the butter, simply heat it on a low flame and there you have some melted butter. Now, add both cucumber juice and melted butter in a bowl and mix them properly. Leave the mixture aside and let it rest for about 20-30 minutes. There you go, you have successfully prepared your cucumber juice butter face mask.

Application

In order to apply a butter face mask, first, make sure that you wash your face well before the application. Dry it up using a towel, leaving no water on your face. Now, with the help of a cosmetic brush, apply the face mask all over your face. Let it sit for about 15-20 minutes at least. Once it dries up, clean your face using cold water and apply some moisturiser afterward.

FOOD CORNER

Gajar Ka Halwa

Ingredients

Carrots - 1 kg (preferably red, juicy carrots)
Full-fat milk - 1 liter
Sugar - 200-250 g (adjust to taste)
Ghee (clarified butter) - 4-5 tbsp
Cardamom powder - 1 tsp
Nuts & dry fruits - 2-3 tbsp chopped almonds, cashews, pistachios, raisins
Optional - saffron strands for aroma and richness

Prepare the Carrots

- Wash and peel the carrots thoroughly. Grate them finely using a box grater or food processor. The finer the grate, the softer and creamier the halwa.

Cook the Carrots

- In a heavy-bottomed pan or kadhai, pour full-fat milk and bring it to a boil.
- Add the grated carrots and reduce the flame to medium. Let the mixture simmer, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.
- Cook until the milk reduces significantly, almost evaporating. This usually takes 30-40 minutes.

Add Ghee and Sugar

- Once the milk is almost absorbed, add ghee and mix well. Add sugar gradually. The mixture will release some water again as sugar melts. Continue cooking on low flame. Keep stirring frequently to prevent the halwa from sticking to the pan or burning.

Add Flavorings

- Sprinkle cardamom powder over the mixture for aroma. Optionally, soak a few saffron strands in a tablespoon of warm milk and add for a rich color and flavor.



When love fades: Understanding why marriages end

Marriage is often entered with hope, commitment, and the belief that love will endure. Yet for many couples, the journey takes unexpected turns. The decision to end a marriage is rarely sudden; it is usually the result of emotional distance, unresolved issues, and changing life realities that accumulate over time. Understanding the common reasons behind marital breakdown offers insight—not blame—into why relationships sometimes reach a breaking point.

Communication Breakdown

At the heart of most troubled marriages lies poor communication. When couples stop expressing their feelings honestly or listening empathetically, misunderstandings multiply. Small disagreements turn into lingering resentments, and silence replaces meaningful conversation. Over time, emotional disconnect becomes harder to bridge than any single conflict.



Emotional and Physical Infidelity

Trust is the foundation of marriage, and infidelity—emotional or physical—can shatter it completely. Emotional affairs, often dismissed initially, can be just as damaging as physical ones. When one partner feels

replaced, neglected, or betrayed, rebuilding trust becomes an uphill task, and many marriages fail under that weight.

Growing Apart

People evolve with time. Careers change, priorities shift, and personal values mature. When couples grow in different directions without nurturing shared goals, the sense of companionship fades. What once felt like a partnership can begin to feel like coexisting parallel lives, leading to loneliness within the marriage.

Financial Stress and Conflicts

Money remains one of the most common sources of marital conflict. Differences in spending habits, financial secrecy, debt, or unequal earning power can create persistent tension. When financial stress combines with lack of transparency or blame, it often erodes mutual respect and trust.



How fast should you walk for heart health? Docs says brisk pace cuts risk

Walking has long been recommended as an easy way to stay active. But a new study suggests that when it comes to heart rhythm, pace is not optional, it's essential.

Research published in the journal Heart found that people who walk at a brisk pace have a significantly lower risk of developing atrial fibrillation, a common heart rhythm disorder. According to the study, brisk walkers reduced their risk by up to 43 per cent, with the strongest protection seen at faster walking speeds.

To understand what this means outside a research paper, we spoke to Dr Saurabh Gupta, Consultant Cardiologist, who explained why speed changes the impact walking has on the heart.

"Walking slowly is better than being inactive, but brisk walking actually trains the heart," Dr Gupta said. "It improves how the heart beats, how it recovers, and how stable its rhythm remains over time."

The study followed a large group of adults over several years and compared walking pace with the risk of developing heart rhythm abnormalities, particularly atrial fibrillation.

Participants who walked faster than 4.8 km per hour, roughly a brisk, purposeful pace, showed a noticeably lower risk. Those who



walked faster than 6.4 km per hour saw the greatest benefit.

"This is not power walking or jogging," Dr Gupta clarified. "It's the pace you naturally pick up when you're slightly late and trying to get somewhere."

Atrial fibrillation, often called AF, causes the heart to beat irregularly. It can lead to blood clots, stroke, heart failure and long-term complications if left untreated.

"What makes AF dangerous is that many people don't feel symptoms at first," Dr Gupta said. "By the time it's detected, the risk of stroke may already be high."

With AF cases rising globally, especially among older adults, simple prevention tools like walking are gaining attention.

Doctors often struggle to

explain walking speed in practical terms. Dr Gupta offered a simple rule.

"You should be able to talk, but not sing," he said. "If you're walking and slightly short of breath, that's usually the right zone."

He added that most people don't need smartwatches or apps. Counting steps works too. Around 100 to 120 steps per minute usually falls into the brisk category.

The study suggests the biggest gains are seen in older adults, people who are mostly sedentary, and those with risk factors such as high blood pressure or excess weight. "Brisk walking is one of the safest ways for these groups to improve heart rhythm without stressing the body," Dr Gupta said.



How much water should one drink daily according to age? Daily intake explained

Water makes up roughly 60-70% of the human body, and the fluid leaves your system constantly through breathing, sweating and urine. So, knowing how much water to drink daily isn't just about thirst. It's about keeping your body working well, step by step.

The old "eight glasses a day" idea is a general rule, but real daily water intake needs are different for each person. Factors like age, body size, lifestyle and even weather affect how much you should drink.

DAILY WATER INTAKE BY AGE GROUP

Understanding how much water to drink becomes simple when you break it down by age:

Children and teenagers

Ages 1-3: Around 1 litre per day (including water in food).

- Ages 4-8: About 1.2 litres.
- Ages 9-13: Around 1.6-1.9 litres.
- Teenagers (14-18): Nearly 1.9-2.6 litres, boys slightly more than girls.
- These recommendations help kids grow and stay active without dehydration.

Adults

- Men (19+): Around 3.1 litres a day.
- Women (19+): Around 2.7 litres a day.

This covers all fluids from drinks and food combined.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women

Mums-to-be need more water, pregnancy raises fluid needs to about 3 litres, and breastfeeding may need up to 3.1 litres.

Seniors (60+)

With age, the body's ability to sense thirst weakens, so older adults should aim for 1.6-2 litres daily to avoid dehydration.

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Scientists solve a major roadblock in cancer cell therapy: Study

Researchers have found a reliable way to grow helper T cells from stem cells, solving a major challenge in immune-based cancer therapy. Helper T cells act as the immune system's coordinators, helping other immune cells fight longer and harder.

The team discovered how to precisely control a key signal that determines which type of T cell forms. This advance could lead to ready-made cell therapies that are cheaper, faster, and easier to access.

For the first time, researchers at the University of British Columbia have shown how to consistently produce a crucial type of human immune cell, known as helper T cells, from stem cells in a controlled lab setting. The research, published on January 7 in Cell Stem Cell, removes a major barrier that has slowed the development, affordability, and large-scale production of cell therapies.

By solving this problem, the work



could help make off-the-shelf treatments more accessible and effective for conditions such as cancer, infectious diseases, autoimmune disorders, and more.

"Engineered cell therapies are transforming modern medicine," said co-senior author Dr. Peter Zandstra, professor and director of the UBC School of Biomedical Engineering. "This study addresses one of the biggest challenges in making these lifesaving treatments accessible to more people, showing for the first time a reliable and scalable way to grow multiple immune cell types." Over the past

several years, engineered cell therapies such as CAR-T treatments have produced dramatic, sometimes lifesaving results for people with cancers that were once considered untreatable. These therapies work by reprogramming a patient's immune cells to recognise and destroy disease, effectively turning those cells into 'living drugs'.

Even with their success, cell therapies remain costly, complex to manufacture, and out of reach for many patients around the world.

One key reason is that most existing treatments rely on a patient's own immune cells, which must be collected and specially prepared over several weeks for each individual. "The long-term goal is to have off-the-shelf cell therapies that are manufactured ahead of time and on a larger scale from a renewable source like stem cells," said co-senior author Dr. Megan Levings, a professor of surgery and biomedical engineering at UBC.

After years of saying no, Apple is turning Siri into an AI chatbot called Campos

Apple is working on a major upgrade to Siri that could change how users interact with their iPhones, iPads and Macs. Later this year, the company plans to turn Siri into a full conversational AI assistant, a move that puts Apple directly into the fast-growing chatbot space led by OpenAI and Google.

The new version of Siri, internally called Campos, is designed to behave more like a chatbot than a traditional voice assistant. Instead of giving short replies or failing at follow-up questions, Siri will be able to hold proper conversations, understand context and complete complex requests. Users will activate it the same way they do today, either by saying "Siri" or pressing the side button, but the experience after that is expected to feel far more natural.

People familiar with the development told Bloomberg this chatbot is separate from the Siri update Apple plans to release soon as part of iOS 26.4. That earlier update will keep the current Siri layout and add features shown last year, such as reading on-screen content, using personal data when allowed, and offering improved web searches. The chatbot experience will arrive later and will replace the existing Siri interface entirely.

This project is a key part of Apple's effort to improve its standing in artificial intelligence. Apple Intelligence, introduced in 2024, struggled to impress



due to delayed features and limited usefulness at launch. News of the chatbot plans was welcomed by investors, with Apple's stock moving up after the report.

Apple is expected to show the new Siri at its Worldwide Developers Conference in June, followed by a public release around September. The chatbot will be the main addition to iOS 27, iPadOS 27 and macOS 27. Apart from AI-related changes, these software updates are said to focus mostly on speed improvements and fixing long-standing bugs, rather than introducing new designs.

Inside Apple, engineers have tested the chatbot as a standalone Siri app, similar to ChatGPT or Gemini. However, the company does not plan to release it that way. Instead, Siri will remain built into

the system and available across apps and settings, just like it is today.

For years, Apple avoided launching a chatbot, arguing that users prefer tools that work quietly in the background. But with Samsung, Google and several Chinese phone makers already offering built-in conversational AI, Apple faced growing pressure to act.

Once launched, the new Siri will be able to search the web, write text, generate images, summarise documents and analyse uploaded files. It will also use personal data, with permission, to find messages, calendar events, music and files more quickly. Unlike third-party chatbots, Siri will be able to see open apps and content on the screen, allowing it to take actions such as changing settings, opening apps, placing calls or starting the camera.

Apple plans to connect Siri deeply with its own apps, including Mail, Photos, Music, Podcasts, TV and Xcode. For example, users could ask Siri to find a photo based on what's in it and then edit it using voice commands, or request help writing an email using details from upcoming calendar events.

Privacy remains a sensitive topic inside the company. While many chatbots remember past conversations to personalise responses, Apple is considering tight limits on how much the new Siri can remember, keeping privacy concerns in mind.

AI not just about creating content, it can predict road crashes too!

Artificial Intelligence is not just about creating text, images, graphics and videos online; it can make a big change in the physical life and for humanity by even predicting road crashes.

The assertion was made by SaveLife Foundation Founder and CEO Piyush Tewari here during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting.

Tewari, who ventured into the area of working on road safety after losing a young family member in a road crash, said his organisation is looking at using AI in a big way for predictive analysis.

He also lauded the Government of India for a big push around AI in road safety.

Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari recently announced an initiative where AI is going to be used to interpret the road crash data that is coming out and provide faster insights.

"Can we predict road crashes by bringing some data points together? So, there's definitely a huge amount of application, and the signs are very much positive."

