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Bangladesh Elections: Massive Mandate for BNP

TARIQUE RAHMAN SET TO BECOME 1ST MALE PM IN 35 YEARS

PM Modi congratulates Tarique Rahman, says 'India will support democratic, inclusive Bangladesh'



Mr. Tarique Rahman in BNP office

I.S. SALUJA FEBRUARY 13, 2026 DHAKA (TIP):

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) on Friday, February 13, claimed victory in the crucial general elections, marred by sporadic incidents of violence, to elect a new government to replace the interim administration, which took charge after the fall of the Awami League regime in August 2024.

"The Bangladesh Nationalist Party-BNP is set to form the government after victory in the majority of seats," BNP's media cell posted on x.

The Election Commission (EC) is yet to make a formal announcement. According to multiple media reports, EC is expected to declare BNP the

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EU leaders ready countermeasures to pressure from Russia, China and Trump

The plan would include measures to coordinate upgrading energy grids, deepen financial integration and loosen merger regulations to allow European firms to grow to better compete globally



European Council President Antonio Costa, right, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen address the media at the end of an EU summit at Alden Biesen Castle in Bilzen-Hoeselt, Belgium, Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026.

Photo Credit / AP

FEBRUARY 13, 2026 BELGIUM (TIP)

European Union leaders broadly agreed on Thursday, February 12, 2026, on a plan to restructure the 27-nation bloc's economy to make it more competitive as they face antagonism from U.S. President Donald Trump,

strong-arm tactics from China and hybrid threats blamed on Russia.

Meeting in a Belgian castle, the EU leaders agreed an "action plan" with a strict timeline for the economic restructuring, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said.

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Nationwide strike in India draws 30 crore (300 million) participants, say trade unions

Members of various trade unions stage a protest during a nationwide strike called by a joint forum of central trade unions to demand the repeal of the four labor codes and the withdrawal of several government policies, in Chennai Thursday, February 12, 2026.



FEBRUARY 13, 2026 NEW DELHI (TIP)

More than 30 crore workers, farmers, agricultural workers, and other groups of employees participated in the general strike on Thursday, February 12, 2026, to protest against the four Labor Codes and the free trade deals being struck with the United States, European Union, and the

United Kingdom, the central trade unions said.

The joint strike call was given by the CTUs and the farm unions of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM). Their charter included demands to withdraw the Draft Seeds Bill,

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UNSC panel notes Pak-based terror group JeM's reported link to Red Fort attack

A deadly and high-intensity explosion had rocked the Red Fort area in New Delhi, killing about 15 people and injuring many more



Security personnel seen at the blast site near Red Fort, in New Delhi.

File Photo /Credit Sushil Kumar Verma

FEBRUARY 13, 2026 UNITED NATIONS (TIP)

A report by the U.N. Security Council sanctions monitoring team has noted that Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed was reported to be linked to a terror attack on the Red Fort in New Delhi last November that killed 15 people.

"One Member State noted that Jaish-e-Mohammed had claimed responsibility for a series of attacks. It was also reported to be linked to an attack on the Red Fort in New Delhi on November 9 that killed 15

people," the 37th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team

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COMMENT

A New Political Chapter in Bangladesh: Hope, Responsibility, and Regional Stakes

Bangladesh stands at a crucial turning point. With elections drawing to a close and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led by Tarique Rahman securing a decisive mandate, the nation appears poised to enter a new political chapter after months of turbulence. The departure of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, now living in exile in India, marked a dramatic shift in Bangladesh's political landscape—one accompanied by unrest, division, and episodes of violence that have left deep scars on the national psyche.

Mr. Rahman's return to Dhaka after 17

years abroad carries symbolism as well as expectation. Exile often transforms leaders, sharpening both their sense of destiny and their burden of responsibility. Upon arrival, he promised good governance, prosperity, and stability. The people of Bangladesh, having endured uncertainty and polarization, are eager for precisely that—a period of healing, economic focus, and democratic normalcy.

Yet promises are the easier part of leadership; performance defines the legacy. Bangladesh has, over the decades, demonstrated resilience despite political upheavals. From its birth in 1971 through successive phases of military and civilian rule, the nation has shown capacity for recovery. But the recent unrest—particularly the tensions between rival political factions and concerns surrounding the treatment of minority Hindus—has brought into sharp focus the fragility of social harmony.

The test before Mr. Rahman is not merely administrative competence; it is moral leadership. Can he prevent recurrence of hostilities between political groups? Can he ensure that Muslims and Hindus alike feel equally protected under the law? Can he move the national conversation away from vengeance toward reconciliation?

The treatment of minorities, especially Hindus, will be closely watched not only domestically but internationally. For India, the matter carries profound significance.



Tarique Rahman has received a massive mandate of the people who, having endured uncertainty and polarization, are eager for a period of healing, economic focus, and democratic normalcy.

The relationship between the two neighbors is intertwined by geography, history, culture, and commerce. Any instability within Bangladesh has immediate regional implications. Cross-border migration pressures, security challenges, and diplomatic tensions inevitably arise when internal harmony deteriorates.

Thus, Indo-Bangladesh relations will depend considerably on how inclusively the new administration governs. Protection of minority rights is not simply a moral obligation—it is a strategic imperative for regional stability.

At the same time, responsibility does not lie on one side alone. If Bangladeshi Muslims face discrimination or hostility in India, such developments could provoke emotional and political repercussions in Bangladesh. The subcontinent's history teaches that communal tensions seldom

partisan power. History will judge which path he chooses. The world, too, watches carefully. Bangladesh is not merely a South Asian state; it is an increasingly important player in global supply chains and regional geopolitics. Investors and governments alike seek predictability, rule of law, and social stability.

This is Bangladesh's moment to turn a page—to replace division with dialogue, hostility with harmony, and fear with fairness. If the new administration governs with even-handed justice, it can transform the present mandate into a durable democratic legacy.

In South Asia, peace is rarely accidental. It is cultivated. And now, more than ever, leaders in Dhaka and New Delhi bear a heavy responsibility to ensure that harmony prevails—for the sake of their peoples and the wider region.

INDRAJIT
SALUJA

remain confined within borders. Leaders on both sides must therefore exercise sagacity and restraint.

New Delhi's approach will also be significant. While respecting Bangladesh's sovereignty, India has an interest in encouraging conditions conducive to stability and pluralism. Diplomacy rooted in mutual respect—not interference—will serve both nations better. Quiet cooperation in trade, infrastructure, water-sharing, and border management can build trust that transcends partisan shifts.

For Mr. Rahman, the overwhelming mandate he has received can become either an opportunity for inclusive statesmanship or a temptation toward consolidation of

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Faith Leaders, Educators and Local Elected Officials Unite for World Interfaith Harmony Week Commemoration in Long Island

FEBRUARY 8, 2026
PLAINVIEW, NY (TIP)

The bitter cold weather was no match for local leaders and youth with hearts burning to advance peace and unity.

More than 100 people gathered on February 7 at the Plainview Jewish Center in Long Island. Participants commemorated World Interfaith Harmony Week, designated by the United Nations General Assembly as an observance celebrated each year during the first week of February.

Saturday's event, hosted by the Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Center, brought together faith leaders, educators, and public figures to promote interfaith harmony. Co-hosts included the Shanti Fund and Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL), an international peace group in special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council and the UN Department of Global Communications.

The event began with opening remarks from the host and co-hosts and statements from local elected officials, including New York State Senator Steven Rhoads and Supervisor Joseph Saladino from the Town of Oyster Bay.

"HWPL does such amazing work and its mission is something that we should all try to take to heart, because to me, interfaith harmony is really the only solution that will solve many of the problems that we have," Senator Rhoads said. "The world will divide us in a million different ways if we allow it, but the one common theme that we have, the one thing that unites us all, is our



common belief in something greater than ourselves, and that's exactly what HWPL is focusing on."

The gathering was divided into several different segments. Following welcoming remarks, a Hindu leader addressed the issue of religious persecution and provided practical steps for the community to take to protect the right to religious freedom. All participants stood for a moment of silence and prayer for victims of persecution and violent extremism.

Jewish, Muslim and Sikh community leaders spoke about the significance of interreligious harmony and peace from the perspective of their own religious traditions and scriptures. Two educators emphasized the importance of teaching the youth core values, including empathy, unity and understanding, to create young ambassadors for peace.

"In our schools, we engage in many activities and programs such as 'No Place for Hate,' 'Unity Day,' and 'Start with Hello.' We also have embedded a civics

rubric in all of our social studies classes so students have a measurement by which they can judge themselves," said Dr. Mary O'Meara, superintendent of schools for the Plainview-Old Bethpage Central Schools District.

"We have created shared learning experiences for our school community through workshops on inclusivity, conducting equity walks, hosting community forums and attending events like today's."

The youth themselves played a key role in the program by participating in several cultural performances. Young people from the Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Center danced and sang traditional hymns. A fan dance team named after South Korea's national flower also graced the stage with a show promoting unity and harmony.

The event was a significant one for HWPL, which received a certificate of recognition from New York State Assemblywoman Rebecca Kassay for their role in organizing the interfaith

harmony week event.

HWPL New York Branch leaders and Mr. Surinder Chawla from the Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Center posed for a photo honoring their memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed for the implementation of HWPL peace education, which will launch in New York for the first time in February with a training to develop peace educators. The leaders of the Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Center later gifted the HWPL New York Branch leaders with traditional shawls.

The Plainview Jewish Center was honored to provide their venue for the commemorative gathering and looks forward to future programs that can unite diverse members of the community.

"I think in the times we live in, I mean, all we hear is hate and intolerance and conflict," said Plainview Jewish Center President Shea Lerner. "I think any opportunity to get together with like-minded people who believe in peace and justice and equity--we have to avail ourselves of those opportunities."

Jaime Greenberg Named Honoree of 20th Annual Cooking For A Cure Fundraiser For Diabetes Research Institute Foundation (DRIF)

FEBRUARY 13, 2026
GLEN COVE, N.Y. (TIP)

For the last 25 years, Glen Cove's Jaime Greenberg has been a tireless community advocate, leader in the field of adoption law, proud father of two children, and a dedicated public servant in numerous roles. Now, he's elevating his commitment to a cause that hits especially close to home - the fight to end Type 1 Diabetes in our lifetime.

Greenberg and his family will be honored at the 20th anniversary Cooking for a Cure fundraiser, which is being held at the Crescent Beach Club in Bayville on Wednesday, April 22. "I can't wait to do whatever we can to support the DRIF and help scientists build a cure," he said.

Jaime's experiences with diabetes span much of his life, and his personal passion for the fight to cure and prevent type 1 diabetes intensified after his son Sean's diagnosis.

After Sean, a hockey player, was losing weight and drinking water excessively, tests at a subsequent doctor's visit revealed the cause, and Sean was rushed to Cohen's Children's Hospital for immediate care and information about how to manage his diabetes. Now 21, Sean is thriving and plans to continue with his hockey pursuits thanks to a Dexcom



Sean growing up

continuous glucose monitor pump, excellent nutritional habits, and his own diligence.

Soon after, though, a frightening incident revealed Jaime's own type 2 diabetes diagnosis.

"I was driving, and I passed out while I was behind the wheel," he said. "My blood sugar was through the roof. My mom was diabetic, so I always knew about diabetes, but I didn't pick up on the signs for myself. It came out of left field."

Through his involvement in Glen Cove Junior Soccer - which he now leads as its President - Jaime met event co-founder Delia DeRiggi-Whitton, and they spoke frequently about their children and their respective experiences with type 1 diabetes.

"I've been very involved the last couple of years, and I'm gaining greater understanding and following the

breakthroughs," Jaime said. "My goal and hope someday is for Sean and everyone with diabetes to have something in their bodies so they don't have to take insulin anymore."

Throughout its run, Cooking for a Cure has raised more than \$1.5 million for the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation, which supports the Institute's cutting-edge work as a world leader in cure- and prevention-focused diabetes research. Research at the DRI is uncovering ways to naturally regenerate the human pancreas, leading to expanded treatment therapies and accelerating our path to cure and prevention.

"Whether he is on the soccer field, supporting families in the courtroom as an adoption specialist, advocating for our youth or supporting local businesses, Jaime has proven himself to be a passionate advocate for the causes that



Sean with family

Photos / Courtesy of the Greenberg family

matter most - and there is nothing more important than the health of our children and a diabetes-free future," said DeRiggi-Whitton, the Minority Leader of the Nassau County Legislature. "It has been a blessing to see Jaime and his son thrive after being diagnosed, and I am so proud to have the Greenberg family in our corner on this mission. I hope to see everyone on April 22 as we continue the fight for a cure!"

Tickets are \$125 and available for online purchase at cookingforacure.givesmart.com. Contact Mariah Moscone, Director of External Affairs at the DRIF and Development Manager for Team DRI, at 954-964-4040, ext. 1123 or mмосcone@drif.org for additional information.

A New Kind of Service Movement Emerges on Long Island - Led by Youth, Powered by Community



FEBRUARY 8, 2026
GLEN COVE, NY (TIP)

Long Island witnessed more than the launch of a new civic chapter on February 7, 2026; it saw the birth of a movement designed to redefine how communities engage, how youth lead, and how service evolves for a new generation.

The inaugural Charter Night of the Long Island MindSpark Lions Club brought together a diverse gathering of attendees from across the region, signaling strong interest and momentum behind an organization that places youth, innovation, and inclusive service at its core.

From the outset, the tone of the evening was clear: this was not simply a ceremonial launch. It was a declaration of

purpose.

Community members, Lions district leaders, charter representatives, families, and professionals filled the venue to learn about a chapter built on a forward-looking mission - empowering youth from all communities to actively serve those in need while developing leadership, compassion, and real-world problem-solving skills.

What stood out most was the unmistakable energy of young participants. Youth voices were not only present - they were central. Several young attendees addressed the gathering, sharing their needs, ambitions, and the gaps they see in access to opportunities, mentorship, and platforms for innovation. Their perspectives



transformed the evening from a formal event into a dialogue about the future.

District Governor, District 20-K2 (Nassau County & Bermuda) Jeanne



Behind the event's success was the generous support of the Maddipatla Foundation, the major sponsor, whose commitment to youth development and community advancement made the launch possible.

Mulry and partner Lion Kevin Immediate Past District Governor Maria Leitao MD 20 Past Council Chair Paula Umreiko and partner Past Council Chair Andy Umreiko



The evening was further elevated by the presence of Dr. Nori, a Padma Bhushan awardee and distinguished guest, whose participation underscored the initiative's credibility and significance. His message resonated deeply: meaningful change begins when communities invest in their youth not just as beneficiaries, but as leaders.

Lions district leaders and charter members from across the network also attended, demonstrating strong institutional backing for a chapter that reflects the evolving priorities of service organizations worldwide.

THE ATTENDEES INCLUDED:

Past International President Al Brandel and partner Lion Dr. Maureen Murphy

Lions Clubs International Foundation Constitutional Area 1 Vice Leader PDG Lorri Rieger and her partner, District Marketing Chair PDG Fred Rieger

Past District Governor & District Global Membership Team Chair Sue Piccolo

District Global Extension Team Chair Sharon Wozniak

District LCIF coordinator Helen Farley District Chaplain Teri Resca

District Zone Chair Anju Sharma

EVENT DETAILS:

Pledge of Allegiance done by PDG Fred Rieger

District Chaplain Teri Resca offered the Invocation.

Lion Toast by District LCIF coordinator Helen Farley

Toast to the Kind by Past District Governor Maria Leitao

Ganpati Vandana by performers Ayra Potti, Shilpika Punna, and Anaira Rachhariya, choreographed by Hamsini Jamboor.

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

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Indian origin Nisha Agarwal appointed to head 'People with Disabilities' in New York

New Commissioner to focus on accessibility in New York City

**FEBRUARY 11, 2026
NEW YORK CITY (TIP)**

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani has appointed Indian-origin Nisha Agarwal as the new Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People With Disabilities.

The appointment was announced on February 10 as part of a series of senior-level changes in the city administration.

Agarwal would be responsible for improving accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities across New York City as the head of the office.

Her role would also focus on ensuring that city services, public infrastructure, housing, transport, health care, education and employment programs are accessible to all residents.

Mayor Mamdani, while announcing the appointment, said that making the city affordable is not enough and stressed that accessibility must also be a priority. He said Agarwal's experience in



Nisha Agarwal

Photo: @NYCMayor/X

law, government and advocacy would

help remove long-standing barriers faced by people with disabilities.

Agarwal is a public interest lawyer and has worked in several key government and advocacy roles.

She previously held senior positions at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and at the International Refugee Assistance Project.

During the administration of former mayor Bill de Blasio, she also led the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs.

She is a Harvard graduate and lives in Brooklyn. Her father Suresh Agarwal, worked as a nuclear engineer and mother Rita Agarwal worked in human resources. She also has a brother, named Neil.

Reacting to her appointment, Agarwal told a local website: "I will work with and on behalf of disabled New Yorkers to ensure accessibility is central to how this city serves its residents".

Indian American educator Ankur Patel enters Los Angeles Board of Education race

**FEBRUARY 11, 2026
LOS ANGELES (TIP)**



Ankur Patel, Indian American educator and longtime public-school advocate, has entered the race for a seat on the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Board of Education from District 4.

Ankur Patel, Indian American educator and longtime public-school advocate, has entered the race for a seat on the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Board of Education from District 4.

Running on a platform centered on systemic transparency and the expansion of student support services, Patel himself a product of LAUSD, seeks to bridge the gap between administrative policy and the daily realities of the classroom.

Patel's journey is deeply intertwined with the San Fernando Valley, where he attended local public schools before earning a B.S. from UCLA in Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution

His campaign emphasizes a "student-first" philosophy, shaped by his years as a community coordinator and environmental advocate. Patel argues that the district's massive budget often fails to reach the students who need it most, particularly those in underserved pockets of District 4.

"I am a product of this district, and I know its potential," Patel said during a recent community outreach event. "But I also see where the system is failing to support the holistic needs of our children. We cannot expect academic excellence if we aren't first addressing the mental health and well-being of every student."

A primary pillar of Patel's platform is the integration of more robust mental health resources within schools. He advocates for a lower student-to-counselor ratio, arguing that the current workload for school staff prevents meaningful intervention for at-risk youth.

Furthermore, Patel is calling for an "open-book" approach to the district's finances. He intends to implement more rigorous oversight of how bond measures and state funding are allocated, ensuring that infrastructure improvements do not come at the expense of classroom resources.

Patel is also leaning heavily into his background in science and sustainability. He has proposed initiatives to greenify urban campuses, suggesting that school environments play a critical role in student performance and local climate resilience.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

First turbaned Sikh in Pakistan army now Lieutenant Colonel

**FEBRUARY 12, 2026
ISLAMABAD (TIP)**

Harcharan Singh, the first turbaned Pakistani Sikh, who made history by securing a place in the Pakistan army has now become the first Sikh to be decorated with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.



Harcharan Singh, the first turbaned Pakistani Sikh, who made history by securing a place in the Pakistan army has now become the first Sikh to be decorated with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

He was born in 1987 in Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak. His promotion to Lieutenant Colonel was approved after rigorous selection board evaluation conducted in late 2025. Minorities have faced a hard time finding space in the Islamic framework of statehood in the neighboring country.

Confirming this, Pakistan Punjab's Minister for Minorities Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora said though many Christians have served in the Pakistan army, no Hindu or Sikh 'could qualify'.

Singh had joined the Pakistan army in 2007 at the age of 20 as Captain. Initially serving in the Ordnance Corps, Singh later volunteered for a combat role and was posted to the 12th Battalion of the Baloch Regiment where he served in demanding operational and border areas while being at the rank of Major.

"Lt Col Singh's achievement has proved that there is no barrier for the minorities in Pakistan, and that only talent speaks and sets the parameters for success. Lt Col Singh is an example of equality of all religions and unity in Pakistan. We, as part of the Sikh community, will give him a rousing welcome when he visits his hometown next," he said.

Delighted at his brother's success, Mastan Singh, the former president of Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC) said, "Lt Col Singh is the pride of Baba Nanak's city and the whole Sikh community, as well," he said. At present, Lt Col Singh is posted at Abbottabad in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Indian American physician-scientist Padma Gulur appointed as head of anesthesiology by Washington University

**FEBRUARY 12, 2026
WASHINGTON (TIP)**

Dr. Padma Gulur, a prominent Indian American physician-scientist and authority on pain management, is set to lead the Department of Anesthesiology at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis from Aug. 1. Gulur will also serve as the inaugural Alex S. Evers MD Distinguished Professor in Anesthesiology, according to a university release.

Gulur comes to WashU from Duke University, where she has served as the interim chair of the Department of Anesthesiology. Her career has been defined by a commitment to redefining how hospitals and communities approach pain, particularly in the wake of the national opioid crisis.

"Dr. Gulur has made transformative contributions to pain management," said Dr. David H. Perlmutter, dean of WashU Medicine. He noted that her ability to change the trajectory of patient outcomes by providing high-quality care while reducing the risk of addiction makes her a vital addition to the university's leadership.

Gulur is widely recognized for developing two care models now used across the country. One focuses on the critical window following surgery, ensuring patients receive effective relief without falling into the trap of long-term opioid use. The other is a community-based proactive approach, identifying individuals at risk for chronic pain before their conditions escalate.

Beyond administrative leadership, Gulur is a pioneer in non-invasive medical technology. Her research has explored alternatives to traditional medication, including green light therapy. This is a treatment that uses specific light wavelengths to mitigate pain. Her work has even led to patented technologies designed to make opioid dispensing safer.

"I am honored to lead the Department of Anesthesiology at WashU Medicine," Gulur said. She emphasized that the university's culture of collaboration provides a unique environment to advance medical science and patient care.

Gulur's professional journey includes significant tenures at Massachusetts General Hospital and the University of California, Irvine. At every stop, she has championed multidisciplinary care, particularly for pediatric patients and those recovering from complex surgeries.

She succeeds Dr. Michael S. Avidan, who has led the department since 2019. Under Avidan's tenure, the department reached a No. 1 national ranking in NIH funding. Avidan will remain on the faculty to continue his own groundbreaking research into perioperative mental health.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



Dr. Padma Gulur is set to lead the Department of Anesthesiology at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis from Aug. 1

Braving extreme cold, 870 Children display their dancing skills at FIA's 42nd Dance Pe Chance Edition

**FEBRUARY 8, 2026
TRENTON, NJ (TIP)**

The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA-NY-NJ-CT-NE) successfully presented the 42nd Edition

The evening welcomed over 2,200 attendees, including dignitaries, community leaders, and cultural enthusiasts, who were treated to an extraordinary showcase of rhythm,

Sreekanth Akkapalli outlined key milestones of the year and emphasized the vital role of volunteers. FIA Chairman Mr Ankur Vaidya spoke about FIA's continued growth as a

diaspora. Hon. Deputy Consul General-NY Vishal J Harsh also graced the occasion, extending his support to the community and acknowledging FIA's



Polished and elegant rhythmic dance performances that left the audiences awe-struck, charmed and pleased.

of its flagship cultural event, Dance Pe Chance (DPC), on Saturday, February 7, 2026, at the Patriots Theatre at the War Memorial in Trenton, New Jersey. Held in celebration of India's 77th Republic Day and the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram, the sold-out event reaffirmed DPC's standing as one of the largest and most prestigious Indian American dance competitions in the United States.

creativity, and cultural tradition inspired by Indian classical, folk, Bollywood, and contemporary dance forms.

The program opened with the national anthems, followed by presentations highlighting FIA's mission and accomplishments. DPC Chair Ms Priti Ray-Patel reflected on the four-decade legacy of Dance Pe Chance, while FIA President Mr

unifying force for the Indian diaspora.

A special highlight of the evening was the Oath Ceremony for FIA's 2026 Executive Committee, administered by Hon. Consul General of India, Amb. Binaya S. Pradhan. In his address, Amb. Pradhan commended FIA for continuously elevating the scale and impact of the event and outlined expanded consular services available to meet the evolving needs of the Indian

continued commitment to cultural preservation and diaspora engagement.

The competition was judged by a distinguished panel featuring legendary actress Padmini Kolhapure, renowned choreographer Supriya Doshi, and acclaimed classical dance exponent Antima Chakraborty, whose expert insights encouraged

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CONTD FROM PAGE 6



The talented participants

1st MINOR CATEGORY AWARD 2026

Rudra Dance Academy



Winners of Minor and Junior categories

1st JUNIOR CATEGORY AWARD 2026

Rudra Dance Academy



1st SENIOR CATEGORY AWARD 2026

Rudra Dance Academy



Winners of Senior and Adult categories

1st ADULT CATEGORY AWARD 2026

Shivaay Dance Creations



participants to push creative and artistic boundaries.

The event was masterfully hosted by Emcee, Ms. Mamta Narula and Ms Srishti Narula, who kept audiences engaged throughout the evening.

This year's edition featured nearly 870 performers from 18 premier dance academies, presenting 31 captivating performances across Minor, Junior, Senior, and Adult categories. Performers delivered a powerful fusion of traditional and modern dance styles, reflecting India's rich cultural heritage while embracing contemporary expression.

Broadway-style production elements-including a massive LED backdrop, immersive lighting, and elaborate costumes-enhanced the storytelling and transformed the stage into a visually spectacular experience.

During the grand finale, over 100 dedicated volunteers were recognized for their contributions, followed by the much-anticipated awards ceremony honoring winners in categories such as Best Choreography, Thematic Innovation, and Outstanding Spirit.

As the curtains closed, FIA leadership reaffirmed that Dance Pe Chance continues to serve as a bridge between generations, fostering cultural pride, youth leadership, and artistic excellence within the Indian American community. Planning is already underway for the 43rd Edition in 2027, promising an even more spectacular celebration.

The success of the event was made possible through the generous support of FIA's sponsors. Bansal Foundation, Diaspora Bi-weekly, TAK group, Bombino Express, Times Network and media partners The South Asian Times, New India Abroad, The Indian Panorama, TV9 USA, ITV Gold, Parikh Worldwide Media and TV Asia for their generous support, making this milestone event possible.

ABOUT THE FEDERATION OF INDIAN ASSOCIATIONS (FIA-NY-NJ-CT-NE)

The Federation of Indian Associations is one of the oldest and largest non-profit umbrella organizations representing Indian Americans in the northeastern United States. Through cultural, civic, and community initiatives, FIA works to preserve heritage, promote unity, and celebrate the contributions of the Indian diaspora.

SEE MORE PHOTOGRAPHS at www.theindianpanorama.news



The judges and the audience

Optics, Hype, and Reality: Who Really Won the US-India Trade "Deals"?

DAVE
MAKKAR



The consummate event manager-perpetually in campaign mode-Nation Divider, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced recent foreign trade arrangements in his trademark theatrical style. As with most major foreign policy announcements under this government, the public rollout followed a predictable four-step sequence: optics first, hype and headlines next, emotional reactions after that, and finally-often weeks later-the arrival of reality.

Within the span of a week, the Modi government proclaimed that India had "signed" two major foreign trade deals. The India-EU arrangement was triumphantly labeled the "Mother of All Deals," while the India-US arrangement was branded the "Father of All Deals." The grandiose nomenclature, however, masks a far more sobering truth.

Reality Check: The "Mother of All Deals" (India-EU)

NOT A DEAL-NOT YET

Despite celebratory headlines amplified by the ruling BJP, its allies, and a largely compliant mainstream media ecosystem dominated by crony capitalist interests, the India-EU agreement is far from concluded.

KEY REALITIES IGNORED IN THE HYPE:

- Any EU trade agreement must be ratified by all 27 EU national parliaments and the European Parliament, a process that typically takes 12-18 months, and often longer. Many such deals stall or are diluted.
- While the EU is a large market of roughly 450 million people, its GDP per capita (~\$56,000) is significantly lower than that of the United States (~\$85,000), with purchasing power unevenly distributed. Over 50% of EU consumers-particularly in Eastern and Southern Europe-have little disposable income for non-essentials. Wealthier, longer-standing members (like Germany, France the Nordics, Benelux) demand high quality that Indian manufacturing isn't positioned to deliver.
- In absolute economic terms, the comparison is starker:
US GDP: ~\$30.6 trillion
EU GDP (27 countries combined): ~\$19.9 trillion.

The US economy is nearly 54% larger than the EU's.

Calling this a completed or transformational deal is, at best, premature-and at worst, deliberately misleading.

Reality Check: The "Father of All Deals" (India-US)

SPIN VS. SUBSTANCE

Indian mainstream media has breathlessly claimed that Prime Minister Modi "got US tariffs reduced from 50% to 18%." This is factually incorrect.

The reality:

- Tariffs were 25%, plus an additional

25% punitive component linked to India's purchase of Russian oil.

- Historically, under BJP Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, average tariffs stood at 3.31%.
- Under Congress Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, they were further reduced to 2.93%.

What is now being sold as a diplomatic triumph is, in comparative and historical terms, a regression.

A growing chorus of independent economists in India warns that this is not a victory born of negotiation, but a capitulation shaped in Washington. Government assurances that India's "sensitive sectors" have been protected ring hollow. In reality, what New Delhi calls "sensitive" is merely a bargaining chip for American negotiators-experts in leverage and coercion. This is not a partnership of equals; it resembles a diktat that risks eroding India's economic sovereignty.

Technology (iCET).

Based on these developments, here's a sectoral and ultimate winner analysis:

Who Actually Won? A Sector-by-Sector Analysis

United States Wins

1. Agriculture & Dairy

- Resolution of WTO disputes on poultry and pork gives US farmers expanded access to the Indian market.
- Favorable tariff treatment for products such as turkey, duck, blueberries, and cherries.

2. Medical Devices

- India agreed to revisit price controls on devices like stents and knee implants-long opposed by US manufacturers-granting better pricing predictability and market access.

- India's most significant gain lies here:

- Jet engine technology (GE F414)
- Cooperation in AI, quantum computing, and space
- This accelerates military modernization and leapfrogs years of indigenous R&D.

4. Tariff De-escalation

- Removal of retaliatory tariffs avoided further trade escalation and restored limited access for Indian steel and aluminum.

Conclusion: Who Is the Real Winner?

In pure trade and market-access terms, the United States emerges as the clear winner. It secured concessions in agriculture, medical devices, and technology while preserving its economic leverage.

India's gains are strategic rather than



India and the European Union have signed a free trade deal, creating the world's largest free trade zone.

No Grand Deal-Just Incremental Arrangements

It is crucial to clarify that there is no single, comprehensive US-India trade agreement resembling a traditional Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Instead, the relationship has advanced through a series of smaller agreements, truces in long-standing disputes, and strategic sectoral partnerships, primarily under the framework of the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum and bilateral dialogues.

