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# Trump Recounts his Administration's Accomplishments

Claims economy is strong; asks Americans to back Republicans - friends of American people



President Donald Trump delivers the State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress in the House chamber at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2026.

-Photo/ Courtesy White House

FEBRUARY 25, 2026  
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

President Donald Trump, in his State of the Union address on Tuesday, February 24, claimed he'd sparked a jobs and manufacturing boom at home while imposing a new world order abroad - hoping that offering a long list of his accomplishments can counter approval ratings that have been falling.

His main objective was convincing increasingly wary Americans that the economy is stronger than many believe, and that they should vote for more of the same by backing Republicans during November's midterm elections. In the process, he shattered his own record, going longer than the 100-minute speech, he gave before a joint session of Congress last year.

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## Canadian PM Mark Carney Arrives in Mumbai on first leg of his first official visit to India



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

File photo

BY PRABHJOT SINGH/ I.S. SALUJA  
FEBRUARY 27, 2026  
MUMBAI/TORONTO/NEW YORK (TIP)

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney is scheduled to arrive in New Delhi on March 1, 2026, according to the information released by the Ministry of External Affairs, government of India.

This marks the second leg of his official four-day visit to India, which begins on February 27 in Mumbai. While his specific arrival time in New Delhi has not been publicly released, his primary official business in the capital-delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled for March 2 at Hyderabad House.

Canadian Prime Minister will have a busy schedule in India.

Arriving in Mumbai on February 27, he will interact with Canadian and Indian business leaders and pension fund experts.

He will arrive in New Delhi on March 1, and on March 2, he is scheduled to have official talks with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi at which the two Prime Ministers will review the India-Canada Strategic Partnership.

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## India, Israel elevate ties to 'special strategic partnership'; agree to soon seal free trade deal



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and others during the exchanging of an MoU at the joint press meet in Jerusalem on Thursday, February 26.

-Photo: PTI

FEBRUARY 27, 2026  
JERUSALEM/ NEW YORK (TIP)

India and Israel on Thursday, February 26, elevated their "time-tested" relationship to a special strategic partnership and agreed to fast-track a long-awaited free trade deal even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi backed the Gaza peace initiative, asserting that

humanity must never become a victim of conflict.

In his media statement after holding wide-ranging talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Modi said India's security interests are directly linked to peace and stability in the Middle East and that New Delhi has

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## 'Huge mistake': Bill Gates apologizes for Epstein link, admits affairs with Russian women

FEBRUARY 25., 2026  
NEW YORK (TIP)



Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates insists he didn't participate in Epstein's crimes.

Photo credit: X/BillGates

American tech entrepreneur Bill Gates has apologized to the staff at the Gates Foundation over his ties with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein but maintained that he did "nothing illicit," according to a media report.

The Microsoft co-founder also admitted that he had two affairs with Russian women and that he made mistakes that had cast a cloud over the philanthropic group while insisting he didn't participate in Epstein's crimes, The Wall Street Journal said in an exclusive report on Tuesday, February 24. Gates was among the scores of celebrities, politicians, leaders and tech entrepreneurs shown having connections with the

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**COMMENT****Law and Order Alone Are a Guarantee of People's Security**

In every civilized society, liberty and law must walk together. When liberty runs ahead and leaves law behind, chaos follows. When law becomes oppressive and forgets liberty, tyranny begins. The enduring strength of a democratic city like New York City lies in maintaining this delicate balance.

In recent years, however, a disquieting debate has taken root-one that calls for "defunding the police." The slogan, emotionally powerful in moments of anger and frustration, may satisfy political passions, but public policy cannot be built upon slogans. The idea of weakening the police force in a sprawling metropolis of over eight million residents demands sober reflection. Law and order alone are the ultimate guarantee of people's security.

**THE REALITY OF CRIME IN AN URBAN GIANT :** A city like New York is a living organism-restless, diverse, vibrant. It is also vulnerable. Shoplifting incidents that went unchecked, brazen robberies in broad daylight, random assaults, shootings, subway crimes-these have deeply unsettled citizens. When stores are looted and culprits appear to walk free, when repeat offenders return to the streets within hours, the social contract begins to fray.

No reasonable citizen wants to live in fear while commuting, operating a business, or sending children to school. The right to life, liberty, and property-enshrined in the American constitutional tradition-presupposes a state capable of enforcing law. Without enforcement, rights become abstractions.

Sometimes I feel that parts of American society, particularly in metropolitan centers, have become "liberty drunk." Freedom is cherished-and rightly so. Yet freedom divorced from responsibility is self-destructive. Consider the simple example of traffic discipline. Heavy traffic flows through the arteries of the city; suddenly a driver makes a reckless U-turn. What is that if not disregard for collective safety? Such conduct can cause accidents, injuries, even fatalities.

Traffic violations may seem minor in comparison to violent crime, but they are symptoms of the same malaise: a growing casualness toward rules. Rules are not arbitrary instruments of oppression. They exist to protect human life and ensure orderly coexistence.

Brawls in public spaces, assaults in transit systems, organized retail theft, shootings-who shall control these if not a trained, adequately staffed, and empowered police force?

**UTOPIA DOES NOT EXIST :** If society were so enlightened and disciplined that no crime occurred, police would indeed be unnecessary. But that is a utopian fantasy. Even the most advanced societies confront some degree of lawlessness. In a dense urban ecosystem like New York, with its enormous demographic variety and economic contrasts, instances of disorder are inevitable.

Therefore, until we reach the distant ideal of universal law observance-perhaps generations away-we must maintain an agency dedicated to enforcing law. Call it police or by any other name; its function is indispensable. Without it, society risks descending into lawlessness.

**LEADERSHIP AND MORAL CLARITY :** Political leadership matters in moments of symbolic significance. Recently, when incidents occurred where individuals pelted members of the New York City Police Department with snowballs during a park event, the official response became the center of debate. Regardless of whether one views the act as trivial mischief or minor assault, the symbolism cannot be ignored.

When elected officials appear to defend or trivialize acts directed against law enforcement personnel performing their duties, they inadvertently send a message that disrespect for authority is permissible. That is a dangerous slope.

A mayor's foremost obligation is to ensure rule of law. Zohran Mamdani-as the city's leader-carries a solemn responsibility: not merely to interpret events politically, but to reinforce norms that sustain civic life. Condemnation of misconduct, initiation of inquiry where necessary, and unequivocal support for officers who are lawfully discharging their duties-these are essential signals. New York City is not, and must never become, a lawless society. To give even the appearance of a "free hand" to disorder is to invite greater disorder.

**THE POLICE: NOT AN OCCUPATION ARMY :** To argue for a strong police force is not to argue for an overbearing or militarized presence. On the contrary, the police must be trained to be civil, dignified, and fearless. Their role is not to dominate but to protect. Courts punish; the judiciary adjudicates. The police enforce the law and ensure safety.

Reform, where needed, must focus on training, accountability, and professional excellence-not on dismantling capacity. A stout, healthy police force means:

Adequate staffing to prevent burnout.

Modern equipment and technology.

Continuous professional training.

Courses in ethics, community relations, and de-escalation.

Transparent accountability mechanisms.

Police officers must be reminded constantly: you are not masters; you are public servants. You are friends of people. You are guardians, not executioners.

At the same time, society must also understand disrespecting or attacking police officers performing lawful duties is an attack on the rule-based order that protects everyone.