"At SaveLife, we have used AI for the last 7-8 years. We've trained cameras using AI, fixed with drones to preemptively identify parked vehicles on highways, for example, because rear-end collisions are a big issue when it comes to road safety."

"Similarly, we have used AI-trained cameras on intersections to identify conflicts and to create a heatmap of such intersections. We've defined conflicts on the basis of proximity, etc.," he said.

Tewari, who is participating in AI and social innovation



sessions at WEF, said there's a significant amount of application of AI in this whole space of road safety.

"I hope to be contributing with regard to our experience of using it in India at a very, very grassroots level," he said.

"AI has the ability to transform lives. The decisions and the thought process that might take months sometimes can be done in hours or minutes using AI. We have to make AI more accessible to the public, and the Government of India's mission is also to make it more accessible."

"So we are very much aligned with the idea of using AI to make mobility safer," he said.

Source: PTI

Mars is back from blackout: Nasa gets first signals from Red Planet

Nasa has triumphantly reestablished communications with its Mars rovers following a two-week solar conjunction blackout, marking the resumption of Red Planet operations at the dawn of an ambitious 2026 exploration campaign.

The blackout, peaking around January 9 when Earth and Mars aligned behind the Sun, severed direct links from late December 2025 to mid-January, forcing Perseverance, Curiosity, and orbiting assets into autonomous mode.

"Loud and clear: Curiosity and Perseverance are both back in touch with Earth following solar conjunction. They're beginning to downlink data collected while the Sun was blocking the signal path between us and the Red Planet," Nasa said in an update.

Engineers at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) confirmed signal lock with Perseverance first, followed by Curiosity and the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter relay network.

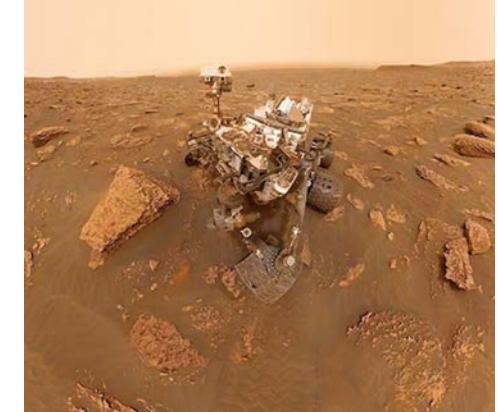
The rovers hunkered down flawlessly, capturing weather data, dust devil imagery, and surface scans while storing gigabytes for downlink. No anomalies have been reported, rovers remain power-positive, with Perseverance prepped for diagnostic and exploration.

This biennial event, driven by the Sun's plasma corona corrupting signals, halts commands to prevent spacecraft malfunctions. Rovers like Curiosity, now over 13 Martian years operational, parked in safe zones, executing pre-loaded scripts.

Orbiters such as MAVEN, briefly offline earlier, now bolster data relays for surface missions. "We've downloaded petabytes already; 2026 science ramps up immediately," noted Mars program scientist Dimitri Bykov.

The timing couldn't be better. With solar maximum fueling dynamic space weather, Nasa's fleet targets sample collection for the Mars Sample Return mission and astrobiology hunts in Jezero Crater.

Perseverance's cache of 20+ rock cores, potential biosignatures, awaits analysis, while Curiosity drills Gale Crater for habitability clues. Upcoming: China's Tianwen-3 sample return and ESA's Rosalind Franklin rover, fostering global collaboration.



Fed's preferred inflation gauge ticks up, denting rate-cut hopes

WASHINGTON (TIP)

The Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge ticked up in November in the latest sign that prices remain stubbornly elevated, while consumers spent at a healthy pace.

Consumer prices rose 2.8% in November from a year earlier, the Commerce Department said, up from a 2.7% annual pace in October.

Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core prices also increased 2.8% in November from a year ago, slightly higher than October's 2.7%.

Consumer spending climbed 0.5% in November from the previous month, the report also showed, a solid increase that hits at an economy growing at a healthy pace in the final three months of last year.

The figures point to a mostly strong economy with inflation still elevated, but down sharply from a four-decade peak in June 2022. Hiring has slowed to a crawl, however, leaving job-seekers frustrated even as the unemployment rate stays low.

January 22 figures suggest that the Federal Reserve will be less likely to reduce its key interest rate when it meets next week, a tact typically used if it is worried about a stumbling economy.

"Today's data should reassure the Fed that the economy remains on a solid footing, despite a cooler labor market," said James McCann, an economist at Edward Jones. "Indeed, there looks to be little urgency to cut rates at next week's meeting, and the central bank could stay on hold for longer should growth remain robust into 2026 and inflation continue to run at above target rates."

On a monthly basis prices, were milder: Both overall inflation and core inflation moved up just 0.2% in November from October.

The figures suggest that the Federal Reserve, headed by Jerome Powell, will be less likely to reduce its key interest rate when it meets next week, a tact typically used if it is worried about a stumbling economy. ZUMAPRESS.com

At that pace, over time inflation would move closer to the Federal Reserve's target of 2%.

The data was delayed by the six-week government shutdown last fall.

The solid figures on consumer spending follow a separate report Thursday which showed that the economy expanded at a healthy 4.4% annual rate in the July-September quarter, the fastest growth in two years.

The data points to continued solid growth in the final quarter of 2025.

Though inflation subsided in October and November, that was because the government shutdown injected a downside



bias to prices. The government was unable to collect most of the data to compile the Consumer Price Index report for October. Similarly most data was unavailable for October's import prices report.

These data gaps also impacted reports for November CPI and import prices. But the government was able to publish the Producer Price Index report for October. The Personal Consumption Expenditures price indexes, tracked by the U.S. central bank for its 2% target, are calculated using some of the data from the CPI, PPI and import prices reports.

"To replace the missing CPIs, BEA derived seasonally adjusted price indexes for October using the geometric mean of the September and November CPIs," the BEA said. "BEA derived non-seasonally adjusted price indexes by applying seasonal adjustment factors from October 2024 to the imputed seasonally adjusted values for October 2025."

The PCE price index increased 0.2% in November, matching October's gain. In the 12 months through November, the PCE Price Index climbed 2.8% after rising 2.7% in October.

Excluding the volatile food and energy components, the PCE price index 0.2% after by the same margin in October. In the 12 months through November, the so-called core inflation increased 2.8% after advancing 2.7% in October.

December CPI data have suggested core PCE picked up last month, with economists' estimates as high as a 0.4% increase, which would translate to a year-on-year rise of 3.1%. December's PCE inflation data will be released on February 20. The Fed is expected to keep interest rates unchanged later this month.

Source: Reuters

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Gold and silver are once again powering ahead on the Multi-Commodity Exchange (MCX), with buyers jumping in at every small dip and momentum showing no signs of cooling.

While the domestic trend remains sharply bullish, experts say understanding the broader backdrop can help investors think about why the rally is persisting and what it could mean for portfolios this year.

Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, notes that MCX gold continues to trade in a strong rising channel, with the Rs 1,57,000–1,58,000 zone acting as reliable support.

Every decline in gold is being absorbed swiftly, signaling dominance by buyers. Ponmudi says a sustained breakout above Rs 1,59,000–1,60,500 could accelerate the rally toward Rs 1,63,000–Rs 1,65,000. The overall structure, he adds, remains "strongly bullish" with momentum clearly on the upside.

MCX silver has been even more energetic, maintaining firm ground above Rs 3,40,000. Its rising channel is steeper and the 20-day EMA near



Rs 3,24,000 is providing solid dynamic support.

Ponmudi sees immediate upside for silver toward Rs 3,50,000–Rs 3,60,000, with potential for further extension to Rs 3,70,000–Rs 3,75,000 in the months ahead. Even a pullback to Rs 3,28,000–Rs 3,20,000 is

TikTok finalises US spin-off deal to maintain operations

TikTok finalised a deal to spin off its United States operations into a new joint venture, ensuring the video application remains accessible to its 200 million American users. The move concludes a multi-year legal and political dispute regarding national security and data privacy. According to a press release, the new entity includes significant equity stakes from a consortium of global investors and the original parent company.

The agreement specifies that tech giant Oracle, UAE-based MGX, and investment firm Silver Lake each hold a 15 per cent stake in the new venture. ByteDance, the Chinese parent company, retains a 19.9 per cent share.

This restructuring follows a 2024 law passed by Congress with bipartisan support that mandated TikTok divest from ByteDance or face a total ban in the United States. While the Supreme Court upheld the law, the current administration provided a window for the deal to materialise after a brief 14-hour service interruption in early 2025.

The company stated in its press release that the new joint venture "will operate under defined safeguards that protect national security through comprehensive data protections, algorithm security, content moderation, and software assurances for U.S. users."

Beyond the flagship video platform, the scope of this deal extends to other assets within the ByteDance ecosystem. The TikTok press release says the joint venture "will also cover other apps in the ByteDance portfolio, including CapCut and Lemon8." This inclusion ensures that the secondary applications used for video editing and social sharing also comply with the newly established security protocols and ownership structure required by United States regulators.

Gold and silver hit new highs again

being viewed by some traders as a strong accumulation zone rather than a breakdown.

Analysts tracking the broader precious metals cycle say this kind of rally reflects more than just short-term positioning.

In 2025, both gold and silver delivered some of their strongest annual returns in decades, with silver in particular seeing historic gains as it crossed the Rs 3,00,000 per kg mark domestically.

That run has continued into 2026, driven in part by investors seeking alternatives when equities have appeared less attractive at certain points, and by robust industrial demand for silver in sectors like solar energy, electric vehicles and electronics that have surged even when traditional markets have softened.

Some market watchers see silver as carrying a higher beta profile compared with gold, meaning it tends to swing more sharply on both upside and downside.



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

**ARIES**

Ganesha says this week, you will face some new experiences in your life. Your sensitivity and deep thinking will prove

to be important for you at this time. At the workplace, the importance of teamwork will increase. Collaboration with colleagues will give you many new possibilities. In your personal life, you will deepen your close relationships. This time is suitable for sharing ideas with them and clarifying feelings. Pay attention to your health this week, regular exercise and following a proper diet will be beneficial for you. Experience more positive energy and keep your intentions strong. Be mentally prepared to face challenges, and remember that every problem has a solution. Your insight and unique perspective will become a source of strength for you now.

TAURUS

Ganesha says this week symbolizes prosperity and balance for Taurus. During this time, positive changes will be seen in your personal and professional life. Your efforts made with patience and dedication will bear fruit. This week you should pay special attention to your health. Resting and meditating for a while will be beneficial to overcome mental exhaustion. Your emotional state will remain strong, but it is important for you to take some time for yourself. Personal relationships will become sweeter; time spent with family will improve your close bonds. If you think of sharing your feelings with someone special, this is the right time. It will be beneficial to be alert to new opportunities in business. Strengthen relationships with colleagues, and working together as partners can give positive results. Maintain politeness and respect towards close individuals, so that cooperation increases in organizations and relationships. Overall, this week is a time of growth and development for you. Have faith in yourself and be ready to face every situation.

GEMINI

Ganesha says this week will be full of variety for Gemini natives. The brilliance of your ideas and communication skills will pave the way for new opportunities. Your partners and friends will be ready to listen to your ideas now, so do not be afraid to share your feelings. Your creativity will be at its peak, which will encourage you to start new projects. This is a perfect

time for career progress; Focus on building good relationships with your colleagues. Pay special attention to health this week. Regular exercise and a balanced diet will keep your energy up. The role of communication will also be important in relationships. Talking about family and personal issues will strengthen your position. Meeting or talking to an old friend can inspire you. At the end of this week, take some time for yourself. Meditation and spiritual activities will give you mental peace. Your emotions will be deep inside you, so it will be necessary to identify and balance them. Try to be happy and keep positivity around you.