- Resolution of six WTO disputes (2023)
- Sector-specific understandings.
- Strategic technology partnerships under bilateral dialogues and the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum

The most notable initiatives include WTO dispute settlements and new collaborations in Critical and Emerging

3. Technology & Semiconductors

- US firms (Micron, Applied Materials, Lam Research) are major beneficiaries of India's semiconductor push.
- The US gains supply-chain diversification away from China while retaining technological dominance.

India Wins

1. Manufacturing ("China Plus One")
- US companies relocating supply chains align with India's PLI schemes, boosting manufacturing, jobs, and exports.

2. Services & Skilled Labor

- Continued access for Indian IT and engineering talent to the US market sustains firms like TCS, Infosys, and Wipro, despite visa frictions.

3. Defense & Strategic Technology

commercial-most notably in defense, advanced technology, and geopolitical alignment against China. These benefits are long-term and contingent, not immediate or guaranteed.

The government's attempt to market these incremental, uneven arrangements as the "Mother" and "Father" of all deals is less diplomacy and more domestic political theater. Once the optics fade and the headlines move on, the reality is unmistakable: this was not a triumph of trade negotiation, but a carefully choreographed exercise in perception management.

(Dave Makkar is a Social & Political Activist based in New Jersey, USA. He can be reached at davemakkar@yahoo.com The opinion expressed by the writer is his own, not necessarily the publication's)

The approaching AI surge, its global consequences

M.K.
NARAYANAN



WITH AI DISRUPTING GLOBAL POWER, WARFARE AND GOVERNANCE, THE ISSUE IS WHETHER HUMANITY CAN KEEP PACE WITH A SET OF CHECKS AND BALANCES IN PLACE

If there is a single technology that promises to unravel the present and usher in a new era, the bet would be on Artificial Intelligence (AI). At the very least, AI is set to effect a transformation that is comparable to any previous revolution, not excluding the Industrial Revolution. Impressive Large Language Models (LLMs) are already rolling out faster than one would have imagined possible. Rivalry between the United States and China in this area has become intense and the success of recent Chinese models is having a catalytic effect on the AI industry as a whole. This is, however, only the beginning.

All this has special relevance to a world which Canadian Prime Minister, Mark Carney, described in his address to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos (in January this year), as follows: "... We are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition... great powers have begun using economic integration as weapons, tariffs as leverage, financial infrastructure as coercion, supply chains as vulnerabilities to be exploited". Mr. Carney did not, however, touch on potentially the greatest disruptor of all, viz., AI, or refer to the baneful/beneficial influence of AI which is already beginning to impact today's world. When he talked of great power rivalry, and that countries in between have a choice, there was no mention of AI and what impact it would have on today's world, and more so in the future.

FACE THE REALITY

World leaders must, however, wake up to this new reality, and come to terms with a phenomenon in which Open AI is beginning to consume the world. There is little realization that the transformation that is taking place is almost certain to turn the world upside down. When Mr. Carney stated that 'we are in the midst of a rupture and not a transition', he did not have in mind - and probably realized even less - that it is the advent of AI, rather than other aspects, that is likely to herald the collapse of the international order as we know it.

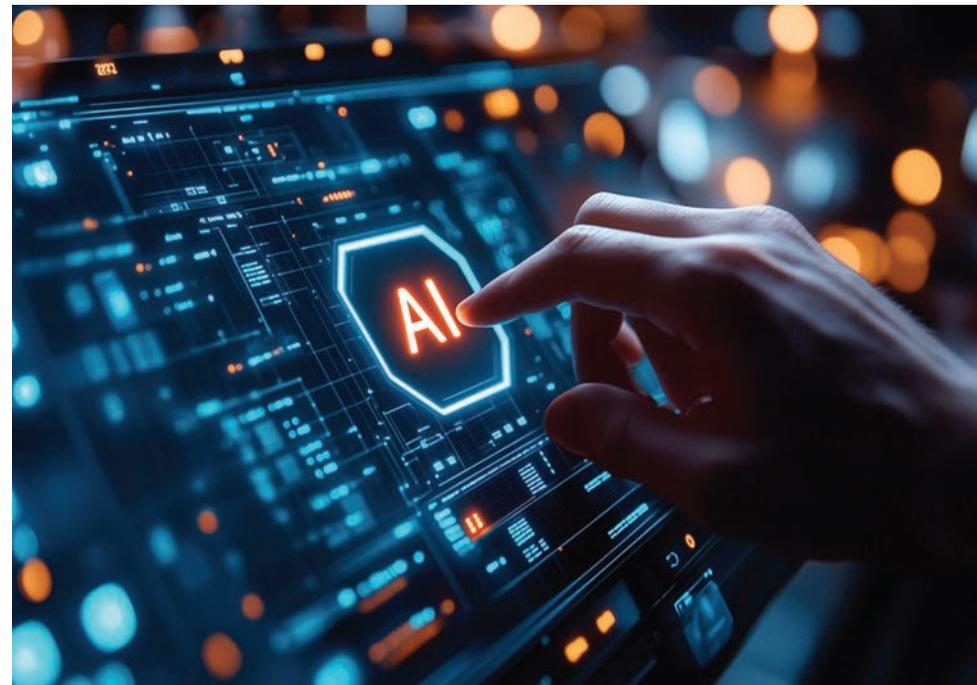
WHY AI INFRASTRUCTURE MATTERS MORE

Few leaders currently understand the extent of the threat posed by AI to the world as we know it. Some industry leaders such as Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella have pointed out that AI was already being used as tools of diplomacy and state-craft, and that nations require to build resilience and sovereign stacks. AI did figure in discussions at the WEF, but the contents of the debate hardly mirrored the dangers arising from unchecked AI. A great deal of the debate turned on how countries were placed to exploit this new phenomenon, with Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw taking time off to rebut the

presumption that India was a secondary AI power. Industry leaders, no doubt, increasingly see AI as a strategic enabler, given that digital transformation is helping to reshape competitiveness across different sectors - from fintech to health care. Additionally, there is some realization that AI's potential extends to other sectors as well. The judicial fraternity, for one, however, believes that there is a need to be more cautious about the use of AI in court proceedings, and that excessive reliance on AI in court rooms could lead to misjudgment. They point to the dangers of 'hallucinations' which could lead to improper citations and fabricated judgments.

MARCHING AHEAD ACROSS DOMAINS

All this, however, is but a precursor to



'Scientists, political leaders and others must come together to understand the implications of runaway AI technologies'

what the real potential and danger posed by AI in the world of tomorrow are. As AI proliferates globally, it is already becoming evident that few technologies have the potential to exert the same degree of influence in terms of enhancing information flows, surveillance capabilities, revolutionizing of communications, empowering analytical frameworks and the military-industrial segment. No other area of technology seems to have such a profound impact on existing civilizational networks.

In this sense, AI portends a breaching of certain limits that had existed since the Second World War and the overweening threat posed by technology and its utilization in different domains. What is noteworthy is that AI operates at granular levels - and that the technology itself is undergoing a phased transition. In its present form, AI is already enabling the replication of speech and language, vision and reasoning, but what is little realized is that it is set to

achieve new and dangerous heights of capabilities. This is specially so in regard to military and defense applications, for as AI becomes increasingly militarized, warfare itself is bound to - and is already undergoing - a paradigm shift from man to unmanned platforms, and from dependence on human-controlled systems to autonomous ones, that are capable of making their own decisions.

Even as AI is set to become all pervasive, its transformative impact on warfare, especially in the area of the evolution of weapon systems, is what is most worrisome. AI has made possible the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles that are capable of autonomous flight. AI-driven cyber weapons and uncrewed ground vehicles equipped with intelligent navigation and targeting capabilities are already a

conventional military capabilities. It is the hugely asymmetric impact that AI commands, that is both its strength and its danger portent. Though this is not being openly mentioned or touted, the reality is that it represents a colossal transfer of power from the traditional military to others, who have the capacity to develop and utilize AI devices. The real danger is that AI could very soon eclipse the smartest individuals, and nobody can or will know, when they become autonomous, and totally out of human control.

The dystopian impact of a powerful set of technologies which are not under the control of a human body or entity, and of self-sustaining technology, portrays a doomsday scenario. The beginnings of this are already evident, and are set to escalate enormously to the next levels of the concentration of power. There are unlimited possibilities in the doomsday scenario of autonomous drone swarms unleashing attacks on crowds, killing hundreds, if not, thousands. Both the military and security establishments would seek to equip themselves with such devices in a few years. AI would then be well set to become the greatest force amplifier in history. Its impact could range from wars and accidents, to random terror groups, to counter-revolutionary forces, and the like. The blunt truth is that nobody knows when, if how, AI might overtake or eclipse humans, and become an autonomous force for good or evil.

It is also becoming evident that, apart from the battlefield, AI is now becoming an instrument of immense value in different spheres of human activity including diplomacy and intelligence. In that sense, it is no longer merely a tool. Concerns that technologies such as AI would outpace institutions meant to govern them are real, but the most spectacular demonstration of AI is as yet on the battlefield - as seen across western Europe and West Asia. In both sectors, space, cyber and electronic warfare capacities have been woven together to completely transform the nature of warfare itself.

NEED FOR EFFECTIVE OVERSIGHT

The obiter dictum - given that AI enables rapid data processing and predictive analysis, and also provides opportunities for a variety of options, including crisis response, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution - is that humankind must develop a set of checks and balances to prevent AI from 'running away with the bit in its mouth'. Scientists, political leaders and others must come together to understand the implications of runaway AI technologies and decide how to keep them under control and in a manner that they benefit, rather than become a threat to, humankind.

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

Why Parliament needs quiet conversations

THE ABSENCE OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE RULING DISPENSATION AND THE OPPOSITION IS VISIBLE IN RAHUL GANDHI'S REFERENCE TO NARAVANE'S WORK

VIVEK
KATJU



"THE BITTERNESS, RANCOR AND INVECTIVE NOW WITNESSED ALMOST DAILY AMONG THE LEADERS OF THE RULING DISPENSATION AND THE OPPOSITION INDICATES THAT THE TRADITION OF BEING IN COMMUNICATION WITH ONE ANOTHER IS EITHER ABSENT OR NOT AS MUCH AS IT SHOULD BE. THIS IS PARTICULARLY DAMAGING TO NATIONAL INTEREST BECAUSE THE COUNTRY IS FACING GRAVE STRATEGIC CHALLENGES"

The disruption in the Lok Sabha that prevented a discussion on the Budget is over. A new chapter of bitterness, though, has begun, with the Opposition moving a no-confidence motion against Speaker Om Birla. All through this Lok Sabha session, the Opposition has targeted Birla for not giving sufficient time to it in the chamber's proceedings. Since the beginning of this Budget Session, the Congress has been particularly aggrieved that Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi has not been allowed to speak.

Gandhi wanted to focus on excerpts from the book 'Four Stars of Destiny' written by a former Army Chief, General Manoj Mukund Naravane. The book is not formally in the public domain. It is yet to be cleared by the Ministry of Defense (MoD). General Naravane has said that it was sent for clearance to the MoD by the publishers. Gandhi has shown a hard copy of the work in Parliament's premises. Soft copies of the book are circulating on the internet. The Delhi police have lodged an FIR to investigate how the book is available on the internet if it has not been approved for publication.

The government has taken the position in the Lok Sabha that Gandhi cannot refer to a book which has not been cleared for publication. This may be technically correct, but the government would be aware that what General Naravane has purportedly written in the book regarding India-China clashes in Eastern Ladakh in 2020 is circulating among the public. This would inevitably lead to many people making up their minds on the issue without having the benefit of the government viewpoint.

With regard to memoirs, a point may be made. Military and civilian officers who have held sensitive and senior positions have to eschew the temptation

of treading into the territory of confidential information while penning their memoirs. They also have to be conscious that their interaction with the political leadership, while they were in service, was always based on trust. It is a matter of honor and obligation that this trust between the military and civilian officers and the political leadership is

taken the nation's interest in the diplomatic and political spheres into account.

The recent impasse in the Lok Sabha and the motion against Birla once again highlights the absence of sufficient communication between different elements of the political class. Yes, there is a degree of contact during

with one another is either absent or not as much as it should be. This is particularly damaging to national interest because the country is facing grave strategic challenges.

The absence of dialogue between the ruling dispensation and the Opposition is visible in Gandhi's reference to Naravane's work. Once Gandhi had



Disruption: Lok Sabha MPs who were suspended for 'unruly behavior' in Parliament on Feb 4.

-Photo / PTI

always maintained while in service or after retirement. The system will be greatly impaired if details of meetings of Cabinet committees or the decision-making processes, especially on matters of national security, are revealed. Even if these officers feel that political leaders erred or that they were let down, they do not have the luxury or liberty to break that trust after their retirement.

Senior military and civilian officers have to be conscious of their remit. Thus, civilian officers need to be conscious that decisions given to them have to be interpreted by them within their area of responsibility. And, military officers have to refract decisions or advice of the political leadership strictly within the confines of their military responsibilities. They cannot view them from any other perspective. Thus, if a matter is left to their discretion, it is to be interpreted by them narrowly in the context of their military duties and not be extended to the diplomatic and political domains. That is the jurisdiction of other institutions of the state. Military leaders have to assume, in such situations, that the discretion given to them has been only after the political leadership has

Parliament's sessions so that it can function even if only to a minimal extent. However, the lack of communication on issues is obvious.

This is in contrast to what prevailed in the past. Former civil servants can recall that leaders in the government and the Opposition kept in touch with each other on issues of national significance. I remember occasions during my diplomatic career when the government briefed leaders of the Opposition before embarking on a major diplomatic initiative or when the nation faced a sudden crisis.

This was done not because such an outreach would prevent the ebb and flow of politics on the issues on which these briefings were done, but because they gave an understanding to all sections of the political class of the challenges and opportunities relating to these issues. In some instances, the leaders communicated directly with one another while in other cases, through trusted aides.

The bitterness, rancor and invective now witnessed almost daily among the leaders of the ruling dispensation and the Opposition indicates that the tradition of being in communication

referred to it, the government could have told him that it could not agree to any discussion based on the work, but that it was willing to brief him on the reasons which have led it to not give clearance to the work. It could have briefed him in confidence about the important incidents in Eastern Ladakh, including those which have been purportedly mentioned in the work. After all, the members of the political class are all committed to the nation's interest. They all have a sense of what can be disclosed and what has to be kept secret.

I recall an incident which occurred in the Standing Committee on External Affairs chaired by former Prime Minister IK Gujral. It illustrated that the political class knows what can be disclosed and what has to be held back. Foreign Secretary K Raghunath was being questioned about India's assistance to the Northern Alliance. Members were getting impatient with Raghunath's sparse answers; Gujral stepped in to say that he knew what the MEA was doing and closed the discussion. No member protested.

(Vivek Katju is a former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs)

The commemoration of the 29th anniversary of the Ghulja Massacre

**FEBRUARY 9, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

The commemoration of the 29th anniversary of the Ghulja Massacre, a pivotal moment in Uyghur history symbolizing ongoing repression, took place during the World Interfaith Harmony Week celebrations in New York City on Tuesday, February 3, 2026.

Held at the Church Center for the United Nations, the event featured an impressive lineup of speakers. Dr. Thomas Walsh, President and Trustee of the HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership and former Chairman of the Universal Peace Federation, delivered the keynote address. Among the other notable participants were Imam Dr. Shamsi Ali, President and Founder of the Nusantara Foundation; Ms. Rushan Abbas, Founder and Executive Director of Campaign for Uyghurs; Rev. Dr. T.K. Nakagaki, President and Founder of the Heiwa Peace and Reconciliation Foundation; and Mrs. Amanda Akue, Chief Branch Manager of the HWPL New York Branch. The event was moderated by Guru Dileepji, who led a meaningful dialogue and remembrance of the tragic occurrence.

During his opening remarks, Guruji emphasized the significance of the Ghulja Massacre of February 3-5, 1997, as a crucial reminder of the ongoing struggles faced by the Uyghur people in China. He called for immediate dialogue on their rights and acknowledged the deep trauma within the Uyghur diaspora. Honoring those who lost their lives, he expressed strong solidarity with the community in their fight for fundamental rights and cultural identity.

Participants observed a moment of silent prayer, and guest speakers lit candles in tribute. Guruji declared this anniversary a powerful call to action, urging greater awareness of Uyghur human rights issues and robust international advocacy for justice and cultural preservation.

Ms. Rushan Abbas, Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the World Uyghur Congress, delivered a powerful and compelling speech that commanded attention at the gathering, highlighting the Ghulja Massacre and the ongoing struggles faced by the Uyghur community in China. She vividly recounted the tragic events of February 1997, emphasizing the critical and immediate need for unwavering advocacy for Uyghur rights. Her remarks



celebrated the remarkable resilience of the Uyghur people, exemplified by her own family, while firmly asserting the necessity to protect their cultural identity in the face of escalating repression. This repression by Chinese authorities encompasses digital

in internment camps, facing forced labor and the suppression of their religious rights. He condemned the destruction of their cultural identities and the horrific physical and mental torture they endure, including mass rape. Additionally, he criticized the separation of children



surveillance, informant networks, family coercion, cyberattacks, and physical intimidation. Ms. Abbas issued a determined call to the international community, urging them to stand resolutely against these injustices, including the genocide of Uyghurs in China, and to offer their full support to the Uyghur cause. She advocated for a united front to achieve profound and lasting change and justice.

Imam Dr. Shamsi Ali, President of the Nusantara Foundation, spoke powerfully about the Uyghur crisis, stating that over one million individuals are unjustly held

from their parents, who are taken to boarding schools to adopt communist ideology. Imam Ali urged for immediate global awareness and action against these serious human rights violations.

Dr. Thomas Walsh, President of HJ International, delivered a keynote speech addressing the oppressive and Sinicization policies of the Chinese government under President Xi Jinping. He focused on the government's initiative to enforce atheism through state-controlled patriotic religious associations, which suppress various faiths, especially Uyghur Islam. During

his talk, Dr. Walsh noted that an anti-cult association specifically targets groups like the Uyghurs, Falun Dafa, and the Church of Almighty God, labeling them as anti-patriotic in China. He stressed the Communist Party's dominance over religious organizations, including its authority in appointing Catholic bishops.

Dr. Walsh raised alarms about the situation of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, pointing out the harsh limitations on their cultural and religious expressions, such as the ban on traditional clothing and the forceful requirement to eat during Ramadan. Furthermore, children are prohibited from receiving religious education until they reach 18, which contributes to the erosion of their cultural identity. He concluded by highlighting the oppressive surveillance state in China, which implements a sophisticated and systematic monitoring system that observes all facets of life, exacerbating the repression faced by the Uyghur population.

Rev. Dr. T.K. Nakagaki, President of the Heiwa Peace and Reconciliation Foundation pointed out that Dalai Lama, the Tibetan leader or Taiwanese people cannot enter or speak at the United Nations. Mrs. Amanda Akue, Chief Branch Manager of the HWPL New York Branch, emphasized that everyone contributes to building a world of peace, freedom, and love, highlighting the importance of collective action to support communities in need.

In his concluding remarks, Guruji expressed concern for those suffering under the Chinese government's repression, particularly the Uyghur, Tibetan Buddhists, and Turkic Muslim communities. He emphasized that systematic detainment and invasive surveillance threaten individual freedoms and global human rights. Guruji called on the international community to stand in solidarity with these vulnerable groups and demand accountability from the Chinese Communist Party while urging for commemorative events to be transformed into real advocacy and policy change.

(Based on a press note issued by Guru Dileepji. He can be contacted at +1 (212) 851 6672 (Call, Text & WhatsApp) o +1 (917) 300 4004 (Call only). Website: <https://www.gurudeleepji.com>)



DOJ's antitrust chief has been fired, sources say

FEBRUARY 12, 2026
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

Gail Slater, who ran the antitrust division for the Justice Department for nearly a year, was fired by the Trump administration this week, two people familiar with the matter told CNN.

Slater, who suggested in a post on X Thursday, February 12, she was leaving on her own, had been repeatedly at odds with Attorney General Pam Bondi and the West Wing for months, the sources said. Her removal as the antitrust chief was viewed as a long time coming, and it remains to be seen who fills her role on a permanent basis.

Bondi issued tepid praise of Slater in a statement Thursday, February 12.

"On behalf of the Department of Justice, we thank Gail Slater for her service to the Antitrust Division



Gail Slater

which works to protect consumers, promote affordability, and expand economic opportunity," the

attorney general said.

The friction between Slater and President Donald Trump's White House had been clear for months. In December, Trump issued a "full and unconditional pardon" for Oak View Group co-founder Tim Leiweke, who was indicted by his own Justice Department - in a case led by Slater - earlier in 2025.

"As outlined in the indictment, the Defendant rigged a bidding process to benefit his own company and deprived a public university and taxpayers of the benefits of competitive bidding," Slater said in a statement at the time.

Slater said in her Thursday post on X: "It is with great sadness and abiding hope that I leave my role as AAG for Antitrust today. It was indeed the honor of a lifetime to serve in this role."

(Source: CNN)

EPSTEINSHAKE

Kathy Ruemmler, top Goldman Sachs lawyer, resigning amid Epstein fallout

FEBRUARY 12, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)

Kathy Ruemmler, the chief legal officer at Goldman Sachs, said Thursday, February 12 night she is resigning amid fallout from the Justice Department's release of millions of pages of Jeffrey Epstein documents, a CNN report says.



Kathy Ruemmler, chief legal officer at Goldman Sachs

Her resignation is effective June 30.

Her announcement comes as she has weathered numerous news stories in recent weeks examining her relationship with the disgraced financier.

Ruemmler and those around her have insisted she had a professional relationship with Epstein.

"Since I joined Goldman Sachs six years ago, it has been my privilege to help oversee the firm's legal, reputational, and regulatory matters; to enhance our strong risk management processes; and to ensure that we live by our core value of integrity in everything we do," Ruemmler, a former Obama White House counsel, said in a statement to CNN. "My responsibility is to put Goldman Sachs' interests first. Earlier today, I regretfully informed David Solomon of my intention to step down as Chief Legal Officer and General Counsel of Goldman Sachs as of June 30, 2026."

David Solomon, CEO of Goldman Sachs, told CNN in a statement: "Throughout her tenure, Kathy has been an extraordinary general counsel, and we are grateful for her contributions and sound advice on a wide range of consequential legal matters for the firm. As one of the most accomplished professionals in her field, Kathy has also been a mentor and friend to many of our people, and she will be missed. I accepted her resignation, and I respect her decision."

Chairman of law firm Paul Weiss resigns after Epstein emails become public

FEBRUARY 5, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)

Brad Karp, the chairman of Paul Weiss, one of the most prominent corporate law firms in the country, abruptly resigned from his post Wednesday after newly released Jeffrey Epstein files revealed his email exchanges with the convicted sex offender, though he will remain at the firm.



Brad Karp, the chairman of Paul Weiss

"Leading Paul, Weiss for the past 18 years has been the honor of my professional life. Recent reporting has created a distraction and has placed a focus on me that is not in the best interests of the firm," Karp said in a statement Wednesday evening.

Karp was appointed chairman of Paul Weiss nearly two decades ago and "will continue to focus his full-time attention to client service at the firm," according to a statement the firm gave CNN. Paul Weiss announced Scott

Barshay has taken over as chairman.

Emails released by the Justice Department last week show that Karp and Epstein maintained communications as recently as 2019, the year Epstein died.

On July 22, 2015, Karp in an email profusely thanked Epstein for hosting him for an evening he called "once in a lifetime."

Karp wrote, "Jeffrey, I can't thank you enough for including me in an evening I'll never forget. It was truly 'once in a lifetime' in every way, though I hope to be invited again. You are an extraordinary host - and your home....!!! Thanks, again. See you soon. Brad"

Epstein replied, "you are always welcome. . there are many many nights of unique talents. you will be invited often"

The Wall Street Journal first reported Karp's resignation. A spokesperson for the firm, fully named Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP, previously told the paper, "Mr. Karp never witnessed or participated in any misconduct. Mr. Karp attended two group dinners in New York City and had a small number of social interactions by email, all of which he regrets."

In June 2016, Karp asked Epstein if he could help get his son a job in an upcoming Woody Allen film.

Karp wrote that his son "would love to work, in any capacity, with Woody on his upcoming film project, if that's a possibility. He certainly doesn't need to be paid and he's a really good, talented kid. Thanks so much. Brad"

Epstein replied, "i will ask, of course. can you tell me what role he would like to fill , i know little about the movies"

Karp made headlines last March after meeting with President Donald Trump and reaching a deal for the president to rescind his executive order that suspended security clearances for lawyers and staff at the law firm.

Treasury, IRS provide guidance for certain energy tax credits regarding material assistance provided by prohibited foreign entities under the One, Big, Beautiful Bill

FEBRUARY 12, 2026
WASHINGTON (TIP)

The Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service today issued a notice providing guidance for determining whether electricity-producing qualified facilities, energy storage technologies, or eligible components are receiving material assistance from a prohibited foreign entity (PFE) and would be ineligible for certain energy tax credits.

The One, Big, Beautiful Bill added new restrictions to clean electricity credits under Internal Revenue Code Sections 45Y and 48E, and the advanced manufacturing production credit under Section 45X to determine eligibility for credits when there is material assistance from a PFE.



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Notice 2026-15 provides that Treasury and IRS intend to propose regulations with respect to the definition of a PFE and the calculation of the material assistance cost ratio that taxpayers must use to determine whether there was material assistance from a PFE. The notice also details how to use interim safe harbors authorized by the OBBB and provides example calculations under those safe harbors.

The notice also provides that Treasury and IRS intend to propose regulations and other further guidance with respect to the definition of a PFE and the material assistance rules, including new safe harbor tables as authorized in the OBBB.

THE NOTICE EXPLAINS THAT A TAXPAYER MAY RELY ON THE RULES PROVIDED IN THE NOTICE TO CALCULATE THE MATERIAL ASSISTANCE COST RATIO FOR:

- * any Section 45Y or 48E qualified facility or energy storage technology the construction of which begins after Dec. 31, 2025, until 60 days after the publication of the forthcoming safe harbor tables.
- * any Section 45X eligible components sold in taxable years beginning after July 4, 2025, the date of the OBBB's enactment, until the date that the forthcoming safe harbor tables are published.

Finally, the notice requests comments 45 days from the date of publication regarding definitional, anti-circumvention, and other issues for future guidance.

For more information, visit One, Big, Beautiful Bill Provisions on IRS.gov.

Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller Welcomes Monks on "Walk for Peace" to Final Stop in Annapolis



Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller (4th from the right in a saffron coat) with monks

**FEBRUARY 12, 2026
ANNAPOLIS, MD (TIP)**

Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller welcomed on Thursday, February 12, nearly two dozen Buddhist monks to the Maryland State House, the final destination on their "Walk for Peace." The monks, along with dozens of volunteers and their canine companion, Aloka, have walked more than 2,300 miles from Fort Worth, Texas, to Washington D.C. This marks the first time the monks have visited an official residence of a First Family along their entire journey.

"I am profoundly honored that this extraordinary delegation of venerable monks chose to include Annapolis as a sacred stop on their remarkable journey. To witness our community respond with such an outpouring of love, unity, and compassion fills my heart beyond measure," said Lt. Governor Aruna Miller. "From Fort Worth, Texas, across ten states and through our nation's capital, it is both fitting and deeply symbolic that the Walk for Peace concludes here in Annapolis - the nation's first peacetime capital. This is a moment that will be etched in our history and in our hearts. We will never forget the grace, the purpose, and the profound spirit of peace that has brought us together today."

Upwards of 12,000 people flocked to Annapolis to welcome the monks on their approach to the capitol from the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium. Following brief remarks, Lt. Governor Miller escorted the monks inside the State House to be introduced to the House and Senate Chambers, where they were presented with resolutions in recognition of their journey, and for a

collaborative conversation with other local elected officials and the Council for Interfaith Outreach, chaired by the Lt. Governor.

Governor Wes Moore and First Lady Dawn Moore also



Maryland Governor Wes Moore and First Lady Dawn Moore welcomed the monks to Government House

welcomed the monks to Government House for a private lunch. Before their meal, the monks were presented with Maryland State Flags pins to commemorate their visit and thank them for their commitment to compassion and peace.

"It was an honor to welcome these spiritual leaders to Maryland, the final destination of their powerful 'Walk for Peace,'" said Governor Wes Moore. "To walk 2,300 miles is a physical feat and a profound act of faith in motion. It was a privilege to welcome them to the People's House as they conclude their journey."

"After a powerful journey across the nation, the governor and I are proud to welcome these monks to 'The People's House,' a place where we are committed to ensuring that all people feel seen and welcomed," said First Lady Moore. "As a state, we know that in order to create change and build a better future - we must work together. We thank the monks for being an inspiration to all Marylanders, and showing us how we can unite our communities, uplift our society, and build meaningful connections under the one common goal of peace."

Dr. Lora Hargrove, Director of Faith Outreach for the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives, guided the conversation with the Council and the monks, emphasizing the importance of interfaith collaboration in strengthening community resilience, promoting mutual respect across religious traditions, and addressing common challenges together.

"When faith communities come together to listen, learn, and serve alongside one another, we create a foundation of unity that lifts up all Marylanders," said Governor's Office of Community Initiatives Director of Faith Outreach Dr. Lora Hargrove. "Here in Maryland, we are proud to stand with leaders of all faiths to build bridges, foster dialogue, and advance peace in our communities."

Anne Arundel County Executive Stuart Pittman and Lt. Governor Aruna Miller each presented the monks



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller presenting Venerable Bhikkhu Paññakara, a proclamation declaring February 12, 2026 as "Walk for Peace Day."

with a proclamation declaring February 12, 2026 as "Walk for Peace Day." Faith Community Liaison for Montgomery County Kate Chance presented the monks with a "Peace Day," citation. Capitol Police Lieutenant Colonel Glend McGuire presented them with a police badge to honor their journey and their presence.

The walk began in Fort Worth, Texas, on October 26, 2025. Rooted in Theravada Buddhist teachings of nonviolence, mindfulness, and loving-kindness, the pilgrimage was launched to raise awareness for peace after lead monk Venerable Bhikkhu Paññakara said he observed a lack of mindfulness across the nation and the world. The group initially brought only 1,000 "peace bracelets" to share along the journey, but by the end, they had distributed hundreds of thousands.