**EDUCATION AS THE LONG-TERM SOLUTION :** Law enforcement alone is insufficient. A deeper transformation must begin in schools and homes.

**Children should be taught from a young age:**

The value of discipline, The necessity of rules.

The meaning of civic duty,

The dignity of being law-abiding citizens.

There should be civic education programs that instill pride in responsible citizenship. Following laws should not be seen as compulsion but as a badge of honor.

It may take generations to cultivate a deeply internalized law-observant culture. Until that day arrives, enforcement mechanisms remain essential.

**THE COST OF WEAKNESS :** History teaches that when the state hesitates to enforce law, alternative forces emerge-gangs, vigilantes, parallel power structures. Businesses shut down, residents relocate, investment dries up. Ultimately, the most vulnerable suffer the most.

Ironically, calls to defund police often arise from a desire for social justice. Yet weakened policing frequently harms marginalized communities first. They are least equipped to hire private security or relocate to safer neighborhoods. Lawlessness disproportionately affects those with the least protection.

A well-trained, accountable, and robust police force is a social equalizer: It protects the store owner in Brooklyn as much as the tourist in Midtown. It safeguards the subway rider at midnight as much as the executive returning from Wall Street.

**BALANCING REFORM AND STRENGTH :** None of these arguments deny the need for reform. Instances of misconduct must be addressed transparently. Accountability strengthens, rather than weakens, law enforcement legitimacy. But reform does not equal defunding.

Investing in mental health support units, community policing models, and technology-driven crime prevention does not contradict strengthening the force. They are complementary strategies.

The slogan "defund the police" may resonate emotionally, but governance requires nuance. Cities are complex organisms. Stability cannot be reduced to catchphrases.

**A DIRECT WORD TO THE MAYOR :** Mr. Mayor, leadership demands clarity. The people of New York entrusted you with responsibility-not to experiment recklessly with public safety, but to ensure it. Strengthen the police force. Enhance training. Demand civility and dignity from officers. Create oversight mechanisms that promote trust. But do not weaken the shield that protects millions.

Public statements should reinforce order, not ambiguity. When officers are targeted-whether with snowballs or stones-the principle at stake remains the same. Law must not be mocked.

At the same time, continue building bridges between communities and law enforcement. Organize town halls. Encourage dialogue. Promote transparency. When citizens see police as partners rather than adversaries, tensions ease.

**THE ULTIMATE GUARANTEE :** In the final analysis, security is the bedrock of civilization. A peaceful, enjoyable city life requires law-abiding citizens and firm, just enforcement. Without safety, liberty becomes hollow. Without order, prosperity evaporates.

New York is a great city-dynamic, creative, resilient. It deserves governance that recognizes this fundamental truth: law and order alone are the ultimate guarantee of people's security.

Strengthen the police, reform where necessary, educate the young in civic virtues, and cultivate respect for law. Do this, and you will have fulfilled your duty-not only as mayor, but as guardian of one of the world's most important cities.

The measure of a city's greatness is not only its skyline or its culture. It is the confidence of its people when they walk its streets-confident that law protects them, confident that order prevails, confident that their leaders understand the sacred balance between liberty and discipline.

Let New York remain not merely a symbol of freedom-but a model of responsible freedom.

INDRAJIT  
SALUJA**DISCLAIMER**

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# Sherrill nominates first woman to lead N.J. State Police

**FEBRUARY 25, 2026  
TRENTON, NJ (TIP)**

Gov. Mikie Sherrill has picked retired New Jersey State Police officer Jeanne Hengemuhle to be the first woman to lead the agency.

Hengemuhle served 26 years in the State Police and retired in 2024 as a lieutenant colonel. She is set to take over as acting superintendent Thursday, Sherrill, a Democrat in her second month as governor, said Wednesday while announcing the nomination. Hengemuhle will need confirmation from the state Senate to get the formal title.

"It is an honor to once again answer the call to protect and serve the State of New Jersey," Hengemuhle said in a statement. "As a veteran of the State Police, I know firsthand the critical role our Troopers play in building strong community partnerships and safeguarding our residents against potential harm.

"I am grateful that Governor Sherrill has entrusted me with this position, and I will strive to lead with the State Police's core values of Honor, Duty, and Fidelity."

Sherrill said Hengemuhle is a "dedicated public servant with decades of experience in the State Police. She understands not only the responsibilities of the job, but also the profound duty to



Then Capt. Jeanne Hengemuhle, commandant of the New Jersey State Police academy, delivers remarks at a 2017 state police graduation ceremony. Gov. Mikie Sherrill has picked her to be the first woman to lead the agency. -File photo

serve and protect our communities each and every day."

Hengemuhle succeeds Lt. Col. David Sierotowicz, who served in a temporary capacity after Patrick Callahan retired in December.

Hengemuhle served in several commands, including as the branch

commander of the administration where she oversaw recruitment, personnel development and training strategy. She led the state police academy and earlier in her career was a public information officer for the agency.

Hengemuhle earned bachelor's and master's degrees from The College of

New Jersey (formerly Trenton State College), where she is also a member of the athletic hall of fame for a standout softball career. The Bergen County native now lives in Middlesex County.

The announcement of Hengemuhle's nomination included statements of support from Wayne Blanchard, president of the state police union, the State Troopers Fraternal Association.

Hengemuhle was one of his trainers in the academy, "at which time she demonstrated great care and compassion for recruits, while instilling discipline, knowledge, and professionalism to myself and all recruits who have become enlisted into the ranks of the New Jersey State Police," he said.

"Acting Superintendent Hengemuhle enjoyed a dedicated and decorated career in the New Jersey State Police that will give her the tools and knowledge base to lead the State Police to its highest levels internally, while externally enhancing our police services capabilities while increasing public satisfaction of the New Jersey State Police," Blanchard added.

Sherrill's Attorney General, Jennifer Davenport, and the New Jersey State Police Chaplain, the Rev. John R. Taylor, also offered support for the nomination.

(Source: NJ.Com)

## UN Women Special Representative in Afghanistan, Susan Ferguson comments on Decree No. 12 issued by the de facto authorities of Afghanistan



UN Women Special Representative in Afghanistan, Susan Ferguson  
Photo : UN Women

**FEBRUARY 25, 2026  
NEW YORK/ KABUL (TIP)**

The latest decree issued by the de facto authorities in Afghanistan further diminishes the rights of women and girls and exposes them to even greater risk of violence.

Shared with the courts for implementation in early January, Decree No. 12 formally removes equality between men and women before the law. It places husbands in a position of authority over their wives and limits women's ability to seek protection or justice.

Under the decree, a husband is only criminally liable for violence within marriage if he causes severe and visible physical injuries. Other forms of violence - including psychological and sexual violence - are not prohibited.

Under Decree No. 12, and when coupled with existing decrees, women face serious obstacles when seeking justice. They must prove abuse before a male judge, while fully covered, and while accompanied by a male guardian -

who may be the perpetrator of the violence.

The decree allows women, or their relatives, to be jailed if they go often to a relative's home without their husband's permission.

Acts deemed 'immoral' or 'corrupt' are defined as crimes, punishable by the harshest penalties, including death. Women are particularly vulnerable under these provisions because they are already more closely monitored within their communities, and existing decrees already prescribe so much of how women and girls can live.