CANCER

Ganesha says this week many positive changes will come in your life. Family relationships will be strong and the atmosphere at home will be pleasant. You will get an opportunity to spend more time with your loved ones, which will make your relationships even deeper. Your emotional state will also be strong during this time. You will recognize the possibilities within you and try to take your creativity to new horizons. Morale will also be high in the workplace, due to which you will move fast towards your goal. However, sometimes you may feel a little sensitive. Therefore, take care not to let negative emotions overwhelm you. Practicing meditation or yoga will be beneficial for you. This week you are likely to find a solution to an old problem, which will restore your mental peace. The time will also be appropriate to work on a new project or idea. Keep in mind that it is important to have faith in yourself from a personal point of view. Listen to your intuition and move in the direction your heart says.

LEO

Ganesha says many opportunities can be expected for you this week. Your self-confidence and positive energy will attract people around you. In the work sphere, your relationship with the team will be strong and you will focus on an important project. You will be able to present your point effectively, so attend a meeting and share your thoughts. In personal life, this is a great time to spend time with your loved ones. An old conversation can strengthen your relationships. Do not be afraid to express your feelings openly. In terms of health, a little physical activity and meditation will improve your mental health. Try to include it in your daily routine. Some unexpected events may also happen this week, so be tolerant and face the situation with full patience. Take special care that you keep your thoughts positive. Keep moving forward, as this week is going to bring a new turn for you.



Gemini

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - JAN 26 - FEB 01, 2026

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla

**VIRGO**

Ganesha says this week, many opportunities and challenges will come up for Virgo natives. You will feel yourself full of new energy and inspiration. At work, your hard work will pay off and your plans will achieve success beyond expectations. It is time to increase harmony with colleagues, and teamwork can get you the expected results. In personal relationships, it is time to spend more time with your family and friends. Establishing communication will strengthen relationships. Love life will also bring excitement and novelty, which will help you increase mutual understanding. On the health front, try to adopt a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Consider yoga and meditation for mental peace. Do not forget to enjoy small joys. This week your hard work and positive attitude will show you new possibilities, just keep faith in yourself and keep moving forward.

LIBRA

Ganesha says this week, many important changes are indicated for Libra people. In work life, you need to establish better coordination with colleagues. Your harmony and communication skills will prove to be especially useful this week. In personal relationships, do not hesitate to express your feelings. Your loved ones will understand your sensitivities and this is an important time to strengthen relationships. In terms of health, this week it is advisable to focus on regular exercise and proper diet. Yoga and meditation will be beneficial for you to maintain mental health. Social life will also increase; you will get an opportunity to spend time with friends and family, which will increase your positive energy. This week, your positive thinking and cooperation will help you face many difficulties. Keep your focus and keep moving forward.

**SCORPIO**

Ganesha says this week, there are possibilities of positive changes in various areas for the people of the Scorpio zodiac. Your confidence and determination will increase, which will enable you to move faster towards your goals. Some new opportunities may knock at your door in professional life. Try to express your thoughts clearly, so that your hard work gets results quickly. Personal relationships will also improve. Try to spend time with your family and friends; this will make you mentally strong. In matters of love, you will be able to establish better communication with your partner, which will further increase your intimacy. Keep trying in terms of health. Regular exercise and a balanced diet will help maintain your energy. Control your emotions and try to stay away from negativity. Use your time wisely and focus on your goals. Your



hard work is likely to yield positive results this week.

SAGITTARIUS

Ganesha says this time of the week is going to open the doors of new possibilities for you, Sagittarius. You will be more willing to share your ideas and plans. This week is favorable for social interaction. Spending time with friends and family will make you happy. New opportunities in personal and professional spheres will attract you at this time. Express your ideas clearly, as there will be a special charm in your style. You will be appreciated for the work you do, which will increase your confidence. In terms of health, focus on regular exercise and a balanced diet. Doing meditation or yoga can be beneficial to maintain mental peace. Your creativity will be at its peak this week, so do not miss working on new projects. Be patient while making plans and take care of the little things. This week will be especially fruitful for you.

**Capricorn**

Ganesha says this week marks a new beginning for Capricorn people. Some positive changes may be seen in your workplace. You will get the fruits of your hard work soon and experience rapid progress towards your goal. In personal life, harmony and understanding will increase in relationships. Time spent with family will give you mental peace. Your thoughts and feelings will be clear this week, which will enable you to communicate better with your loved ones. In terms of health, it is advisable to take care of regular exercise and a balanced diet this week. A little caution will help in maintaining your health better. Participating in social activities will allow you to make new contacts and strengthen your social status. Be full of confidence, and welcome new opportunities. This week your organized approach and discipline will help you reach new heights. At the same time, wishes are likely to be fulfilled. Make good use of this time and focus on your goals.

AQUARIUS**Aquarius**

Ganesha says this week many new opportunities will come to you. Your creativity and ideology will get a new direction, which will enable you to bring newness to your work. Relationships will be stable and you will enjoy spending time with your loved ones. This week also looks favorable from the economic point of view. Your investments may improve, so make decisions wisely. Your efforts will be appreciated in the work field and you may get a chance to work on an important project. From a health point of view, keep in mind that you should resort to yoga or meditation to reduce stress. This will strengthen your mental health.

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BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : JAN 26 - FEB 1
BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA**JANUARY 26**

Ganesha says you are capable of juggling both your personal and business lives. It's time to apply your prior knowledge and skills learned in the new places. You will be followed with admiration and praise. You should possess refined manipulative skills and be a technical person. You will be forced by circumstances to work hard and relocate your company to a country that is constantly growing abroad. Your routine existence will abruptly alter, and you'll embark on a journey.

JANUARY 27

Ganesha says God has given you a tremendous amount of talent, which you must develop through unrelenting effort. Your capacity for retrieval is extraordinary. As your focus shifts to some frolicsome activities, you'll be in good physical and mental health. You have new opportunities if you use them wisely. You decry the degradation of the environment because you love it. Your friends will assist you as soon as possible. You will be accompanied and congratulated by family and friends.

JANUARY 28

Ganesha says the family will provide a long-term investment they made for you. Academically speaking, things will go in your favor, and you probably will enlist. Your area of interest promises to bring you a lot of harmony, support, name recognition, and celebrity shortly. Your reputation at work is built on how you handle the little things. You make efficient and effective use of your precious time to achieve your objectives. For both you and others, your advice is crucial.

JANUARY 29

Ganesha says you are shrewd enough to create large bugs for both you and your employer. You do the assignment in your own manner. You are a one-man army. By listening to some spiritual and philosophical talks, your mental and physical health will be improved. You hold modern views and detest bigots. You hold your employees to a very high standard of excellence. You force others to uphold their obligations and rights, as you are well aware of your own.

JANUARY 30

Ganesha says your split personality aids in establishing recognition and popularity in all facets of life. You are always there for your family and friends. Your charitable disposition is your strength. Your superiors and coworkers are expected to respect and value you. You probably adhere to the Western cultural practices of not worrying about the future. There are many high-end, branded goods in your wardrobe. Everyone's life is made happier by your jovial disposition.

JANUARY 31

Ganesha says you make your decision with the speed of a bullet train, and everyone will probably support you. Your efforts alone will always point you in the direction of achieving your goals. Your natural tenacity dispels any questions you may have regarding any task given to you. Everyone, including your home and your gaffers, loves the way you work and speak. You will be the perfect role model for your juniors. Everyone's life is made happier by your jovial disposition. You make a positive, friendly impression.



VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

FEBRUARY 1

Ganesha says you are in high demand at all times. If you practice psychology, you will set standards for others. Your grilling prowess will keep you away from your adversaries and con artists. In a nutshell, you are an expert in your field. Your husband turns out to be lucky for you because, after your wedding, you receive several gifts and financial increases. After your marriage, you'll sense a rising light within you. You make the most of your time by developing your capacity to solve complex problems intellectually.

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CONTD FROM PAGE 68

Spending time with family will give you mental peace. Trust your intuitions this week and try to adopt new things. This is the time to move forward with positivity and self-confidence.

PISCES

 **Pisces** Ganesha says this week is a sign of a new beginning for the people of Pisces. Your creativity and sensitivity will be of special importance to you this week. You may have to face some new responsibilities in the workplace, but your hard work and patience will bring you success. There may be a lack of communication in personal relationships, so spending time with your loved ones will be important. Focus on yoga and meditation this

week, it will be extremely beneficial for your mental health. Take steps thoughtfully in financial matters, and think well before taking any major

financial decision. In terms of health, light exercise and a balanced diet will be beneficial for you. Overall, this week is going to bring positive

changes for you, just make sure that you listen to your conscience and move forward accordingly.

॥ SHREE GANESHAY NAMAHII



Know/Buy your Lucky Gemstones

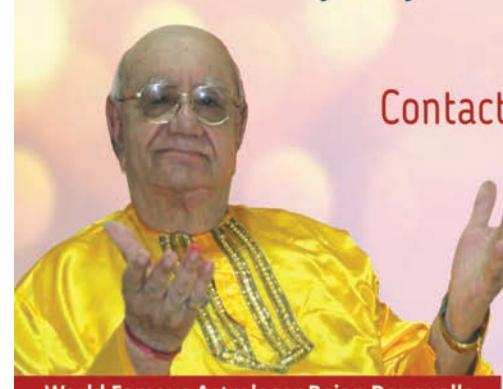
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Nastur Bejan Daruwalla

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Chirag Daruwalla is the best astrologer and one of the most famous names in the astrology world. He has more than 18 years of experience. Readers may seek his advice related to career, health, finance, business, money, love and marriage. He has complete knowledge, solutions, and guidance to all the problems related to life. Visit his website chiragdaruwalla.com. He is available for consultations on WhatsApp number +91 8141566266 or by email: info@chiragdaruwalla.com

Sikh History This Week

JANUARY 23 TO JANUARY 29

23rd January

1923 Dhanna Singh Behbalpur joins the Babbar Akali Jatha.

1923 Second attempt to kill Arjan Singh Patwari of Haripur also ends in a fiasco. He was alledged to be responsible for Master Mota Singh's arrest.

1948 Dr. B.R. Ambedkar suggested the Sikhs to struggle for a Punjabi speaking state.



1960 Sirdar Tirath Singh accepted shahadat in Delhi, in connection with the Punjabi Subha morcha.

24th January

1849 Chatter Singh joined with Sher Singh against the British while the British forces spared from Multan battle joined their forces.

1923 Pragpur is raided to arrest Kishan Singh Garhgaj.

1928 Raghbir Singh RajaSasi formed the Central Sikh Association.



1943 Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha passed away at Kadia-Kunal.

Among the 12 Sikh misls, Nabha reign represented the major branch of Phullkiyan misl. The Nabha family began with Gurdit Singh, the eldest son of Chaudhary Tiloc Singh, who in turn was the eldest son of Baba Phull. As a result, Nabha is also known as Chaudhary da Garh (house of Chaudhary).

1960 129 members of the SGPC and over 100,000

GurSikhs took a vow to lay lives for Punjabi Suba.

1993 Kesri Nishan hoisted at The Hague.



25th January

1921 Morcha of Taran Taran marked the beginning of Gurudwara Reform Movement. Hazara Singh became the first martyr of the movement.

1922 Karam Singh of Daulatpur arranged diwan at Nawanshehar.

1936 The Nankana Sahib Committee established the Guru Nanak Prachar Trust.



26th January

1720 Nadir Shah attacked, ransacked, and looted Delhi.

Pandits and Brahmins suffered extensively under Aurangzeb, Bahadur Shah, Forkhshayer, Nadar Abdali, etc. and Guru's Sikhs rescued their daughters, sacrificed their own lives for saving their Dharam. Then these decepers used to honor the Sikhs as "saintly rulers."

1921 Sikhs assume control of Sri Darbar Sahib, Taran Taran.

1950 Republic day of India. But the Sikh Nation's aspirations remain unfulfilled.

1986 The Sarbat Khalsa, gathered together at Akal Takht Sahib, Amritsar resolved to establish a sovereign State, Khalistan and elected a Panthic Committee to co-ordinate the movement for national independence.