"When we started out in Fort Worth, Texas, we were alone. We are not alone anymore," said Venerable Bhikkhu Paññakara. "After this walk, we are not alone. We have so many people walking with us on this path, together, for the better. So I am honored, I am grateful, that I chose this walk for peace."

India Culture Center (ICC), Houston celebrates 77th Republic Day of India



**FEBRUARY 3, 2026
HOUSTON (TIP)**

The Consulate General of India, Houston, congratulates the India Culture Center (ICC), Houston-one of the region's oldest and most respected diaspora organizations-for the successful celebration

of the 77th Republic Day of India on Sunday, February 1, 2026.

A truly diaspora-driven celebration, showcasing the vibrant cultural heritage of India, saw enthusiastic participation from community members, elected representatives, and cultural groups from

across Greater Houston.

The Consulate was pleased to support the initiative; established a Consular Help Desk and a Tourism Promotion Desk to provide assistance and engage with the community. Consul Prashant Sona represented the Consulate at the celebrations.

Events like these are more than celebrations; they are platforms to reconnect, collaborate, and contribute-strengthening the bridge between our community's adopted homeland and Bharat, while passing forward our shared legacy to future generations.

Ambassador of India to Rumania Holds Business interaction to attract investment opportunities

FEBRUARY 6, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)

A Business interaction was arranged during the visit of Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra on 4-5 February 2026 at Galati. Business meetings were organised with the support of Ms. Adriana Radu, General Manager, Romanian Investment Zoom. The interaction brought together leading members of the local business community along with senior local government representatives, including the Mayor of Gala?, the County President, and the President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The meeting served as an interactive platform for promoting investment opportunities in India and strengthening bilateral economic engagement. It enabled companies from both sides to explore cooperation opportunities across diverse business sectors.



Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra is addressing the Business Interaction event at Galati

The business interaction was conducted in a business round table format and witnessed participation from more than 35 representatives of the Romanian business community, many of whom expressed strong interest in developing partnerships with Indian counterparts. The meeting commenced with special remarks by H.E. the Ambassador, who highlighted India's emergence as a global hub across sectors including technology, manufacturing, and innovation. The Ambassador conveyed appreciation to all participants and extended sincere thanks to Ms. Adriana Radu for facilitating meaningful business engagement during the visit.



Ambassador had a meeting with Mr. Mitica Sandu and Ms Doina Cucu, Vice Presidents of Galati County Council



Business Interaction Meet

The interaction generated positive interest among participants, opening avenues for future collaboration, technology partnerships, and continued engagement between industry stakeholders. The event further



Ambassador met with Mr. Ionut Pucleanu, Mayor of Galati

reinforced ongoing efforts to deepen India-Romania cooperation across business and technology sectors.

The Ambassador reaffirmed its continued commitment to strengthening economic and commercial ties between India and Romania,



Ambassador met Mr. Marian Barbu, Rector of "Dunarea de Jos University", to discuss strengthening academic cooperation



Ambassador's meeting with Ms. Andreea-Anamaria Naggari, Prefect of Galati

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.

In addition to the business interaction, H.E. the Ambassador held a series of productive meetings with senior government and institutional representatives of



Ambassador, Mayor and President City Hall

Galati, including Mr. Ionu? Pucleanu, Mayor of Galati, Ms. Andreea-Anamaria Naggari, Prefect of Galati, Mr. Costel Fotea, President of the Galati County Council, Mr. Ion Mocanu, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Galati, Mr. Mitica Sandu and Ms Doina Cucu, Vice Presidents of Galati County Council. Discussions focused on investment and business opportunities in the region, highlighting Galati's strategic location as an industrial and logistics hub with strong potential for cooperation in sectors such as manufacturing, port logistics, technology, and trade facilitation. Both sides expressed interest in

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Extended Celebration of India's Republic Day in Timisoara Showcases Cultural Unity and Cinematic Tribute



Ambassador celebrated the 77th Republic Day with Indian Community from Timisoara



Ambassador and Dr. Nilima Rajpal Kundnani meet with local hero

**FEBRUARY 8, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)**

The Embassy of India in Bucharest commemorated the 77th Republic Day of India through an extended celebration held on 7 February at Hotel Rivo, Timisoara, bringing together members of the Indian and Romanian communities for a historic and vibrant cultural evening marked by unity, reflection, and shared cultural appreciation.

India's Republic Day, observed annually on 26 January to mark the adoption of the Constitution of India, was celebrated in Timișoara through a special event organized by the Embassy of India to Romania and Moldova in collaboration with the vibrant Indian community from the Timisoara and the region. The event witnessed the participation of nearly 250 distinguished guests from both the Indian and Romanian communities.

The celebration was graced by the presence of H.E. Dr. Manoj Kumar

Mohapatra, Ambassador of India to Romania, alongside esteemed local dignitaries, including Mr. Alexandru Varzaru, Head of Economic and International Cooperation Services at the Mayor's Office; Ms. Liliana Oneț, Subprefect of Timiș County; Prof. Dr. Dorel Șandesc, Pro-Rector and Hospital Manager, UMF Timișoara; and several other prominent representatives of the city. Among the distinguished attendees was Mr. Christian Farkas Elisei, owner of a regional chain of hotels, including Hotel Rivo, where the event was organized.

In his address, Ambassador Dr. Mohapatra underscored the vital role of cultural diplomacy and people-to-people engagement in strengthening the enduring friendship between India and Romania. The program featured a screening of the patriotic film *Dhurandhar*, inspired by the true story of a spy, portraying themes of courage,

sacrifice, and national pride that resonated deeply with the audience.

During the event, Dr. Nilima Rajpal Kundnani was recognised for her 28 years of dedicated social service in Romania. The Ambassador also expressed heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Nilima and other medical staff of the Județean Hospital for their tireless efforts in saving the life of Mr. Rajinder Singh, an Indian construction worker who suffered a serious workplace accident in December 2025.

The celebration brought together workers, professionals, academics, and dignitaries, symbolizing unity across social and professional backgrounds. Organizers noted that this marked the first large-scale celebration of India's Republic Day in Timișoara, uniquely centered on fostering intercultural understanding through cinema and community participation. Adding a culinary dimension to the festivities,

guests were served traditional Indian cuisine prepared by India Bistro, led by Mr. Deepak, which was warmly appreciated and contributed to the festive spirit of the evening.

During the program, the upcoming Holi Festival of Colors, scheduled to be held in Timisoara on 15 March 2026, was also announced. Renowned for its multicultural character, Timișoara continues to welcome growing international communities. Celebrations such as this Republic Day event reflect the city's inclusive spirit and highlight the role of cultural initiatives in strengthening bonds between Indian and Romanian residents.

The evening concluded on a note of optimism, reaffirming the shared commitment of India and Romania to friendship, cooperation, and deepening cultural exchange.

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

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exploring avenues to enhance business cooperation and attract investments, particularly in areas aligned with India's growing industrial and technological strengths.

The Ambassador also met with Mr. Marian Barbu, Rector of Dunărea de Jos

University of Galați, where discussions centred on strengthening academic cooperation and promoting knowledge exchange between India and Romania. The interaction explored possibilities for student and faculty exchanges, collaborative research initiatives, and



Ambassador interacted with students of "Dunarea de Jos University", highlighting opportunities for India-Romania educational exchange



Business Representatives and Government Representatives with Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra

partnerships between universities of the two countries to enhance academic and professional opportunities for students. During his visit to the university, the Ambassador also interacted with students, encouraging them to explore educational and cultural exchanges with India and highlighting opportunities for higher studies and cooperation in emerging academic and technological

fields.

The business interaction event concluded with productive and forward-looking discussions, reflecting strong mutual interest and laying the groundwork for deeper cooperation all sectors between India and Romania.

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

NSA Doval visits Canada, meets Canada's outgoing Deputy Clerk & National Security and Intelligence Advisor

FEBRUARY 8, 2026
OTTAWA (TIP)

India's National Security Advisor (NSA), Ajit Doval, was on a two-day visit to Canada this weekend. He not only met Nathalie Drouin, the outgoing Deputy Clerk and National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister of Canada, but also the Public Affairs Minister, Gary Anandasangaree.

Eye brows have been raised in political circles about her meeting Ajit Doval, especially when she is packing her bags to go to Paris on her diplomatic assignment. It would have been better if her successor had met the Indian NSA, as both countries have a series of contentious issues related to law and order and transnational crime, besides the growing lists of extradition requests.

Nathalie Drouin was appointed Canada's Ambassador to France and Monaco last week. Announcing her appointment, the Canadian Prime Minister, Mark Carney, said that she brings three decades of experience and leadership across diplomacy and public service. She has held senior roles in the federal public service, including as Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council and National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime



NSA Ajit Doval and Nathalie Drouin, who serves as the Deputy Clerk and National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister of Canada.

Minister, Associate Secretary to the Cabinet, and Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General of Canada. She has also served as Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General for the Québec government and in a number of roles within the Autorité des marchés financiers. Ms. Drouin has played a central leadership role in implementing Prime Minister

Carney's foreign policy strategy. Interestingly, her successor is yet to be named.

Ajit Doval was in Canada for two days from February 6. The visit, kept as a closely guarded secret, was part of the regular bilateral security dialogue between India and Canada. It was a return visit by the Indian NSA, as his Canadian counterpart undertook a visit to India last year. At the end of the

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two-day visit, an official statement was released by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.

The release said that the two sides acknowledged the progress on initiatives aimed at supporting the safety and security of their countries and citizens. They agreed to a shared work plan to guide bilateral cooperation on national security and law enforcement issues and to enable practical collaboration on respective priorities.

During the meeting between Ajit Doval and Nathali Drouin, it was agreed that each country would establish security and law-enforcement liaison officers and that their respective agencies would build on working relationships. This important step will help streamline bilateral communications and enable timely information sharing on issues of mutual concern to Canada and India, such as the illegal flow of drugs, particularly fentanyl precursors, and transnational organized criminal networks.

The two National Security Advisors also committed to formalizing cooperation on cybersecurity policy and information sharing on cybersecurity issues, as well as continuing discussions on cooperation related to fraud and immigration enforcement, consistent with domestic laws and international obligations.

Rita Virk appointed to the Board of Directors of the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation



Rita Virk of Punjabi descent, has been appointed to the Board of Directors of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)

FEBRUARY 11, 2026
OTTAWA (TIP)

Rita Virk, a Chartered Professional Accountant of Punjabi descent, has been appointed to the Board of Directors of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Gregor Robertson, announced today.

"Rita Virk brings valuable experience in finance, risk management, and governance. Her depth of expertise and strategic insight will be a strong asset to CMHC's Board of Directors as it advances its mandate and supports the federal government's efforts to strengthen Canada's housing system," Gregor Robertson said while announcing her appointment.

As part of the Government of Canada's broader efforts to respond to the housing crisis, work is being done across the housing continuum to respond to the needs of communities across Canada. CMHC plays a vital role in shaping housing solutions with our partners in industry and all levels of government.

CMHC is a federal Crown corporation that plays a critical role as a national convenor in the housing finance system, and through research, program development and delivery, and commercial operations, is a vital contributor to the sustainability and stability of Canada's housing system. Its mandate is "to promote housing affordability and choice, facilitate access to and competition and efficiency in the provision of housing finance, protect the availability of adequate funding for housing at low cost, and generally contribute to the well-being of the housing sector in the national economy."

Rita Virk is a Chartered Professional Accountant with extensive experience in finance, risk management, and governance. She has held senior leadership and board roles across the public and private sectors, bringing deep expertise in financial oversight, internal audit, system modernization, and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy development. She currently serves on the Departmental Audit Committee for Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada and holds a Master of Professional Accounting degree, as well as the Institute of Corporate Directors designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors. Rita Virk was identified through an open, competency-based selection process.

This appointment reflects the Government of Canada's commitment to strong leadership and good governance at CMHC.

The Government of Canada, together with its partners, is investing in housing infrastructure to build resilient, connected communities and affordable housing options that meet the needs of Canadians.

Rita Virk has held several board and committee roles in the financial sector, including serving as Audit Committee Chair and as a member of the People Experience Committee at Prospera

Credit Union, as well as Vice Chair of the Prospera Foundation Board. Prospera Credit Union employs approximately 700 people, operates 27 branches, and manages \$9 billion in assets.

In addition, she has served on the boards and committees of Westminster Savings, the British Columbia Real Estate Association, Fraser Health, and the BC Children's Hospital Foundation. She is a member of the Harvard Business Review Advisory Council and has a strong interest in innovation and emerging technologies.

Rita Virk currently serves on the Departmental Audit Committee for Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED). She holds a Master of Professional Accounting degree and the ICD designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors.

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

Tumbler Ridge tragedy echoes in Parliament, Milan

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FEBRUARY 11, 2026
OTTAWA (TIP)

Canada plunged into gloom as the echoes of the Tumbler Ridge shooting tragedy reverberated from coast to coast, besides reaching the Olympic cities of Milan and Cortina. While Prime Minister Mark Carney made a touching statement in the House of Commons, the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Committees also condemned the dastardly killings while expressing solidarity with the families of the victims.

Meanwhile, the British Columbia division of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (BC RCMP) has the suspect who carried out the mass shooting incident that killed eight people and left many more injured in the small northeastern

gunfire. And as officers approached the school, rounds were fired in their direction. Officers entered the school to locate the threat. Within minutes, an individual confirmed to be the shooter was located deceased," said McDonald.

Shaken by the tragedy, the worst in the recent years in the country, Prime Minister Mark Carney, took to the floor of House of Commons to condemn the gruesome shooting incident. He said:

"This morning, families in Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia, woke to a different world. Parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters began their first day on earth without someone they loved dearly.

"What happened has left our nation in shock and all of us in mourning. Nine people killed. More than 25 others were



Crime scene tape surrounds the high school where a deadly mass shooting took place, in the town of Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia. -Photograph: Jennifer Gauthier/Reuters

community of Tumbler Ridge Tuesday afternoon.

McDonald also confirmed that one fewer than the initially suspected 10 people had died. He clarified that only nine, including Van Rootselaar, had died.

"Initially, it was believed that one of the victims, a female with significant injuries, who was transported from the scene by our members and then transitioned to paramedics, had succumbed to her injuries," he explained.

"Police have since confirmed that is not the case. She is alive, and was one of the two female victims who were airlifted to the hospital. Both of those victims remain in serious condition."

RCMP said that eighteen-year-old Jesse Van Rootselaar, a resident of the small town of approximately 2,400, has been identified as the suspected shooter, whom police confirmed died by self-inflicted gunshot wound.

"Two firearms, a long gun and a modified handgun were recovered by responding officers. Determining the origin of these firearms and what role they played in the shootings remains a significant part of the active and ongoing investigation," BC RCMP Deputy Commissioner Dwayne McDonald said at a press conference, revealing that RCMP officers were shot at as they swarmed Tumbler Ridge Secondary School around 1:20 p.m. Tuesday. The RCMP had ordered the local area to hold in place for hours in reaction to what was later revealed to be a deadly active shooter investigation.

"Upon arrival, there was active

injured. Some still in hospital fighting for their lives. The investigation is ongoing, and we must allow law enforcement the time and space to do their work thoroughly.

"Tumbler Ridge is a community of some 2,400 people, nestled in the foothills of the Rockies. It is one of the youngest towns in the province - carved out of the wilderness in the 1980s, built on the promise of the resource economy and by the determination of its residents. It is a town of miners, teachers, construction workers - families who have built their lives there, people who have always shown up for each other there.

"When wildfires raged, neighbors helped each other pack up and move out of harm's way. They checked in on seniors and those living alone. They made sure no one was left behind. When the coal mines shut down, residents supported local businesses, shared job leads, and lifted each other up.

"Tumbler Ridge represents the very best of Canada - resilient, compassionate, and strong.

"Yesterday morning, parents from Tumbler Ridge sent their children to school. Many will never hold them again. Young people and their teachers have witnessed an unimaginable cruelty.

"I want each of them to know: your country is with you," he said in a voiced choked with emotions.

Continuing with his condolence address, Mark Carney said "on behalf of all Canadians, I offer my prayers to the victims, to their families, their friends, to all those who were injured, and to everyone whose life was changed

Summary of the police briefing on the Tumbler Ridge shootings

Deputy commissioner Dwayne McDonald confirmed that police have identified the suspect as 18-year-old Jesse Van Rootselaar, who was a resident of Tumbler Ridge.

Police revised the death toll down to nine people, including the suspect, after a female victim with significant injuries survived (she remains in critical condition).

A 39-year-old found deceased at the suspect's family residence was the mother of the suspect, and the 11-year-old victim was the suspect's step-brother.

The deaths at the private residence occurred first before the suspect went to the high school. Police were called to the home after they had been called to the school, by a female youth who is related to the suspect and victims.

Those killed at the school were a 39-year-old teacher, three 12-year-old female students and two male students aged 12 and 13. One victim was found in the stairwell, and the others were located in the school's library.

Two firearms were recovered at the scene - a long gun and a modified handgun. Police are still working to determine their origins and role in the incident.

The suspect had a firearms license that had expired in 2024 and did not currently have any firearms registered to her.

The suspect had dropped out of Tumbler Ridge secondary school about four years ago and was not currently a student there.

There is no information at this point to suggest that any of the victims in the school were specifically targeted.

Police had attended the suspect's family residence on multiple occasions over the past several years, dealing with mental health concerns of the suspect.

This included one police attendance to the home approximately two years ago where firearms were seized under the criminal code. The lawful owner of those firearms petitioned for them to be returned, and they were.

The suspect was born as a biological male who had started transitioning about six years ago and identified in public and on social media as female.

The suspect is believed to have acted alone.

Police don't yet have an idea as to what the suspect's motive was.

irreversibly yesterday.

"I want to express my profound gratitude to the first responders - the RCMP officers who entered that school not knowing what awaited them. To the paramedics and medical staff at the Tumbler Ridge Health Centre. To the teachers and school staff who acted with extraordinary courage to protect the children in their care.

"In the darkest of moments, they showed the best of Canada.

"I have spoken with the Premier of British Columbia, David Eby, to express my condolences and those of the Government of Canada. The Minister of Public Safety, Gary Anandasangaree, has been coordinating the federal response and is enroute to Tumbler Ridge with the Premier, and the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Gregor Robertson.

"We have been here before - École Polytechnique in Montréal; the Islamic Cultural Centre of Québec City; La Loche, Saskatchewan; Humboldt; Portapique, Nova Scotia. Each time, it breaks us open.

"In the days ahead, there will be important questions to ask and difficult conversations to have. We owe that to the victims and to their families. But today, however, is for grieving and remembrance. Today is for the people of Tumbler Ridge and the Peace River region - for a community enduring the unimaginable.

"A few moments ago, Mr. Speaker, we held a moment of silence for families who are grieving. For many of them today, the silence is loud. We may never fully reconcile with the horrific, senseless violence that ripped through

Tumbler Ridge yesterday," the PM said.

Reacting to the shooting in Tumbler Ridge, the Canadian Olympic and the Canadian Paralympic Committee shared the following statement:

"We are deeply saddened by the devastating school shooting in Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia. Our hearts go out to the families grieving the loss of loved ones, to those recovering from injuries, and to the entire community. In this moment of profound sorrow, the Canadian Paralympic Team holds the people of Tumbler Ridge close and shares in their grief."

BC RCMP Deputy Commissioner McDonald says multiple victims were discovered dead throughout the school, and roughly 25 more were injured.

"Once it was determined to be safe, officers evacuated over 100 students and faculty to a local community center. While police continued to assess whether any ongoing threats remained, those with potential injuries were transported to the local medical clinic for triage and assessment, and two victims with significant injuries were transported to hospital via air ambulance."

"The deceased victims from the school include an adult female educator, three female students, and two male students, between the ages of 13 and 17."

On Tuesday, police confirmed two more people had been discovered dead in a nearby home.

Two additional victims, an adult female and a male youth, were located deceased at a local residence," McDonald clarified.

(Prabhjot Singh is a Toronto-based senior journalist. He can be reached at Prabhjot416@gmail.com)

India reviewing US invite to join Trump's Gaza Board of Peace

India is reviewing the invitation from the United States to join Donald Trump's Board of Peace for Gaza Strip, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday, Feb 12. He did not specify whether India would attend the first proposed meeting of the board, scheduled for 19 February.

Addressing reporters in New Delhi, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal confirmed that New Delhi has received a formal communication from Washington regarding participation in the board but is yet to take a position.

"As far as the Board of Peace is concerned, we have received an invitation from the US government to join the Board of Peace. We are currently considering this proposal and reviewing it," Jaiswal said.

INDIA'S CAUTIOUS RESPONSE

Jaiswal reiterated India's longstanding support for peace and dialogue in the region but stopped short of committing to the US-led initiative.

"As you are aware, India has consistently supported efforts that promote peace, stability, and dialogue in West Asia. Our Prime Minister has also welcomed all such initiatives that pave the way for long-term and lasting peace in the entire region, including Gaza," he said.

DAC nod for 114 Rafale jets, sets stage for Russia-like France tie-up

NEW DELHI (TIP)

In its biggest-ever push, the Defence Acquisition Council on Thursday, Feb 12, approved a proposal to procure 114 Rafale jets from French plane manufacturer Dassault, setting the stage for a long-drawn strategic tie-up for the Indian Air Force's battle readiness.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), the apex decision-making body of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), also okayed the acquisition of six additional US-made Boeing P8-I surveillance planes for the Navy. It also approved the purchase of a high-altitude pseudo satellite (HAPS) vehicle and 350-plus Scalp long-range air-launched cruise missiles that played a major role in last year's Operation Sindoor against Pakistan.

Chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the DAC meeting accorded "acceptance of necessity" (AoN) for proposals of the services having an estimated value of about Rs 3.60 lakh crore (\$39 billion), the MoD said. The payment schedule will be spread across several financial years and the AoN is the first step towards the acquisition process.

The purchase of 114 Rafales will allow France Russia-like dominance in India's combat jet sector. The planes will be acquired under a Make in India scheme, with Dassault partnering with an Indian



company. The Air Force already flies 36 Rafales while the Navy has ordered 26 marine variant planes.

After the latest acquisition, India will have 176 Rafales in its fleet, with experts saying increasing the numbers would reduce maintenance costs. The Russian-origin Sukhoi 30MKI jets—272 in number—so far comprise the largest fleet. A Rafale flight-training and maintenance, repair and overhaul facility is operational at the IAF base in Ambala. The Air Force has the capacity—space, spares, tooling and trained manpower—to immediately induct two squadrons (some 36-38 planes).

The French plane maker will integrate Indian weapons, missiles and ammunition on all 114 jets and also provide secure data links to allow digital integration of the jets with Indian radars

and sensors. This will allow sending imagery to ground-based controllers.

Dassault will be facilitating the transfer of technology (ToT) for manufacturing air frames. The company's suppliers, including engine maker Safran and avionics provider Thales, will be part of the ToT. The indigenous content is expected to be between 55 per cent and 60 per cent once the ToT for the air frames, engines and avionics is done.

The Cabinet Committee on Security, which is chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is expected to give the final approval. India and France are looking to seal the deal for the jets when a meeting is scheduled between PM Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron, who will be visiting India from February 17-19. On the purchase of six Boeing P8I planes, the MoD said the acquisition would significantly boost the Navy's combat and war-fighting capability in long-range anti-submarine warfare, maritime surveillance and maritime strike capability.

The Navy already has 12 of these planes, which were extensively used during Operation Sindoor. During the military stand-off in Eastern Ladakh, the planes were often flying over the Himalayas, keeping an eye on Chinese military movement across the Line of Actual Control.

Rolls Royce offers to co-develop engine for Indian fighter jets

NEW DELHI (TIP)

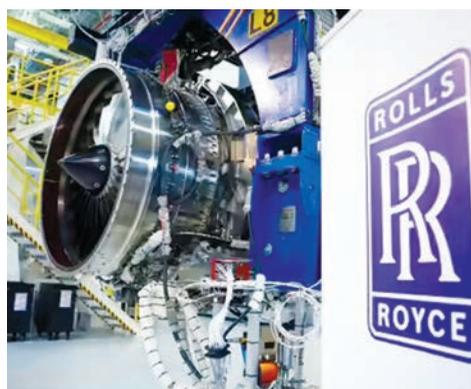
Rolls Royce has announced its intention to scale-up its business in India, and has offered co-development of a future aero-engine for fighter jets, along with partnerships across defence, civil aviation and energy sectors.

The company in a statement on Thursday, Feb 12, said that in collaboration with the UK Government, it has offered to co-develop a 120-kilo newton class combat jet engine core that could be India's fastest route to an indigenous next-generation engine.

The co-development will provide full technology transfer with IP ownership for India, supported by a dedicated design complex and manufacturing capabilities that will unlock significant job creation, the company said.

As part of the push, Rolls-Royce Chief Executive Officer Tufan Erginbilgic met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Thursday to discuss the company's desire to be part of India's growth journey and how its advanced technologies can support India's growth plans and self-reliance.

The move by the British technology



giant comes less than two weeks after the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) invited bids from Indian defence and aerospace companies to partner in producing the next generation of engines.

The DRDO has issued an expression of interest (EOI), asking for bids from Indian companies to become 'Development-cum-Production Partner (DcPP)' for what is termed as 'advanced high-thrust class engine (AHTCE) programme.

The Indian company will support design, development, manufacturing, integration, testing, and certification of

a next-generation indigenous aero gas turbine engine.

Foreign engine houses will assist. This is where global players like Rolls Royce are in the race which includes Safran of France, General Electric of US and IHI of Japan. The Gas Turbine Research Establishment (GTRE) under the DRDO will lead the programme.

So far, India imports engines even for its indigenous fighter jet, the Tejas. With more than 500 jets to be produced the India over the next 15-17 years, the non-availability of an engine is seen as a handicap for growth.

The DcPP will act as the primary industrial execution agency, responsible for transforming GTRE's engineering outputs into flight-worthy engine. This includes tooling, manufacturing engineering, special processes, inspection systems, engine assembly, subsystem testing, and final integration.

The scope includes manufacturing and assembly of compressor, combustor, turbine, afterburner, subsystems like the gearbox, oil system and fuel system.

ED arrests real estate company's former director Lodha

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) on Thursday, Feb 12, formally arrested Rajendra Lodha, former director of real estate company Lodha Developers Limited (LDL), in an alleged money-laundering case.

A special court on February 12 awarded Lodha's custody to the anti-money-laundering agency.

The ED is conducting a money-laundering investigation against him in connection with allegations that he had caused wrongful loss of more than Rs 85 crore to LDL when he was on the company's board of directors.

He was arrested in the crime branch case in September last year and had been in judicial custody since.

The ED case against Lodha is based on a cheating and forgery case filed under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita by the Mumbai police.

The ED, probing the money-laundering case, produced him before a special court on February 12 on a production remand, where he was placed under arrest.

Right to privacy not absolute, private calls, chats admissible as evidence: Court

The Chhattisgarh High Court has clarified that private electronic communications, including WhatsApp chats and call recordings, can be considered as evidence in matrimonial disputes if they are relevant to the issues before the court.

The observation came in an order delivered by the High Court in mid-February 2026 at Bilaspur while hearing an appeal arising out of a pending divorce proceeding before a Family Court.

The matter stemmed from a marital dispute in which the husband had filed for divorce and sought to rely on certain WhatsApp conversations and telephone call recordings to substantiate his allegations. The wife objected to the move, contending that the material had been obtained without her consent and that permitting it to be taken on record would amount to a violation of her fundamental right to privacy under Article 21 of the Constitution.

The Family Court had earlier allowed the husband to place the electronic material on record. Aggrieved by the Family Court order, the wife challenged the decision before the High Court, arguing that private chats and call records should not be admitted as evidence.

While examining the challenge, the High Court considered the scope of Section 14 of the Family Courts Act, 1984, which empowers Family Courts to receive and consider any evidence that may assist in effectively resolving disputes, even if such material might not strictly comply with the technical rules of the Indian Evidence Act.

The High Court, in its ruling, observed that although the right to privacy is a constitutionally protected right, it is not absolute in the context of judicial proceedings. When a dispute is brought before a court of law, the need to ensure a fair trial and arrive at the truth may outweigh privacy concerns, particularly where the electronic communication is directly connected to the issues in question, it said.

The Court emphasised that family courts are meant to adopt a more flexible and pragmatic approach in order to do substantial justice between parties. Therefore, electronic evidence such as WhatsApp chats and call details may be examined if they are relevant and help in adjudicating the dispute fairly. However, the admissibility of such material would still be subject to scrutiny regarding its authenticity, relevance, and the manner in which it was obtained, it added.

Amendments made to India-US trade deal factsheet based on 'shared understanding', says MEA

NEW DELHI (TIP)

India said on Thursday, Feb 12, that a joint statement issued with the US remains the basis for a proposed interim trade agreement, and that the American side amended a White House fact sheet on the trade deal to reflect the understandings reached so far between the two sides.

The fact sheet, issued by the White House on Monday, caused controversy as it said that India would reduce tariffs on "certain pulses" and had "committed" to buying American goods, including energy and technology, worth \$500 billion over five years. The document was subsequently revised to drop these contentious issues.

Asked about the matter at a weekly media briefing, external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal made it clear that the joint statement on a framework for an interim agreement on "reciprocal and mutually beneficial trade", issued on February 7, remained the main document guiding the work towards a trade deal.

"The joint statement is the framework and remains the basis of our mutual understanding in the matter. Both sides will now work towards implementing



this framework and finalising the interim agreement," he said. "The amendments in the US fact sheet reflect the shared understandings contained in the joint statement."

The Indian side had raised the contentious wording and issues in the fact sheet, on which there was no agreement as yet, with Washington, resulting in the amendments, people familiar with the matter said.

The amended fact sheet deleted "certain pulses" from the agricultural products for which India has agreed to slash tariffs, such as tree nuts, soybean oil, wine and spirits. It also removed a reference to India removing its digital services taxes, with the new version stating that the Indian side is "committed to negotiate" digital trade rules.

The amended fact sheet also stated that India "intends to buy" more US goods, rather than making a commitment to purchase such products, bringing it in line with the joint statement.

Pulses are a politically sensitive product for India, the world's largest producer and consumer of the item. Farmers' groups have expressed dissatisfaction with the trade understandings reached by India and the US, and the opposition has criticised the government over the proposed opening up of the agricultural sector.

In the case of digital services, India removed its 6% equalisation levy on digital advertising services from April 1, 2025, through the Finance Bill, 2025.