Decree No. 12 criminalizes criticism of de facto officials, their policies, or their interpretation of Sharia law, subject to penalties including prison or corporal punishment, which further reduces participation in public space and advocacy for women's rights.

UN Women is profoundly concerned about the implications of the decree.

Afghan women and girls have the right to live free from violence and discrimination. They are entitled to dignity, safety, freedom of movement and participation in public life. Legal frameworks must uphold equality before the law, protect women from all forms of violence, and ensure meaningful access to justice without discrimination.

UN Women calls on the de facto authorities to ensure that all laws and policies protect the rights of women and girls, in line with human rights treaties and conventions to which Afghanistan is a party.

## Columbia Student Arrested by ICE in a University Building is Released

**FEDERAL OFFICIALS HAD MISREPRESENTED THEMSELVES TO GAIN ACCESS, ACCORDING TO THE UNIVERSITY. MAYOR ZOHRAN MAMDANI SAID PRESIDENT TRUMP HAD TOLD HIM THE STUDENT WOULD BE LET GO.**



Demonstrators march and hold signs. Hundreds of protesters gathered outside Columbia on Thursday, February 26 to protest the detention of a student by federal authorities.

Photo credit: CS Muncy for The New York Times

**SHARON OTTERMAN  
NEW YORK TIMES  
FEB. 26, 2026  
NEW YORK (TIP)**

Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents entered a residential building owned by Columbia University early Thursday morning and detained an undergraduate student. The school said in a letter to the campus that the agents had conducted the operation under false pretenses.

Claire Shipman, the university's acting president, said in the letter that the immigration officers appeared to gain access by saying that they were searching for a "missing person." A state assemblyman said that he had been told by university officials that the federal agents presented themselves as Police Department officers to convince a building superintendent to let them in.

The case quickly escalated to the highest political levels. Mayor Zohran Mamdani said he had brought up the

student's detention during a meeting with President Trump in Washington on Thursday. Just after 3 p.m., Mr. Mamdani said on social media that President Trump had informed him that the student would "be released imminently."

The student, Elmina Aghayeva, posted on Instagram at about 3:45 p.m. that she had been released. "The university is relieved and thrilled that our student, Ellie, has been released from detainment," Columbia posted on social media shortly afterward.

Earlier Thursday, federal officials had confirmed the arrest of the student by ICE agents in a statement.

"ICE arrested Elmina Aghayeva, an illegal alien from Azerbaijan, whose student visa was terminated in 2016 under the Obama administration for failing to attend classes," the statement from the parent agency of ICE, the Department of Homeland Security, said.

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

# Indo-Canadian translator and Indian Heritage writer Padma Viswanathan on 2026 International Booker Prize Longlist



Padma Viswanathan, a Canadian writer of Indian heritage, was on Tuesday named on the 2026 International Booker Prize longlist as the English translator of a "haunting" Portuguese language novel by Brazilian author Ana Paula Maia.

**FEBRUARY 25, 2026  
LONDON (TIP)**

Padma Viswanathan, a Canadian writer of Indian heritage, was on Tuesday named on the 2026 International Booker Prize longlist as the English translator of a "haunting" Portuguese language novel by Brazilian author Ana

Paula Maia.

'On Earth As It Is Beneath', described by judges as a stark exploration of power and corruption, is among 13 worldwide contenders for the coveted literary honor.

The annual prize worth 50,000 pounds, divided equally between the author and translator, was last year won by Kannada writer-activist Banu Mushtaq and translator Deepa Bhashti for the short story collection 'Heart Lamp'.

"'On Earth As It Is Beneath' is a stark, unsettling exploration of power, violence, destruction and institutional corruption that will linger with readers long after the final page," the judging panel said of the work translated by US-based Viswanathan.

The 58-year-old Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville is an accomplished playwright and author, whose novels have been published in eight countries.

"The caliber and variety of translated fiction being published in the UK is unbelievable," said author Natasha Brown, chair of the 2026 judging panel.

"As judges, we've been spoilt for choice

during these past eight months reading this year's 128 submissions. Our discussions are always lively, and we've often been surprised by the myriad ways these books engaged us," she said.

The other works this year include: 'The Nights Are Quiet in Tehran' by Shida Bazayr and translated from German by Ruth Martin; 'We Are Green and Trembling' by Argentinian author Gabriela Cabezon Camara and translated from Spanish by Robin Myers; 'The Remembered Soldier' by Anjet Daanje and translated from Dutch by David McKay, and 'The Deserters' by Mathias Enard and translated from French by Charlotte Mandell.

The list also includes: 'Small Comfort' by Ia Genberg and translated from Swedish by Kira Josefsson; 'She Who Remains' by Rene Karabash and translated from Bulgarian by Izidora Angel; 'The Director' by Daniel Kehlmann and translated from German by Ross Benjamin; 'The Duke' by Matteo Melchiorre and translated from Italian by Antonella Lettieri; 'The Witch' by Marie Ndiaye and translated from French by Jordan Stump; 'Women

Without Men' by Iranian author Shahrnush Parsipur and translated from Persian by Faridoun Farrokh; 'The Wax Child' by Olga Ravn and translated from Danish by Martin Aitken; and 'Taiwan Travelogue' by Yang Shuang-zi and translated from Taiwanese by Lin King.

These will be whittled down to a shortlist of six books by March 31, with each shortlisted title guaranteed a prize of 5,000 pounds, split 50-50 between the book's author and English translator.

The announcement of the winning book will take place on May 19 at a ceremony at Tate Modern in London.

The International Booker Prize is awarded annually for a single work of fiction, either a novel or a collection of short stories, written in another language and translated into English and published in the UK and/or Ireland.

According to the organizers, the 2025 winner 'Heart Lamp', the first collection of short stories to win the prize and the first translated from Kannada, rapidly sold out in the UK in the subsequent days, with the UK publisher, And Other Stories, immediately reprinting 40,000 copies.

## Canada deports Punjabi youth accused of extortion, releases photo seeking public help

**THE SURREY POLICE SERVICE (SPS) HAD IDENTIFIED LOVEBIR IN EARLY 2026 AS A SUSPECT IN EXTORTION-LINKED CRIMES**



**FEBRUARY 20, 2026**

Lovebir Singh

Photo released by the Surrey police.  
Photo: X/@surreypps

**SURREY, BC (TIP)**

Canada has deported a Punjabi youth, Lovebir Singh, 22 - accused of involvement in extortion-related criminal activity - and has released his photograph while appealing to the public to provide information on his

associates and activities during his stay in the country.

The Surrey Police Service (SPS) identified Lovebir in early 2026 as a suspect in extortion-linked crimes. Singh, a foreign national, had been in Canada since the fall of 2023. After SPS shared its findings with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), an immigration investigation was launched, following which Lovebir was deported.

The SPS said it released Lovebir's photo after determining that public disclosure was necessary to support ongoing investigations. The force hopes the move will prompt witnesses, victims or associates to come forward with information about Lovebir's activities and the criminal networks behind violent extortions in the region.

Anyone with information can contact SPS at 604-599-0502, the Surrey Extortion Tip Line at 236-485-5149, or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or www.solvecrime.ca for those wishing to remain anonymous.

A reward of up to \$250,000 is also on offer through the Surrey Extortion Reward Fund, established in September 2025, for information leading to charges and convictions in extortion cases.