1986 Work was initiated to dismantle Akal Takht constructed under government's forcible "Kar Sewa" after Bluestar Operation. This work was carried out by Baba Santa Singh, who was excommunicated from the Panth for his cooperation.

27th January



1682 Janam Din Baba Deep Singh Ji. Known as Deepaa in his childhood, he was born on 14 Magh Sunmat 1737 to mother Mata Jeeonee and father Bhai Bhagtoo at Paahoowind, Amritsar. He is remembered as one of the most revered martyrs of Sikh history.

1846 Anglo-Sikh war was fought at village Aliwal, Tehsil Jagraon. The Sikhs suffered severe losses due to internal dissensions.

1921 Gurudwara Sudhar Dal was named Akali Dal and Sarmukh Singh Jhabal was elected its first President. This body was to serve as a central body controlling and directing various Akali Jathas that had mushroomed from mid-1920.

1923 The Kar-Sewa of Amritsar Sarowar was initiated. All participant Sikh sangats gathered at Gurdwara Sri Putali Sahib to do their ardas before proceeding for kar-sewa at Sri Harmandie Sahib.

1983 Akali members of Parliament and Assembly resigned in support of Sikh's righteous demands.

28th January

1520: Guru Baba Nanak Dev in the course of his udasis (travels) arrived at Mecca, the Centre of Islam, accompanied with his GurSikh Bhai Mardana. Here he convinced the Hajies and other dignitaries that God is omnipresent. His abode is not confined to Mecca alone. He preached the Message of Universal love and brotherhood.

1757: Baba Aalla Singh and Sardar Chadhat Singh together attacked the forces of Abdali and rescued the Hindu women that were being forcibly taken from their residence. The Sikh forces safely returned each women to her rightful home.

29th January

The Babbar Akali conspiracy case, Supplementary I, was brought before the committing magistrate.

1925 14th Shahidi Jatha of 500 valiant Akali Satyagrahies, led by Saradar Darshan Singh Pheruman courted arrest upon reaching Gangsar, Jaito.

1928 All Party Sikh Conference held at Amritsar.

1970 Indira Ghandhi announced the so-called award on Chandigarh. It was to be given to Punjab in exchange for 114 villages to Haryana. It was like buying a white elephant to save the life of Fateh Singh. Though Fateh Singh would not have died even otherwise; a coward, as he was.

1976 Articles of Organization for the Sikh Dharma Brotherhood were promulgated.

1986 The Panthic Committee, appointed by Sarbat Khalsa on Jan. 26, 1986, announced the Declaration of Independence, from Sri Akal Takht Sahib, Amritsar.

1989 The US Congress condemns India for its prosecution of the Sikhs. The Congressmen expressed their sympathies for the Sikh national cause and condemned Indian Nazism.

Ratha Saptami: Celebrating the Sun God, harbinger of light, life, and spiritual awakening

Ratha Saptami, also widely known as Surya Saptami, is one of the most revered solar festivals in Hindu tradition. Observed on the seventh day (Saptami) of the bright half (Shukla Paksha) of the month of Magha (January–February), it symbolizes the Sun's northward journey (Uttarayana) and the renewal of energy, prosperity, and spiritual enlightenment. It is celebrated with devotion across India, often referred to as the birthday of the Sun God, who sustains all life and illuminates the cosmos with divine light.

Mythological Origins and Legends

Ratha Saptami is steeped in Vedic and Puranic lore. According to the Skanda Purana, Vishnu Purana, and Bhavishya Purana:

The Chariot of Surya

Surya, the Sun God, travels across the sky in a divine chariot (Ratha) drawn by seven horses, representing the seven days of the week and the seven colors of the rainbow, which symbolize the spectrum of knowledge, energy, and spiritual awakening. On Ratha Saptami, his chariot is said to turn towards the northern hemisphere, marking the change of season and the start of longer, brighter days.

Surya as a Life-Giver

Hindu cosmology portrays Surya as the father of all beings and the source of life on Earth. Ancient texts describe him as Aryaman, Savitr, Mitra, and other Vedic forms, highlighting his dual role as a physical source of energy and a spiritual illuminator.

Legend of Sage Mandavya

A popular story recounts how Sage Mandavya's devotion and penance pleased Surya, who granted him long life, health, and prosperity. This legend emphasizes that devotion to the Sun purifies the mind and body, leading to material and spiritual benefits.

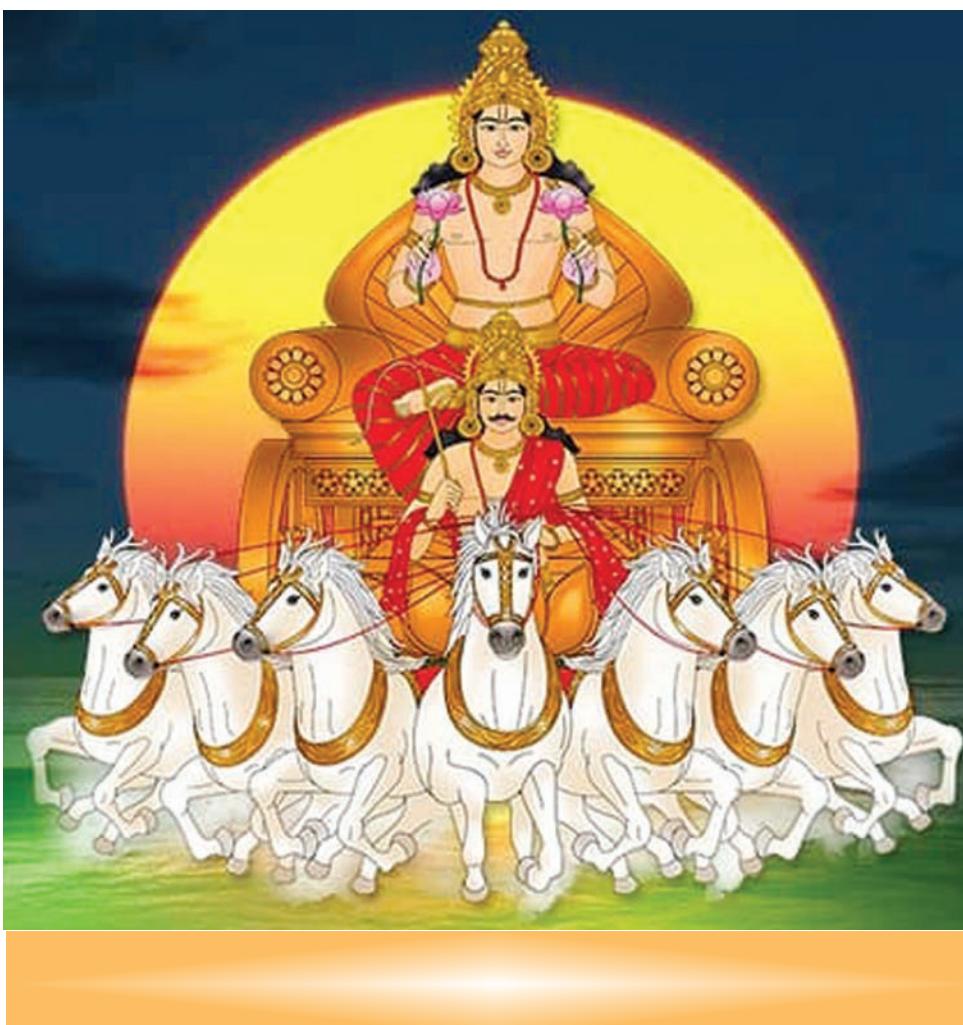
Symbolic Significance

The day also marks the beginning of agricultural preparation in many regions, as farmers pray to Surya for bountiful crops, reflecting the cosmic connection between humans and nature.

Spiritual Significance

Ratha Saptami is much more than a festival of light. It is a day to honor energy, health, vitality, and spiritual wisdom:

- **Health and Vitality:** Sun worship is believed to strengthen the body, boost immunity, and energize the mind.
- **Removal of Ignorance:** Surya symbolizes knowledge and truth. Devotees seek his blessings to eradicate negativity and spiritual darkness.
- **Prosperity and Growth:** The festival is considered highly auspicious for



Important information

Ratha or Surya Saptami 2026

Sunday, 26 January 2026

Saptami Start : 25 January 2026 at 00:39 AM

Saptami End : 25 January 2026 at 11:10 PM

career growth, financial stability, and overall prosperity.

- **Spiritual Awakening:** It encourages inner reflection, meditation, and aligning oneself with cosmic rhythms and dharma.

Observing Ratha Saptami: Rituals and Practices

The rituals of Ratha Saptami are both elaborate and symbolic, reflecting the deep connection between human life, nature, and the cosmos.

Early Morning Rituals and Surya Arghya

- Devotees wake up before sunrise to bathe and purify themselves.
- Facing the east, they offer water (Arghya) to Surya, usually mixed with milk, turmeric, and sacred leaves, reciting mantras like *Om Suryaya Namah* or the Gayatri Mantra.
- The water offering is said to remove sins, strengthen the heart, and energize the nervous system.

Chariot Symbolism and Puja

- A Ratha (chariot) is drawn on the floor or altar, using turmeric, rice, or

colored powders. This represents Surya's cosmic journey and reminds devotees of the movement of time, energy, and life cycles.

- Flowers, red cloth, and lamps are offered to the Sun, red being the color of vitality and life force.

Fasting and Offerings

- Many observe a partial or full fast, consuming milk, fruits, and light vegetarian meals.
- Special dishes include til (sesame) laddoos, kheer, halwa, or rice-based sweets, symbolizing warmth, sustenance, and sweetness in life.
- Charity (dana) is encouraged, reflecting the Sun's universal generosity.

Astrological and Medicinal Practices

- In Ayurveda, Sun exposure in moderation is believed to boost metabolism, vitamin D, and energy.
- Devotees sometimes apply herbal pastes or turmeric during morning baths to strengthen the skin and purify the body.
- Astrologically, the Sun governs the soul (Atma), authority, and mental clarity. Worship on this day is said to

reduce malefic effects of Surya in one's horoscope.

Yoga and Surya Namaskar

- Practicing Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutations) at dawn is highly auspicious.
- Each posture is a meditation in movement, aligning the body with solar energy and cosmic rhythm.

Regional Celebrations

- Maharashtra and Gujarat: Devotees perform Ratha Saptami Puja near rivers or temples, offering bilva leaves, flowers, and water to Surya.
- Tamil Nadu and Karnataka: Temples hold processions of Surya idols on chariots, and devotees offer til and jaggery-based sweets.
- Odisha: Sun temples, especially in Konark, see ritual baths and recitation of Surya stotras.
- North India: Devotees often observe fasts and perform early morning Surya Arghya, followed by charity and feeding the needy.

Symbolism and Spiritual Lessons

The Chariot with Seven Horses

- Represents seven days of the week, seven chakras, and seven colors of light, symbolizing balance, energy, and spiritual awakening.

Rising Sun and Uttarayana

- The northward movement of the Sun signifies knowledge, positivity, and victory of light over darkness, reflecting the inner journey toward self-realization.

Offering Water (Arghya)

- Symbolizes purification, devotion, and surrender to the divine. The water is both literal and metaphorical, cleansing body, mind, and soul.

Spiritual Practices for Devotees

- **Morning Meditation:** Sit facing the rising sun, visualizing divine energy entering the body and cleansing the mind.
- **Chanting Mantras:** Reciting Surya Gayatri, Aditya Hridayam, or simple Om Suryaya Namah infuses vitality and mental clarity.
- **Yoga & Sun Salutations:** Enhances physical stamina, spiritual awareness, and inner balance.
- **Charity and Good Deeds:** Aligns personal life with cosmic generosity, spreading warmth and light to others. Even today, Ratha Saptami reminds us to:
 - Align our daily routines with natural cycles for health and mental clarity.
 - Express gratitude to the Sun as the universal giver of life and energy.
 - Recognize that spiritual growth requires devotion, discipline, and balance between material and inner life.



CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

Massive winter storm spanning 40...

performance without fans. Carnival parades in Louisiana were cancelled or rescheduled.

At least 182 million people were under watches or warnings for ice and snow, and more than 210 million were under cold weather advisories or warnings. In many places those overlapped.

Utility companies braced for power outages because ice-coated trees and power lines can keep falling long after a storm has passed.

"It's going to be a big storm," Maricela Resendiz said as she picked up chicken, eggs and pizzas at a Dallas store to get her, her 5-year-old son and her boyfriend through the weekend. Her plans: "Staying in, just being out of the way."

Freezing rain slickened roads in Lubbock, Texas, in the afternoon as temperatures dropped.

After sliding into the South, the storm was expected to move into the Northeast, dumping about a foot (30 centimeters) of snow from Washington through New York and Boston, the National Weather Service predicted.

Arctic air was the first piece to fall in place

Frigid air that spilled down from Canada prompted the cancellations of classes at schools throughout the Midwest. Wind chills as low as minus 40°F (minus 40 Celsius) meant that frostbite could set in within 10 minutes, making it too dangerous to walk to school or wait for the bus.

Despite the bitter cold, a protest over an immigration crackdown went on as planned in Minnesota, with thousands demonstrating in downtown Minneapolis.

Nationwide, more than 1,000 flights were delayed or cancelled Friday, with well over half of them in Dallas, according to the flight tracking website FlightAware. About 2,300 were called off for Saturday.

In Oklahoma, Department of Transportation workers treated roads with salt brine, the Highway Patrol cancelled troopers' days off and National Guard units were activated to help stranded drivers.

The federal government put nearly 30 search and rescue teams on standby. Officials had more than 7 million meals, 600,000 blankets and 300 generators placed throughout the area the storm was expected to cross, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

President Donald Trump said via social media that his administration was coordinating with state and local officials and "FEMA is fully prepared to respond." Ice could take down power lines and pipes could freeze. After the storm passes, it will take a while to thaw out. Ice can add hundreds of pounds to power lines and branches and make them more susceptible to snapping, especially if it's windy.

In at least 11 Southern states from Texas to Virginia, a majority of homes are heated by electricity, according to the US Census Bureau.

A severe cold snap five years ago took down much of the power grid in Texas, leaving millions without power for days and resulting in hundreds of deaths. Gov Greg Abbott vowed that it will not happen again, and utility companies were bringing in thousands of employees to help keep the lights on.

Northeast braces for possibly heaviest snow in years

Boston declared a cold emergency through the weekend, and Connecticut was working with neighboring New York and Massachusetts in case travel restrictions are needed on major highways.

Connecticut Gov Ned Lamont urged people to go grocery shopping now and "stay home on Sunday."

Philadelphia announced schools would be closed Monday. Superintendent Tony B Watlington Sr told students, "It's also appropriate to have one or two very safe snowball fights." (Agencies)

Thousands march through downtown...

Beside faith leaders, the "no work, no school, no shopping" day of protest was kicked off by community leaders and labor unions - and included actions around the state, plus business closures in solidarity.

The "Day of Truth & Freedom" protest came in the wake of the killing of Renee Good, the unarmed woman shot by a federal immigration officer in Minneapolis earlier this month.

The protesters' demands include that ICE leave Minnesota, that the ICE officer who killed Good be legally held accountable, an end to additional federal funding for ICE, and for the agency to be investigated for human rights and constitutional violations.

Hundreds of local businesses in Minnesota announced closures in solidarity. Thousands of people took the day off from their jobs to join the action, while others participated by not shopping on Friday. The Minneapolis city council endorsed the day of action and the general strike.

The state's cultural institutions - including the Walker Art Center, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the Science Museum of Minnesota and the Minnesota Children's Museum - closed on Friday as well.

During a protest at the Minneapolis-St Paul airport on Friday morning, hundreds of clergy members called for an end to the ICE surge and urged airline companies to join them in opposing ICE in the state. Video of the action showed hundreds of people walking outside the airport in sub-zero temperatures, singing songs and praying together. Deportation flights go in and out of the airport daily.

On Friday afternoon, thousands clad in winter gear and carrying signs filled the streets of downtown Minneapolis to march in subzero temperatures, ending in a rally inside the Target Center, an arena downtown.

"We are going to be having dangerously cold weather on Friday -10F with wind chills. Like the high is going to be -10F with wind chills of up to -20F," Chelsie Glaubitz Gabiou, president of the Minnesota Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, had told the Guardian earlier.

"We are a northern state, and we are built for the cold, and we are going to show up, but folks are going to need to pay attention to not just the march, but what people are doing, the individual stories of solidarity that people are going to be doing."

The Minnesota AFL-CIO, the state's federation of more than 1,000 affiliated local unions, endorsed the day of action, along with dozens of local labor unions.

"I think what generated the idea for this action came out of the need to figure out what we can meaningfully do to stop it," Kieran Knutson, the president of Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 7250 in Minneapolis, told the Guardian last week. "The government in the state of Minnesota has not offered any path towards stopping these attacks, this violence."

A childcare worker in Minneapolis, who requested anonymity for fear of retaliation toward the immigrant families they serve, said they were shutting down for the day after consulting and receiving immense support from the families of the children they care for.

"We had time to ask the families that we serve if they would be on board with shutting down and we got a hugely positive response," they said. "We serve families that are on childcare assistance, families that pay out of pocket. So they were all in agreement, even ones that have been trying to go to work, even during this time where they were fearful of being out of their houses. So it was really the families. They all stood up for it, too."

At the University of Minnesota campuses in Minneapolis, St Paul, and Duluth, labor unions representing student workers and staff have called for the university system to shut down on Friday to allow students and workers to participate in the day of action.

The University of Minnesota graduate labor union said ICE's operations have had an impact on student workers since the beginning of the Trump administration. In early 2025, at least three international students at the University of Minnesota were arrested and detained by ICE, despite an immigration judge ordering their release.

"It's really concerning to us that the university is remaining neutral in a time when immigrant communities and international students are literally under attack," said Abaki Beck, president of the University of Minnesota graduate labor union. "One of the other things we're pushing for on campus specifically is increased support for immigrant workers and international students."

A spokesperson for the University of Minnesota cited a guidance memo from university leadership in response to the day of action. They said in a statement: "The University of Minnesota fully supports the rights of faculty, staff, and students to engage in lawful civic

expression. We also must ensure continuity of operations and meet our responsibilities to students and the university community."

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) claimed to have made 3,000 arrests in Minnesota over the past six weeks.

The US army put 1,500 soldiers on standby for possible deployment to Minnesota, as 3,000 immigration officers have been dispatched to the state by the Trump administration.

"This is beyond insane. Why would these labor bosses not want these public safety threats out of their communities?" a DHS spokesperson said in an email in response to the economic blackout.

"These are the criminals these labor bosses are trying to protect," the spokesperson added, citing 23 uncaptioned photos of claimed undocumented immigrants with criminal records who have been arrested by ICE.

Nationwide, immigrants with no criminal record continue to make up the largest group in US immigration detention, which is at record levels. (Agencies)

'Melania', a film documenting US First...

January 30. Saturday's showing will be the first time the president, her family and close friends see the film in full, said Marc Beckman, the first lady's outside adviser and agent.

The film offers rare behind-the-scenes access to the first lady, who has kept a low public profile during her husband's second term. The trailer opens on Inauguration Day in January 2025, showing her donning a navy wide-brimmed hat for the ceremony at the US Capitol. It also depicts her role as an adviser to the president, including a moment in which she encourages him to emphasize "peacemaker and unifier" in his inaugural address.

Beckman, who produced the film, oversaw the \$40 million movie deal with Amazon's MGM Studios, plus a follow-up documentary series set for release later this year focusing on some of Melania Trump's priorities, including children in foster care.

"This is not a political film at all," Beckman said in an interview, adding that the first lady spearheaded the film's creative direction.

The movie highlights her fashion choices, diplomatic engagements and the operations surrounding her Secret Service protection. Beckman said viewers also will see moments that capture the president's sense of humor.

Ahead of the public theatrical release of the film next week, the president and first lady will attend a premiere on Thursday, January 29, at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, renamed the Trump-Kennedy Center by the Trump-appointed board of directors.

The first lady is also scheduled to ring the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange on Wednesday, January 28, to promote the film, Beckman added.

US regulator seeks to bypass Indian...

In the most high-profile legal case in the U.S. involving an Indian conglomerate, the SEC has been trying to send summons to Adani group founder Gautam Adani and his nephew Sagar since last year.

Adani group has called the allegations "baseless" and said that it would seek "all possible legal recourse" to defend itself. It did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comment on the latest SEC filing, dated January 21. In the response to the New York court, the U.S. markets regulator said it "does not expect service to be completed" through the current route and should be allowed to directly email the summons to the Adani group executives.

India's law ministry also did not immediately respond to a Reuters' request seeking comment on the latest filing. It has previously described the issue as a legal issue between private firms and the United States.

ALLEGED SCHEME TO BRIBE INDIAN OFFICIALS

The indictment, which was unsealed in November 2024, accused Adani group executives of being part of a scheme to pay bribes to Indian officials for buying electricity produced by Adani Green Energy, a unit of the Adani group.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



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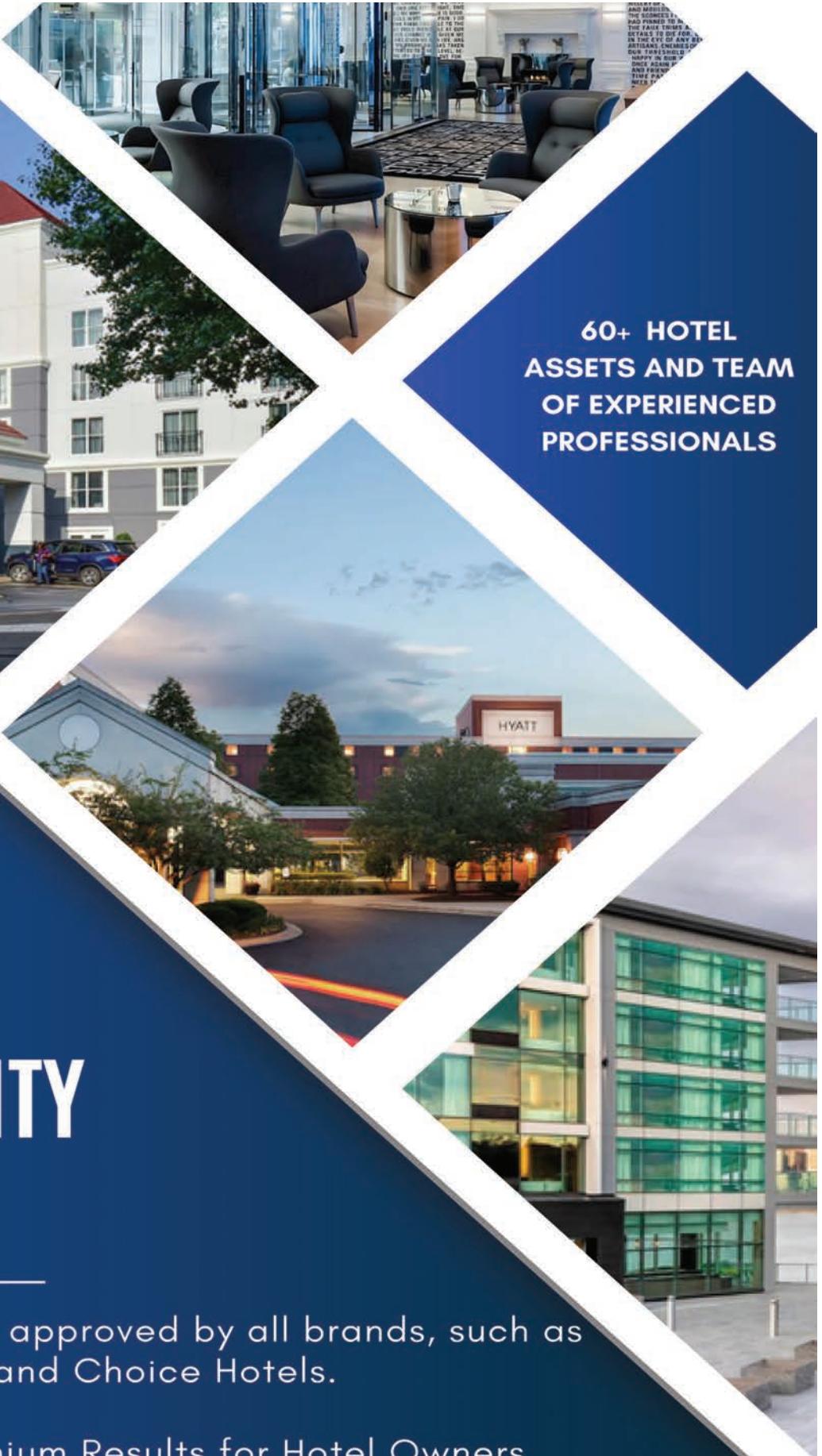
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AR RAHMAN AND RAMAYANA

Sri Ram is a figure revered by people of all faiths; he is our cultural icon, and we are all influenced by the Maryada Purushottam, as he is often called. As a Muslim, I view him as an integral part of our legacy and hold him in high regard among humanity's great personalities. I grew up listening to Kathas (stories) in my hometown of Yelahanka, near Bangalore, and while in Dallas, I had the opportunity to hear Morari Bapuji at the Ekta Mandir. He highlighted all the virtues of Sri Ram.