The final contours of the trade deal are expected to become clear by March, almost a year after the two sides began discussions on the matter. Bilateral relations came under strains not witnessed in the past two decades after Trump hit Indian exports with a 25% reciprocal tariff and then doubled the figure with a punitive levy over Russian oil purchases. Following the recent understanding, the tariffs were cut from 50% to 18%, providing relief to Indian exporters.

BJP MP files notice for Rahul Gandhi's ouster from Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI (TIP)

BJP MP Nishikant Dubey on Thursday, Feb 12, initiated a formal process seeking to disqualify Congress MP Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha.

The step came in the aftermath of acrimonious exchanges between Rahul and BJP MPs over several controversial issues, including the alleged circulation of former Army Chief Gen MM Naravane's unpublished book.

A combative Rahul, however, was unfazed by the move. In a video message, the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) said whether an FIR was filed, a criminal case was registered or a privilege motion was brought against him, he would continue to fight for farmers.

He said any trade deal which "takes away the livelihood of farmers or weakens the country's food security is anti-farmer". Rahul alleged that the Modi government was compromising with the interests of the country's "annadatas" and claimed that farmers and their hard work had been handed over to the US.

On February 11, the Congress MP, while speaking on the Budget in the Lok Sabha, had levelled allegations against Union

Minister and former diplomat Hardeep Singh Puri on the Epstein files disclosures.

Dubey's retaliatory action on Thursday has stemmed from the LoP's allegations against Puri and also against the government as a whole.

After filing paperwork to initiate action against Rahul, Dubey said the Congress MP seemed to be connected to foreign powers. "Who is funding Rahul, whose motive is to destroy the nation? How did he get the unpublished book? The Lok Sabha must reject Rahul's membership," Dubey said. "This is not the first time that Rahul has made efforts to create controversy with the objective of defaming the government...be it defence, finance, commerce, external affairs...he has the uncanny knack of fomenting public sentiments by raising unsubstantiated and unethical aspects in Parliament as well as other public fora," Dubey said in the notice. "The genesis of such recalcitrant attitude of Rahul stems from his active involvement with the 'Soros Foundation', which is notorious, worldwide, in destabilising various countries for the benefit of its client states....," the notice said.

SC refuses nod to Haryana's Aravalli Zoo Safari Project

The Supreme Court on Thursday, Feb 12, refused permission to the Haryana Government to submit a plan on the proposed Aravalli Zoo Safari Project in Gurugram and Nuh districts till the definition of the "Aravalli range" was clarified by experts. Maintaining that it would not allow "anyone to touch the Aravallis", a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant made it clear that the issue of jungle safari would be taken up with the main matter on the "Aravalli range".

Haryana Senior Additional Advocate General Lokesh Sinhal said the state had revised the detailed project report (DPR) of the safari project from 10,000 acres to over 3,300 acres and that it should be allowed to furnish the DPR to the court-appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) and the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) for their examination. However, the Bench was not convinced. "We are not experts. The experts will decide the definition of the Aravalli. Till the definition of the Aravalli range is finalised, we will not allow anyone to touch the Aravallis," the Bench said.

India in history this Week

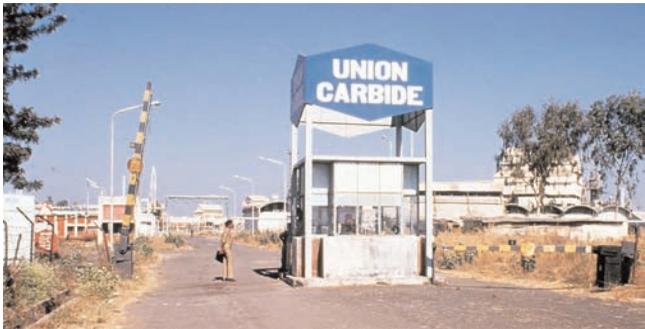
FEBRUARY 13 TO FEBRUARY 19

13 FEBRUARY



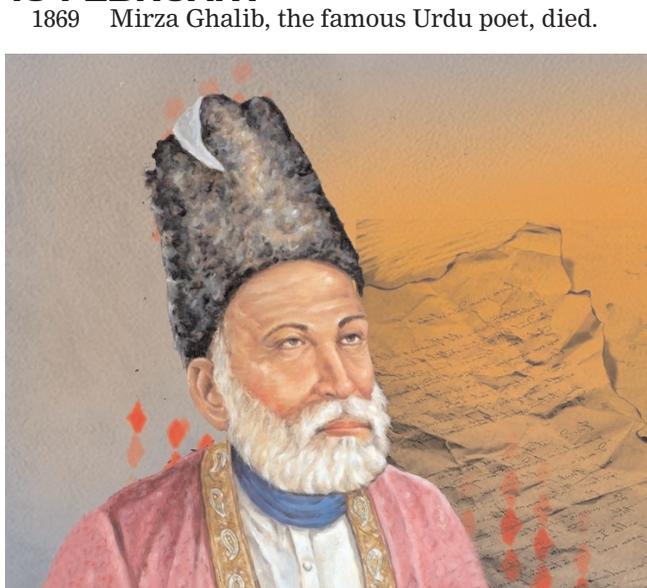
1879 Birth of freedom fighter Sarojini Naidu.
1959 Children's favorite Barbie doll begins selling.
1984 Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi inaugurates the Mazgaon Dock in Mumbai for the Navy.

14 FEBRUARY

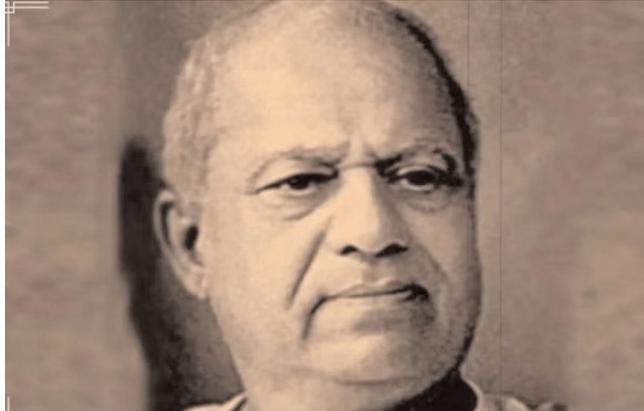


1989 Union Carbide, responsible for Bhopal gas scandal, agreed to give compensation to the government.
1881 In 1881, Rajendra Lal Dutt and Basu opened the country's first homoeopathic college in Calcutta.
1967 In 1967, the 74th Lok Sabha elections were held.
1999 The fifth National Games were inaugurated in Imphal in 1999.
1970 The ordinance was passed by the President in 1970 about nationality.

15 FEBRUARY



1869 Mirza Ghalib, the famous Urdu poet, died.
2017 On this day ISRO launched 104 satellites simultaneously.
1903 On February 15, 1903, the world's favorite soft toy teddy bear was launched into the market by Morris Miktom.
1967 Elections to the fourth Lok Sabha were held in 1967 in India.



16 FEBRUARY

1944 Dada Saheb Phalke died.
1982 The Jawaharlal Nehru International Gold Cup football tournament was held in Calcutta for the first time in 1982.
1987 A missile with submarine capable of hitting the submarine was inducted into the Indian Navy in 1987.
2008 Tata Motors launched a vehicle for the Army on February 16, 2008, called a Light Specialist Vehicle, to allow the Army to show its power through it.
2009 On February 16, 2009, former President Pranab Mukherjee presented the Interim Budget for the year 2009-2010.

17 FEBRUARY

1915 Gandhiji visited Santiniketan for the first time.
1931 Lord Irwin welcomed Gandhiji to the Viceroy's residence.
2007 Veteran Gandhian Smt. Arunaveen Desai passed away in Gujarat.
2014 On 17 February 2014, the Election Commission banned the transmission of exit polls until the last phase of voting was over.

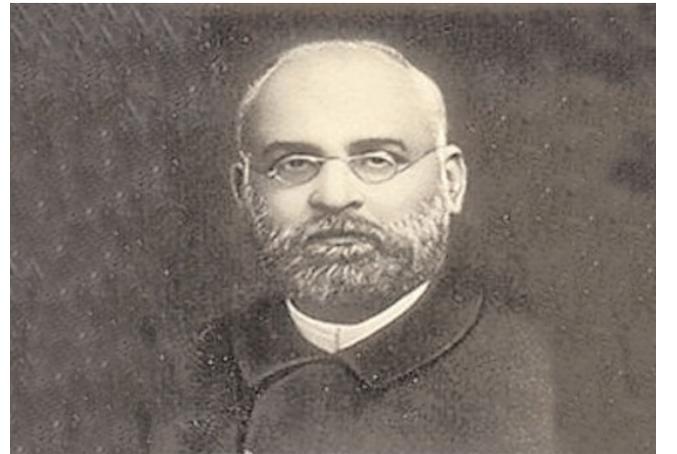


18 FEBRUARY

2007 68 people were killed in bomb blast in the Samjhauta Express going from Delhi to Lahore.



1905 Shyamji Krishnavarma founded the India Home Rule Society in London in 1905.



1911 In 1911, the first delivery of the aircraft by air was done in India.
1964 The Royal Indian Navy (Navy) rebellion occurred in 1946 in Mumbai.



1971 India established its first satellite contact with Britain in 1971 through the Arvi satellite station.

1979 The US gave India a check for Rs 1664 crore in 1979, which is considered to be the largest check in the world.

19 FEBRUARY

1891 Daily publication of Amrit Bazar Patrika started.



1630 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the first ruler of the Maratha Empire, was born.

1389 In 1389, Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq II of Delhi was assassinated.

1986 In 1986, the first computerized railway reservation ticket was introduced in India.

LUNAR NEW YEAR DRAGON PROCESSION CELEBRATES DAZZLING DISPLAY OF CULTURE, MUSIC AND DANCE

BY MABEL PAIS

The NAI-NI CHEN DANCE COMPANY, based in Fort Lee, New Jersey, invites the public to a vibrant and FREE Dragon Procession in Newark, presented with the support of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) and the Newark Museum prior to their performance on Saturday Feb. 14. This festive event honors the Chinese American community's legacy in Newark and marks the arrival of Spring and the Year of the Horse with authentic traditional music, dance, and pageantry.

EVENT DETAILS

WHAT: Dragon Procession featuring dancers and musicians of the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, accompanied by traditional cymbals and drum music. All community members are welcome to join the parade and share in the celebration.

WHEN: Saturday, February 14, 2026, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM



Lunar New Year Dragon Procession at NJPAC.

-Credit: www.nainichen.org.

WHERE: The procession will begin in front of NJPAC (One Center Street), travel through Military Park and past the Newark Museum (49 Washington Street) by Halsey Street, and return via Broad Street to NJPAC.

PRICE: FREE

This event is open to everyone!

Join the dancers and musicians of the acclaimed, Fort Lee-based Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company — a professional, Asian American, woman-led group celebrated for their innovative blend of Asian artistic traditions and American modernism. The company is dedicated to advancing equity, representation, and

cross-cultural dialogue through the art of dance.

SCHEDULE

12:00 PM – Kick-off outside NJPAC
12:00–12:15 PM – Procession through Newark streets

12:15–12:30 PM – Performance inside the Newark Museum's Main Hall

12:30–12:45 PM – Procession returns through Newark, ending at NJPAC

This annual Lunar New Year Dragon Procession serves as a festive prelude to the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company's full performances at NJPAC on Saturday and Sunday, February 14–15, 2026. Join the procession for a unique opportunity to experience a dazzling display of culture, music, and dance in the heart of Newark!

Watch a preview of the performance on stage - https://youtu.be/1mZ_mN3-RU

For more information, visit <https://nainichen.org>

CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES



The Divine Nine. -Credit: www.njpac.org.

BY MABEL PAIS

Wear your colors and join the celebration of the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)!

For more than a century, the Divine Nine (D9) — the nine African American fraternities and sororities that are part of the NPHC — has nurtured generations of leaders. With an affiliation that lasts a lifetime, members are empowered to preserve their cultural heritage and champion change in political, economic and social arenas.

WHAT: The DIVINE NINE: Nine African American Fraternities & Sororities

WHEN: Monday, February 23, 2026 @ 5 PM

WHERE: NJPAC Chase Room

PRICE: FREE (PSEG's "Standing in Solidarity" Series)

FILM : A link to the "PSEG Foundation Social Impact film" will be emailed to registrants to watch in advance at home; "African American Fraternities and Sororities – The Divine 9," is an episode of the PBS series "Basic Black." This month's "Standing in Solidarity" program features a panel of impactful D9 members. Learn why D9 members continue to lead the charge in social justice and community empowerment.

PROGRAM

In partnership with Dodge Poetry, the program will open with words from Cortney Lamar Charleston, an award-winning poet and author of the forthcoming "It's Important I Remember" (Curbstone Books/Northwestern University Press, 2026).

PANELISTS

Keshia Butler-Thomas, Area 6 Coordinator of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.'s Northeastern Region and CEO of LCK Consulting Services, LLC

Nigel Coelho, Eastern Regional Director of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and Vice

President – Operations at US Foods

Fred Davis, President of Alpha Alpha Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Financial Secretary of the Eastern Region of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and Partner in tax services at Aprio Advisory Group, LLC

William S. Parrish, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. and Founder and Chairman of HBCU Greatness, Inc.

Ericka Shoulars, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., New Jersey State Coordinator, and Director at BNY (Bank of New York Mellon)

Theodore N. Stephens, II, Former Grand Polaris of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. and Essex County Prosecutor

Monica Pixie Townsend, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., New Jersey State Social Action Coordinator and Program Director at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

Annette Harrell Vick, President of Beta Alpha Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

L-Mani S. Viney, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Jersey City Alumni Chapter and Dean of Students at West Orange High School

MODERATOR

The panel will be moderated by Calvin R. Ledford Jr., a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. and President of the PSEG Foundation and Director of PSEG Corporate Social Responsibility.

The panel is curated by Sherlock Dow, President, National Pan-Hellenic Council of Central Jersey.

REGISTRATION

RSVP @ njpac.org/event/the-divine-nine-agents-of-change/#register

This is a FREE event.

The National Pan-Hellenic Council

The National Pan-Hellenic Council is a collaborative umbrella council composed of historically African American fraternities and sororities, commonly called the Divine Nine, and also referred to as Black Greek Letter Organizations. Learn more at <https://www.nphchq.com>.

ST BENEDICT'S OF NEWARK, NJ SERVES YOUTH OF ALL FAITHS, RACES AND CULTURES



St. Benedict's Prep School.

-Credit: www.njpac.org.

BY MABEL PAIS

In 1973, the Benedictine monks of Newark Abbey reopened St. Benedict's Preparatory School with 89 students, a renewed commitment to the City of Newark and a vow to serve youth of all races and cultures who are most in need. Five decades later, St. Benedict's has expanded to more than 1,000 students from all socio-economic and faith backgrounds in grades K-12, gaining a national reputation for building community and bridging divides.

Anthony DePalma (author and former New York Times correspondent) will lead a conversation with Father Edwin Leahy (headmaster of St. Benedict's for the last 53 years) and St. Benedict's alumnus and parent Mark Comesañas, (executive director of "My Brother's Keeper Newark") about the history and challenges of the school's engagement with the city and its youth over the last five decades.

Copies of DePalma's new book about St. Benedict's, "On This Ground: Hardship and Hope at the Toughest Prep School in America" (HarperCollins Publishers, 2026), will be available for purchase.

WHAT: ST BENEDICT'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL

WHEN: Thursday, February 26, 2026 @6 PM

V E N U E :
www.NewarkLibrary.org
Washington Street, Newark, NJ Newark

PRICE: Free

REGISTRATION

njpac.org/event/newark-history-society-on-common-ground-st-benedicts-and-newark/#register

Registration is required - RSVP for In-Person at the Library @

https://formstack.io/_wdlMrbzMDtkatoapnuBR94r99mSt8M8dGgJOKHtHm-_OUMLVc11NYqfcz-m2ymCy4bwUvwnBkzsumF7KhLsQ

RSVP for the virtual zoom starting at 6:30PM @

https://formstack.io/_wdlMrbzMDtkatoapnuBR94r99mSt8M8dGgJOKHtHm-_OUMLVc11NYqfcz-m2ymiW_IqLbTA8bVzOJpfm5wHA

ST. BENEDICT'S ABBEY

Learn more at <https://newarkabbey.org>

St. Benedict's Preparatory School / St. Benedict's Prep School

Learn more at <https://sbp.org>.

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

SATYAJIT RAY'S 'DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE FOREST' RESTORED IN 4K & SHOWING AT NYC'S FILM FORUM

BY MABEL PAIS

"From the master, another masterpiece." – Wes Anderson

"One of my favorite movies of all time." – Mira Nair

SATYAJIT RAY'S "DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE FOREST," adapted by India's most celebrated director, from Sunil Gangopadhyay's celebrated 1968 novel, (1970), a modern search for connection that conjures the timeless resonance of a folktale, will run at the Film Forum, (209 West Houston Street, New York City) Friday, February 27 - Thursday, March 12 in a new 4K restoration.

All shows preceded by a video introduction by Wes Anderson

Desperate to flee Calcutta's rat race, four friends — Ashim (Soumitra Chatterjee), Sanjoy (Subhendu Chatterjee), Hari (Samit Bhanja), and Shekhar (Rabi Ghosh) — drive to Palamu, one of India's rural "tribal lands," where they bribe a watchman into letting them stay at a sylvan guesthouse. Despite vowing to get away from it all, the crew soon mixes with the locals, including a woodland family: the soulful yet mischievous Aparna (Sharmila Tagore) takes to the overconfident Ashim, while her widowed sister-in-law Jaya (Kaberi Bose) grows closer to the bookish Sanjoy. At the same time, Hari, fresh off a break-up, woos a Santal girl named Duli (Simi Garewal) and Shekhar, despite his own penchant for gambling, tries to rein in



A scene from "Days and Nights in the Forest."

Credit: Courtesy, www.filmforum.org.

his companions' boozy hedonism. Filled with some of Ray's most indelible characterizations and lavish images (shot by longtime cinematographer Soumendu Roy), "DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE FOREST" touches on masculine vulnerabilities and Indian class divisions with the graceful complexity of a master at his peak.

"Ray's language of cinema is a kind of miraculous vernacular, all his own."

– Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*

"A blend of the fully accessible and the inexplicable, the redolent, and the mysterious." – Pauline Kael, *The New Yorker*

"Utterly charming." – Howard Thompson, *The New York Times*

"Behold the master at work... Satyajit Ray conjures truth and insight through the most ordinary of interactions...A masterpiece." – Ben Sachs, *Chicago Reader*

"Ray gradually distills a magical world of absolute stasis: a shimmering summer's day, a tranquil forest clearing, the two women strolling in a shady avenue, wistful yearnings as love and the need for love echo plangently. Elsewhere jobs have to be won or lost, problems faced and solved, but not here; an illusion of course, revealed as time lifts its suspension but leaves one of the quartet a changed man, the other three assailed by tiny waves of self-doubt. Beautifully shot and acted... Ray's masterpiece." – *Time Out*

Written and directed by Satyajit Ray

Based on the original novel by Sunil Gangopadhyay

Starring Soumitra Chatterjee, Subhendu Chatterjee, Samit Bhanja, Rabi Ghosh

Cinematography by Soumendu Roy | Edited by Dulal Dutta | Music by Satyajit Ray

1970 | India | In Bengali with English subtitles

Approx. 116 min. | 4K DCP Restoration

Janus Films

HINDU HOUSEHOLD GODS' PRINTS EXHIBITION AT THE MET ON VIEW

BY MABEL PAIS

Household Gods: Hindu Devotional Prints, 1860–1930

In Hinduism, the act of "darshan," or "seeing god," is central to worship. This intimate exchange between deity and devotee traditionally takes place in the temple. But within each home is also a shrine, dedicated to that householder's chosen deity. The need to display an image of the divine in the home was traditionally fulfilled by small icons made of clay or metal.

In the mid-19th century, new technologies were introduced into India, first photography and then the chromolithographic press. The latter permitted the production of inexpensive prints of the Hindu gods for mass consumption. These proved immensely popular and for the first time in India, even the humblest home could afford a colorful icon of their chosen god to display in the household shrine.

"Household Gods: Hindu Devotional Prints, 1860–1930" presents the first encyclopedic exhibition of these chromolithographic prints from the pioneering studio presses of Calcutta (Kolkata), Poona (Pune), and Bombay (Mumbai). These mass-produced prints became a powerful means of expressing Indian religious identity at a time when the country was experiencing the first stirrings of the Independence movement.

Featuring approximately 120 works, shown in four rotations, from The Met's collection of chromolithographic prints, along with paintings and portable triptych shrines, "Household Gods" provides a unique window on the vibrant tradition of Indian devotional imagery on the cusp of modernity.

IMAGES

Krishna and gopis

Germany - ca. 1880–1900

In this festive scene, the flute-playing Krishna is seen presiding over devotees who perform the Dandiya Raas, a dance typical of western India during which the performers strike wooden sticks. The couples, in dress



The MET's Hindu Gods Exhibit: Durga holding the infant Krishna.

Credit: www.metmuseum.org.

characteristic of the Marathas of Maharashtra, dance in a circle around Krishna, who is standing on a blue lotus bloom. This setting evokes the Raslila dance between Krishna and the milkmaids (gopis), as described in the Bhagavata Purana and the Gita Govinda, key texts devoted to celebrating the youthful Krishna. The stagelike setting is flanked by drummers beating time on large kettledrums. Beyond is a palatial avenue of houses and a temple at the apex, all rendered in dramatic linear perspective.

DURGA HOLDING THE INFANT KRISHNA (DEVA GOSTHA)

India, Kolkata, West Bengal - ca. 1885–95

This print of Durga in her maternal aspect is a startling reflection of the evolution of worship in the Bengal region during the nineteenth century. The goddess, a consort of Shiva, is nursing the infant Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu. While Shiva and Vishnu represent alternative divine forces, this image "marries" the two gods by evoking their most familiar settings. Durga's lion mounts steps atop the snowy peaks of the Himalayas, Shiva's abode, and the pastoral scene in the foreground recalls Krishna's childhood among the cowherders at his adoptive home near Mathura. The curved framing device (chaalchitras) represents the portable shrines constructed for the Durga Puja festival in Kolkata.

On view from January 24–May 25, 2026

Dimensions

Image: 15 7/8 × 11 7/8 in. (40.3 × 30.2 cm)

Credit Line

Purchase, David E. Stutzman and John D. Lamb Gift, 2016

Object No. 2016.484

EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

During the exhibition, a selection of artworks will come off view and be replaced by new works:

Rotation 1: January 24–May 25, 2026

Rotation 2: May 30–October 11, 2026

Rotation 3: October 17, 2026–February 21, 2027

Rotation 4: February 27–June 27, 2027

Through June 27, 2027

Now on view at The Met Fifth Avenue in Gallery 251

Free with Museum admission

The Met Fifth Avenue (www.metmuseum.org)

1000 Fifth Avenue

New York, NY 10028

Phone: 212-535-7710

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

SAMAY RAINA, INDIA'S FASTEST RISING COMEDIAN, TAKES OVER MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

BY MABEL PAIS

SAMAY RAINA, Indian stand-up comedian, chess streamer, and cultural phenomenon, is bringing his globally celebrated stand-up special, "Still Alive," to the United States, with a landmark performance at New York City's iconic Madison Square Garden. The tour, which has already sold over 300,000 tickets worldwide, will be the only time it's performed by Raina in North America, marking a major milestone in his international comedy journey.

"The audience in (the) USA and Canada saw me at the worst time of my life, now they get to see me in the best" says comedian Samay Raina.

Known for his razor-sharp wit, unfiltered humor, and deeply relatable storytelling, Raina has emerged as one of the most influential voices in modern Indian comedy. "Still Alive" is a bold, introspective, and laugh-out-loud exploration of life, resilience, internet fame, failure, and the absurdities of modern existence, delivered with Samay's signature honesty and irreverence. The show is an electrifying, fast-paced, no-filter experience that mirrors the chaos of the internet generation. Blending dark humor, self-reflection, and Samay's trademark spontaneity, the show feels more like a live event than a traditional comedy performance.

The "Still Alive" tour is expected to draw fans from across the U.S., reflecting the growing global influence of Indian comedians and the appetite for culturally resonant, boundary-pushing humor. Samay has previously sold-out successful tours in Europe, Australia and India and is now bringing the best show of his career to the USA and Canada, produced by The Comedy Factory & Millennial Events.

"Last year alone, Samay Raina's North American tour sold over 50,000 tickets across 32 cities in under six weeks, a clear testament to his



Samay Raina.

Credit: Courtesy, Samay Raina.

unmatched connection with audiences here," says Hiral Jamindar, Director - Millennial Events. "This year, with his popularity accelerating at an extraordinary pace, we're thinking bigger, including iconic venues, larger capacities, and a scale that reflects his cultural impact. Samay isn't just touring anymore; he's building a global comedy movement."

Samay Raina first rose to prominence after winning "Comicstaan" and has since built a massive global following through sold-out international tours, viral stand-up clips, and his pioneering blend of comedy and live chess streaming. His ability to seamlessly connect with Gen Z and millennial audiences has positioned him as a defining voice of his generation.

The U.S. leg of "Still Alive" continues Raina's streak of sold-out shows worldwide and signals a new chapter in his expanding global footprint.

Learn more about Samay Raina @ Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/maisamayhoon/?hl=en>

TICKETS

Show information and tickets can be found at <https://www.msg.com/events-tickets/samay-raina-infosys-theater-at-msg-february-2026/3B00636C05D8932F>.

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

Madison Square Garden, colloquially known as the Garden or by its initials MSG, is a multi-purpose indoor arena in New York City. It is located in Midtown Manhattan between Seventh and Eighth avenues from 31st to 33rd streets above Pennsylvania Station. Learn more at <https://www.msg.com/madison-square-garden>.

PATRIZIO BUANNE, FAVE NEAPOLITAN POP CROONER, CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

BY MABEL PAIS

PATRIZIO BUANNE, the world's favorite Neapolitan pop crooner, is bringing his 20th anniversary world tour, performing 20 years of hits, including favorite songs from the Italian pop songbook and his original hits. Buanne will perform at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) on Friday February 20, 2026 at 8:00PM.

Known for his velvet voice, timeless charm, and passionate performances, Buanne is celebrating two decades since the release of his debut album. Fans can look forward to beloved hits like "Il mondo," "Forever Begins Tonight" and original favorites, alongside new music from his upcoming anniversary album NapoLatino — a vibrant blend of Neapolitan, Italian, and Latin sounds, out this October via Universal Music/Decca.

With over 20 million albums sold worldwide — including more than 500,000 in Australia — Patrizio is one of the world's most beloved vocalists, known for sold-out concerts and chart-topping releases. His anniversary shows promise to be his most memorable yet: a heartfelt celebration of the music, stories, and passion that have defined his remarkable 20-year career.

TICKETS

Tickets are available at www.njpac.org



Patrizio Buanne.

Credit: www.njpac.org.

or 1-888-GO-NJPAC (1-888-466-5722) or visiting the box office at 1 Center Street, Newark, NJ.

METROPOLITAN ENTERTAINMENT

Metropolitan Entertainment is a preeminent producer of world class live entertainment. One of the most respected independent concert promoters in the U.S., Metropolitan Entertainment has been presenting a wide range of concerts and events across New York, New Jersey and beyond since 1971. For more

information, visit metropolitanpresents.com or follow Metropolitan Entertainment on Instagram @metropolitanentertainment.

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJPAC)

NJPAC, located in downtown Newark, New Jersey, is among the largest performing arts centers in the United States. It is the artistic, cultural, educational and civic center of New Jersey — where great performances and

events enhance and transform lives every day. As New Jersey's anchor cultural institution, NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the State's and the world's best artists, while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has attracted more than 11 million visitors (including more than two million children) since opening its doors in 1997, and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. Visit www.njpac.org for more information. @njpac.

FOLLOW NJPAC ONLINE:

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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, Social Issues, Education, Business, Spirituality, Health and Wellness, and Cuisine.



Sunny Leone on Kennedy: I was shocked when Anurag Kashyap approached me

Sunny Leone says Anurag Kashyap's Kennedy is one of those rare films that "has weight." The actor, who plays Charlie in the neo-noir thriller, spoke exclusively to India Today about her excitement around the film, her initial shock when Kashyap approached her, and the intense preparation that went into shaping her character.

Sunny reflected on Kennedy's journey across international festivals, the audience response, and why the role feels like a turning point in her 15-year-long career.

"I am so excited. You can see I'm ready to start jumping up and down. But it's nice. I was there for a short amount of time, but at that time, it was such an amazing experience to work on this film. The amount of hard work that has gone into it, all the places we have been for this film, and the response we have gotten from so many different places, countries, festivals, and even random people. Random people come up and say, 'I saw Kennedy.' And you're like, 'You saw it?' 'Yeah.' And, you know, it's very, very exciting. Kennedy finally has a home. Finally, very excited," she shared.

For Sunny, screen time has never been the priority. Instead, she says it's the impact a character leaves behind that truly matters.

She said, "It's exactly the second part of your statement. It definitely is about what the character is. It's not about the amount of time on screen; it's about how impactful that amount of time is in the film. And I think for me, it was so amazing to be a part of it. When you watch it, it's not like I'm there and then I'm gone. It's there, and then I'm not there, so in that way, it makes me feel good because it's like most great films, it's not just following one person. There are so many different characters."

She also praised the ensemble cast and the film's writing. "The people who are in this film are unbelievable at what they've done. And some of the funniest dialogues are from people where you're just thinking, 'What is going on here?' It makes it fun to watch."

Akshay Kumar's Bhooth Bangla using recycled Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 script?

For some time now, speculation has been rife that Akshay Kumar's upcoming film Bhooth Bangla is a recycled version of Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2's script. However, production house T-Series has shut down all such claims, categorically stating that the two films are individual projects.

What's Happening

Shiv Chanana, Co-Producer at T-Series, addressed the matter directly and firmly reiterated that there is no factual basis to the claims linking the two films.

He said in an official statement, "We have also come across some articles, but the fact is we have never received any script from Mr Priyadarshan or his team for making a Bhool Bhulaiyaa franchise."

The Co-Producer at T-Series stressed that Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 and Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 were built as original stories, with no narrative connection to each other or to any earlier scripts being cited now.

Furthermore, he added, "It is our franchise. If anything has to be developed, it will be developed by us and under our supervision, which is exactly how Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 and Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 were made. I don't understand where these stories are coming from-this was never the case."