## Indian American Sikh Man, Father of Young Triplets, Abducted Last Week Found Dead

**FEBRUARY 25, 2026  
NAPA COUNTY, CA (TIP)**

Days after a Tracy father of three infant triplets was abducted and later found dead, the San Joaquin County Sheriff said Monday that investigators believe he was not the intended target in the kidnapping and homicide.

Authorities previously confirmed that a body found Friday afternoon near Lake Berryessa was Avtar Singh, 38, of Tracy. The discovery came several days after Singh was reported missing.

San Joaquin County Sheriff Patrick Withrow said surveillance video shows Singh being forced into a white SUV near Gurdwara Guru Nanak Parkash along West Grant Line Road at approximately 2:30 p.m. on Feb. 17. Withrow said Singh appeared to resist but was overpowered by three abductors.

"This was not a random act," Withrow said. "They were targeted after another individual for a specific reason and we're hoping that reason comes to the light."

Singh was reported missing Tuesday at 8:52 p.m. Temple leaders told KCRA 3 that Singh's wife realized he was gone after returning home from work and finding their three small children alone.

"The kids were alone. God's blessing. They were safe, but they were alone," said Deep Singh, temple secretary and spokesperson.

Deputies with the Napa County Sheriff's Office located a body Friday



Avtar Singh of Tracy, abducted last week, was found dead

afternoon near Lake Berryessa, approximately a two-hour drive from Tracy. Officials later confirmed the body was Singh's. Authorities have not released additional details about suspects or a motive.

Singh was a longtime volunteer at the gurdwara, where he served as a sevadar for more than two decades. His duties included assisting in the langar kitchen and supporting daily operations at the temple.

"This is a tragedy, but an ongoing investigation," Withrow said.

The homicide investigation remains active. Authorities are asking anyone with information to contact law enforcement.

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# Indian-origin Asha Sharma appointed as new executive vice-president and CEO of Microsoft Gaming, overseeing the Xbox

FEBRUARY 22, 2026  
SAN FRANCISCO (TIP)

In a major leadership shift, Microsoft has named Indian-origin Asha Sharma as the new executive vice-president and CEO of Microsoft Gaming, overseeing the Xbox division. She replaces Phil Spencer, the longtime gaming chief who is retiring after nearly 38 years with the company, marking the end of an era for Xbox.

The move, announced by CEO Satya Nadella in an internal memo, positions Sharma to report directly to the Microsoft chief as the company pushes deeper into games, services and AI-driven experiences.

Sharma outlined her vision to deliver "great games, recommit to core Xbox fans and redefine the future of play across devices amid shifts toward cloud gaming, AI and subscriptions".

She brings nearly 15 years of expertise



Microsoft has named Indian-origin Asha Sharma as the new executive vice-president and CEO of Microsoft Gaming

in technology, product and operations. She started at Microsoft in 2011 in marketing and product roles for two years before joining Porch Group as COO.

From 2017 to 2021, Sharma was VP of product and engineering at Meta, heading Messenger, Instagram DMs, video calling and Messenger Kids. She then served as COO at Instacart in 2021.

Sharma rejoined Microsoft in 2024 as president of Core AI Product.

Widely described as Indian-origin and born in Racine, Wisconsin, according to some profiles, Sharma adds to the roster of prominent Indian-descent leaders at tech giants like Microsoft. However, detailed public records on her family background or specific Indian ties remain limited.

Her appointment has also drawn public reaction in India and online. Entrepreneur Anand Mahindra congratulated her, praising her view of gaming as an "interactive art form".

Tech experts question move  
Asha Sharma's appointment has sparked criticism across social media platforms, with some gamers and commentators questioning whether an AI-focused executive without a traditional gaming pedigree is the right fit for Xbox

## Indian-origin Store Manager Arrested in \$300K Lottery Ticket Theft Case in US

FEBRUARY 26, 2026  
MIAMI, FLORIDA (TIP)

Rakesh Tanguturi, 34, a convenience store manager in Miami, was arrested this week on felony charges of organized fraud involving \$50,000 or more and first-degree grand theft in connection with the alleged theft and redemption of Florida Lottery scratch-off tickets, according to police.



Rakesh Tanguturi was arrested this week on felony charges of organized fraud involving \$50,000 or more

Authorities say Tanguturi managed Bargain Stop Market II in the city's Little Haiti neighborhood. The investigation began after the store owner noticed irregular bank account activity related to lottery transactions and discovered multiple scratch-off ticket

books missing from inventory. Police allege that the total value of the missing ticket books exceeded \$300,000. After accounting for redeemed winnings and partial recovery of funds, investigators estimate the confirmed financial loss at approximately \$60,500.

According to the arrest report, Tanguturi initially denied involvement. Investigators say he later sent a text message admitting to taking the ticket books, redeeming winning tickets, and using the proceeds for personal expenses. He also allegedly confessed in person to the store owner and a Florida Lottery investigator. Authorities further stated that the tickets were redeemed in bulk at a single retailer, a pattern that raised red flags during the investigation.

Tanguturi was booked into the Turner Guilford Knight Correctional Center. His bond was set at \$30,000. Officials also confirmed that an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainer has been placed on him.

The case remains under investigation.

## Punjabi-origin woman in UK in coma, all limbs removed after a routine dog lick

FEBRUARY 22, 2026  
LONDON (TIP)

A rare, but devastating case, where a Punjabi-origin woman in the UK lost her limbs to sepsis after dog interaction.

She fought for life for months in a hospital suffering cardiac arrests and quadruple amputation as doctors suspect bacteria may have entered her body through a small cut, possibly after the dog lick.

After spending 32 weeks in the hospital, Manjit Sangha, 56, from the West Midlands has returned home and is determined to regain independence.

She underwent a quadruple amputation following a devastating battle with sepsis.

According to News, she fell critically ill last July after being unwell over a weekend. Within 48 hours, she was in coma.

"Your mind is all over the place," her husband, Kam Sangha, told the media.

"You're thinking 'how can this happen in less than 24 hours?' One minute on a Saturday she's playing with the dog, Sunday she's gone to work, Monday night she's in coma."

Doctors believe bacteria may have entered her bloodstream through a tiny cut or scratch, potentially after one of the family's dogs licked the wound. While such infections are extremely rare, medical professionals say the case highlights how rapidly sepsis can escalate.

The NHS describes sepsis as a life-threatening condition that occurs when the body's immune system overreacts to an infection and begins attacking its own tissues and organs. The UK Sepsis Trust estimates there are around 50,000 sepsis-related deaths in the UK each year.

By the time Manjit was admitted to intensive care at New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton, her condition had deteriorated drastically. Her heart stopped six times. Surgeons later amputated both her legs below the knee and both hands in a bid to stop the infection from spreading. She also lost her spleen, battled pneumonia and developed gallstones that may require further surgery.

"I didn't know what was happening," she told the media.

"The first month I do not remember anything. Losing your limbs in a short time is a big thing. It's very serious and not to be taken lightly."

Despite doctors reportedly fearing she might not survive, Manjit was discharged from Moseley Hall Hospital in Birmingham to a "hero's welcome" from family at their home near the Wolverhampton and Staffordshire border.



Manjit Sangha lost her limbs to sepsis after dog interaction

## PAKISTAN GURDWARA LINKED TO GURU NANAK DEV TO BE RESTORED

FEBRUARY 26, 2026  
LAHORE (TIP)

A historic gurdwara associated with Guru Nanak Dev in Sialkot, Pakistan, is set to be restored after remaining closed since Partition.