Some narrow-minded individuals try to confine Sri Ram as if he were their personal property. However, no one truly owns Ram; instead, he belongs to all of us. Each of us can learn from the values he embodied and strive to follow them.

Sri Ram, also known as Rama, is one of the most revered figures in Hinduism. He is celebrated as the embodiment of moral virtue, righteousness (dharma), duty, compassion, courage, and ideal leadership. Often referred to as Maryada Purushottama, meaning "the supreme man," he upholds the highest standards of conduct and honor. His life and adventures are central to the ancient Hindu epic, the Ramayana, which is attributed to the sage Valmiki. This epic is one of the two major epics of Hinduism, the other being the



Music maestro A.R. Rahman

Mahabharata. The story symbolizes the triumph of good over evil, emphasizes the importance of fulfilling one's duty even in times of adversity, and highlights the power of devotion and loyalty.

Music maestro A.R. Rahman recently discussed his work on the album for Nitesh Tiwari's upcoming film, "Ramayana," emphasizing that his faith did not hinder his connection to the project. He also shared insights about

collaborating with Hans Zimmer on the film starring Ranbir Kapoor and Yash. We need to embrace a Muslim artist like Rahman as musical director for the epic "Ramayana," as it highlights the universality of Sri Ram's character. Rather than diminishing Ram, we should celebrate his significance.

In an interview with BBC Asian's YouTube channel, Rahman was asked whether his religious beliefs influenced his composition process. Responding to

this, he said, "I studied in a Brahmin school, and every year we had Ramayana and Mahabharata, so I know the story. The story is about how virtuous a person is, higher ideals, and all that stuff. People may argue, but I value all those good things - any good things that you can learn from. The prophet has said that knowledge is something invaluable, no matter where you get it from - a king, a beggar, a good act, or a bad one. You can't shy away from things."

He further reflected on the larger message of unity and growth, adding, "I think we need to elevate from small-mindedness and selfishness. Because when we elevate, and we become radiant, we become a radiant of that, and that's very important. I am proud of the whole project because it's from India to the whole world, with such love. Hans Zimmer is Jewish, I am Muslim, and the Ramayana is Hindu."

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

CONT'D FROM PAGE 47

Mahakumbh: A Mighty Event, A Mighty Book

transcendental. Water has no boundary, it surges and flows, turns corners, and erodes hardened hearts. The Mahakumbh demands all masks and attire are surrendered to her waters, to find a single skin underneath -- humanity. It is a purification rite that restores the truth underlying all human narratives.

Symbolically we can still dip in the pages of this book to relive the thrill of the event. For those such as myself, who could not attend the event early last year, reading the book is a reenactment of the ritual to experience its excitement and energy. The book has done a great service immortalizing the Mahakumbh, making it tangible for posterity. Finally, we grasp that Prayagraj, a holy site of pilgrimage like Mecca, Jerusalem or Kashi is the human heart where we discover the reconciliation of all contradictions and paradoxes. Where Love finally is the beginning, remainder, and the destination in all our inner and outer journeys. As is expressed so beautifully by His Eminence Cardinal Oswald Gracias: "This book will help us listen more deeply--to the longings of our own heart, to the silent music of creation, and to the voice of the One who speaks through both."

AUTHOR BIO

Usha Akella, Austin-based poet, has authored 11 books that include poetry and spiritual musical dramas. She has been invited to numerous international poetry festivals. She is the founder of the decade-old Matwaala (www.matwaala.com) that amplifies South Asian diasporic poets.

Her editorial works include a 'A House of Words', a festschrift dedicated to Keki Daruwalla published by the Sahitya Akademi of India. Her travel articles have appeared in Indian Express, Swagat, etc., and she has also won acclaim for her astute interviews of various people in The Hindu, Parabola and on her own website of curated interviews www.the-pov.com.

MIKE GHOUSE



Nestled along the sun-kissed coast of Kerala, Varkala is a hidden gem that blends natural splendor, spiritual tranquility, and vibrant culture. Unlike the bustling beaches of Kovalam or Goa, Varkala offers a serene cliffside landscape, stunning sunsets, and a uniquely laid-back charm, making it a must-visit for travelers seeking relaxation, adventure, and spiritual rejuvenation.

Varkala is a coastal town in the southern part of Kerala known for the unique 15m high 'Northern Cliff' adjacent to the Arabian Sea. It is popular for its hippie culture, shacks on the cliff serving great seafood and playing global music and the samadhi of Kerala's saint Sree Narayana Guru. Varkala is also known for Jardana Swami Temple, also known as Dakshin Kashi.

Varkala has some of the best pristine beaches, hills, lakes, forts, lighthouses, natural fisheries and springs - all of this together makes this town a little paradise. You will also find a lot of shops with signboards in Hebrew selling Yoga mats, oxidised silver jewellery and harem pants made of cotton. Ayurvedic spas, affordable resorts, hostels, clean beaches make it a must-visit city of Kerala.

Varkala's most striking feature is its cliffside coastline, known as the Varkala Cliff, which stretches for about 3 km along the Arabian Sea. These red laterite cliffs rise dramatically above the pristine beaches, providing panoramic views of the ocean, perfect for photography, meditation, or simply watching the waves crash below.

Water Sports in Varkala

Varkala is a beautiful coastal town in Thiruvananthapuram district. It lies in the southern part of Kerala. It is the only place in Kerala where the hills come close to the sea. The uniqueness of the place is the merging of cliffs with the Arabian Sea. Varkala Beach is a popular beach where you can enjoy various water sports activities such as para-sailing and paragliding.

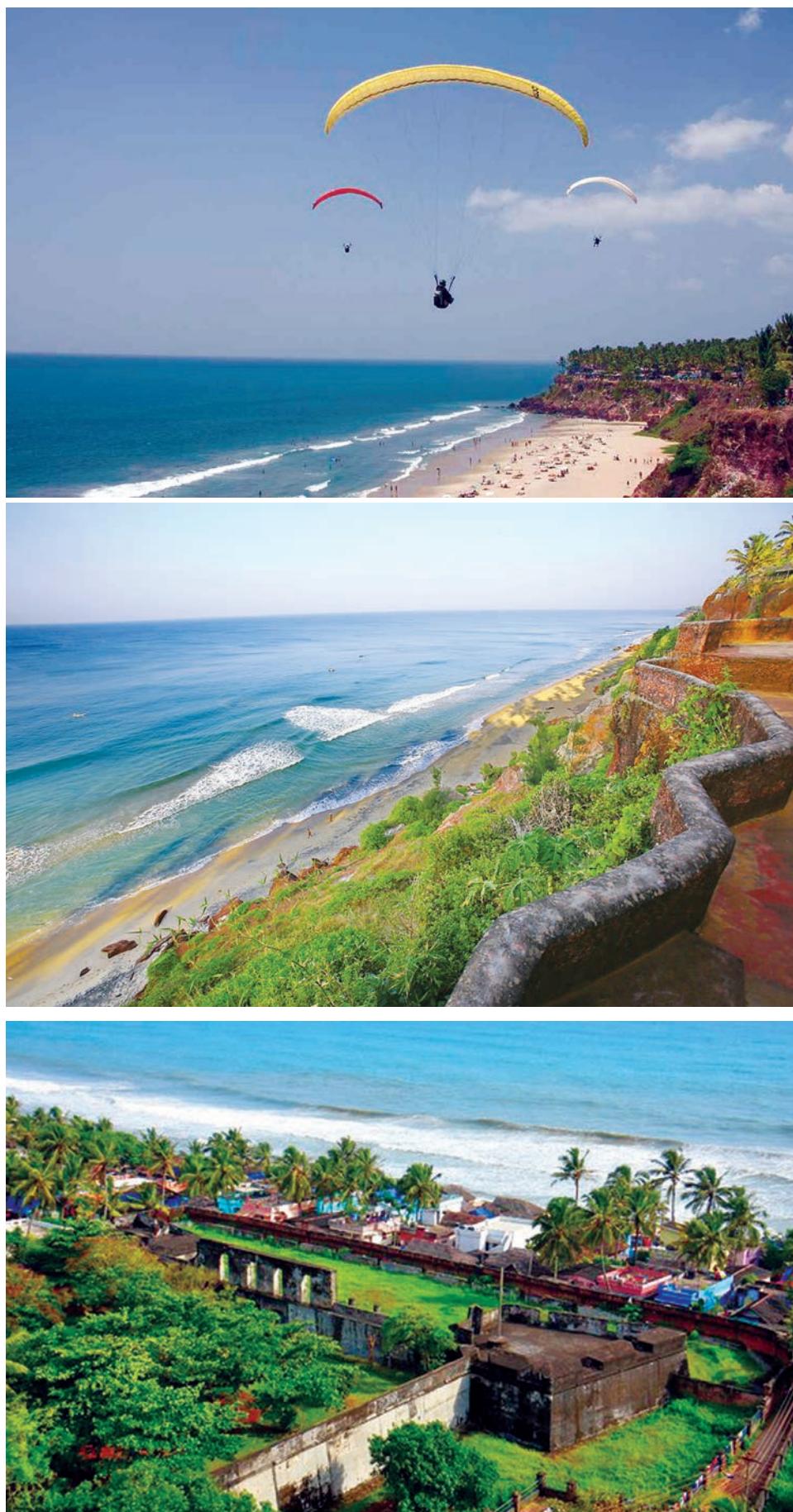
The Geological Survey of India calls it as the Varkala Formation. The Discovery Channel has named Varkala as one of the top ten seasonal beaches.

Several water sports operators are to be found along the beaches, and travellers can easily do a lot of water activities with good fun. The Kapil Lake, situated close to the beach, is another famous destination to enjoy moments of peace. The Chilakkkoor Beach which is close to the Varkala town is a perfect destination to view the sunset. Though the beach is not developed commercially, it is an ideal place for leisurely evening walks.

Varkala Beach

Set amid a beautiful setting about 10 km away from the calm and quiet hamlet of Varkala in Kerala, Varkala Beach, also known as Papanasam Beach, is a beautiful stretch of sand renowned for its solitude unlike other commercial beaches of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The backdrop Arabian Sea against the cliffs of Kerala is a unique one since these sedimentary formation

Varkala: Kerala's cliffside paradise by the Arabian Sea



peaks are not found anywhere in the otherwise flat coastline of Kerala.