As per the statement shared by the production house, industry insiders also said, "Bhool Bhulaiyaa, a unique horror-comedy franchise, is a prized asset in T-Series' iconic film portfolio. If anyone tries to take advantage of the BB brand, name, or universe by using its name directly or



indirectly, the makers will take strict legal action."

The Buzz

According to a Mid-Day report recently, Bhooth Bangla was originally planned as a sequel to the hit Bhool Bhulaiyaa franchise.

The report said, "Priyadarshan had written a draft for a sequel. He was certain that if the franchise were to be taken ahead, it would be with Akshay. But things

didn't materialise then. Later, T-Series took the franchise forward with director Anees Bazmee and Kartik Aaryan. When Priyan sir and Akshay decided to reunite, he reworked that draft."

About Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2

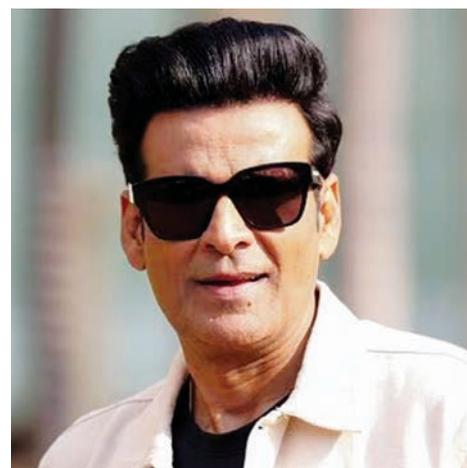
Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 is a sequel to Akshay Kumar and Vidya Balan's 2007 horror comedy Bhool Bhulaiyaa. It was led by Kartik Aaryan, Kiara Advani and Tabu. It was released in 2022.

Manoj Bajpayee to replace Govinda in Bhagam Bhag 2, Paresh Rawal confirms

Paresh Rawal has finally put speculation to rest around the casting of Bhagam Bhag 2 – and the update is bound to spark debate. The veteran actor has seemingly confirmed that Manoj Bajpayee will be stepping into the sequel in place of Govinda, marking a major shift from the much-loved comic trio of the original film.

Directed by Priyadarshan, Bhagam Bhag (2006) went on to become a cult comedy, driven by the chaotic energy and crackling chemistry between Akshay Kumar, Govinda and Paresh Rawal. Nearly two decades later, the sequel is taking shape with a refreshed cast – and Rawal insists the change will bring something new to the table.

Speaking to Bollywood Hungama, Paresh Rawal revealed that Bajpayee will join Akshay Kumar in the upcoming instalment, while also



sharing that he himself will be seen in a double role. "It'll make for a different and unique combination," Rawal said, expressing excitement about the new dynamic.

However, Govinda's absence has not

gone unnoticed. Fans of the original film have taken to social media to voice their disappointment, with many urging the makers to reconsider the sequel without the actor who played a key role in the film's comic success.

Addressing the chatter around Govinda's exit, Rawal clarified that he was not privy to the reasons behind the decision. "I have genuinely no idea. However, we'll miss Govinda," he said, acknowledging the actor's contribution to the franchise.

Govinda, who dominated the comedy genre through the 1990s with his effortless timing and flamboyant screen presence, saw his career slow down in the late 2000s. Despite sporadic attempts at a comeback, the actor has struggled to reclaim his former box-office standing.

Blake Lively, Justin Baldoni fail to reach settlement, trial set for May

Actors Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni failed to reach a settlement during a court-ordered conference in New York this week, clearing the way for their legal dispute to proceed to trial in May.

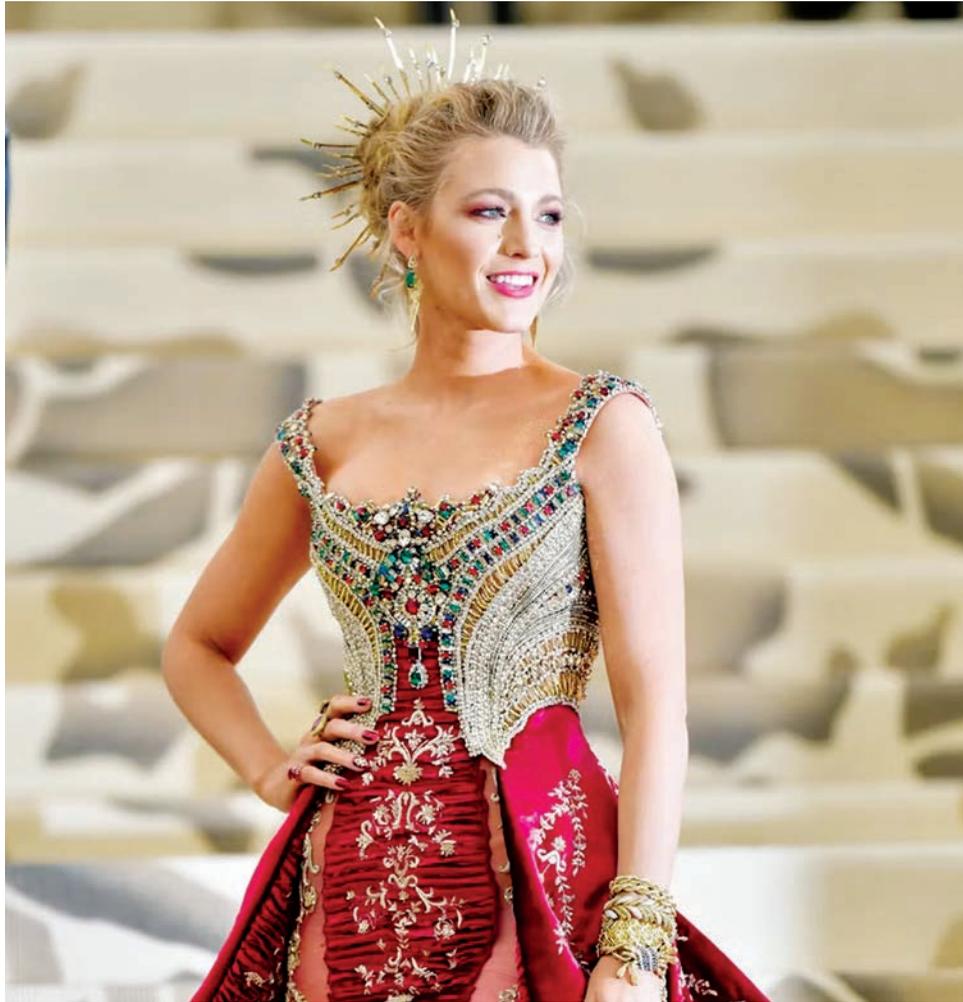
The closed-door settlement conference was held on Wednesday at the Daniel Patrick Moynihan United States Courthouse in Manhattan. Both parties attended the session, marking the first time Lively and Baldoni appeared in court together since the case was filed. The efforts to resolve the matter outside court, however, were unsuccessful, per Deadline.

The case arises from a lawsuit filed by Lively against Baldoni, in which she has alleged sexual harassment, retaliatory conduct and intentional infliction of emotional distress. The total damages sought in the case now amount to USD 550 million.

Baldoni's lawyer, Bryan Freedman, confirmed that the settlement discussions did not lead to an agreement. Speaking to reporters outside the courthouse, Freedman said the talks were "unsuccessful," while adding that there is "always a chance" of a settlement. He stated that he was "looking forward" to the trial scheduled for May.

The settlement conference was overseen by Magistrate Judge Sarah L. Cave. Lively attended the hearing alone, while Baldoni was accompanied by his wife, Emily Baldoni.

The legal battle has drawn public attention following US District Judge Lewis J. Liman's decision to unseal several court documents earlier this year. The materials include internal emails, text messages and voice memos related to the case. Among them is a



message from a Sony executive referring to Lively as a "terrorist."

Other unsealed records include a four-minute voice memo sent by Lively to Baldoni, as well as text exchanges involving Matt Damon, Ben Affleck and Taylor Swift. Messages between Lively and Swift have been widely discussed, including one in which Lively asked for help regarding Baldoni and

sought Swift's support for the film.

The current proceedings follow Judge Liman's June ruling dismissing Baldoni's USD 400 million defamation lawsuit against Lively and her husband, actor Ryan Reynolds. The court has not yet ruled on whether any of Lively's claims against Baldoni will be dismissed ahead of trial.

The case is now scheduled to go to trial on May 18.

The Mummy 4 release date out: Brendan Fraser, Rachel Weisz to return after 20 years

After nearly two decades, The Mummy franchise is set to return to the big screen with a fourth installment, bringing back fan-favourite duo Brendan Fraser and Rachel Weisz for another thrilling adventure. As announced by Universal Pictures, the film is scheduled for release on May 19, 2028. It will see the actors reprise their iconic roles as Rick O'Connell and Evelyn Carnahan, rekindling nostalgia among longtime fans.

While specific plot details for The Mummy 4 are still under wraps, the announcement alone has generated excitement, given the massive popularity of the earlier films. The franchise originally began in 1932 with Karl Freund's *The Mummy* and went on to spawn multiple sequels and reboots over the decades. However, it was the 1999 remake starring Fraser and Weisz that created a distinct global fanbase with its blend of action, humour, and supernatural thrills.

Directed by Stephen Sommers, the 1999 film followed librarian Evelyn Carnahan and her brother Jonathan as they enlisted adventurer Rick O'Connell to help locate the legendary City of the Dead, Hamunaptra. Their expedition took a dangerous turn when Evelyn accidentally awakened the cursed priest Imhotep after reading from the Book of the Dead.



Margot Robbie recalls unsolicited diet advice from co-star

Long before Margot Robbie became one of Hollywood's most bankable stars, she encountered a moment that quietly reflected the unspoken pressures young actresses often face. In a recent interview with Charli XCX for *Complex*, the actor revisited an uncomfortable incident from the early days of her career, when a male co-star handed her a book on dieting, unprompted.

Recalling the episode, Robbie said the gesture left little room for interpretation. "Very, very early in my career, an actor I worked with — a male actor — gave me a book called *French Women Don't Get Fat*, and it was essentially a book telling you to eat less," she said. "And I was like, 'Whoa, f**k you, dude.'"

The actor explained that the message behind the gift was clear. "He essentially gave me a book to let me know that I should lose weight. I was like, 'Wow.'"

Robbie chose not to name the actor or the project they were working on at the time, adding

that she has "no idea where he would even be now."

First published in 2004, *French Women Don't Get Fat* by Mireille Guiliano explores French eating habits, advocating moderation and lifestyle-based approaches to food. While the book has found a wide readership over the years, Robbie's experience highlights how conversations around body image — particularly in the film industry — can often be unsolicited and deeply personal.

Despite such early encounters, Robbie has gone on to build a formidable career, earning both critical acclaim and commercial success. Her filmography includes *The Wolf of Wall Street*, *Suicide Squad*, *I, Tonya*, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, *Bombshell*, *Babylon* and the global blockbuster *Barbie*.

She has received three Academy Award nominations so far — for Best Actress (*I, Tonya*), Best Supporting Actress (*Bombshell*), and Best Picture (*Barbie*), the latter as a producer.





Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri with British High Commissioner to India Lindy Cameron
(Photo: PTI)

India, UK sign pact to end double social security payments for short-term workers

India and the United Kingdom on Tuesday signed a major social security agreement aimed at ending double contributions for employees on short-term overseas assignments, a move expected to benefit nearly 75,000 Indian professionals working in Britain.

The pact will allow workers posted for up to three years to avoid paying social security in both countries, easing financial pressure on employees and companies and strengthening business ties between the two nations.

The agreement was signed in New Delhi by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and British High Commissioner Lindy Cameron, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Under the agreement, employees from India and the UK on temporary assignments of up to 36 months will no longer be required to make social security contributions in both countries.

"The agreement seeks to avoid double social security contributions for employees of both countries on temporary assignments in each other's territories for periods of up to 36 months," the MEA said.

"The agreement will support mobility and continued social security coverage of the employees on short-term overseas assignments," the ministry added.

The pact is expected to bring significant relief to Indian companies operating in the UK, particularly major IT firms such as Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys.

These companies frequently send skilled employees to Britain for short-term projects. Until now, such workers and employers often had to contribute to both Indian and UK social security systems. "This will enhance India-UK partnerships in the service sector, leveraging the high skills and innovative service sectors of both countries," the MEA said.

The social security agreement forms part of the broader India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), signed in July last year. At the time of the CETA signing, both governments had committed to concluding a separate pact on social security.

Deaths in Iran's crackdown on protests reach more than 7,000, say activists

DUBAI (TIP)

The death toll from a crackdown over Iran's nationwide protests last month has reached at least 7,005 people killed with many more still feared dead, activists said Thursday, Feb 12.

The continued rise in the tally of the dead from the demonstrations adds to the overall tensions facing Iran both inside the country and abroad as it tries to negotiate with the United States over its nuclear program. A second round of talks remains up in the air as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pressed his case directly with U.S. President Donald Trump to intensify his demands on Tehran in the negotiations.

"There was nothing definitive reached other than I insisted that negotiations with Iran continue to see whether or not a Deal can be consummated. If it can, I let the Prime Minister know that will be a preference," Trump wrote afterward on his Truth Social website. "Last time Iran decided that they were better off not making a Deal, and they were hit. ... That did not work well for them. Hopefully this time they will be more reasonable and responsible."

Trump told reporters at the White House Thursday that Iran should come to an agreement with Washington "very quickly." Asked about his timeline for striking a deal with Iran over its nuclear program, Trump said, "I guess over the next month, something like that."

Trump, who is seeking a deal to constrain Iran's nuclear program and who also has suggested the U.S. might take military action in response to Iran's crackdown on protesters, warned Iran that failure to reach a deal with his administration would be "very traumatic."

Meanwhile, Netanyahu told reporters before boarding a plane to return to Israel that Trump believes that his terms and Iran's "understanding that they made a mistake the last time when they did not reach an agreement, may lead them to agree to conditions that will enable a good agreement to be reached."

Netanyahu said he "did not hide" his own "general skepticism" about any deal, and stressed that any agreement must include concessions about Iran's ballistic missiles program and support



for militant proxies, not just the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. He described talks with the U.S. president as "excellent."

Meanwhile, Iran at home faces still-simmering anger over its wide-ranging suppression of all dissent in the Islamic Republic. That rage may intensify in the coming days as families of the dead begin marking the traditional 40-day mourning for the loved ones.

Activists' death toll slowly rises

The U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency — which offered the latest figure of 7,005 people killed, including 214 government forces — has been accurate in counting deaths during previous rounds of unrest in Iran and relies on a network of activists in Iran to verify deaths. The continuing rise in the death toll has come as the agency slowly is able to crosscheck information as communication remains difficult with those inside of the Islamic Republic.

Iran's government offered its only death toll on Jan. 21, saying 3,117 people were killed. Iran's theocracy in the past has undercounted or not reported fatalities from past unrest.

The Associated Press has been unable to independently assess the death toll, given authorities have disrupted internet access and international calls in Iran.

Russia to send crude oil and fuel to Cuba soon, Izvestia reports

MOSCOW (TIP)

Russia is preparing to send crude oil and fuel cargoes to Cuba in the near future, Reuter reported quoting Izvestia newspaper, on Thursday, February 12, which cited the Russian embassy in Cuba.

Cuba is grappling with fuel shortages after the U.S. moved to choke off its oil supplies. The communist-run island has warned international airlines that jet fuel will no longer be available, the latest sign of fast-worsening conditions.

The country has long relied on Venezuela for much of its jet fuel, but it has not received crude or refined products from its closest ally since mid-December, when Washington moved to block Venezuelan exports.

"Supply of crude and oil products is expected from Russia to Cuba in the near future as humanitarian aid," a Russian embassy diplomat told the newspaper.

Izvestia said Russia last sent oil to Cuba in February 2025, delivering 100,000 metric tons.

The Kremlin declined to comment directly on the reported plan but said it was in contact with Havana to discuss possible support.

"We are in close contact with our Cuban friends, and we are discussing options for providing them with assistance," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Asked whether Washington might escalate tariffs on Russian goods if Moscow helps Cuba, Peskov said: "We wouldn't want



any escalation, but on the other hand, we don't have much trade with the United States right now. We'd probably count on constructive dialogue and a solution to existing problems through dialogue."

Russia has said Cuba's fuel situation is critical and accused the U.S. of trying to "suffocate" the island's economy. Moscow has pledged to oppose any form of military intervention and voiced solidarity with Cuba and Venezuela.

Russia also said on Wednesday, February 11, it would suspend flights to Cuba once Russian tourists leave the island.



Switzerland to vote on 10 million population cap amid immigration debate

In a country famous for precision watches and carefully managed neutrality, Switzerland is now preparing to count something far more contentious — its people.

On June 14, Swiss voters will decide whether to limit the country's population to 10 million by 2050. The proposal has been put forward by the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP) amid concerns over rising immigration and fast population growth.

Switzerland's population is currently around 9.1 million. If it reaches 9.5 million, the government would have to start taking steps to control further growth. If the number crosses 10 million, authorities would be required to take all possible measures to bring it back below that level, according to Reuters.

Backers of the initiative, launched under the slogan "preserving what we love," argue that rising numbers are straining housing, infrastructure and wages. The SVP wants the limit written into the constitution, with future caps adjusted annually to account for natural population changes.

If approved, the government would be required to refuse entry to newcomers, including asylum seekers and family members of foreign residents, once the 9.5 million threshold is crossed. It would also be compelled to renegotiate international agreements that drive population growth, including a key accord with the European Union guaranteeing the free movement of people.

The Federal Council has warned the proposal could jeopardize Switzerland's economic prosperity and destabilize its relationship with the EU, its largest trading partner. Business groups have been blunt. Business association Economiesuisse has labeled it the chaos initiative, arguing that labor migration remains essential to healthcare, construction, hospitality and transport.

"Our country will continue to depend on labor migration in the future," business associations said in a joint paper with the Swiss Employers Association, cautioning that companies could relocate abroad without access to foreign workers.

Russian air attack knocks out power, heat to thousands of Ukrainians

KYIV (TIP)

Russia pounded Ukraine with drones and ballistic missiles overnight on Thursday, further battering its energy system and leaving tens of thousands in the capital Kyiv and the cities of Dnipro and Odesa without heat, power and water, officials said.

Russia has intensified its winter campaign of strikes on Ukraine's power grid, plunging major cities into long periods of cold and darkness in freezing temperatures.

In Kyiv alone, around 3,500 apartment buildings were without heating on Thursday after the latest attack knocked out supplies to nearly 2,600 high-rises, on top of the 1,100 already affected by previous strikes, said Mayor Vitali Klitschko.

More than 100,000 families were without electricity, according to private energy firm DTEK, which said one of its thermal power plants had been targeted but did not disclose the location.

Two people were hurt in the attack on Kyiv, which also hit a residential building, Klitschko said.

Ukraine's air force said Russia launched 24 ballistic missiles, one cruise missile and 219 drones overnight. Air defences downed or neutralised 16 missiles and 197 drones, it said.

KEY CITIES OF ODESA, DNIPRO ALSO HIT

The Black Sea port of Odesa was hit twice in less than 24 hours.

Late on Thursday, regional governor Oleh Kiper said a second wave of drone strikes had damaged houses and industrial sites and energy infrastructure. Kiper said the attack had disrupted electricity, heating and water supplies.

Deputy Prime Minister Oleksiy Kuleba had earlier said an initial wave of attacks had left nearly 300,000 people without water as the attack disrupted power supplies in the city. Close to 200 buildings in the port city were left without heating.

Military administration chief Serhiy Lysak said the attack also damaged an apartment building and sparked a fire that engulfed one of the city's markets, injuring one person.

In the industrial southeastern city of Dnipro, a combined missile and drone strike wounded four people, including a baby boy and a four-year-old girl, regional governor Oleksandr Ganzha said on Telegram.

Two people were killed and six more wounded in an attack on the railway hub of Lozova in the northeastern Kharkiv



The Ukrainian capital during a Russian missile and drone strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine February 12, 2026. REUTERS

region bordering Russia, prosecutors said.

Moscow has denied intentionally targeting civilians during the war although its attacks have killed thousands of them since it invaded at full scale in February 2022. Ukraine has also hit civilian targets in Russia or Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine during the war, though on a far smaller scale.

'BLOW TO PEACE EFFORTS'

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha condemned the attack as undermining a peace push led by U.S. President Donald Trump to end the four-year war.

U.S.-backed trilateral talks between Ukraine and Russia have so far failed to resolve key differences between the two sides, while Moscow has pressed on with a battlefield offensive and attacks on Ukrainian cities.

"Each such strike is a blow to peace efforts aimed at ending the war. Russia must be forced to take diplomacy seriously and de-escalate," Sybiha wrote on X.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Wednesday the U.S. needed to put more pressure on Russia if it wanted the war to end by summer.

Spy agency says Kim Jong Un's daughter is close to being designated North Korea's future leader

SEOUL (TIP)

South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers on Thursday that it believes the teenage daughter of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is close to being designated as the country's future leader as he moves to extend the family dynasty to a fourth generation.

The assessment by the National Intelligence Service comes as North Korea is preparing to hold its biggest political conference later this month, where Kim is expected to outline his major policy goals for the next five years and take steps to tighten his authoritarian grip.

In a closed-door briefing, NIS officials said they are closely monitoring whether Kim's daughter — believed to be named Kim Ju Ae and around 13 years old — appears with him before thousands of delegates at the upcoming Workers' Party



Congress, said lawmaker Lee Seong Kweun, who attended the meeting.

First appearing in public at a long-range missile test in November 2022, Kim Ju Ae has since accompanied her father to an increasing number of events, including weapons tests, military parades and factory openings. She traveled with him to Beijing last September for Kim's first summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in

six years on the sidelines of a World War II event.

Speculation about her political future intensified last month when she joined her parents on a New Year's Day visit to Pyongyang's Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, a sacred family mausoleum displaying the embalmed bodies of her late grandfather and great-grandfather, the country's first- and second-generation leaders. Some experts saw the visit as the clearest sign yet that she's positioned to be the heir to her 42-year-old father.

South Korean officials initially expressed doubt that she could be chosen as a North Korean leader, citing the country's deeply conservative culture and tradition of male-dominated leadership. But her increasingly prominent appearances in state media have prompted a reassessment.

Hindu tea worker killed in Bangladesh

The body of a young tea garden worker was recovered with his hands and legs tied in Moulvibazar district of northeastern Bangladesh, according to a media report on Thursday, Feb 12, as voting for the parliamentary elections was underway.

Police recovered the body of 28-year-old Ratan Shuvo Kar from Champara Tea Garden in Kamalganj upazila, around 200 kilometres northeast of Dhaka, on Wednesday, Feb 11.

Local residents discovered the body in the garden at approximately 10 am on Wednesday and alerted authorities. According to locals, the victim's body bore visible injury marks and was found in a bloodied condition.

Ratan's elder brother, Laxman Kar, said the family had been searching for him since the previous night.

"This morning, we were informed that his body was lying in the garden. We went there and identified him. We do not know why he was killed," he said.

Police sent the body to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital for an autopsy. The officer-in-charge said an investigation is underway to identify those responsible.

The killing follows the fatal attack on 62-year-old Hindu trader Susen Chandra Sarkar on Monday.

Sarkar was hacked to death inside his shop at Bogar Bazar intersection in Trishal upazila of Mymensingh district. Police said unidentified attackers assaulted him with a sharp weapon, left his body inside the shop, and shut the shutters before fleeing.

According to independent monitoring groups, at least 15 targeted killings of Hindu minority individuals have been recorded over a 45-day period, the South Asia Forum for Freedom of Religion or Belief said in a statement on Tuesday.

Last month, the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council alleged that communal violence has been rising at an alarming rate as the general election approaches. The council reported 51 incidents of communal violence in December 2025 alone.

According to the 2022 census, Bangladesh is home to approximately 13.1 million Hindus, accounting for about 7.95 per cent of the country's population.



Red-faced Pak reaches out to US to remove 'incorrect' India map in trade deal post

ISLAMABAD (TIP)

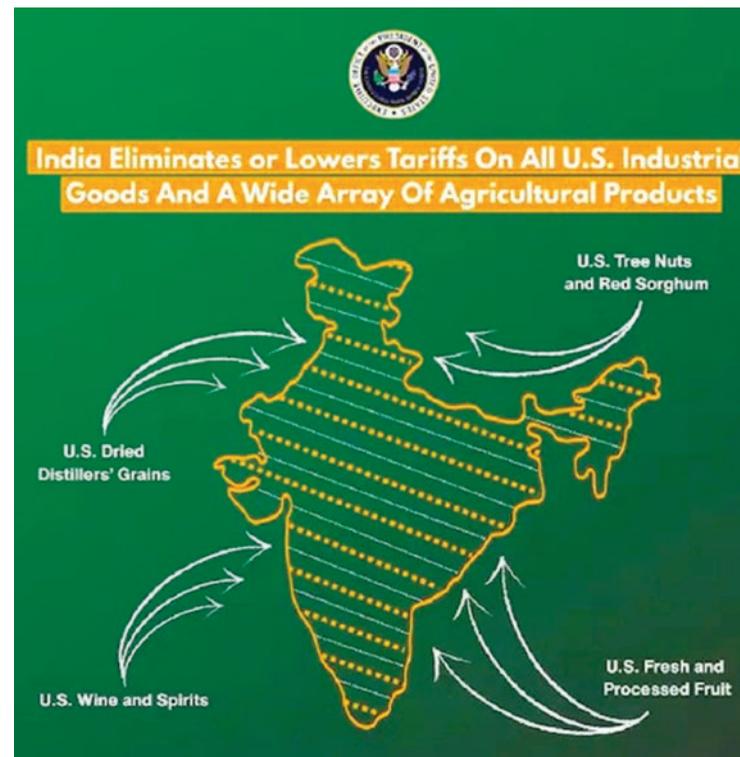
Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said that Islamabad had contacted Washington after a map posted by the US Trade Representative showed Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Aksai Chin within Indian territory, a move that has caused considerable embarrassment for the country. The map, which marked a clear departure from Washington's earlier depictions of the region, was deleted later.

Red-faced over the India map shared in a social media post by the top US official's office, the ministry said Pakistan had taken up the matter with US officials, pointing out that the depiction was inaccurate and did not conform to the UN-recognised representation of the region.

"The map was put up by certain handles. We contacted US authorities. They realised that the map was incorrect. The international map on J&K, which delineates Pakistani and Indian territories, is legally sanctioned by the UN. If you go to the UN website, you will see the actual map," the Ministry's spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said in a briefing.

He added that Pakistan "notes with satisfaction that the US side made the requisite corrections to highlight the legal UN-sanctioned map of our region, which clearly delineates J&K as a disputed territory, whose settlement is to be done through a UN-administered plebiscite in accordance with UNSC resolutions".

India and the United States announced a framework for a trade deal last week, resetting tariffs to lower levels and opening access to an economy worth over USD 30 trillion. While releasing details of the agreement, the Office of the US Trade Representative also published a map of India depicting the entire Jammu and Kashmir region, including Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), as part of the country. The map also included Aksai Chin, which



China claims to be part of its territory.

Though India's territorial sovereignty does not require validation from the United States, the move marked a departure from Washington's long-standing practice.

However, as speculation mounted over whether it was an error or a carefully calibrated repositioning amid a broader reset in bilateral ties, the US Trade Representative's office moved to put the debate to rest by deleting the post entirely from its official X account.

Imran Khan's son claims father almost blind in one eye, blames Munir, his puppets

ISLAMABAD (TIP)

The son of jailed former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has accused the country's government and military leadership of being directly responsible for his father's deteriorating health, claiming prolonged solitary confinement and medical neglect have left him nearly blind in one eye.

Kasim Khan, son of the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), tweeted that his father has "lost most of the vision in his right eye, with reports indicating only 15% eyesight remains."

"This is the direct consequence of 922 days of solitary confinement, medical neglect (denied blood tests) and the deliberate denial of proper treatment in jail," he wrote.

"The responsibility lies squarely with the regime in power, the Army Chief and the puppets enabling this cruelty," Kasim added in direct dig at Asim Munir, Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces, and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

"This physical deterioration is



happening under their orders, their watch and their responsibility. They have manipulated and warped the justice system in order to keep my father in solitary confinement."

Imran Khan, 73, has been incarcerated at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi since August 5, 2023, following his conviction in a corruption case. A former cricketer-turned-politician, he has denied wrongdoing and described the cases against him as politically motivated.

Kasim also said he and his brother,

both of whom live in the UK, have been denied visas to visit their father. "My brother and I are still being denied visas to see our father as his health deteriorates. History will record this injustice," he wrote.

He urged international bodies to intervene. "We urge human rights bodies, legal institutions and democratic nations to confront this persecution and ensure those responsible face consequences."

Separately, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi condemned what he called "gross negligence" by the federal government regarding Khan's medical condition.

Addressing a cabinet meeting, Afridi said an official medical report itself acknowledged that Khan has lost most of his eyesight in his right eye, with only 10 to 15 percent remaining. However, he questioned the credibility of the report, saying Khan's personal physicians have not been allowed to conduct a full examination.

Ramadan: The sacred month of fasting

RAMADAN IS THE NINTH AND HOLIEST MONTH OF THE ISLAMIC CALENDAR, OBSERVED BY MUSLIMS WORLDWIDE AS A PERIOD OF FASTING, PRAYER, CHARITY, AND REFLECTION. FROM DAWN UNTIL DUSK, HEALTHY ADULT MUSLIMS REFRAIN FROM FOOD, DRINK, AND IMMORAL BEHAVIOR TO CULTIVATE SELF-RESTRAINT, GRATITUDE, AND CLOSENESS TO GOD. IN 2026, RAMADAN IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN ON FEBRUARY 17.

When the crescent moon gently curves into view against the evening sky, it signals more than the arrival of a new month—it marks the beginning of a sacred transformation. Across continents and cultures, Ramadan reshapes daily life for Muslims, reordering time itself around prayer, fasting, charity, and reflection. From the quiet predawn hours of Suhoor to the communal joy of Iftar, Ramadan is a month in which faith is lived intensely, consciously, and collectively.

Observed by nearly two billion Muslims worldwide, Ramadan is not merely a ritual obligation. It is a spiritual retreat woven into everyday life—a time for moral refinement, inner discipline, and a renewed relationship with the Quran.

The Sacred Timing of Ramadan: A Lunar Journey Through the Year

Ramadan occupies the ninth position in the Islamic Hijri calendar, a purely lunar system based on the moon's cycles. Each Islamic month begins with the sighting of the new crescent moon (hilal). Because the lunar year is approximately 10-11 days shorter than the solar year, Ramadan migrates through the seasons over time, sometimes arriving amid long, sweltering summer days and at other times during the short, cool days of winter.