Pakistan's Minority Affairs Minister Ramesh Singh Arora inspects the historic gurdwara in Sialkot district.

Known as Gurdwara Pehli Patshahi Nanaksar, the shrine is located at Fateh Bhinder village in Daska district of Sialkot. The structure, which has fallen into disrepair, is undergoing assessment for restoration.

It is believed that Guru Nanak Dev visited the site. The shrine remained on the Pakistan side after Partition and was abandoned following the migration of the Sikh population.

A marble plaque inscribed in Gurmukhi detailing Guru Nanak's visit is still present at the site.

Pakistan's Minority Affairs Minister Ramesh Singh Arora, Parliamentary Committee on Culture and Heritage Chairperson Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar and Evacuee Trust Property Board Chairman Qamar-uz-Zaman, along with heritage experts, visited the site to assess its condition.

Arora said Guru Nanak stayed at the site after returning from Babe Di Beri in Sialkot. He said the gurdwara remained closed for nearly 80 years, leading to severe neglect. Cracks have appeared in the structure.

He described the restoration as part of a programme to preserve Sikh heritage and promote religious tourism under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

Around 40-50 gurdwaras across Pakistan have been identified for restoration over the next three years. In the first phase, work on 17-18 gurdwaras is under way and expected to be completed by May.

Arora said Sikh pilgrims visiting Pakistan felt reassured knowing their sacred sites were protected. He said Sikh history would be incomplete without Pakistan.

(Source: TRIBUNE)

## Arranged Love - A Tender Exploration of Modern Romance Within Tradition

Worldwide Distribution by World Cinema Partners  
Produced & Directed by Sanjane Koneshamoorthy

**FEBRUARY 26, 2026  
NEW YORK (TIP)**

Arranged Love, the latest romantic drama from filmmaker Sanjane Koneshamoorthy, delivers a gentle yet emotionally resonant portrayal of love shaped by culture, family, and personal choice. Distributed globally by World Cinema Partners, the film offers audiences across borders a heartfelt look at the evolving meaning of relationships in contemporary society.

At the center of the story is Merunasri, a young woman caught between two distinct romantic paths: an arranged match with the sincere yet socially awkward Dhaventhiran, and a more organic emotional connection that challenges her understanding of love and destiny. Rather than framing the narrative as a simple choice between tradition and modernity, Arranged Love thoughtfully examines the delicate balance between familial expectations and individual autonomy.

With emotional restraint and cultural sensitivity, the film avoids melodrama, embracing instead a reflective

storytelling style. Dhaventhiran's quiet vulnerability brings warmth and understated humor, while Merunasri's inner conflict anchors the narrative with authenticity and depth. Supported by a soothing soundtrack and clean, intimate visuals, the film creates a space where emotions unfold naturally and patiently.

Director Sanjane Koneshamoorthy crafts a cinematic experience that feels both personal and universal. Through subtle performances and nuanced writing, Arranged Love reminds audiences that love is not always dramatic or instantaneous - sometimes it is built slowly through understanding, compromise, and quiet devotion.

Though modest in scale, the film resonates beyond its cultural setting, speaking to global audiences navigating tradition in a rapidly modernizing world. It is a story about choice, timing, and the courage to define love on one's own terms.

Arranged Love stands as a sincere and relatable romantic drama - a celebration of love that grows gently, honestly, and authentically.



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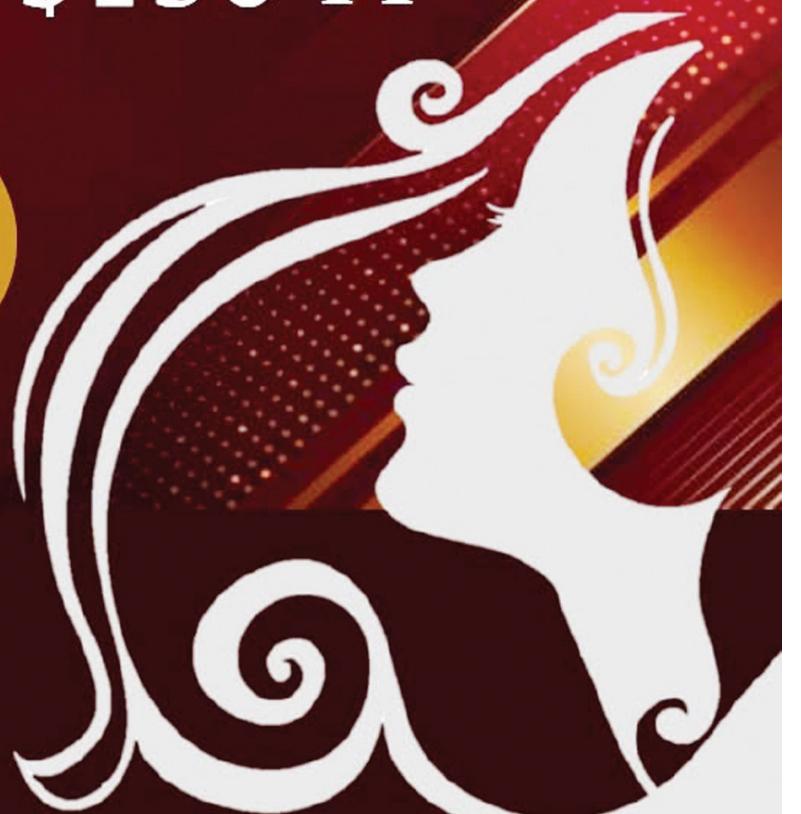
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## Pioneer in Nutraceuticals Dr Raj K Chopra dies: Renee Mehra pays tribute

Raj K. Chopra was a leading figure in the vitamin and health foods industries, and a luminary in the world of coenzyme Q10. In 1976, Raj co-founded Tishcon Corporation in Westbury Long Island, a manufacturer of nutritional supplements, vitamins, and nutraceuticals, for which he coined the tagline, "only nature has had more experience with vitamins."

Raj was a true pioneer- from the innovative products he developed to his unique leadership style. His groundbreaking development of a superior delivery system for coenzyme Q10, a patented, hydrosoluble formulation, benefits millions around the world. His emphasis on improving the bioavailability and delivery of essential nutrients raised the bar in the industry. Raj was often quoted as saying "we don't want vitamins that simply enrich the toilet bowls!" - hence, his interest in pharmacokinetics and commitment to designing delivery systems to optimize

absorption.

Raj completed his graduate studies in industrial pharmacy at Columbia and went on to become one of the world's experts in chewable multivitamin formulations, timed-release formulations, and bio-enhanced supplements.

In 2006, the American College of Nutrition honored Raj as the 2006 Industry Recipient of the prestigious Bieber Award in recognition of "his outstanding academic accomplishments and distinguished contributions in the nutrition industry." In the early 2000s, the FDA granted Tishcon orphan drug designations for its coenzyme Q10 and ubiquinol products to treat pediatric congestive heart failure, Huntington's disease and a number of debilitating diseases associated with mitochondrial cytopathies. Raj was a generous supporter of the United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation and cared deeply about supporting

patients with these rare diseases. In 2022, Raj was honored by the United Natural Products Alliance (UNPA) and awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award, given "to individuals in the natural products industry who have devoted their hearts and minds to the betterment of society through ethical and diligent business leadership." Raj was honored by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin - Queens Long Island chapter in 2022 and given an award "established to recognize individuals who through actions and pursuits have contributed significantly to the betterment of the community."