The beach itself is divided into two parts, the southern area of the beach lying at the end of the road leading from Janardhana Swamy Temple regarded as sacred by Hindus. However, if you are a tourist, the north part of the beach right at the bottom of the cliff is worth going renowned for its natural mineral spring.

The water of Varkala Beach is

regarded to own medicinal and curative properties. A dip in the hoy water is said to cleanse the body of impurities and all sins and thus the name Papanasam Beach meaning 'Destroyer of Sins'.

Sunsets at the Varkala Beach are especially pristine and call for a serene walk along the beach. Also if you are a seafood lover, then the place is a paradise for you. The eating joints nearby offer some of India's best moth watering and

affordable food.

Edava Beach

Untouched and unspoilt by tourist activities, the Edava beaches are the virgin stretches circling a blue lagoon where sea and backwaters run parallel divided by a more-than-one km of straight road. There is also an estuary that connects the sea with the backwaters here.

Thiruvambadi Beach

Lying 1 km off Thiruvambadi road, this black sand beach adjacent to the North cliff is an ideal picnic spot amidst lush coconut groves to relax and unwind.

Anjengo Fort

Anjengo Fort, situated 12 km off Varkala at Anjengo, is believed to have been built in 17th century. Presently the fort is protected by the National Heritage monuments.

The cemetery in the fort shelters the deceased occupants of the fort. The popular Muthalapuzhi Lake is situated very close to the Fort. Autos or cabs can be taken to reach the fort.

Sivagiri Mutt

Located at Varkala in Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala is the one of the popular ashrams of Shri Narayana Guru, Sivagiri Mutt. This ashram celebrates Guru Deva Jayanti (in August) and the Guru Deva Samadhi (in September) every year.

Janardhana Swami Temple and Varkala Beach are some nearby attractions which one should never miss during their visit to Sivagiri Mutt. Sree Narayana Guru (1855-1928), a saint, social reformer, philosopher and a leader of Ezhava community, made Varkala his headquarters. Sivagiri mutt, instituted by Sree Narayana Guru, is another major pilgrim centre here. The 'Sivagiri Pilgrimage' is usually conducted between 30th December and 1st January every year. Even decades after the Guru breathed his last breathe here in 1928; his Samadhi (resting place) continues to be thronged by thousands of pilgrims. The Sivagiri Mutt is also the headquarters of the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sangham, a religious organization established by the Guru to propagate his concept of 'One Caste, One Religion, One God'.

Ponnumthuruthu

Ponnumthuruthu, also known as Golden Island is located 20 km from Varkala. It is popular for its 100 year old Shiva Parvathi temple situated amidst thick coconut groves stretched over the sandy beaches.

Boats from Nedunganda can be taken through a 30 minute backwater ride to Ponnumthuruthu which offers a perfect getaway from the bustle of city life.

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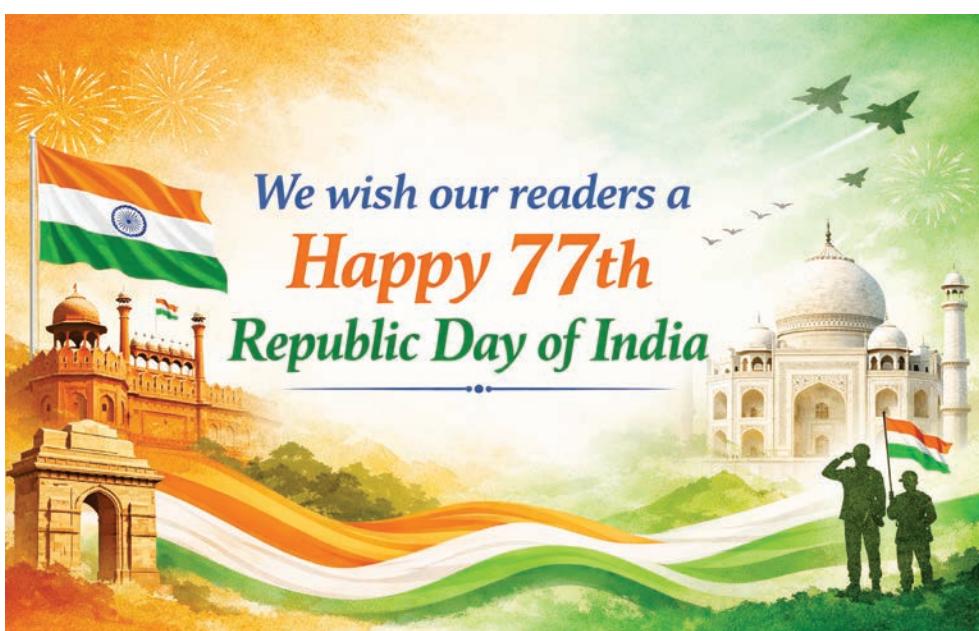
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Andrew Pappachen Receives 2025 Good Samaritan Award for Decades of Service

Celebrated Indian American Leader Recognized by Global Malayalee Christian Forum and CMS College Alumni



Andrew is seen seated with others

AJAY GHOSH
JANUARY 18, 2026
KOTTAYAM (TIP)

Andrew Pappachen, a distinguished Indian American community leader, was honored with the 2025 Good Samaritan Award by the Global Malayalee Christian Forum in a solemn ceremony at the Kochi Ramada Inn on January 17, 2026. This prestigious award celebrates his unwavering commitment to the Indian diaspora, acknowledging over 30 years of dedicated service and leadership.

In a separate event marked by warmth and nostalgia, Pappachen was felicitated by his classmates and professors from CMS College in Kottayam. The gathering, held on a recent Saturday, highlighted his significant contributions to the global Malayalee community and brought together friends, mentors, and supporters from his formative years.

Renowned writer Prof. S. Sivadas, classmate Rev. Dr. K.M. George, and professors including Dr. George Cherian, Dr. Joseph Cherian, Dr. Mary Kuruvilla, Prof. Parvathy, Thomas Job, and Prof. John presented Andrew with a ceremonial shawl, signifying their respect and admiration.

Expressing his gratitude, Pappachen described the recognition as the greatest honor of his life, emphasizing the humility and pride he felt in receiving such accolades from both his professional community and alma mater.

Andrew Pappachen's journey began in Kerala, India, where he earned a master's degree in chemistry from Kerala University. After migrating to the United States in 1973, he continued his academic pursuits, obtaining a master's degree in environmental engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology, New Jersey. Furthering his expertise, he completed a doctoral program and earned specialized Mini master's degrees in water Pollution and Air

Pollution, as well as a degree in Public Administration from Rutgers University.

With a career spanning 47 years in government service, Pappachen worked for the City of Newark, New Jersey, from 1974 to 2018. He held key positions such as Chief Engineer, Director of Operations for Newark



Andrew is honored

Watershed Conservation and Development Corporation, and Director of Public Works. Between 2012 and 2019, he served as Environmental Commissioner in Montville Township, where he continues to reside. Currently, he works as an Environmental Consultant and is a New Jersey State certified water distribution system and water treatment operator. Since 2000, he has also served as an Adjunct Professor, teaching courses on water

pollution, water and wastewater treatment, and environmental regulations.

Pappachen is an accomplished author, with several books published in both English and Malayalam. His English titles include *Love With The Ghost*, *A Journey Alone*, *Rays of Light From The Darkness of A Prison Cell*, *Zero to Infinity*, and *Story of Achu*, each offering unique perspectives and narratives. His Malayalam works, published by Prabath Book House in Trivandrum, comprise *Thalamurakalethedi*, *Theerdhadanathintte Kadha*, *Eruttil Ninnu Velichathilaekku*, and *Sophi*.

Beyond literature and academia, Andrew Pappachen has played a pivotal role in numerous organizations. He is the founder, former Global President, and chairman of the World Malayalee Council, and has held leadership posts at the Kerala Center New York, Asian American Heritage Council, Asia Society, and Festival of People in New Jersey. His community service has been recognized by various associations, including the Asian American Political Coalition, Federation of Indian Associations, Kerala Center New York, Staten Island Malayalee Association, Kerala Cultural Association, and YMCA.

Driven by a vision to unite Malayalees worldwide, Pappachen founded the World Malayalee Voice and has worked tirelessly to foster communication and preserve Malayalee identity across generations. He is the son of Korah and Lucy Andrews from Kollad, Kerala. His wife, Somini, hails from Vadavathoor, Kottayam. Their daughter, Simmy, is an executive in healthcare management, while their son, Kevin, manages fraud investigations at a New Jersey bank. Kevin's wife, Grace, and their daughter, Anna, complete the family.

Andrew Pappachen's life and career stand as a testament to dedicated service, visionary leadership, and the enduring power of community.

(Press release issued by Ajay Ghosh, Media Coordinator, AAPI)



Andrew is awarded a plaque



History This Week

JAN 23 - JAN 29

JANUARY 23

January 23, 1937 - In Moscow, 17 leading Communists went on trial, accused of participating in a plot engineered by Leon Trotsky to overthrow Stalin's regime and assassinate its leaders. After a seven-day trial, 13 of them were sentenced to death. Trotsky fled to Mexico where he was assassinated in 1940.

January 23, 1943 - In North Africa, British forces under General Bernard Montgomery captured Tripoli in Libya.

January 23, 1968 - The American ship USS Pueblo was seized by North Koreans in the Sea of Japan amid claims the Navy ship was spying. The ship was confiscated and its crew held in captivity until December, with one fatality.



Birthday - Russian film director Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948) was born in Riga, Latvia. He developed a new way of film making utilizing artistic montages (a series of arbitrary images) to deliver an emotional impact. Prior to him, most film makers showed scenes in strictly chronological sequences. His classic films include Potemkin, Alexander Nevsky, and Ivan the Terrible.

JANUARY 24



January 24, 1965 - Winston Churchill (1874-1965) died. He had been Britain's wartime prime minister whose courageous leadership and defiant rhetoric had fortified the British during their long struggle against Hitler's Germany. "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat," he stated upon becoming prime minister at the beginning of the war. He called Hitler's Reich a "monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime." Following the war, he coined the term "Iron Curtain" to describe the barrier between areas in Eastern Europe under Soviet Russia's control and the free West.

January 24, 1972 - Japanese soldier Shoichi Yokoi was discovered on Guam after he had spent 28 years hiding out in the jungle not knowing World War II had long since ended.

JANUARY 25

January 25, 1947 - Gangster Al Capone, who once controlled organized crime in Chicago, died in Miami at age 48 from syphilis.

January 25, 1959 - An American Airlines Boeing 707 made the first scheduled transcontinental U.S. flight,

traveling from California to New York.

January 25, 1961 - President John F. Kennedy conducted the first live televised presidential news conference, five days after taking office.

January 25, 1971 - In Uganda, a military coup led by Idi Amin deposed President Milton Obote. Amin then ruled as president-dictator until 1979 when he was ousted by Tanzanian soldiers and Ugandan nationalists. During his reign, Amin expelled all Asians from Uganda, and ordered the execution of more than 300,000 tribal Ugandans.



Birthday - Scientist Robert Boyle (1627-1691) was born in Lismore, Ireland. He formulated Boyle's Law concerning the volume and pressure of gases.

JANUARY 26

January 26, 1943 - Nazis began using Hitler Youths to operate anti-aircraft batteries in Germany following heavy Allied bombing of Berlin and other cities.

January 26, 1994 - Romania became the first former Cold War foe to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) following the collapse of the Soviet Union.



January 26, 1998 - President Bill Clinton made an emphatic denial of charges that he had a sexual affair with Monica Lewinsky and had advised her to lie about it. "...I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky..."