Moon Sighting and Tradition

The commencement of Ramadan is traditionally determined by the physical sighting of the moon, in accordance with the instruction of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

> "Fast when you see it, and break your fast when you see it."

> (Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim)

This practice reflects Islam's deep connection with natural rhythms and communal witnessing. In the modern era, some Muslim-majority countries also use astronomical calculations, while others maintain strict adherence to physical moon sighting, occasionally resulting in regional variations in the start of the month.

Ramadan lasts 29 or 30 days, culminating with the sighting of the next crescent moon that ushers in Eid al-Fitr.

The Quranic Foundations: Ramadan as the Month of Divine Revelation

The spiritual heart of Ramadan lies in its intimate connection with the Quran. It was during this month that the first verses of the Quran were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon



him) in the Cave of Hira in 610 CE—an event that transformed the course of human history.

The Quran explicitly sanctifies Ramadan:

"The month of Ramadan is that in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of guidance and criterion."

> (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:185)

This verse establishes Ramadan not only as a time of fasting but as the Month of the Quran—a period dedicated to recitation (tilawah), contemplation (tadabbur), and living the moral guidance of divine revelation.

Throughout Ramadan, mosques resonate with Quranic recitation, and many Muslims aim to complete the entire Quran at least once, reviving a tradition that dates back to the Prophet, who would review the Quran with Angel Jibril each Ramadan.

The Obligation of Fasting: A Pillar of Islam

Fasting during Ramadan (Sawm) is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, making it a core act of worship alongside prayer, charity, and pilgrimage. Its obligation is outlined in the Quran:

> "O you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain taqwa."

> (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:183)

The goal of fasting is taqwa—a



heightened state of God-consciousness that influences every aspect of a believer's life.

Who Must Fast—and Who Is Exempt

Fasting is obligatory for all adult Muslims who are physically and mentally able. Islam, however, balances devotion with compassion. Exemptions include:

- The sick or chronically ill
- The elderly
- Travelers

- Pregnant or breastfeeding women
- Women during menstruation

Those unable to fast may make up the missed days later or provide fidya—feeding the poor—ensuring that the spirit of mercy remains central.

The Daily Rhythm of Ramadan: From Dawn to Dusk

Ramadan introduces a distinctive daily structure that blends physical restraint with spiritual focus.

From Page 29

Suhoor: The Blessed Pre-Dawn Meal

Before the break of dawn, Muslims rise for Suhoor, a meal that nourishes the body and signals the intention (niyyah) to fast. The Prophet Muhammad emphasized its importance:

> "Take Suhoor, for indeed there is blessing in it."

> (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Suhoor reflects Ramadan's balance-spiritual devotion supported by physical care.

The Fast: Discipline of Body and Soul

From dawn (Fajr) to sunset (Maghrib), Muslims abstain from food, drink, smoking, and marital relations. Yet the essence of fasting extends far beyond physical hunger.

It is a fast of:

- The tongue, from gossip and falsehood
- The eyes, from harmful or unethical sights
- The heart, from anger, arrogance, and envy

As the Prophet warned:

> "Whoever does not give up false speech and evil conduct, Allah has no need for him to give up his food and drink."

> (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Fasting thus becomes a comprehensive moral discipline.

Breaking the Fast: Iftar and Its Sacred Meaning

At sunset, the fast is broken with Iftar, a moment infused with gratitude and humility. Following the Sunnah, Muslims traditionally break their fast with dates and water before performing the Maghrib prayer.

A supplication is recited, acknowledging reliance on divine provision. This moment symbolizes trust in God, patience rewarded, and spiritual fulfillment after hours of restraint.

Iftar is also a deeply communal experience. Families gather, neighbors share food, mosques host open meals, and strangers sit side by side. Feeding a fasting person carries immense spiritual reward, reinforcing Ramadan's emphasis on generosity and social solidarity.

Night Worship: Taraweeh and Spiritual Immersion

After the obligatory night prayer (Isha), Muslims perform Taraweeh, special congregational prayers unique to Ramadan. Over the course of the month, the entire Quran is often recited during these prayers.

Mosques during Taraweeh are filled with a distinctive spiritual energy-long rows of worshippers standing in unity, listening to the rhythmic recitation of divine verses that echo through the night.

Laylat al-Qadr: The Night That Transcends Time

Among the final ten nights of Ramadan lies Laylat al-Qadr (The Night of Power)-the night when the Quran was first revealed.

The Quran describes it as:



> "The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months."

> (Surah Al-Qadr 97:3)

Worship on this single night is believed to equal more than 83 years of devotion. Muslims intensify prayer, Quranic recitation, and supplication, seeking forgiveness and divine closeness.

Charity and Compassion: The Social Spirit of Ramadan

Ramadan heightens social responsibility. Muslims give:

- Zakat (obligatory charity)
- Sadaqah (voluntary charity)
- Zakat al-Fitr, given before Eid to ensure the poor can celebrate

Acts of generosity multiply-from food drives and free Iftar kitchens to quiet, anonymous donations-transforming Ramadan into a month of collective care.

Cultural Expressions Across the Muslim World

While Ramadan's religious essence remains universal, its cultural expressions vary widely:

- In India, Ramadan bazaars in Old Delhi, Lucknow, and Hyderabad bustle with haleem, kebabs, and sweets.
- In Turkey, traditional drummers roam streets before dawn to wake people for Suhoor.
- In Egypt, homes glow with colorful lanterns known as fanous.
- In Indonesia, mass Quranic recitations and communal prayers define the nights.

These traditions add local color while reinforcing communal bonds.

The Psychological and Moral Transformation

Ramadan offers a pause in a fast-paced world. By limiting consumption, it sharpens gratitude. By enforcing restraint, it strengthens self-control. By encouraging charity, it fosters empathy for the less fortunate.

Modern observers often note increased



mindfulness, stronger family ties, and a renewed sense of purpose during the month.

Eid al-Fitr: The Joyful Culmination

Ramadan concludes with Eid al-Fitr, a festival marked by communal prayers, festive meals, and expressions of gratitude. It celebrates not indulgence, but the successful completion of a sacred discipline.

The Enduring Essence of Ramadan

At its core, Ramadan is not about hunger-it is about awakening.

It teaches that true strength lies in restraint, true wealth in generosity, and true fulfillment in spiritual connection. As the month departs, it leaves behind lessons meant to endure long after the crescent moon fades.

In a world defined by excess and haste, Ramadan stands as a timeless reminder: that faith can slow time, discipline can free the soul, and devotion can transform the ordinary into the sacred.

Sikh History This Week

FEBRUARY 13 TO FEBRUARY 19

13th February

1870: Baba Darbara Singh of the Nirankari movement, passed away. He was second to Baba Dayal Singh, founder of the Nirankari movement.



1923: A police informer, Diwan, is murdered by the Babbar Akalis.

1987: Feb. 13-15, an Academic Conference on Sikh Scholarship was organized under the auspices of the University of Toronto. This was the first conference of its kind after the assault on Golden Temple. Many renowned scholars from United Kingdom, India, United States, and Canada participated in this conference. Papers were presented on selected topics on Religion and Culture; History and Politics: India; History and Society; Diaspora; and Comments on recent Events.

14th February

1983: 11 Sikhs killed in a strike observed by the Hindus of Punjab.

15th February

1605 Guru Hargobind married Mata Damodari,



daughter of Narian Das, a Julka Khatri of the village of Dall, 6 Kilometers southeast of Sultanpur Lodhi in Kapurthala district of the Punjab. This marriage resulted in a son, Baba Gurditta born in 1613 and a daughter, Bibi Viro born in 1615.

1762 Ahmad Shah Abdali traveled from Sirhind to Lahore with 50 bullock-carts filled with heads of Sikh.

1809 The East India Company established a cantonment in Ludhiana. This cantonment was specifically established to check the advance of Khalsa forces beyond the Sutlej.

1984 Feb. 15-20, the Hindus of Haryana under the guidance of the Chief Minister Bhajan Lal and senior police officials, attacked innocent Sikhs in the cities of Panipat, Rohtak, Kaithal Karnal, Ambala, Jind and other parts of Haryana province and killed 20 Sikhs,

burnt six Sikh shrines and looted 200 Sikh houses and shops. The hair and beards of more than 12 Sikhs were shaved off by the Hindus in the presence of heavy contingents of police and Central Reserve Police CRP.

16th February

1892 Prof. Sahib Singh, a renowned scholar of GurSikhism, was born.

1923 Waryam Singh of Dhugga and Dalipa of Dhamman join the Babbar Khalsa.

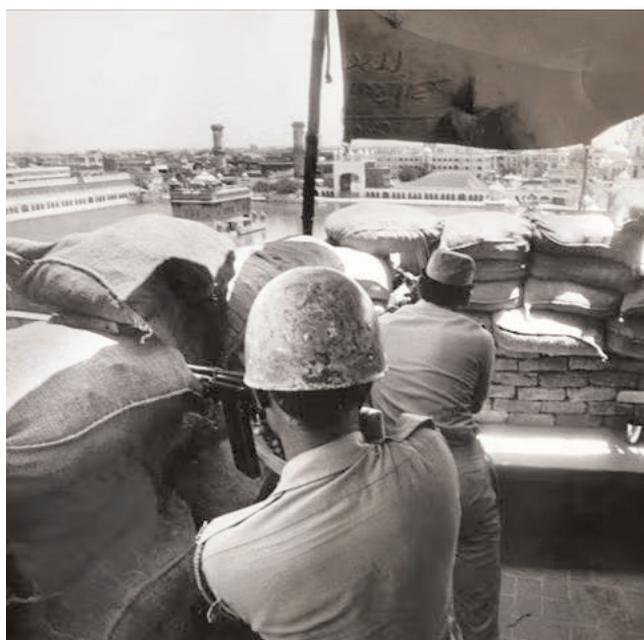
1986 Foundation stone was laid for the re-



construction of Akal Takht after Operation Bluestar. Sri Akal Takht was severely damaged in this operation. Although the Government of India forcibly repaired the building under curfew, through Baba Santa Singh, main leader Budha Dal, this is not accepted by Guru Khalsa Panth. This building repaired by Government of India was torn down and Baba Santa Singh punished for his cooperation with the government in this matter.

17th February

1984: The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) fired indiscriminately upon Sri Darbar Sahib complex at Amritsar. As a result three visiting devotees were



killed.

18th February

1850 Maharaja Dalip Singh reached Fatehgarh, Uttar Pradesh, India. Maharaja Dalip Singh was forcibly separated from his mother Maharani Jind Kaur and sent to Fatehgarh, (Farrukhabad, district of Uttar Pradesh in India) by Lord Dalhousie.



1921 Khadur Sahib Gurudwaras were brought under control of SGPC.



19th February

1848: Jathaedar Ganda Singh and two associates were hanged until death in Lahore. On January 30, 1848 Jathaedar Ganda Singh (Jathaedar of Sri Akal Takhat), Akali Kharak Singh, Bibek Singh, Hira Singh, Mastan Singh, Muhar Singh, and Hukam Singh protested the entry of some British officers into the Darbar Sahib without removing their shoes. This resulted in a clash between the Akalis and the government officials. One official (subedar) was killed and a company commander got injured. Some Sikhs also got injured. The tyrant Mr. Lawrence arrested the Sikhs. Jathaedar Ganda Singh and his two of his companions were hanged. Six more Sikhs were sent to the jails of Barailey, outside Punjab.

1921 Mahants and Pujaris of various historical Gurudwaras, held a convention to express themselves against Singh Sabha reformers and call on the government to restore the status quo ante at the Golden Temple, Amritsar. Because of the resolve of the reformers and unity within Guru Khalsa Panth, the reformers were victorious in their efforts.

1949 Master Tara Singh was arrested at Narela, under sedition charges. He was on his way to Delhi to attend a Conference.

Egg-cellent hacks: Eggs have amazing uses beyond the kitchen

Eggs are a kitchen staple, but their beauty benefits go far beyond breakfast. Packed with proteins, vitamins A, D, E, biotin, and fatty acids, eggs have been used in traditional home remedies for centuries. From strengthening hair to restoring skin glow, this humble ingredient can work wonders—without expensive products or chemicals.

Hair conditioner

How much do you spend on hair products? A small fortune, no doubt. But next time you condition your hair, try this alternative: whisk up egg yolk with a dab of honey and a dash of olive oil. Leave it on your hair for 30 minutes before rinsing. Your hair care routine will never be the same again.

Nail revitalizer

Did you know that eggs promote nail growth? Bathe them in a cup of warm milk and one egg yolk for healthier looking, nourished nails.

Under eye mask

Fed up looking like a panda? Whether due to lack of sleep, stress, or eating certain foods, the dark rings that gather like storm clouds under your eyes aren't likely how you want to start your day. Minimize puffiness and swelling by dabbing a couple of coats of egg white under your peepers. You'll look lighter and fresher for it!

Egg white skin care

Egg white is well known for tightening skin. Its healing properties also extend to shrinking pores, and reducing the excess grease that leads to oily skin. In effect, egg white is a natural and soothing anti-ageing cleanser.

Yolk moisturizer

Two whisked egg yolks mixed with water and applied liberally to your face imbues your skin with an energizing shot of vitamin A.

Hangover cure?

This one's debatable. However, there are those who swear that mixing one raw egg with salt, pepper, and a sprinkling of Tabasco works wonders on the night before.

First aid kit

Cut yourself? Boil an egg. Not to eat, at least not



straight away, but to peel off the shell to extract the thin membrane. The membrane acts as a make-shift Band-Aid and is effective in stemming blood. It also has scar-fighting nutrients. Now you can eat that egg.

Fabric whitener

Gather up those discarded eggshells, tie them up in cotton bag, and pop them into the laundry. They whiten your whites better than any chemical.

Nutrient-rich water

How many times have you boiled an egg and dumped out the water afterwards? Don't! Let it cool and give the plants a drink. The used water is nutrient-rich and full of good things for their health.

Blackhead removal strip

Rid yourself of blackheads by whisking a drop of lemon juice with two egg whites and applying the mixture to a clean face. Peel the mask off after 15 minutes and at the same time unclog those hair follicles for a smoother-looking you.

Under-Eye Firming Treatment

Egg whites temporarily tighten the skin under the eyes, reducing puffiness.

How to use: Apply a tiny amount of egg white carefully under the eyes. Wash off after it dries.

FOOD CORNER

Malai Soya Chaap

Ingredients

- 250 g soya chaap (sticks or pieces), Water (for boiling), ½ tsp salt, ½ cup fresh cream (malai), ¼ cup thick curd (hung curd preferred), 1 tbsp cashew paste, 1 tbsp ginger-garlic paste, 1 tsp green chilli paste, ½ tsp turmeric powder, 1 tsp red chilli powder (adjust to taste), 1 tsp coriander powder, ½ tsp garam masala, 1 tsp kasuri methi (crushed), Salt to taste, 1 tbsp lemon juice, 1 tbsp oil or butter, for cooking, 2 tbsp butter, 1 tbsp oil, 1 small onion (very finely chopped or paste), ½ cup fresh cream, ¼ cup milk (optional, for gravy consistency), ½ tsp sugar (optional), Fresh coriander for garnish

Method

- Boil soya chaap in salted water for 5-7 minutes to remove raw smell. Drain, rinse with fresh water, and squeeze gently. Cut into bite-sized pieces if required.
- In a bowl, mix cream, curd, cashew paste, ginger-garlic paste, green chilli paste, spices, kasuri methi, salt, lemon juice, and oil.
- Add the chaap pieces and coat well. Cover and marinate for at least 30 minutes (1-2 hours for best flavor). Heat a pan or tawa with a little butter. Shallow fry the marinated chaap until lightly golden on all sides. Remove and keep aside.
- In the same pan, heat butter and oil. Add finely chopped onion or onion paste and sauté until soft and lightly golden. Add remaining marinade and cook on low heat until the butter separates. Stir in fresh cream and milk to adjust consistency. Add sugar if using.
- Add the fried chaap pieces to the gravy. Simmer for 5-7 minutes on low flame, stirring gently.
- Garnish with fresh cream and chopped coriander.
- Serve hot with: Butter naan or garlic naan, Tandoori roti, Laccha paratha, Jeera rice



When love feels right: Signs of a happy, healthy relationship

In a world where relationship advice often focuses on red flags, breakups, and heartbreak, it's easy to forget that love can also be calm, supportive, and deeply nourishing. A happy and healthy relationship doesn't mean perfection or the absence of conflict—it means two people choosing growth, respect, and understanding, even on imperfect days. So how do you know if what you share with your partner is truly healthy? Beyond butterflies and grand gestures, there are quieter, more meaningful signs that indicate emotional security and genuine happiness.

Consistent Respect

One of the most significant and empowering parts of a healthy

relationship is mutual respect. This ensures that most parties feel valued. It also provides a strong and stable foundation that makes it possible to exercise autonomy and deal with any conflicts that come up.

Shared Time Together

Even if you and your partner have different careers and hobbies, it's so important to have at least some time devoted to simply enjoying one another's company. You don't necessarily need to have fancy dinners or plan anything very intense. Even just taking walks together, curling up to read books or chatting over a cup of coffee helps you to stay connected and emotionally intimate.

You Don't Just Watch TV



An important amendment to the above sign of happy and healthy relationships is that shared time should at least partly revolve around direct interaction.

Sometimes, couples can fall into a rut where they only spend time alone watching TV, focusing attention outwards. If you ever worry that you're spending too much time on television, have a chat about more direct ways of spending time together.

Physical Closeness

The physical closeness involved in a happy and healthy relationship isn't just about sex! It's also about cuddling, kissing, sharing massages, holding hands and such. All of these types of interactions prompt your brain to release oxytocin (sometimes called the "love hormone"). This cements a strong bond, reduces stress and provides a foundation for lasting commitment.

Running vs cycling: Which is better for weight loss?

When it comes to weight loss, few debates are as enduring as running versus cycling. Both are powerful cardiovascular exercises, both burn calories, and both have passionate supporters. But if weight loss is the primary goal, which one truly delivers better results?

The answer, as with most health questions, depends on how your body works, how you train, and what you can sustain long term.

THE SCIENCE OF WEIGHT LOSS

At its core, weight loss is about creating a calorie deficit, burning more calories than you consume, while preserving muscle mass and metabolic health. Cardio exercises like running and cycling accelerate this process by increasing energy expenditure, improving insulin sensitivity, and boosting cardiovascular fitness.

RUNNING: HIGH IMPACT, HIGH CALORIE BURN

Running is often considered the gold standard for weight loss and for good reason.

On average, a person weighing around 70 kg can burn 600–800 calories per hour while running at a moderate pace. The reason is simple: running is a weight-bearing, high-impact activity that engages multiple muscle groups simultaneously, including the legs, core, and stabilising muscles.

Why running helps weight loss:

- Burns more calories per minute than most forms of cardio
- Elevates heart rate quickly
- Improves metabolic rate even after exercise (afterburn effect)
- Requires minimal equipment

The downside:

- Running places significant stress on joints, especially the knees, hips, and ankles. For beginners, people with obesity, or those with joint



issues, this can increase the risk of injury, often leading to inconsistency, which ultimately stalls weight loss.

CYCLING: LOW IMPACT, LONGER DURATION

Cycling, whether outdoors or on a stationary bike, is a low-impact aerobic exercise that is gentler on the joints. A moderate cycling session burns approximately 400–600 calories per hour, slightly less than running, but with important advantages.

Why cycling supports weight loss:

- Easier to sustain for longer durations
- Lower injury risk, especially for knees and back
- Ideal for overweight individuals or beginners
- Allows higher training volume without excessive fatigue
- Because cycling is less taxing on joints, people often exercise longer and more frequently, which can offset the lower per-minute calorie burn.



Study suggests people with obesity are 70% more likely to be hospitalised, die from infectious disease

People with obesity could be 70 per cent more likely to be hospitalised or die from an infectious disease, including flu, COVID-19 and pneumonia, according to a study published in *The Lancet* journal.

In 2023, obesity was linked to one in ten infection-related global deaths, researchers said, even as they said estimates of obesity's global impact should be interpreted with caution.

Researchers from the UK and Finland said that people with obesity were seen to have a higher risk of being hospitalised or dying due to SARS-CoV-2 infection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, there was a lack of evidence of whether the link exists for infectious diseases in general, they said.

The team analysed data from the UK Biobank and Finnish cohorts, amounting to over 540,000 people. Body mass indices (BMI) of the participants were noted at the time of enrollment, who were then followed up for an average of 13-14 years.

“(The) study of over 540,000 people suggests people with obesity are 70 per cent more likely to be hospitalised or die from an infectious disease; people with the most severe obesity face three times the risk,” the researchers said.

Extrapolating the findings globally, the team said that obesity may have been a driving factor in 0.6 million out of 5.4 million deaths (10.8 per cent) from infectious diseases in 2023.

“Our findings suggest that people living with obesity are significantly more likely to become severely ill or to die from a wide range of infectious diseases. As obesity rates are expected to rise globally, so will the number of deaths and hospitalisations from infectious diseases linked to obesity,” author Solja Nyberg, from the University of Helsinki in Finland, said.

There is an urgent need for policies that help people stay healthy and support weight-loss, such as access to affordable healthy food and opportunities for physical activity, Nyberg said.

Why drying wet clothes inside your home is a health hazard?

When it's cold or rainy and sunlight is scarce, many people hang wet clothes inside bedrooms or living rooms. It seems harmless, but drying wet clothes indoors raises indoor humidity and can make the air heavy and damp. That higher moisture doesn't just affect walls and furniture, it also encourages mould growth and can trigger breathing issues like asthma or allergies. Research has shown that dry clothes inside homes can contribute a large portion of indoor humidity and worsen air quality. Knowing the risks of drying wet clothes indoors helps you protect your home and health.

Hanging wet laundry inside increases moisture in the air. Without good ventilation, this moisture stays put and settles on walls, ceilings and furniture. Over time, damp surfaces become breeding grounds for mould and mildew. Mould not only damages paint and plaster but also eats away at building materials. Many households don't realise how much water their clothes release, a load of wet laundry can add almost two litres of water into indoor air as it dries.

The indoor humidity problems from drying wet clothes are more than just a cleaning headache. Mould spores in the air can irritate eyes, noses and throats. For people with asthma, chronic breathing conditions or allergies, exposure to mould can worsen symptoms. Fungal particles can inflame airways and make asthma



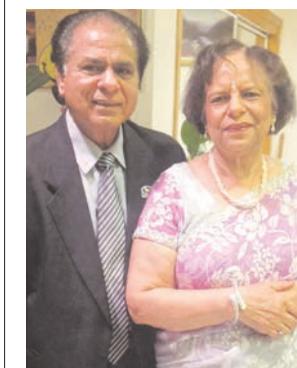
attacks more likely. Even in otherwise healthy people, long exposure to damp air and mould can cause coughing and discomfort.

If you must dry clothes inside:

- Open windows and use exhaust fans to improve air flow.
- Place a dehumidifier or air purifier in the room.
- Avoid hanging laundry in bedrooms where you sleep.
- Keep doors open to let moisture escape.
- Better ventilation and moisture control help reduce mould growth and keep indoor air safer.

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YouTube is using AI to create custom playlists for users

YouTube is rolling out AI-generated playlists for users. This means that users can now create custom playlists using simple prompts and AI will do the rest for you. However, there is a catch which is that these AI-generated playlists are only available to paying customers, aka those who have subscribed to YouTube Premium.

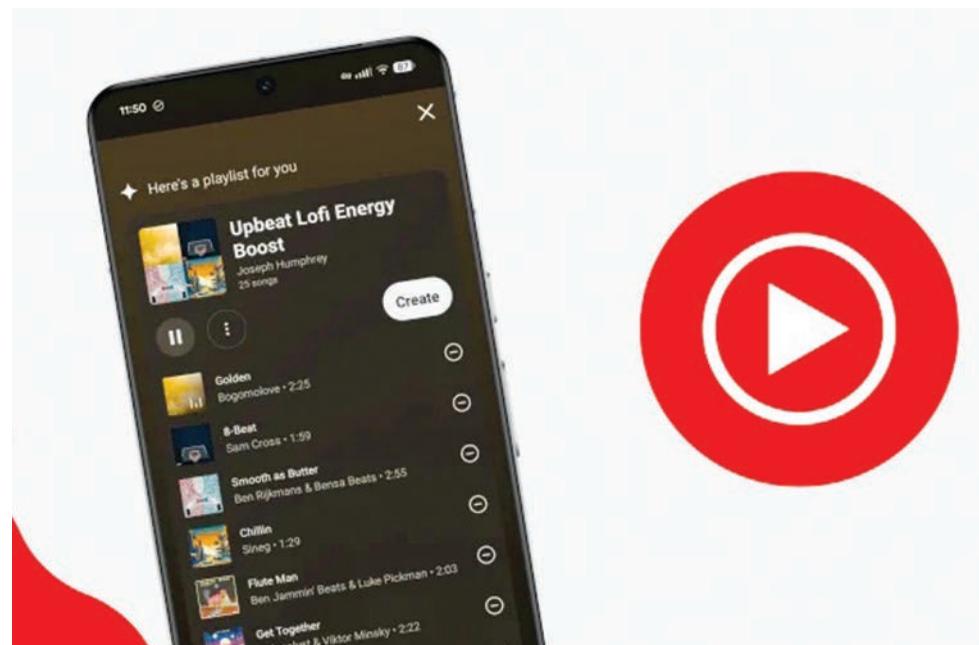
If you are a YouTube Premium – or Google One – subscriber, you can now use AI to generate playlists across videos (YouTube) and audio (YouTube Music). The feature is available to both Android and iPhone users. The update rollout is part of Google's wider plan to move towards more AI-driven tools that are meant to provide more personalised content to users.

YouTube AI-generated playlists: How to use

Users who have a Premium subscription of YouTube can access the feature by going to the Library tab in the YouTube app, tapping the "New" button, and selecting "AI playlist." The app then prompts users to enter a request using text or voice.

Users can ask for playlists such as "death metal," "sad post-rock," "house mix for a chill party," "indie pop," or even "90s Bollywood classic hits." Within seconds, the AI generates a personalised playlist based on the prompt.

Competing players like Amazon Music



and Spotify already have AI-based playlists or radios. YouTube is also now joining the bandwagon.

This is not YouTube's first shot at using AI. In July 2024, Google's video streaming platform tested a tool that allowed users to create custom radio stations using prompts. The new playlist generator builds on that idea, offering a more refined experience that is now being rolled out to a wider group of paying subscribers.

The update for Premium YouTube

users comes at a time when the platform is working hard to make its premium subscription more appealing to its users. Just this week, it was spotted testing a new way to make YouTube Premium more useful by removing lyrics for some non-subscribers hinting that soon this could be turned into a paid feature.

Earlier this month, the company said it had reached 325 million paying subscribers across its platforms, including Google One and YouTube Premium.

Nasa's Swift Observatory is falling to Earth: Science paused for dramatic rescue

Nasa's Neil Gehrels Swift Observatory, a 21-year-old powerhouse in detecting cosmic explosions, is plummeting toward Earth due to relentless atmospheric drag, prompting a bold agency intervention.

On February 11, 2026, mission controllers suspended most science operations to reorient the spacecraft, minimising drag and buying precious time for a private reboost mission.

Launched in 2004, Swift has revolutionised astrophysics by swiftly slewing to capture gamma-ray bursts (GRBs), the universe's most powerful blasts signalling black hole births and star deaths, using its Burst Alert Telescope (BAT), X-ray, UV, and optical instruments.

Solar activity during Solar Cycle 25 has superheated Earth's upper atmosphere, puffing it outward and accelerating Swift's descent from an initial 585 km to below 400 km altitude by early February.

Without action, the 1.4-ton probe faced a 90% chance of uncontrolled reentry by late 2026, though it would fully burn up harmlessly.

"We've halted target slews with secondary telescopes, but BAT continues GRB detection," explained principal investigator S. Bradley Cenko at Nasa's Goddard Space Flight Center. "This drag-minimising posture extends orbit life ahead of summer reboost." The strategy targets maintaining Swift above 300 km, optimising odds for the rescue.

Nasa has contracted Katalyst Space Technologies of Flagstaff, Arizona, for a \$30 million mission deploying a robotic "Link" spacecraft, air-launched via Pegasus rocket. Set for June 2026, it will rendezvous, autonomously dock, and thrust Swift into a stable 600 km orbit, potentially adding a decade of service.

This pioneering satellite-servicing demo could transform end-of-life management for countless low-Earth orbit assets. Cenko emphasised urgency: "Transitioning now maximises margins for this game-changer." While science yields temporarily to survival mode, Swift's legacy, over 2,000 GRBs observed, plus black hole and supernova insights, hangs in the balance.



Google makes it easier to remove your personal info and deepfakes from search

As the Indian government rolls out stricter IT rules around AI-generated content and deepfakes, including mandatory labelling and faster takedown timelines, Google has announced new tools that make it easier for users to remove explicit images and sensitive personal information from Search. The update comes as regulators worldwide intensify scrutiny of how tech giants handle digital abuse and "manipulated content". According to Google, the updated Search system aims to help victims of such harmful content to report and give users more direct control over what appears about them online.

In an official blog post, the company outlined a new removal process that allows individuals to report explicit images directly from Search results. Here is how it works:

- To restrict explicit data, click the three dots next to a Search result.
- From the menu that appears, select the "Remove result" option.
- Google will then prompt the user to specify the reason for the removal. If the image is explicit or intimate



in nature, users can choose the option stating that it shows a sexual image of them.

One of the key updates to Search is that users can now report multiple images in a single request. Earlier, individuals had to file separate complaints for each link or image. With the new update, Google now allows users to select several explicit results at once and submit them together, making the process faster and less repetitive.

- Once users submit a request, they can track its progress through the "Results about you" hub.

This dedicated dashboard will show the status of pending and reviewed

requests and send notifications when there are updates.

The company has also introduced additional safeguards. After Google approves a removal request, users can enable a feature that filters out similar explicit results from appearing in future searches related to their name. This update is particularly aimed at cases involving AI-generated deepfakes, where manipulated content can resurface in different forms.

In addition to restricting explicit images, Google is also expanding its removal options to cover more types of sensitive personal data. Users can now request the removal of information such as government ID numbers, personal addresses and phone numbers from Search results. The system can also notify users if new instances of such information appear online, allowing them to take swift action.