Throughout his life, Raj was deeply concerned about the underserved, and through Tishcon, he actively supported the work of Vitamin Angels, an organization that distributes essential nutrients and life-saving vitamins around the world, and other such organizations. Raj received the Vitamin Relief Guardian Angel Award



Raj Chopra leaves behind 3 children, Geeta, Mona and Raj Jr, and Avana Grace, his grandchild.

for his generous contributions, including donating over 20 million high potency vitamin A softgels to help prevent vitamin A deficiency blindness in infants and children in Africa and Asia, as well as prenatal vitamins to supplement the diets of pregnant women, and multivitamins for young children.

Raj Chopra leaves behind 3 children, Geeta, Mona and Raj Jr, and Avana Grace his grandchild.



Maroof Raza battled long with cancer which finally vanquished him. Ajay Banerjee pays tribute to the man who connected the gap between military doctrine and public understanding of the military jargon

FEBRUARY 27, 2026  
GURUGRAM (TIP)

Major Maroof Raza (retd), a respected voice in India's strategic circles, passed away today, February 27, following a prolonged battle with cancer.

Major Raza, 67, who breathed his last in Gurugram, was an Army officer with ground experience in tackling counter insurgency in the north-east. After leaving the Army, he blossomed as a military historian, a respected strategic affairs commentator and authored several books on Pakistan and China.

Known for his analytical mind he connected the gap between military doctrine and public understanding of military jargon. His work was a 'bridge' between academia and the rugged realities of the battlefield. "Maroof had great confidence and oratory skills, the transition towards being a strategic commentator was natural for him," says Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh (retd), a long-

## Maroof Raza - A bridge between academia and rugged realities of battlefield dies at 67

standing friend of Major Raza.

Born into a military family - his father was Brigadier MM Raza from the Grenadiers regiment. Schooled at Mayo College, Ajmer, Major Raza graduated in history honors from the St Stephen's College, New Delhi.

He joined the Army and was commissioned into the 6th battalion of the Grenadiers regiment and later the battalion was converted into 14 Mechanized Infantry. In his early days, he had extensive involvement in counter-insurgency (CI) operations, in the north -east. He later served as instructor at the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Dehradun, from where had passed out in December 1980.

Major Raza resigned from his commission to pursue a career in strategic studies and media and did his Master's in War Studies from King's College, London, and did an MPhil in International Relations from Cambridge University.

Around the same time 24x7 news channels were holding daily shows in the evening and Raza became a household name providing the "soldier's perspective" on national security issues. His ability to explain the nuances of the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan or the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China was his forte.

His major published books include: Low Intensity Conflicts (1995); Wars and No Peace Over Kashmir (1996); Kashmir's Untold Story: Declassified (2019); Contested Lands: India, China and the Boundary Dispute (2021).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said

Maroof Raza made a rich contribution to the world of journalism. He enriched public discourse with his nuanced

understanding of defense, national security as well as strategic affairs. Pained by his passing,

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# DIGITAL FORTRESSES OR SILENT EXTRACTION?

DAVE  
MAKKAR



India's Data Center Boom Raises Hard Questions on Sovereignty, Resources, and Who Really Profits



## "Zero tax till 2047."

The phrase sounds visionary - almost patriotic. It suggests foresight, confidence, and a bold leap toward a digital future. We are told that India is positioning itself as the global nerve center of data storage, artificial intelligence infrastructure, and cloud dominance.

The slogan is simple: Data is the new oil.

But there is a crucial second half to that sentence - often left unsaid.

Whoever controls the oil controls power.

And whoever controls the data controls the future.

India stands today at the epicenter of a historic technological transformation. Massive data centers are rising across Navi Mumbai, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and other industrial corridors. Government incentives, including extended tax holidays on certain services, have attracted global giants such as Amazon, Google, and Microsoft. Large domestic infrastructure players, including the Adani Group (through Adani Connex), are rapidly building capacity to match anticipated digital demand.

We are told this is development.

But development - if it is to deserve the name - must answer deeper questions beyond concrete, servers, and ribbon-cuttings.

### The Questions That Matter

The debate is not whether India should host data centers. Of course it should. Digital infrastructure is critical for economic competitiveness.

### The real questions are:

Who are these centers fundamentally designed to serve?

On whose land are they built?

Using whose electricity?

Drawing whose water?

Storing whose data?

And ultimately - generating profit for whom?

These are not anti-growth questions. They are responsible governance

questions.

"If resources are Indian, risks are public, but profits are global - can we call it true development?"

### DATA CENTERS: THE FORTRESSES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

These are not ordinary buildings.

Every Aadhaar authentication, every UPI payment, every online purchase, every Google search, every WhatsApp message - flows through the servers housed in these facilities.

**Data is not passive storage.**

It is behavioral intelligence.

It is economic mapping.

It is political insight.

It is predictive modeling.

In earlier centuries, power rested on territory and trade routes. Today, it rests increasingly on information flows.

Even if data is stored physically within Indian borders, the question of ownership and technological control remains critical. Localization alone does not equal sovereignty. Infrastructure ownership structures, software control layers, and backend operational oversight determine who truly commands the architecture of influence.

**History teaches us a difficult lesson.**

Corporations once came for spices and textiles.

Today, they come for data.

Earlier, extraction was visible.

Now, it is embedded in policy frameworks.

### THE WATER QUESTION: A RESOURCE REALITY CHECK

Perhaps the most uncomfortable aspect of this rapid expansion is rarely discussed in public forums.

A medium-sized data center can consume approximately 1 million liters of water per day for cooling systems.

Large facilities can use millions of gallons daily - equivalent to the daily needs of tens of thousands of citizens.

Meanwhile:

Bengaluru frequently faces water rationing.

Chennai has endured extreme water crises.

Hyderabad experiences seasonal water stress.

Farmers across multiple states struggle for irrigation.

Water is not an infinite resource in India.

When corporate infrastructure is guaranteed continuous supply in water-stressed regions, legitimate policy questions arise about prioritization.

Development must not mean transferring scarce public resources to private gain without transparent long-term justification.

### DATA CENTERS: THE NUMBERS BEHIND THE SERVERS

#### Estimated Water Usage

Medium facility: ~1 million liters/day

Large facility: Up to 5 million gallons/day



Essential Infrastructure—For Whom?

Equivalent household support: 10,000-50,000 people

#### Energy Demand

Large facilities can consume as much electricity as small towns

Require stable, uninterrupted power supply

#### Land Acquisition

Projects often span hundreds of acres  
Located near industrial corridors and coastal regions

#### Tax Incentives

Extended exemptions on selected services

Long-term fiscal concessions to boost sector growth

#### Why It Matters

Resource allocation in water-stressed states

Sovereignty over data infrastructure  
Long-term public revenue considerations

Environmental sustainability accountability

**We hear of renewable energy transitions, carbon neutrality targets, efficient cooling technologies.**

But transparency remains limited. Public environmental audits are not easily accessible. Community-level engagement is minimal. Independent oversight data is sparse.

If these projects are genuinely sustainable, then full disclosure should strengthen their credibility - not weaken it.

Development strengthened by transparency creates trust. Development shielded by opacity creates suspicion.

The 2026 Policy Incentive: Strategic Vision or Structural Imbalance?