Birthday - Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964) was born on a military base in Little Rock, Arkansas. He commanded Allied forces during World War II in the Pacific. In 1942, he uttered one of the most famous phrases of the war, "I shall return," when forced to leave the Philippines due to the unchecked Japanese advance. In 1950, after war broke out in Korea, he became commander of the United Nations forces. However, disagreements with President Harry Truman over war policy resulted in his dismissal by Truman in April 1951. MacArthur then appeared before Congress and announced his retirement, declaring, "Old soldiers never die - they just fade away."

JANUARY 27

January 27, 1943 - The U.S. 8th Air Force conducted the first all-American bombing raid on Germany as 55 bombers targeted Wilhelmshaven, losing three planes while claiming to have shot down 22 German fighters. The success of this

first mission encouraged U.S. military planners to begin regular daylight bombing raids, which eventually resulted in high casualty rates for the American crewmen involved.



January 27, 1944 - Russian Army General Govorov announced the lifting of the Nazi blockade of Leningrad. During the 900-day siege, an estimated one million Russian civilians inside the city died of disease, starvation and relentless German shelling.

January 27, 1945 - The Russian Army liberated Auschwitz death camp near Krakow in Poland, where the Nazis had systematically murdered an estimated 2,000,000 persons, including 1,500,000 Jews.

January 27, 1967 - Three American astronauts were killed as a fire erupted inside Apollo 1 during a launch simulation test at Cape Kennedy, Florida.

January 27, 1973 - U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War ended as North Vietnamese and American representatives signed an agreement in Paris. The U.S. agreed to remove all remaining troops within 60 days thus ending the longest war in American history. Over 58,000 Americans had been killed, 300,000 wounded and 2,500 declared missing. A total of 566 prisoners-of-war had been held by the North Vietnamese during the war, with 55 reported deaths.

Birthday - Labor leader Samuel Gompers (1850-1924) was born in London. He emigrated to America at age 13, worked in a cigar factory, eventually becoming head of the Cigar Workers' Union. He later brought together several national unions under the name American Federation of Labor and became its first president.

Birthday - German Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859-1941) was born. He was a grandson of England's Queen Victoria and ruled Germany from 1888 through World War I. Although he had military training, he left conduct of the war mainly in the hands of Generals Paul von Hindenburg and Erich von Ludendorff. In 1918, amid the defeat of Germany, he abdicated and fled to the Netherlands where he lived in seclusion until his death. He was given a military funeral by Hitler.

JANUARY 28

January 28, 1915 - The U.S. Coast Guard was created by an Act of Congress, combining the Life Saving Service and the Revenue Cutter Service.

January 28, 1935 - Iceland became the first country to legalize abortion.

January 28, 1963 - African American student Harvey Gantt entered Clemson College in South Carolina, the last state to hold out against integration.

January 28, 1986 - The U.S. Space Shuttle Challenger exploded 74 seconds into its flight, killing seven persons, including Christa McAuliffe, a teacher who was to be the first ordinary citizen in space.

Birthday - Explorer Henry Stanley (1841-1904) was born in Wales. As a



newspaper correspondent for the New York Herald, he was given the challenging assignment of finding missionary-explorer David Livingstone in Africa. Upon locating Livingstone near Lake Tanganyika in 1871 after an exhausting search, Stanley simply asked, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?"

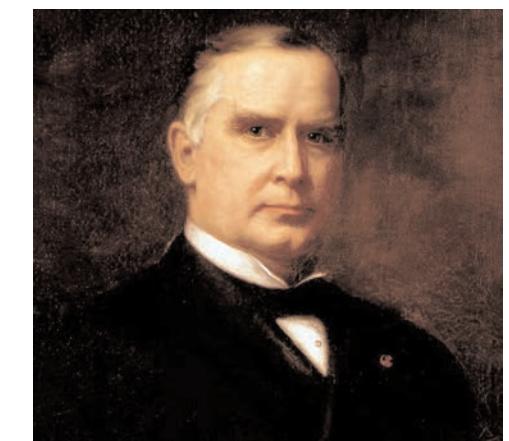
JANUARY 29



January 29, 1916 - During World War I, the first aerial bombings of Paris by German zeppelins took place.

January 29, 1919 - The 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Prohibition Amendment) was ratified. For nearly 14 years, until December 5, 1933, the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages were illegal in the United States. The Amendment had the unexpected result of causing enormous growth of organized crime which provided bootleg liquor to thirsty Americans.

Birthday - Common Sense author Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was born in Thetford, England. His pamphlet, published in 1776, provided inspiration to undecided Americans that a new nation, independent from Britain, might eventually become "...an asylum for mankind!" He served in the Continental Army and observed the hardships of American troops fighting the world's most powerful army. He then published The Crisis series pamphlets which began by stating, "These are the times that try men's souls." He refused to accept the profits from his writings and wound up destitute after the Revolution.



Birthday - William McKinley (1843-1901) the 25th U.S. President was born in Niles, Ohio. He was elected in 1896 and re-elected in 1900. Early in his second term, on September 6, 1901, he was shot and mortally wounded by an anarchist at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, and died eight days later.

Birthday - Russian playwright Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) was born in Taganrog, Russia. His works included Uncle Vanya, Three Sisters and The Cherry Orchard.

Kishan's statement knock, Surya's welcome fifty give India 2-0 lead

RAIPUR (TIP)

Ishan Kishan justified his national recall with a sensational 32-ball-76 while captain Suryakumar Yadav scored his first fifty after 23 innings as India decimated New Zealand by seven wickets for a 2-0 lead in the five-match T20 series here on Friday, January 23.

Ahead of the all important T20 World Cup, it all seems to be falling in place for India with Suryakumar (82 not out off 37) overcoming a prolonged lean patch and Kishan emerging as a destructive top-order enforcer. India were expected to chase 209 on a belter of a pitch but not with such ease after losing Abhishek Sharma and Sanju Samson by the second over of the chase.

Suryakumar and Shivam Dube (36 not out off 18) closed out the game in a canter as India gunned down the target in 15.2 overs. Kishan, back in the side after a gap of more than two years, went berserk from ball one and ended with 11 fours and four sizzling sixes.

Kishan's knock actually would keep Sanju Samson on tenterhooks after back-to-back failures as Tilak Varma, when fit would take that number three position. In such a situation, Kishan stacking up necessary numbers could spell doom for the Kerala man.

His special knock included a flurry of pick up shots, pulls and even a reverse sweep. Such was the timing and impact of the innings that Kishan got a hug from his skipper after mistiming a slog sweep off Ish Sodhi's bowling.

Suryakumar maintained the momentum generated by Kishan in the able company of Dube, who too collected his fair share of sixes.

At the start of the chase, Samson could not carry on for long despite being dropped at deep square leg on the second ball of the innings. The pressure piled up on India when trump card Abhishek's mistimed flick off Jacob Duffy to be holed out at deep square leg. The counter attack from Kishan tilted the game in favour of India.

The captaincy of Mitchell Santner left a lot to be desired as his decision to give Zak Foulkes the third over after two tight overs by Henry and Duffy, left a lot to be desired.

Earlier, Kuldeep Yadav regained form with two timely



strikes in the middle overs as India limited New Zealand to 208 for 6.

Rachin Ravindra (44 off 26) and skipper Mitchell Santner (47 not out off 27) took the attack to India in different phases of the game to ensure New Zealand got past 200-run mark.

Expecting heavy dew, skipper Suryakumar Yadav predictably opted to bowl with Harshit Rana and Kuldeep Yadav playing instead of injured Axar Patel and rested Jasprit Bumrah.

Devon Conway (19 off 9) and Tim Seifert (24 off 13), fresh off BBL, got the Black Caps off to a flying start before falling in quick succession. Conway, who has been caught in the slip cordon multiple times on the white ball tour thus far, went on the offensive in the first over against Arshdeep Singh despite being beaten by an outswinger on the very first ball of the match.

Conway dispatched the left-arm seamer for three crisp fours and a sliced six over backward point for an 18-run over.

Seifert smashed four boundaries off Arshdeep's following over that also went for 18 runs. Harshit Rana was introduced in the fourth over and he struck off his second ball, dismissing Conway for the fourth time in as many innings including his dominance over the left-handers in the ODI series.

Australian Open – Alcaraz beats Moutet in straight sets to cruise into round of 16

In ominous Carlos Alcaraz wasted little energy in his 100th Grand Slam match to sweep into the last 16 of the Australian Open on January 23 with a straight-sets mauling of French showman Corentin Moutet.

The 22-year-old six-time major winner was at a different level on Rod Laver Arena to book his passage with a score of 6-2, 6-4, 6-1 in two hours and five minutes.

Victory thrust him into a clash for a place in the quarterfinals with American 19th seed Tommy Paul, who progressed when Spanish opponent Alejandro Davidovich Fokina retired hurt.

Alcaraz has never gone past the last eight in his four previous trips to Melbourne Park, with the Australian Open the only Grand Slam missing from his burgeoning collection.

He will become the youngest man to win all four majors should he push on and make his breakthrough.

"It wasn't easy. To be honest, when you play someone like Corentin you don't know what's going to be next," said the Spaniard.

"So that's really difficult, you know, to approach the match. But I had fun on the court. I think we both pulled off great shots, great points."

The win against Moutet came in his 100th Slam match with Alcaraz having a remarkable 87-13 win-loss record — matching the legendary Bjorn Borg at the same stage of his career.

Bangladesh to face ICC action for skipping T20 World Cup

MUMBAI (TIP)

Amid a failed last-ditch attempt to overturn the International Cricket Council's (ICC) decision to stage Bangladesh's group games of the 2026 T20 World Cup in India, a fresh media report has claimed that ICC chairman Jay Shah is contemplating strict consequences if Bangladesh pull out of the tournament.

According to news agency ANI, Shah is currently in Dubai, where a final call on the matter is expected to be taken.

Tensions escalated after the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) directed IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders to remove Bangladesh fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman from their squad amid rising regional concerns. The decision did not go down well in Bangladesh, where the government responded by banning the broadcast of the IPL.

Soon after, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) wrote to the ICC, requesting that their T20 World Cup group matches be shifted out of India on security grounds. As per the tournament schedule, Bangladesh are slated to play their group games in Kolkata and Mumbai.

The ICC rejected the request following an independent security assessment that classified the threat level as "low to moderate". The ICC Board of Directors subsequently voted 14-2 in favour of retaining



Bangladesh's matches in India.

As reported by PTI, the BCB then approached the ICC's Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) in an attempt to overturn the decision. However, Clause 1.3 of the DRC's Terms of Reference states that the committee cannot function as an appellate body against decisions taken by the ICC or its authorised committees.

As a result, the DRC declined to hear Bangladesh's plea, ruling that it fell outside its remit under ICC by-laws.

The report further added that a formal announcement on Bangladesh's replacement at the World Cup is expected by Saturday.

"The ICC Board members are extremely unhappy with Aminul Islam Bulbul over holding a press conference before informing the global body. Asif Nazrul is a persona non grata for the ICC, but Bulbul should not have allowed a press conference without first communicating with the ICC," a source told PTI.

Scotland in line to replace Bangladesh

With the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) refusing to change their stand over their team's participation in the upcoming T20 World Cup, Scotland are in line to take their place.

Cricket Scotland have been informally alerted about the developments and a final decision of the International Cricket Council (ICC) is awaited. ICC Chairman Jay Shah was in the Dubai headquarters on Friday, charting out the next course of action.

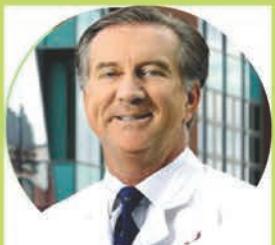
Scotland are likely to replace Bangladesh in Group C to be placed with England, Italy, Nepal and the West Indies. Bangladesh were scheduled to play three matches in Kolkata and one in Mumbai.

On Friday, to have their way in getting Bangladesh's T20 World Cup matches moved from India to Sri Lanka, the Bangladesh Cricket Board wrote to the ICC seeking the intervention of the governing body's Dispute Resolution Committee, but the appeal would not pass muster, it is learnt.

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Best Wishes, Peter



Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



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