However, Google has clarified that these removals apply only to its Search results. The original content will still exist on the website where it was published unless the hosting platform separately removes it.

Same garment levy benefits for India, Bangladesh in US pact: Goyal

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday, Feb 12, said India would secure tariff benefits identical to those extended to Bangladesh under its trade arrangement with the United States, dismissing Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's charge that

Dhaka had received a more favourable deal.

In a sharp response that spilled beyond Parliament, Goyal accused Rahul Gandhi of "spreading another lie" by claiming Bangladesh had gained an edge over India in trade concessions.

"Just as Bangladesh has a facility that if raw material is purchased from America, then if you process it and make cloth and export it, it will be available at zero reciprocal tariff. India also has the same facility and India will also get it," Goyal said.

"When the interim agreement is finalised, then you will get to see this in the fine print," he said. He maintained that the proposed arrangement would significantly boost Indian exports and directly benefit farmers, MSMEs, fishermen and traditional artisans.

"Indian farmers will also get the benefit that many such products will be exported to the US, the EU, Switzerland, the UK, Norway and Australia in large quantities. The Rs 5 lakh crore that we export today will become an export of Rs 10 lakh crore," he said.

Goyal went on to demand an apology from Rahul to "the farmers of India, fishermen, workers working in MSME and Vishwakarmas" for allegedly misleading them. Party leader Pawan Khera accused the minister of inadvertently admitting that Indian cotton could be displaced if US raw material was incentivised under a zero reciprocal tariff mechanism. "Goyal in Blunder-land," he said.

As per him — 'Just as Bangladesh has a facility that if raw material is purchased from America, then if you process it and make cloth and export it, then it will be available at zero reciprocal tariff. India also has the same facility and India will also get it.' Basically, what he means is that soon Indian cotton will be redundant in Indian markets. And Indian cotton farmers will be languishing," Khaira said.

The sharp exchange underscores mounting political sensitivity around the proposed interim trade arrangement with the US, particularly in the textiles and agriculture sectors.

While the government projects the agreement as a pathway to expanded market access and export growth, the Opposition has raised concerns about possible adverse impacts on domestic producers if import-linked processing incentives tilt sourcing patterns.

With negotiations still underway, the fine contours of the reciprocal tariff mechanism -- including rules of origin, value



addition thresholds and sectoral coverage -- remain to be finalised.

IT sell-off rattles India's stock market

India's IT heavyweights dragged down the stock market today, tracking a 2% drop in Wall Street, on concerns that AI is set to disrupt their business model.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell as much as 1.07%, or 903.17 points, to 82,771.75 points while the broader Nifty 50 slumped 1.13%. All 16 major sectors declined at the open. Here's a look at the movers of the benchmark:

The Nifty IT index, which sends five companies—Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, Wipro, HCL Technologies and Tech Mahindra—to the Nifty 50, is on track for the worst week since the pandemic started in March 2020.

To be sure, the unwinding of AI stocks on Wall Street is a positive for Dalal Street for the wider market lacks the outsized exposure to such trade.

"What is rattling the Indian market now is the massive sell-off in IT stocks, which is the second largest profit pool of India Inc.," V.K. Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Investments Ltd., told HT Business in an emailed statement. The real impact of the 'Anthropic shock' on the IT sector is yet to be ascertained".

Meanwhile on Thursday, foreign institutional investors bought equities worth Rs 108.42 crore while domestic institutional investors bought stocks worth Rs 276.85 crore, according to exchange data.

RBI surprises market with aggressive dollar sale to support rupee

The Reserve Bank of India sold dollars heavily before the local market opened on Thursday to lift the rupee, six bankers said, with the scale and timing of the move catching most market participants off guard.

The rupee rallied at the open to 90.4550 per dollar after settling at 90.70 in the previous session. The move was more pronounced on the interbank order-matching system, where the currency surged to 90.14.

A large state-run lender was said to be among the most aggressive sellers, with one banker saying the dollar supply was "indiscriminate".

"I don't think anyone would have called this. It's difficult to gauge why they did this and why today," a currency trader at a bank said. He said that the rupee has traded at similar levels in recent days without eliciting any visible discomfort from the Reserve Bank of India.

The bankers did not want to be identified speaking to the media.

The RBI intervention comes against the backdrop of the recent India-US trade deal, which triggered a rally in the rupee. However, after an initial surge, the currency has broadly struggled amid persistent hedging demand from large companies and routine dollar purchases by importers.

"Could it be that the RBI, after such a major trigger, did not want the rupee to weaken further, especially not breach the 91 level?" another banker said. "Maybe that's why they sold heavily before the open, to signal their preferred level."

The central bank has on multiple occasions said it does not target any specific level or band for the rupee and only intervenes to curb excessive volatility.

Jan retail inflation is 2.75% as India rolls out new CPI series

NEW DELHI (TIP)

India's retail inflation for January 2026 based on revised and updated consumer price index (CPI) with base year as 2024 stands at 2.75 percent, according to Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) data released Thursday.

It is the first official inflation reading under the new CPI framework, which replaces the outgoing CPI series based on 2012 as the base year. Under the older series, retail inflation stood at 1.33 percent in December 2025.

However, since index values for months before January 2025 under the new series are not readily available, the year-on-year inflation rate can only be measured for January 2026. Also, December 2025 figure which has been calculated under the old CPI framework is not directly comparable due to change in methodologies.

"The higher reading under the new series does not indicate a sudden surge in price pressures; rather, it



reflects the updated weighting structure, which better aligns with current spending patterns, with a lower share of food and greater weight to housing and services," Aashi Gupta, an associate at think-tank Centre of Social and Economic Progress, told ThePrint.

The new CPI series was released in the presence of MoSPI Secretary Saurabh Garg, Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran, and other officials.

"The new CPI series now provides policy makers with a more up-to-date basis for assessing real incomes, consumption trends and purchasing power," Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran said at the launch of the new CPI series.

He added, "At a macro level, this reflects a progressive diversification of expenditure towards health, education, mobility and connectivity which is what you would expect to see from an economy which is seeing rising incomes and rising living standards."

The ministry highlighted that the top five items driving inflation in the new series were silver jewellery, tomato, coconut, gold/diamond/platinum jewellery and coconut oil when compared with January 2025.

Among these, silver jewellery with CPI weight of just 0.3127 in new series reported highest price rise of 159.67 percent.



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA



ARIES

Ganesha says you should be careful during this week. There may be several challenging situations in personal and professional life. Transparency and clarity are needed in all your communications. There may be an unforeseen delay in your efforts in a career. You should not expect much from higher authorities during this week. Students may get average results for their toil. Children may get improvement in earnings after persistent efforts. A spouse may have health complications throughout this week. He/she may be worried about the delay in the finalization of a career matter. Father may have a positive response to his business inquiries. He may get support from a bank in a property matter. Elder siblings may beget a child after a long time. Younger siblings may enter into partnership business. They may fall in love this week.



TAURUS

Ganesha says this may be a profitable week for you. The exchange of houses between Jupiter and Mercury is desirable for gains without pains. You may get adequate returns for little effort. You may observe an improvement in your working conditions. People may recognize your abilities during this week. It is more important to maintain balance in tough situations. Students may get acceptable returns for their toil. Children may have a delay in the finalization of a marriage alliance. A spouse may have sudden changes in employment. He/she may be troubled by superiors without major reasons. Father may have disturbances with business partners. He may look for a change like work. Elder siblings may have losses in speculation. Younger siblings may suffer from health problems.



GEMINI

Ganesha says this may be a pleasant week for you. There may be decent growth in your earnings. You may be successful in controlling opposition. There may be a compromise in a legal matter. This is a productive week for searching for a new house or commercial property. Students may get decent results for their hard work. Children may have success with their efforts. They may be anxious about some entangled money. A spouse may have pressure or humiliation in a career. He/she may be offered a better designation by the end of this week. Fathers may have trouble on long journeys or be confused about the purchase of the property. Elder siblings



CANCER

Ganesha says this may be a strenuous week for you. There may be several obstructions to the completion of your activities. There may be serious problems in domestic life. You may have sharp fevers, wounds, or injuries during this week. It is better to avoid arguments or unnecessary confrontations. There may be a possibility for the materialization of love matters. Students may get normal results for their performance. Children may have challenging situations in careers or employment. They may be tested by a superior throughout this week. A spouse may have the comfort of new conveyance. He/she may inherit property from ancestors. Father may have a decent financial status during this week. However, you should have financial discipline this week. Elder siblings may acquire a property. Younger siblings may be transferred.



LEO

Ganesha says this may be a dynamic week for you. You may get desirable gains through agency business, mediumship, and contractual works. You may not be active like before and may prefer to be more focused on your work. Students may get supporting results during this week. Children may have uncertainty in the admission for higher education. A spouse may have a tough time with business partners. He/she should give more preference to employment. Father may have a fluctuating mind throughout this week. Elder siblings will gain well during this week. Younger siblings may decide on a marriage alliance. They may get monetary benefits through occupation. It is better to be more focused on the future.



VIRGO

Ganesha says this may be a normal week for you. There may be a success in some interviews by the end of this week. For the businesspeople, this week may be a success. Love affairs and speculation should be strictly avoided. People may often misunderstand your opinions. Students may get decent results for their appearances. Children may have uncertainty about the future. They may not be able to decide on higher studies. A spouse may have gained through business activities. He/she may invest in new projects. The father may get clearance for a foreign visit. He may enjoy peace of mind and the company of friends throughout this week. Elder siblings may face troubles with spouses or business partners. Younger siblings may gain through speculation. They may finalize a marriage decision.



LIBRA

Ganesha says this may be an ordinary week for you. You may withhold decisions about your foreign employment. Despite struggle and strain, you may not be able to impress superiors. There may be decent growth for your earnings through different sources. Students may get astounding results for their efforts. Children may have an uplift in a career in the middle of this week. However, they may not perform well in educational matters. A spouse may have health disturbances during this week. He/she may be hospitalized for some time. Father may dispose of property for the loss. Elder siblings may face troubles in family life. Younger siblings may have attitude problems with superiors.



SCORPIO

Ganesha says this may be a challenging week for you. There may be financial uncertainty for some time. You should be more careful and proactive about prospects. Friends may be of great help in troubling situations. It is better to delay career and financial decisions. Students may get normal results for their hard work. Children may have success in educational matters. However, they may not do well in career or employment. A spouse may have sudden expenditures from different sources. He/she may receive positive communication about the increment. Father may have great pressure in his employment. Elderly siblings may make risky decisions. Younger siblings may have problems with tenants or neighbors. They may face obstructions in starting a business.



SAGITTARIUS

Ganesha says this may be a supporting week for you and highly auspicious for all-around success. You may get gains without much delay. There may be decent returns for your previous investments. Students may get outstanding results for their performance. Children may have a tough time with their spouses. They may postpone foreign visits because of technical problems. A spouse may have distractions at the work location. He/she may be of strong determination to have own property. Father may have success in litigation matters. He may postpone a major decision about a career. Elder siblings may fall ill for some time. Younger siblings will enjoy long journeys on pilgrimage.



CAPRICORN

Ganesha says this may be a troublesome week for you. Excess expenditure may humiliate you. Heavy workloads may absorb most of your time and energy. Superiors may build up extreme pressure on you. Students may get grand success in examinations. Children may have the inheritance of

property from in-laws. They may be involved in some illicit activities. A spouse may have success in foreign lands. He/she may be fascinated by the uplift in financial status. Father may have expansion in the employment of business. He may have minor health problems relating to digestion. Elder siblings may have extraordinary expenditures. Friends may deceive them. Younger siblings may start a business which may end in a flash.

AQUARIUS



Aquarius

Ganesha says this may be a normal week for you. There may not be much progress in career and financial matters. You may be work averse and try to spend more time for entertainment which may bring satisfaction to some extent. Great energy and determination are needed. Students may get normal results for their hard work. Children may have problems in love matters. They may face minor accidents. A spouse may have grand success in career matters. He/she may be confident about prospects. Fathers may have positive changes in employment or business. Elder siblings may seriously search for business opportunities. This is a favorable time for their efforts. Younger siblings may be permanently separated from a spouse.



PISCES

Ganesha says this may be a mixed week for you. There may be favorable happenings in career matters, but troubles may persist in personal life. You may not find a suitable person as a life partner. The comfort of conveyance and accommodation is assured. Positive communications about promotion may be received. There is a great need for concentration to enjoy better results. Students may get satisfactory results despite disturbances in preparation. Children may have success in competitions or interviews. A spouse may have health issues on several occasions. He/she may be worried about financial prospects. Father may have a normal life in career matters. Elder siblings may find foreign employment. They may enjoy success in their love life also. Younger siblings may have financial uncertainty.

AUTHOR BIO

Chirag Daruwalla is the best astrologer and one of the most famous names in the astrology world. He has more than 18 years of experience. Readers may seek his advice related to career, health, finance, business, money, love and marriage. He has complete knowledge, solutions, and guidance to all the problems related to life. Visit his website chiragdaruwalla.com. He is available for consultations on WhatsApp number +91 8141566266 or by email: info@chiragdaruwalla.com

**BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : FEB 16 TO FEB 22
BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA****FEBRUARY 16**

Ganesha says that as the economy improves, you get the benefits of your leave. You February be in a better position financially if you start new projects and plans. You can be proud of your children's achievements. You will be relieved to know that any pending legal issues can be resolved successfully. Patients who have any chronic disease need to take special care of themselves. The benefits of yoga and meditation are immense. Your financial commitments increase, and you earn good profits.

FEBRUARY 17

Ganesha says that getting new sources of income can improve your financial condition. New agreements can be very beneficial. You undertake fruitful journeys frequently and yield desired results. You February want to seek blessings from a spiritual person or visit some holy place. Getting support and benefits from influential people can be a result of your extroverted personality. During this period, there is a possibility of the transaction of real estate or the purchase of a vehicle.

FEBRUARY 18

Ganesha says you are urged not to trust others too much at this time, especially in important matters. It would not be in your best interest to disclose private and confidential information. The sudden influence of a spiritual person can bring amazing changes in your life. In addition to giving you love and attention, your spouse and family February be sympathetic to your concerns. Long-distance travel takes some people abroad. In a workplace environment, you February be required to handle important tasks with a high level of responsibility.

FEBRUARY 19

Ganesha says February today be a day to remember, full of success and luck. Women benefit at this time as new opportunities emerge to advance their job prospects. The elders and younger ones in the family need a lot of your attention. Your spouse's health gives you cause for worry and anxiety. Students should focus on their schoolwork and plan for the future. Romance and new relationships are possible for the unmarried.

FEBRUARY 20

Ganesha says that success today means being happy in whatever you do. You February get attractive returns on past investments, and long-standing legal issues February be resolved in your favor. You February received unexpected financial and kind donations from your entire family and friends. Some minor health problems occur due to stress and tension. You February become more spiritually connected, and this can have a profound effect on the way you think and behave.

FEBRUARY 21

Ganesha says it appears that this day brings rewards and appreciation for women working in the advertising and marketing industries, as well as scientists, lawyers, and writers. As the day progresses, your financial gains increase, due to which you spend more on luxuries. Do not ignore medical advice when necessary, as health issues increase anxiety. If you and your family members can communicate better, your family can be happier, more peaceful, and more prosperous.

**VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR
BEJAN DARUWALLA****FEBRUARY 22**

Ganesha says today is the ideal time to implement important changes and make decisive choices. We can resolve issues related to real estate, partnerships, and new businesses. Some positive news is expected from the children's side. Today's highlights include reconstruction, construction, and social gatherings. Growth and success can come automatically if you focus your efforts. Opportunities for both business and leisure travel abroad arise. Profits can be achieved through selective betting.

Nastur Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at www.bejandaruwala.com
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Once a year, when the night grows longer and silence deepens, millions across India and the world turn inward in devotion. Maha Shivaratri, the Great Night of Shiva, is not merely a festival—it is a spiritual threshold. Observed with fasting, prayer, and meditation, this sacred night is believed to be the most powerful time to connect with Lord Shiva, the supreme yogi, the destroyer of ignorance, and the embodiment of cosmic consciousness.

Unlike festivals of colour and celebration, Maha Shivaratri is marked by stillness, austerity, and inner reflection, making it one of the most profound observances in Hindu spiritual tradition.

The Spiritual Significance of Maha Shivaratri

In Sanskrit, Shiva means “that which is not,” pointing to the formless, infinite reality beyond name and form. Maha Shivaratri symbolises the union of individual consciousness with universal consciousness. Spiritually, the night represents the destruction of darkness and ignorance, leading the seeker towards self-realisation.

It is believed that on this night, the planetary positions are such that they naturally elevate human consciousness. Staying awake (jagran), chanting, and meditation help devotees align with this cosmic energy.

Sacred Legends Associated with Maha Shivaratri

■ The Divine Marriage of Shiva and Parvati

One of the most popular legends celebrates Maha Shivaratri as the night of the marriage of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. After intense penance, Parvati won Shiva's heart, symbolising the union of Shakti (energy) and Shiva (consciousness)—a balance essential for the creation and sustenance of the universe.

■ The Night Shiva Saved the Cosmos

During the Samudra Manthan (churning of the cosmic ocean), a deadly poison (halahala) emerged, threatening to destroy all creation. To save the universe, Lord Shiva consumed the poison and held it in his throat, turning it blue and earning the name Neelkanth.

Maha Shivaratri honours this supreme act of sacrifice and compassion.

■ The Manifestation of the Infinite Lingam

Another legend describes how Shiva appeared as a boundless pillar of fire (Jyotirlinga), challenging Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu to find its beginning or end. When both failed, Shiva revealed himself as the eternal, formless reality.

This story establishes the Shiva Lingam as a symbol of infinity, not a physical form but a cosmic principle.

■ The Devotion of the Hunter

A lesser-known but deeply moving legend tells of a hunter named Lubdhaka, who unknowingly worshipped Shiva by offering bilva leaves and staying awake all night. His

Maha Shivaratri: The sacred night of awakening and divine grace



Important information

Maha Shivratri 2026

Sunday, 15 February 2026

Chaturdashi date starts - 15 February 2026 at 05:05 pm

Chaturdashi date ends - 16 February 2026 at 05:34 pm

Shivaratri Paran Time - 16 February 2026 at 06:59 am to 03:24 pm



unintentional devotion earned Shiva's grace, highlighting that pure intention outweighs ritual perfection.

Importance of Maha Shivaratri

- It is believed that sincere worship on this night absolves past karmas
- Ideal for spiritual practices like meditation, mantra chanting, and self-discipline
- A powerful night for yogis and seekers pursuing liberation (moksha) Symbolises the victory of restraint, awareness, and surrender over ego and desire

Sacred Rituals and Observances

■ Fasting (Vrat)

Devotees observe a strict fast, consuming only fruits, milk, or water. The fast represents control over the senses and purification of the body and mind.

■ Abhishekam of the Shiva Lingam

The ritual bathing of the Shiva Lingam is central to Maha Shivaratri worship.

Sacred offerings include:

- Milk – purity and nourishment
- Honey – sweetness in speech and life
- Curd – prosperity and strength
- Ghee – spiritual illumination
- Water from the Ganga – purification

Offering of Bilva Leaves

Bilva (Bel) leaves are especially dear to Lord Shiva. Offering three-leaf clusters symbolises the surrender of ego, attachment, and ignorance.

The festival is principally celebrated by offerings of Bael or Bilva/Vilvam leaves to Lord Shiva. Many devotees also observe all-day fasting and an all-night-long vigil and chant the sacred Panchakshara mantra dedicated to Lord "Om Namah Shivaya". Some devotees also do penances to gain boons in the practice of Yoga and meditation.

On Mahashivratri, Nishita Kala is the ideal time to observe Shiva Pooja. On this day, in all Shiva's temples, the most auspicious Lingodbhava puja is performed.

On this day, the devotees start visiting temples since early morning. They offer cold water, milk and bael leaves on the Shiv Lingam.

In Nepal, millions of Hindus attend Shivaratri together from different part of the world at the famous Pashupatinath Temple. Thousand of devotees also attend Mahasivaratri at all the different famous Shiva Shakti Peetham of Nepal.

A week-long International Mandi Shivratri Fair is held at Mandi in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh every year which is also one of the major tourist attractions in the state.

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh Elections: Massive Mandate for BNP

winner in the general elections with tallies in predawn hours on Friday, suggesting it got majority seats in parliament.

Different media tallies suggested BNP received more than 151 seats in the 300-seat parliament on Thursday's daylong voting, fair enough to form the next government, ending the 18-month rule of Muhammad Yunus-led interim government.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, February 13, warmly greeted Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader Tarique Rahman on his "decisive victory" in Bangladesh's parliamentary elections and said he looked forward to working with him to advance common development goals.

"I convey my warm congratulations to Mr. Tarique Rahman on leading BNP to a decisive victory in the Parliamentary elections in Bangladesh," Modi said in a post on X. Modi said Rahman's victory showed the trust of the people of Bangladesh in his leadership.

"India will continue to stand in support of a democratic, progressive and inclusive Bangladesh. I look forward to working with you to strengthen our multifaceted relations and advance our common development goals," Modi said.

The BNP on Friday, February 13, thanked India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for recognizing the verdict of Bangladesh's general elections and hoped that the relations between the two countries will be strengthened under the new government. Speaking to PTI videos, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) standing committee member and chief coordinator for the 2026 election Nazrul Islam Khan said the party appreciated Modi's recognition of the people's verdict. "We thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi for congratulating our leader, Tarique Rahman. It is great that a democratic country is supposed to recognize the verdict of the people, and Mr. Narendra Modi has done this. We thank him," he said. (With inputs from agencies)

EU leaders ready countermeasures to pressure from Russia, China and Trump

"The pressure and the sense of urgency is enormous, and that can move mountains," she said.

The plan, to be presented formally in March, would include measures to coordinate upgrading energy grids, deepen financial integration and loosen merger regulations to allow European firms to grow to better compete globally, she said.

"We need European champions," Ms. von der Leyen said.

European Council President António Costa described the meeting as a "real game changer" as leaders threw their weight behind plans to further integrate and simplify the bloc's financial systems.

The meeting had started with an image of unity between the two traditional power centers of the EU after each had publicly staked out different strategic positions. French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz arrived together, crossing a drawbridge side by side into the 16th-century Alden Biesen castle.

"We share this sense of urgency that Europe must take action," Mr. Macron said while standing on a blue welcome carpet next to his German counterpart.

"We want to make this European Union faster, we want to make it better, and above all we want to ensure that we have competitive industry in Europe," Mr. Merz said.

Mr. Merz and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni lead a wing of the bloc calling for deregulation, rebooting Europe's relationship with Washington and forging trade deals like the recent one struck with the Mercosur nations of South America.

The EU "cannot continue to hyperregulate," said Ms. Meloni. "There's no time to lose."

France instead is leading a push for "strategic autonomy" - meaning a bloc less dependent on Washington.

Mr. Macron argues that EU countries should buy exclusively from European producers as the continent pursues greater military spending as a response to Russian aggression in Ukraine. Mr. Merz and Ms. Meloni say purchases should be from both foreign and European firms.

In comments to reporters as he arrived, Macron said he was urging his partners to protect "sectors that are particularly under threat" like cleantech, chemicals, steel, the car industry and defense.

"There is also an increased pressure on us, with competition - sometimes unfair competition - that is very intense, with very strong pressure from China, tariffs imposed on us by the Americans with threats of coercive practices," Mr. Macron said.

EU leaders will also debate new financial instruments to protect the bloc in a global trading system rocked by Mr. Trump's blitzkrieg of tariffs and China's restricting of critical mineral exports.

Mr. Macron is renewing his call for the EU to be able to borrow money, which he described as "Eurobonds for the future" that would provide an opportunity "to challenge the hegemony of the dollar."

Most leaders are calling for action along the lines of the economic stimulus strategy called for by Mario Draghi, former head of the European Central Bank. The 2024 plan includes cutting regulations, making infrastructure investments and establishing trade ties with more countries.

Both Mr. Draghi and Enrico Letta, a former Italian Prime Minister, beseeched leaders assembled in the castle to drastically restructure and integrate the bloc's economy.

"We have way too many barriers that prevent money and capital from moving from one country to another, way too many obstacles to simplification," said Roberta Metsola, president of the European Parliament.

"No more words, but more action," said Mr. Metsola, who like Mr. Merz and Ms. von der Leyen is a leading figure in the European People's Party, which is the largest bloc in the European Parliament and claims 13 heads of EU states as members.

Citizens across the bloc are hungry for a stronger EU and a more unified, stronger and ambitious leadership amid military threats, economic pressures and climate instability, according to an official EU poll, Eurobarometer.

"There has never been a better time for European leaders, national political leaders, to actually leverage on these European citizens' demand for greater European action," said Alberto Alemanno, a professor of EU law at the HEC Paris business school. (Source: AP)

Nationwide strike in India draws 30 crore (300 million) participants, say trade unions

Electricity (Amendment) Bill, Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act, the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act and the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill.

Bharat Bandh highlights: No major impact on normal life due to one-day nationwide strike call

Strike actions and massive mobilizations were reported from more than 600 districts across the country, the CTUs said in a statement. "In mining/manufacturing/service sectors, among the formal and informal labor, huge impact of the strike and mobilization was witnessed," they added.

"The workers/employees in most of the Industrial areas in the country, including in many MNCs, joined the strike in a big way and organized processions. The defense sector employees held protest demonstrations with one hour cut of work in support of strike. The railway unions mobilized and participated in solidarity actions," the CTUs said, adding that the government's attempts to cripple democratic movements through various means has further angered the working class and the farming community.

WORKER-PEASANT UNITY : The SKM congratulated farmers and workers for the successful strike. "It is one of the largest ever general strikes in the history of independent India and specifically noted for cementing the worker-peasant unity as the backbone of the mass resistance against the corporate policies being vehemently pursued by the BJP-led NDA government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi," the SKM statement said.

"Anger among the working people against the FTAs, VB GRAMG Act, the Electricity Bill, the Seed Bill, the Insurance Act, SHANTI Act and anti-people Union Budget 2026-27 and the discontent against the denial of minimum support price as per MS Swaminathan Commission formula for all crops with guaranteed procurement, unwillingness to declare comprehensive loan waiver to liberate farmer households from indebtedness and end continuance of the tragic peasant suicides has reflected on the street protests as part of the general strike," the farmers' body said. The SKM's national council is set to meet on February 24 at Kurukshetra, Haryana to discuss the next phase of action.

Trade Union Coordination Centre (TUCC) leader G. Devarajan said the unprecedented response from millions of working people has once again demonstrated the unity, strength, and democratic resolve of India's toiling masses. "The strike was a powerful expression of protest against a series of anti-worker, anti-farmer and pro-corporate policies being pursued by the Union Government," he added.

UNSC panel notes Pak-based terror group JeM's reported link to Red Fort attack

submitted to the Security Council 1267 Sanctions Committee concerning ISIL and al-Qaeda said.

The report, issued in United Nations, added that on October 8, JeM leader Mohammed Masood Azhar Alvi "formally announced the establishment of a women-only wing, Jamaat ul-Muminat, which was aimed at supporting terrorist attacks."

Even as another member state reported that Jaish-e-Mohammed was defunct, the report added that "Separately, it was reported that on July 28, three individuals allegedly involved in the attack perpetrated in Pahalgam, in Jammu and Kashmir, were killed."

At his weekly briefing in New Delhi on Thursday, February 12, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal was asked for a comment on the UNSC report.

"This particular report that you refer to, is available in the public domain. It is online. This was the 37th Report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team. This was published on February 4, 2026," he said.

"And, we have seen that they have taken on board our inputs, India's inputs in regard to our concern on cross-border terrorism, and also as to how we can strengthen the global fight against terrorism," the MEA spokesperson said.

The UNSC report further said that Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) remained active in south-eastern Afghanistan, where the Haqqani Network exerts considerable influence. Osama Mahmud, the "emir" of AQIS, and Yahya Ghauri, his deputy, were reported to be in Kabul, with the media cell of AQIS based in Herat.

"There were concerns that AQIS was increasingly focused on external operations. Such operations would likely be unclaimed or deniable operations, perhaps as part of the umbrella group Ittihad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan...so as not to create difficulties for the Taliban as hosts of AQIS," it said.

The report added that ISIL-K was active mainly in northern Afghanistan, particularly Badakhshan, and areas close to the Pakistani border. It continued to develop its network of cells to project a threat regionally and beyond.

"Aggressive propaganda by ISIL-K in Central Asian languages expanded its target audience. It sought to exploit issues such as the Gaza and Israel conflict to promote recruitment and financing," it added.

Tucked away in the northernmost reaches of Uttarakhand, close to the Indo-China border, lies a place so stark, silent, and spellbinding that it feels almost unreal. Nelong Valley, often called the “Ladakh of Uttarakhand,” is not a destination you stumble upon—it is one you are granted access to. Remote, restricted, and remarkably untouched, this high-altitude valley offers a rare glimpse into a Himalayan world where nature still rules with quiet authority.

Far removed from the crowded hill stations and pilgrimage trails, Nelong Valley is a journey into isolation, raw beauty, and history layered with geopolitics.

A Valley Carved by Time and Wind

Located at an altitude of around 11,000 feet, Nelong Valley sits within the Gangotri National Park, just a few kilometres from the India-China border. The landscape here is dramatically different from the lush green images usually associated with Uttarakhand. Instead, visitors are greeted by barren mountains, deep gorges, wind-sculpted rocks, and wide open skies—a terrain that mirrors the cold desert geography of Ladakh and Spiti.

The valley was formed over centuries by the Jadh Ganga river, a tributary of the Bhagirathi. The river cuts through steep cliffs, creating a dramatic topography that feels both harsh and hypnotic.

A Land Once Closed to the World

For decades, Nelong Valley remained completely inaccessible to civilians due to its strategic importance. After the 1962 Indo-China war, the region was sealed off, turning it into a military zone. Only recently has the Indian government allowed limited civilian access, and that too under strict regulations.

Even today, visitors need special permits, and the number of tourists allowed each day is restricted—one of the many reasons Nelong remains blissfully untouched.

The Forgotten Villages of the Jadh

Scattered across the valley are the remains of ancient villages once inhabited by the Jadh tribe, a trans-Himalayan community with strong cultural and trade links to Tibet. Before 1962, the Jadh regularly crossed into Tibet for trade, exchanging grains, salt, wool, and livestock.

Abandoned stone houses, broken walls, and silent pathways tell stories of lives abruptly interrupted by geopolitics. Walking through these villages feels like stepping into a paused moment in history—where time stopped, but memories linger.