Tax exemptions extending as far as 2047 are not small gestures.

While India must remain competitive in attracting investment, extended fiscal concessions must be balanced against public revenue needs.

#### At a time when:

Small businesses face heavy compliance burdens,

Infrastructure sectors seek subsidy reform,

States struggle with fiscal pressures, granting prolonged relief to multinational digital corporations demands careful public evaluation.

No nation thrives by ignoring opportunity. But no democracy thrives by avoiding scrutiny.

**Growth - Yes. Blind Alignment - No.**

This is not an argument against foreign investment.

This is not an argument against digital growth.

This is not nostalgia for a pre-technology India.

India must lead in AI.

India must host cloud infrastructure.

India must secure its digital backbone.

But ambition must travel with accountability.

**If:**

Resources are domestic,  
Environmental burden is local,  
Cyber risks are national,  
Public incentives are generous,  
then oversight must be equally robust.  
"Corporations maximize return. Nations must maximize public good."

#### The Core Concern

There is a line separating partnership from dependency.

There is a difference between investment and influence.

There is a distinction between hosting infrastructure and surrendering leverage.

India's digital future should be bold - but sovereign.

The age of servers must not become the age of silent extraction.

Because in the digital century, extraction is no longer visible cargo leaving ports. It is invisible value flowing through fiber-optic cables.

#### Final Reflection

Nations are strengthened - not weakened - by asking difficult questions.

Confident democracies invite scrutiny.

Visionary leadership welcomes transparency.

Enduring development ensures fairness.

If India structures its digital expansion wisely, data centers can become pillars of technological leadership and economic prosperity.

But if policy tilts excessively toward concentrated corporate benefit without sustained public oversight, we risk repeating historical patterns - in modern form.

History does not repeat itself identically.

It evolves.

**Once, extraction arrived by ship.**

**Now, it arrives by server.**

The responsibility lies not in rejecting progress, but in shaping it.

Because when land, water, electricity and policy converge around one sector, the guiding compass must remain national interest.

And in a democracy, asking questions is not obstruction. It is duty.

(Dave Makkar is a social activist. He can be reached at [davemakkar@yahoo.com](mailto:davemakkar@yahoo.com))

# The new world disorder, from rules to might

As the rules-based order erodes, raw power is beginning to reshape the global system

SHASHI  
THAROOR



A world that once imagined it had buried the demons of the 1930s now finds them prowling again - less dramatic, perhaps, but no less corrosive. The post-war order, born in San Francisco in 1945, was built on the conviction that law could restrain power, that institutions could discipline states, and that sovereignty was not a privilege granted by the strong but a right inherent in all nations. The speech by United States President Harry S. Truman at the founding of the United Nations (UN) radiated that belief. He spoke as a man who had seen the abyss and was determined that humanity would not return to it. The UN, he insisted, would be the instrument through which nations "settle their differences peacefully", a bulwark against the old world of spheres of influence and predatory might.

His words, on June 26, 1945, might sound startling to many of his successors. "We all have to recognize - no matter how great our strength," he declaimed, "that we must deny ourselves the license to do always as we please. No one nation ... can or should expect any special privilege which harms any other nation ... Unless we are all willing to pay that price, no organization for world peace can accomplish its purpose. And what a reasonable price that is!"

## THE PREVAILING ATMOSPHERE

Contrast that with the contemporary mood, where the language of international law increasingly sounds like a polite fiction. Analysts often perceive U.S. President Donald Trump's foreign policy posture as one that treats international rules much as Italian drivers treat red traffic lights, less as binding commitments and more as optional tools - useful when they serve your interests, dispensable when they do not. It is not that the U.S. invented unilateralism; great powers have always been prone to exceptionalism, double-standards and bending rules just short of breaking them. But the open embrace of a "might is right" sensibility marks a shift from hypocrisy (which at least paid tribute to norms even while betraying them) to indifference (which does not give a damn about norms). When a major power signals that sovereignty is negotiable, others take note.

If Washington can disregard Venezuela's sovereignty with minimal consequence, what stops Beijing from concluding that Taiwan's status is similarly malleable? Or Moscow from treating Ukraine as a historical correction rather than a sovereign state? Or even New Delhi from deciding that a smaller neighbor's objections are an inconvenience rather than a constraint? The question ceases to be whether international law prohibits aggression but whether the target is powerful enough to raise the costs of it. For decades, the fear of a third world war acted as a grim stabilizer; the horror of total conflict kept lesser conflicts in check. But if the guardrails weaken, the world risks not one great conflagration but a proliferation of smaller, grinding wars - each too limited to trigger global

alarm, yet collectively capable of eroding the foundations of peace.

## AN UNRAVELLING OF MULTILATERALISM

This erosion is compounded by the retreat from multilateralism. The Trump administration's declared withdrawal from dozens of international organizations and agreements - ranging from UNESCO to WHO to environmental and arms-control frameworks - signals a deeper skepticism about the very idea of shared governance. The problem is that the 21st century's most urgent challenges are precisely those that no nation can solve alone. Pandemics, climate change, cyber threats, financial contagion - these are "problems without passports" (in Kofi Annan's phrase), indifferent to borders

lies in the paradox of power itself. Those entrusted with maintaining global order also possess the greatest capacity to disrupt it. World order rested on their willingness not to do so; this willingness has faded in many cases. The institutions established after the Second World War were noble in conception but unequal in design. They reflected the hierarchies of power prevailing at the time of their creation. Authority was concentrated in the hands of a few, while responsibility was shared by all. This imbalance has consequences. When powerful states act as both guardians and exceptions to the rules, the legitimacy of the system suffers.

What makes this moment especially fraught is that the rule-based liberal international order was never a

## THE DANGER TODAY

And yet, the order is not dead. It limps, it strains, it disappoints - but it persists. International courts still adjudicate disputes. Peacekeepers still deploy. Trade flows still depend on predictable rules. Middle powers, from Europe to India to South Africa to Canada to Brazil, still invest in multilateralism because they know that without it, they are at the mercy of ruthlessly self-interested hegemony. They accept Dag Hammarskjöld's famous dictum that "the United Nations was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell". Sometimes the best the world order can do is to prevent things from getting worse.

And yet the question is not whether the old order survives intact; it has already



The 21st century's most urgent challenges are precisely those that no nation can solve alone'. -Photo Credit: AFP

and immune to unilateral solutions. When the world's most powerful state steps back from collective action, the vacuum does not remain empty. Others - most notably China - step in, shaping institutions, norms and standards in ways that reflect their own preferences. The result is not simply a shift in influence but a fragmentation of global governance itself.

We inhabit a world that has become profoundly fluid. It is increasingly difficult for any nation, not only India, to say with certainty where it stands in a shifting geopolitical order. Old certainties have frayed, alliances blur and ambiguity has become the defining condition of our time. History, that indefatigable saboteur of good intentions, continues to complicate the present. Grievances are inherited more reliably than wisdom. Old wars cast long shadows and unresolved injustices continue to poison relations between states. Leaders are asked to negotiate peace while being reminded never to forget past wounds.