Wildlife in a Fragile Ecosystem

Nelong Valley lies within a protected ecological zone and is home to rare Himalayan wildlife. If you're lucky and observant, you may spot snow leopards, Himalayan blue sheep (bharal), musk deer, Himalayan foxes, and a variety of high-altitude birds.

Vegetation is sparse but resilient—juniper shrubs, alpine grasses, and medicinal plants manage to survive in

Nelong Valley: Uttarakhand's hidden himalayan secret



the harsh climate. The ecosystem here is delicate, which is why tourism is carefully controlled.

The Journey: As Thrilling as the Destination

Reaching Nelong Valley is an adventure in itself. The route passes through Gangotri, one of the Char Dham pilgrimage sites, before winding upward into increasingly rugged terrain. The road is narrow, dramatic, and flanked by steep cliffs and plunging valleys.

There are no hotels or shops inside the valley. Visitors must return to Gangotri the same day, making the experience feel fleeting—like a privilege borrowed from nature rather than consumed.

Silence That Speaks Volumes

What truly sets Nelong Valley apart is its silence. There is no network connectivity, no tourist chatter, no honking vehicles. The wind, the river far below, and the occasional cry of a bird are the only sounds that exist.

In an age of constant noise and digital distraction, Nelong offers something rare: stillness. It is a place that invites introspection, where the vastness of the

landscape humbles the human presence.

How to reach

Nelong valley welcomes visitors in the months of May till November, however owing to security reasons the place is prohibited for camping. You can reach Nelong valley from all the way through Bhairon Ghati from where you can easily hire a cab. This beautiful valley is well connected by road from Haridwar, Dehradun and Rishikesh. Every traveler should know that there is no proper accommodation and restaurants in Nelong valley. However, you can book hotels in Bhairon Ghati, Gangotri, Harsil and Dharali. However, Nelong valley do not have a flight, bus or train connectivity but is well connected with road so that you can easily hire cab or taxi or also can self drive to reach this adventurous valley.

- **Reaching By Bus:** The nearest bus station, which is well connected with buses to other cities is Reckong Peo Bus Stand. Harsil Bus Stand is a local bus stop with limited bus frequency.
- **Reaching By Train:** Nearest major railway station to reach Nelong

valley is Dehradun Railway Station. There is also one local train station too but with limited railway connectivity, i.e. Harrawala Railway Station.

- **Reaching By Air:** Nearest major international airport to reach Nelong valley is Chandigarh Airport. There is also a small airport too with limited flight routes, i.e. Jolly Grant Airport.

Points to remember

Nelong valley is now open for public and is the perfect place to visit for adventure seekers and mountain lovers. This picturesque valley of Uttarakhand is a part of Gangotri National Park and is also an abode to many rare animals like snow leopard and musk deer. There are several points which you should keep in mind before planning a trip to Nelong valley:

Nelong valley is located at a distance of about 315 km from the main city of Dehradun. First of all, you have to reach Bhairavghati which is about 100 km from Uttarkashi and then it will take a 25 km ride to reach the mesmerizing valley. Just remember that private vehicles are not permissible here; thus you have to take a forest department vehicle.

Forest department is very much strict in terms of permission to visit Nelong valley. Only registered operators are permitted to take tourists into the valley and that too upto Nelong and beyond that you cannot go in any case.

To enter the valley only six forest department vehicles are allowed in one day with four people each. Surely it will change in some times as government is trying up hard to promote Nelong valley tourism. Before entering you will need a permit which should be taken from the sub-divisional magistrate. You will also require a fitness certificate to enter the valley. The entry of foreigners is not allowed owing to its strategic location.

Night stay is not permitted in the valley as you can find out accommodation options in Bhairavghati. There are numerous budget hotels which offer comfortable stay to tourist. There is also a semi-government guest house there that offers comfortable stay to its guest.

At the time of packing for your Nelong valley trip don't forget to pack sports shoes and woollens, alpeys carry a power bank with you along with sunglasses and first aid box.

There are many nearby attractions in Nelong valley where you can enjoy at your best. One of the best Nelong valley attractions is Padang Temple which is located at about 3500 ft and is devoted to Kaal Bhairav. Don't miss out to seek blessings at the famous Gangotri Temple and exploring many other scenic destinations.

INDIAN NAVY ASSUMES FIRST-EVER COMMAND OF COMBINED TASK FORCE (CTF) 154



FEBRUARY 12, 2026
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

In a landmark development underscoring India's commitment to collaborative maritime security and capacity building in the Indian Ocean Region and beyond, the Indian Navy has assumed command of Combined Task Force (CTF) 154, a key multinational training task force under the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).

The change of command ceremony was conducted on 11 Feb 2026 at CMF Headquarters in Manama, Bahrain, and was presided over by VAdm Curt A Renshaw, Commander, CMF / US NAVCENT / US Fifth Fleet. VAdm Tarun Sobti, Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff (DCNS), Indian Navy, and senior military leaders from other member nations were in attendance. Cmde Milind



M Mokashi, Shaurya Chakra, of the Indian Navy, formally took over as Commander CTF 154 from the outgoing Commander of the Italian Navy.

CTF 154 is specifically oriented towards training and capacity building of member nations of CMF. It reflects the region's growing trust in India's professional expertise, operational experience, and a role as a Preferred Security Partner among the 47 nations of the CMF.

CTF 154, established in May 2023, is dedicated to enhancing maritime security through multinational training programs across the Middle East and the wider region.

The training focuses on five core pillars: Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), Law of the Sea, Maritime Interdiction Operations, Maritime Rescue and



Assistance, and Leadership Development. The task force conducts regular Maritime Security Enhancement Training (MSET) events, exercises like Compass Rose and Northern/Southern Readiness, and outreach to build partner nations' operational capabilities against common threats such as illegal trafficking, piracy, and irregular migration.

CTF 154 operates alongside CMF's other task forces: CTF 150 (Maritime Security), CTF 151 (Counter-Piracy), CTF 152 (Maritime Security in Arabian Gulf) and CTF 153 (Maritime Security in Red Sea).

The Indian Navy looks forward to a productive tenure, delivering high-impact training initiatives and reinforcing global maritime partnerships for peace, prosperity, and security.

SWERA Sets Midwest Ablaze with Fire, Rhythm, and Unbreakable bond at a Memorable Community Lohri

From Punjab's Fields to Chicago's Dance Floor: SWERA's 2026 Lohri Celebration Radiates Power, Laughter & Love
Gidha Beats, Dulla Bhatti's Echo & Endless Joy: Sikh Women Era Lights Up the Chicago with a Legendary Lohri

FEBRUARY 8, 2026
CHICAGO, IL(TIP)

The crisp February evening of Saturday, February 7, 2026, carried more than just winter chill outside Atlantis Banquets in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Inside the hall, the air turned warm and electric with the unmistakable heartbeat of Punjab. Laughter bounced off the walls, the scent of roasted lingered, and colorful dupattas swirled like living flames. This was Sikh Women Era's Community Lohri, a joyful, defiant celebration of harvest, heritage, and the unstoppable spirit of Sikh women.

As a dedicated 501(c)(3) nonprofit, SWERA has long stood for empowerment, equality, and the preservation of Punjabi culture in the American diaspora. On this night they transformed the ancient festival of Lohri welcoming longer days, giving thanks for abundance, and remembering the legendary Dulla Bhatti into a powerful, living tribute to women who carry tradition forward while fearlessly building the future.

Jasbir Kaur Mann, one of the organization's guiding forces, opened the evening with a welcome so warm it felt like stepping into family. Her words wrapped the room in gratitude and unity before Mini Singh stepped forward to sing the National Anthem. The notes rose proudly, reminding everyone that love for heritage and love for this new homeland can stand side by side without apology.

Gurleen Kaur, introduced with affection by Jasbir Kaur Mann, took the stage as the night's charismatic MC. Her energy set the perfect tone for the first performance: a breathtaking Gidha titled "Dheeyan Da." Gurleen Kaur, Parmleen Kaur, Simar Kaur, Reeya Hunjan, and Savreen Kaur, guided by coordinators Payal Virdi and Navneet Kaur, moved with fierce precision and radiant joy. Every stomp, every clap, every flash of lehenga told the same story, the unbreakable pride of Punjab's daughters.

Kirandeep Kaur smoothly took over MC duties, keeping the flow effortless and alive. Minoo Singh then lifted the

mood even higher with the irresistible classic "Mele Nu Chal Mere Naal Kureh," sending waves of nostalgia and involuntary foot-tapping through the crowd.

A quieter, more reflective moment followed when Tahira Rida brought the timeless tale of Dulla Bhatti to life. She reminded everyone why this festival still burns bright: a folk hero who risked everything to protect daughters and stand against injustice. Her storytelling wove history into the present, making the legend feel close and urgent.

Then came pure delight. Baljeet, Kulwant, and Rimple took the stage for "Pension Lag gai bebe nu," delivering the cheeky lyrics with such infectious humor that the entire hall dissolved into laughter and applause.

Poet Rakind Kaur offered a soulful pause with verses



that hushed the room and touched hearts before the energy swung back to hilarity with the skit "Kush Khatti Kush Mithi." Written by Mandeep Kumar and Ritu Kaur, directed by Ritu Kaur, and performed by Rajinder Bir Mago, Gurpreet K Singh, Ritu Kaur, Mandeep Kumar, Nitish, Raj Dhaliwal, and Rajwinder Kaur, the piece was sharp, witty, and perfectly Punjabi leaving the audience wiping tears of joy.

Another powerful wave of rhythm arrived with the grand Gidha performance. Rajwinder Kaur, Rimple Dogra,

Kirandeep Kaur, Diljot Kaur, Narinder Kaur, Sarabjit Kaur, Hardeep Kaur, Manmeet Kaur, Anudeep Sandhu, and Baljeet Kaur commanded the floor. Their synchronized steps and commanding presence turned every movement into a declaration of strength and community.

The musical climax came through the soulful voice of main singer Rav Inder Singh. His melodies filled the hall, kept the dance floor alive, and carried the celebration to its emotional peak. Food by Touch of Spice, adding that perfect touch of spice! Special thanks to K K Pamma for the delicious spread. Decor handled beautifully by team SWERA members Baljeet Athwal and Narinder Kaur! Moongfali and Gachak received from Star Foods and Singh Grocer

Evening's success belongs entirely to DJ RJB Music! His electrifying beats turned every moment into pure triumph and celebration. DJ RJB Music-the undisputed hero of this unforgettable night

True to its mission, SWERA made sure the night was about more than entertainment. Dimpny Kaur and Sukhvir Dhillon organized thoughtful gift hampers for newlywed couples and families welcoming newborns-small, beautiful gestures that honored life's happiest milestones. Participation awards recognized every performer and contributor, while heartfelt thanks poured out to grand sponsor Darshan Singh Dhaliwal and the generous list of supporters including Dawinder Singh Rang, Jassi Sahota, Kamaljit Sahota, Maddy Singh, Chankirat Singh, Ranjit Kaur Teji, Paul Dandona, Bhupinder Dhanoa, Jai Ram Singh Kahlon, Balwinder Singh Chatha, Tarlochan Singh Gill, Rajinder Singh Samra, Mini Singh, Gurpreet K. Singh, Raj Dhaliwal, Joti Khaira, Star Foods, Singh Grocer, Sukhdeep Walia, Sydney Smith Mann, Sandeep Singh Bajaj, Mini Multani, Pammi Sangha, and many others.

History This Week FEB 13 - FEB 19

FEBRUARY 13

February 13, 1635 - Boston Latin School, the first tax-payer supported (public) school in America was established in Boston, Massachusetts.

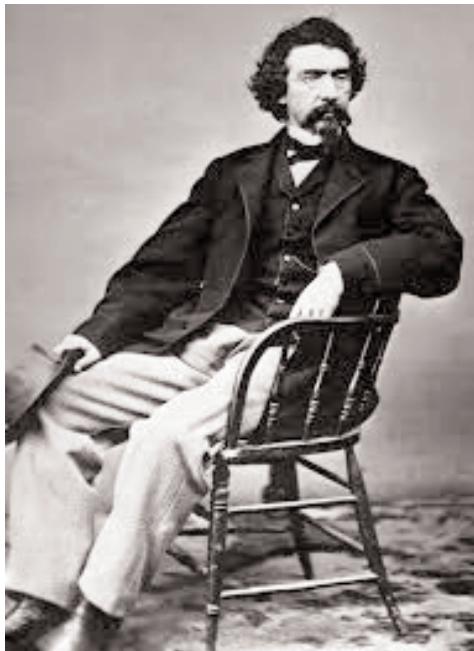
February 13, 1945 - During World War II in Europe, British and American planes began massive bombing raids on Dresden, Germany. A four-day firestorm erupted that was visible for 200 miles and engulfed the historic old city, killing an estimated 135,000 German civilians.



Birthday - American artist Grant Wood (1892-1942) was born near Anamosa, Iowa. Best known for his painting American Gothic featuring a farm couple.

FEBRUARY 14

February 14th - Celebrated as (Saint) Valentine's Day around the world, now one of the most widely observed unofficial holidays in which romantic greeting cards and gifts are exchanged.



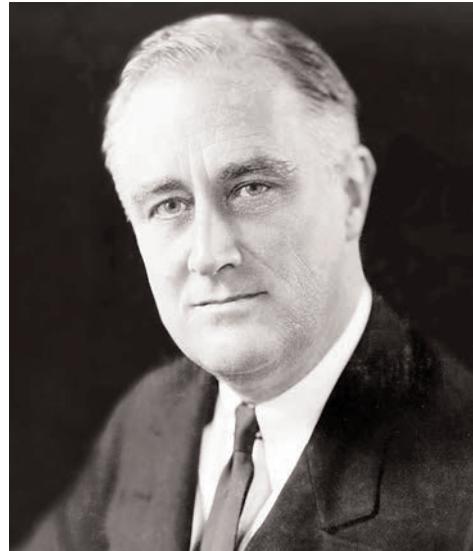
February 14, 1849 - Photographer Mathew Brady took the first photograph of a U.S. President in office, James Polk.

February 14, 1929 - The St. Valentine's Day massacre occurred in Chicago as seven members of the Bugs Moran gang were gunned down by five of Al Capone's mobsters posing as police.

FEBRUARY 15

February 15, 1898 - In Havana, the U.S. Battleship Maine was blown up while at anchor and quickly sank with 260 crew members lost. The incident inflamed

public opinion in the U.S., resulting in a declaration of war against Spain on April 25, 1898, amid cries of "Remember the Maine!"



February 15, 1933 - An assassination attempt on newly elected U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt occurred in Miami, Florida. A spectator deflected the gunman's aim. As a result, Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak was shot and killed instead. The gunman, an Italian immigrant, was captured and later sentenced to death.

February 15, 1989 - Soviet Russia completed its military withdrawal from Afghanistan after nine years of unsuccessful involvement in the civil war between Muslim rebel groups and the Russian-backed Afghan government. Over 15,000 Russian soldiers had been killed in the fighting.



Birthday - Astronomer and physicist Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) was born in Pisa, Italy. He was the first astronomer to use a telescope and advanced the theory that the sun, not the earth, was the center of the solar system.

Birthday - Inventor Cyrus McCormick (1809-1884) was born in Rockbridge County, Virginia. He invented the horse-drawn mechanical reaper, a machine that freed farmers from hard labor and contributed to the development and cultivation of vast areas of the American Great Plains.

Birthday - Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) was born in Adams, Massachusetts. A pioneer in women's rights, she worked tirelessly for woman's suffrage (right to vote) and in 1872 was arrested after voting (illegally) in the presidential

election. She was commemorated in 1979 with the Susan B. Anthony dollar coin, thus became the first American woman to have her image on a U.S. coin.

FEBRUARY 16



Birthday - Entertainer and politician Sonny Bono (1935-1998) was born in Detroit, Michigan. Following a career as a popular singer, he became mayor of Palm Springs, California, then became a Republican congressman, serving until his accidental death from a skiing mishap.

FEBRUARY 17

February 17, 1865 - During the American Civil War, Fort Sumter in South Carolina was returned to the Union after nearly a year and a half under Confederate control. The fort had been the scene of the first shots of the war.



February 17, 1909 - Apache Chief Geronimo (1829-1909) died while in captivity at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He had led a small group of warriors on raids throughout Arizona and New Mexico. Caught once, he escaped. The U.S. Army then sent 5,000 men to recapture him.

FEBRUARY 18

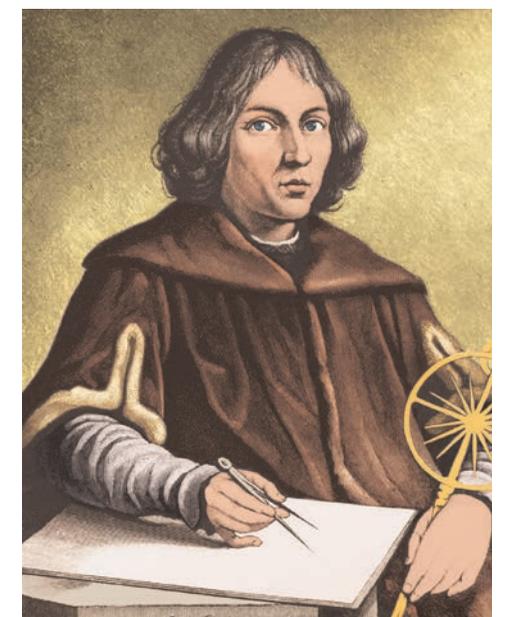


Birthday - American politician Wendell Willkie (1892-1944) was born in Elwood, Illinois. He was the Republican nominee for president in 1940, running against Franklin D. Roosevelt.

FEBRUARY 19



February 19, 1942 - Internment of Japanese Americans began after President Franklin Roosevelt issued an Executive Order requiring those living on the Pacific coast to report for relocation. Over 110,000 persons therefore shut down their businesses, sold off their property, quit school and moved inland to the relocation centers.



Birthday - Astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) was born in Torun, Poland. Considered the founder of modern astronomy, he theorized that the sun, not the earth, was the center of the solar system.

Milano Cortina 2026 Olympic Winter Games



BY
PRABHJOT SINGH

MILAN (TIP): There was no stopping Franjo von Allmen from becoming the first to complete a hat-trick of gold medals in the Milano Cortina 2026 as the fifth day turned out to be historic in more than one way. From the frightening Alpine ski speeds to the roller-coaster ride down the ice track.

It was the Cortina Sliding Centre that was cynosure of all eyes as it bore witness to some breakthrough moments. In another victory for gender equality, the first-ever women's doubles luge champions were crowned at the Winter Games.

Italy added the frosting on the icy cake, delighting local fans by winning both the men's and women's doubles competitions!

While Canada added a bronze - Piper Gilles and Paul Poirier (217.74) finishing third in ice dance - to take its tally to four medals, the US climbed to number two spot with four gold six silver and two bronze medals. Norway continued to be at the top with seven gold, two silver and four bronze medals.

The hero of the day, however, was Swiss speed merchant Franjo von Allmen who successfully demonstrated that lightning could strike three times as he raced to a historic "three-in-one" feat becoming the first athlete of the ongoing games to get three gold medals under his belt. His latest triumph was in Super G.

The 24-year-old Swiss Alpine skiing sensation showed nerves of steel to top the Super G standings with a stunning time of 1:25.32. He beat Ryan Cochran-Siegle of the United States to second place with Swiss compatriot Marco Odermatt finishing third.

In his dream debut, von Allmen became only the third male Alpine skier to win three gold medals at the same Olympics. He is also the first Swiss skier to achieve this feat.

"It's completely surrealistic what's going on today and the whole Olympics," a delighted Von Allmen told reporters after the race.

"For the moment, I'm feeling like I am dreaming but I'm not sure, I don't hope I wake up," he added.

Silver-winner Cochran-Siegle faced a nervous wait until all the favorites had finished their runs to confirm he had made it on to the podium. Yet the U.S. athlete said he felt his early start position suited him in his quest for glory today.

"Today was about really trying to trust my skiing and knowing the course was in good condition," he said. "Having an early bib was an



Alpine skiing star Switzerland's Franjo von Allmen celebrates winning the gold medal in a men's super-G race at the Olympics on Wednesday, February 11, 2026 in Bormio, Italy. (AP)



Gold medalists team USA celebrate during the medal ceremony after the Team Event Free Skating of the Figure Skating competitions at the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games. (EPA)

advantage. And it's nice to put down a run top to bottom where I felt like I was really pushing in the right way."

For Odermatt, the name on everyone's lips prior to these Olympic Games, third place in the super-G was a bittersweet reward for his efforts.

"I won bronze," he said, "You have to be happy if you win an Olympic medal but I wanted a little bit more. I wanted the gold medal."

"It was a good run. On the bottom I made some little mistakes, two or three times. That's where I lost the gold medal."

American speed skating superstar Jordan Stolz blazed to victory in the men's 1000m, clocking an Olympic record time of 1:06.28. The 21-year-old Stolz became the first non-Dutch Olympic champion in the men's 1000m since Vancouver 2010.

The world record holder in the event raced home 0.50 seconds ahead of silver medalist Jennings de Boo of the Netherlands. People's Republic of China's Ning Zhongyan rounded out the podium with bronze in 1:07.34.



Team USA dominates women's moguls podium, wins gold and silver at Olympics.

Elizabeth Lamley safely navigated her way to victory, upsetting defending champion Jakara Anthony in the freestyle skiing women's moguls. The 20-year-old Lemley posted

a winning score of 82.30 points with compatriot Jaelin Kauf (80.77) claiming a second Olympic silver in this event. France's Perrine Laffont (78.00), the champion from PyeongChang 2018, bagged bronze. Anthony of Australia relinquished her crown after slipping on the last run of the final.

Norway continues to be among medals as Jens Luraas Oftebro launched a late charge on the final lap on his skis to race to victory in the Nordic combined individual Gundersen normal hill/10km.

The 25-year-old added another feather to his cap after winning the team gold for Norway in the large hill event at Beijing 2022, as well as individual silver on the large hill.

Austria's Johannes Lamparter stayed with Oftebro but had to settle for silver, finishing a second behind the Norwegian. Finland's Eero Hirvonen took bronze

The hosts Italy blitzed to double gold in the men's and women's luge competitions.

Andrea Voetter and Marion Oberhofer set up the double with a stunning historic first women's doubles luge gold medal at the Winter Olympic Games.

The speedy duo were the fastest on both runs to beat Germany's Dajana Eitberger and Magdalena Matschina by just 0.022s. Two-time Austrian world champions Selina Egle and Lara Kipp finished third.

Emanuel Rieder and Simon Kainzwaldner lapped up the pressure of racing on home ice, surging from third to first to claim the men's doubles gold medal for Italy.

Austria's Thomas Steu and Wolfgang Kindl finished second with German legends Tobias Wendl and Tobias Arlt settling for bronze, falling short of a historic "four-peat."

France's Julia Simon missed just one target on her way to victory in the women's biathlon 15km individual to claim her second gold of Milano Cortina 2026.

Simon finished the race nearly a minute ahead of compatriot Lou Jeanmonnot for a French 1-2 podium finish. Bulgaria's Lora Hristova delivered the performance of her life to secure bronze.

Frenchman Guillaume Cizeron successfully defended his ice dance title with new partner Laurence Fournier Beaudry, with a winning total of 225.82. Cizeron became the first ice dancer to claim gold in the discipline twice at the Winter Games with two different partners.

The pair narrowly beat the U.S. team of Madison Chock and Evan Bates (224.39), with Canada's Piper Gilles and Paul Poirier (217.74) finishing third.

(Prabhjot Singh is a Toronto-based senior journalist. He can be reached at Prabhjot416@gmail.com)

T20 WC: Dominant India inflict 93 run defeat on Namibia

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Brisk fifties by Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya and a game-changing spell by Varun Chakravarthy helped India defeat Namibia by 93 runs in their ICC T20 World Cup clash at New Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium on Thursday, February 12. After a blazing 24-ball 61 by Ishan and a 28-ball 52 by Hardik took India to 209/9 despite a four-fer from skipper Gerald Erasmus, India were challenged by Namibia well in the powerplay, as the visitors ended that phase at 57/1. From there, Varun Chakravarthy (3/7 in two overs), Axar Patel (2/20 in three overs) and Hardik Pandya (2/21 in four overs) turned the tide in India's favour, skittling Namibia out for 116 runs in 18.2 overs. India is at the top of the Group A, with two wins in two matches, followed by Pakistan, with same win-loss ratio.

In the run-chase of 210 runs, openers Jan Frylinck and Louren Steenkamp got Namibia off to a solid start, with Arshdeep Singh and Hardik Pandya getting some hammering during the power play. But a mistimed pull by Frylinck landed into Shivam Dube's hands at deep mid-wicket, sending back Frylinck for 15-ball 22, with three fours and a six. Namibia were 33/1 in 3.4 overs.

Steenkamp ended a highly productive powerplay period for Namibia in style, starting off Arshdeep's sixth over with two fours and ending it with a six over short third man. Namibia was cruising at 57/1 in six overs, with Steenkamp (29*) and Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton (5*) unbeaten.

It was Varun Chakravarthy, who ended this 34-run stand, cleaning up the middle and leg stump of Steenkamp for a 20-ball 29, with three fours and a six. Namibia was 67/2 in 7.1 overs.

Skipper Gerald Erasmus tried to infuse some life into the match with two sixes against Axar Patel in the ninth over, but the next over saw Varun push Namibia back two steps further, literally, with dismissals of Eaton (13) and JJ Smit (0). Namibia were 86/4 in 9.4 overs.

India started the second half well, getting the Namibian skipper caught by Tilak Varma at long-off for an 11-ball 18, and suddenly, half the side was back in the hut for 88 runs in 10.1 overs.

The batting stocks of visitors continued to plummet, with Axar getting Malan Kruger (5), leaving Namibia at 94/6 in 12.3



overs.

Namibia reached the 100-run mark in 14 overs.

Ruben Trumpelmann was next to go courtesy a scorching yorker from Jasprit Bumrah for just six. Namibia were 111/7 in 16.4 overs. Bernard Scholtz (4) also fell to Hardik, as Namibia sank to 116/8 in 17.3 overs. The all-rounder got a shot at a hat-trick as he got Ben Shikongo on the next ball. However, Max Heingo denied him one.

Zane Green (11) was the last wicket to fall to Shivam Dube, with Namibia bundled out for 116 runs in 18.2 overs.

Abhishek still weak, playing Pak game could be 'touch and go'

India's game-changing opener Abhishek Sharma might have been discharged from the hospital but a cloud of uncertainty hovers over his participation in the important T20 World Cup group league fixture against Pakistan in Colombo on February 15.

Abhishek, who is suffering from a stomach infection-related problem, had to be hospitalised for a couple of days after complaining of high fever and stomach pain.

He was discharged from a Delhi hospital on Wednesday but on Thursday, Feb 12, as the Indian team went through the motions at the Kotla, Abhishek didn't train as he is still feeling a bit weak.

There has been a bit of weight loss too and in case of severe stomach infection, one takes some time to recover and gain the strength and endurance to play top-flight cricket.

"Abhishek isn't fine still, might take one or two games," skipper Suryakumar Yadav dropped enough hints that he could be a doubtful starter for the Pakistan game.

It is understood that his training session in Colombo will be an indicator as to how he is shaping up. If he bats for a long duration like he normally does during routine nets, then it might be considered that he is good to go. During the past year if one has tracked the India net sessions, Abhishek takes multiple turns to bat and in a three-hour session, he bats anywhere between 75 and 90 minutes.

COLOMBO (TIP)

With a momentary pause in his delivery and his statue-like pose at the crease, Pakistan spin bowler Usman Tariq has created plenty of attention at cricket's Twenty20 World Cup.

Just enough, it seems, to throw off opposing batters.

With it has come a fair share of controversy - that his pause and sling style of bowling is an illegal delivery, or in cricket parlance, chucking. He's already been reported twice, but cleared, by Pakistani cricket authorities.

The 28-year-old off spinner's unconventional bowling action has already mesmerised some of the big names in shortest format of the game and has seen him taking three wickets against an inexperienced United States in Sri Lanka this week in what was his first T20 World Cup game.

As is often the case in cricket, the reasons for Tariq's potential illegal delivery are complicated.

First, there is the so-called "15-degree debate" - that bowlers cannot exceed the ICC's 15-degree elbow flex limit, which is nearly impossible for on-field umpires to judge accurately in real time.

Another talking point has been the



pause in Tariq's delivery stride.

Baffling the batters

Batters like Cameron Green of Australia and South African Dewald Brevis are a few notable players that were flummoxed by Tariq's bowling action. Power-hitter Brevis fell to Tariq's only second ball in T20 international cricket in November. Green shook his

Pakistan bowler Usman Tariq and his unusual delivery courts controversy at T20 World Cup

head in disbelief and mocked Tariq's bowling action close to the boundary line - but later apologised - when he walked back after slicing a wide delivery straight to the cover fielder during Pakistan's 3-0 sweep of Australia at Lahore.

Tariq's rise in T20 cricket has also seen him taking a hat-trick at Rawalpindi when he took 4-18 against Zimbabwe during the tri-series in November. He has taken 11 wickets off his 88 balls in only four T20 internationals.

It was no surprise when selectors included Tariq in the 15-man T20 World Cup squad, knowing that pitches in Sri Lanka would suit slow bowlers more than pacemen.

Tariq's journey to top-level cricket wasn't a smooth one. He was twice reported for suspect bowling action during country's premier domestic T20 tournament - the Pakistan Super League - over the last two seasons, but on both occasions he was cleared after testing at

the National Cricket Academy in Lahore.

"I have two elbows in my arm," Tariq said. "My arm bends naturally. I have got this tested and cleared. Everyone feels I bend my arm and all that. My bent arm is a biological issue." Tariq has also featured in the Caribbean Premier League and with his deceptive bowling action he was the tournament's second-highest wicket taker for champions Trinbago Knight Riders.

Long pause a problem

"The batters are struggling to read Tariq because of the long pause the moment he steps on the bowling crease," former Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed, who has played with Tariq in the PSL's Quetta Gladiators, told The Associated Press.

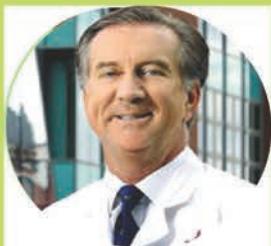
"The long pause disturbs all the concentration of batters and when he bowls a fastish (delivery, after a long pause), or even a slow ball, it leaves the batters clueless."



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Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



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