Perhaps the most profound obstacle

monolith; it was a patchwork of norms, institutions and habits of cooperation. Its ingredients included sovereign equality, non-aggression, collective security, open trade, human rights and multilateral problem-solving. Each of these has been violated repeatedly - by great powers and smaller states alike. Yet, the order endured because enough states believed that the alternative was worse. Today, that belief is wavering. Sovereignty is breached with increasing brazenness. Non-aggression is honored in the breach. Collective security is paralyzed by vetoes. Trade is weaponized. Human rights are dismissed as ideological. Multilateral institutions are starved of legitimacy and resources.

Institutions may possess statutes and mandates, yet, without political will, their authority remains largely aspirational. When powerful states ignore international law or apply it selectively, institutions lose credibility. Peace cannot be enforced by rules alone. It requires good faith, and good faith is increasingly in short supply.

been hollowed out, its norms and institutions subverted. The question is what replaces it: a Sino-centric architecture, a world of competing blocs, a patchwork of issue-based coalitions, or a return to unmediated anarchy?

We are living in an interregnum - the old world fading, the new one unformed. The danger is not that the system collapses overnight, but that it decays slowly, leaving a vacuum filled by opportunism and coercion. The promise of 1945 was that law could tame power. The peril of today is that power may once again tame law. The task for this generation is not to resurrect the past but to prevent the future from sliding into a world where the only real rule is that there are no rules at all.

(A Politician and author, Shashi Tharoor is the fourth-term Member of Parliament (Congress) for Thiruvananthapuram (Lok Sabha), a former Minister of State for External Affairs and the award-winning author of 28 books, including Pax Indica. He currently chairs the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs.)

# THE PIVOT TO THE HARD RIGHT

The world is at the mercy of a few technocrats and authoritarian rulers

GURBACHAN  
JAGAT



Controlled fire was perhaps one of the most defining moments in human evolution as the ability to cook food gave humans the massive surge in calories required to fuel a much larger and more complex brain (the human brain consumes about 25% of the body's energy). It is postulated that fire allowed humans to bypass the metabolic limits which keeps the brains of other primates small. Richard Wrangham, professor of biological anthropology at Harvard University, brought this up in what is referred to as the 'cooking hypothesis'.

In other words, the ancestor who

explorers of the Middle Ages made phenomenal progress, the quantum jump was provided by the Industrial Revolution, which saw a tidal wave of human ingenuity and invention. It also gave rise to democratic movements across Europe. Literature blossomed alongside science.

The products of the Industrial Revolution were still very much under mankind's control due to the development of democratic governance and institutions. These were liberal in nature until the German, Spanish and Italian states gave birth to dictatorships which emasculated the democratic

Today, as humanity develops artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computers, and as the two come together, they bring the strong possibility of a 'sentient' AI. Theoretically, it's AI which is self-aware and capable of taking independent decisions. Are we once again at an inflection point...is humanity about to develop the next 'controlled fire'? The challenge for the evolution of humanity along with technological evolution has always been in its ability to 'control' the fire it creates, for it brings havoc if not controlled. The Chernobyl nuclear disaster is a case in point, so are the questionable bombings

the hard right is happening; it can be observed in the MAGA (Make America Great Again) movement and in similar political activism in Europe, Asia, South America, etc. Our great technological advancement is coming at a time when liberalism in politics and government is giving way to the hard right. Liberal democracies and liberal economies are giving way to authoritarianism in politics and economics...the world order is reverting to the nation state.

Moreover, the 'nation state' is going in for a far more rigid form of government that is authoritarian. The effort is to maintain the facade of democratic elections and hollow the system from the inside. The Trojan horse of authoritarianism and protectionism has come through the gateway of elected governments. Plato critiqued democracy and saw it gradually decaying into a tyranny as power shifted to demagogues who were adept at manipulating the masses - there is much truth in this if we neglect our institutions and bring down the checks and balances of power. The centrist, liberal ideology has been pushed back by the tidal wave of a dogmatic right.

Coupled with these developments is the urgent, almost immediate rearmament and the rise of the defense budgets of most countries of Europe, Asia, etc. This requires a shift from developmental economics to the rearmament of the developing and the developed world. The benefits of this go to the vast military-industrial complex. Today, budgets are being tailored for rearmament, the nuclear treaties being made null and void and nuclear arsenals being replenished... all this points to a disaster in the making. It has already started with wars erupting in various locations across the world.

Add to this the emergence of AI and you have a world at the mercy of a few technocrats and authoritarian rulers. Institutions such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Disarmament Commission and other organizations under the United Nations (UN) helped create a systemic check on the development and use of nuclear energy.

However, AI is a developing technology which is moving at a very rapid pace and is capable of bringing far-reaching changes and disruptions; it is currently without any systemic controls. The immediate need is for countries to get together to face this onslaught of AI and introduce a system of checks and balances which, if not done, can lead to a situation where AI can become an 'uncontrolled fire'.

(Gurbachan Jagat is a former Governor, Manipur & DGP, Jammu & Kashmir)



Worrisome : US President Donald Trump with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The centrist, liberal ideology has been pushed back by the tidal wave of a dogmatic right. -Photo credit / PTI

developed the ability to build a 'controlled fire' was the inventor/scientist not only of his time but for all times. The opening line of the Rig Veda is, "Agnimile purohitam yajnasya devamrtvijam, hotaram ratnadhatamam" (Agni I adore, who stands before the Lord, the god who sees Truth, the warrior, strong disposer of delight). It is an invocation to Agni (the fire god), praising him as a mediator between humanity and divine energy. From the controlled fire and the cooking of food, human ingenuity made progress in discoveries and inventions.

Although the great scientists and

institutions of these nations. However, through the First and Second World Wars, the democracies - with the overwhelming support of the people - prevailed.

This period also saw the next quantum jump - atomic energy that was unleashed on a world holding its breath. Fortunately, the world came together and set up institutions to keep this energy under control. Treaties were signed and honored by nuclear powers. So far, we have succeeded and used it mainly in a positive way. This has been made possible because of our democracies, liberal governments and institutions.

of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Similarly, many questions remain unanswered about the Covid-19 pandemic. I could go on about the misuse of technology, how humanity twists technological advancements developed for its benefit into weapons of mass destruction or control. For as we develop this advanced technology, we must keep in mind what Carl Sagan described as 'technological adolescence' characterized by humanity possessing tremendous world-altering power without the necessary wisdom or foresight to manage it safely.

Today, it must be noted that the pivot to

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# Embassy of India Hosts a Hybrid B2B Meeting on Exports of Agricultural & Food items from India to Romania



The Banner for B2B on Agri-Food event

**FEBRUARY 21, 2026  
BUCHAREST (TIP)**

The Embassy of India in Bucharest organized a Hybrid Business-to-Business (B2B) Meeting on the Agriculture & Food sector today at its premises, aligning with the recent EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signing. This event advanced SME collaborations in food processing and bolstered Indian exports of high-value items such as spices and processed foods to Romania and the wider European market.

Held in close coordination with Mr. Amit Sawhney, CII Europe Council Member, MD of Nippon Global SL, and CEO, the meeting underscored the Embassy's proactive role in promoting bilateral trade and investment in high-potential sectors. The meeting opened with remarks by H.E. Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Ambassador of India to Romania, followed by addresses from Mr. Amit Sawhney and NAFED representatives. The Ambassador emphasized India's pivotal role in global food and agricultural supply chains, its robust manufacturing ecosystem delivering high-quality, cost-competitive products compliant with international standards, and supportive policy frameworks. He urged Romanian partners to pursue sourcing, co-development, and R&D collaborations. Mr. Deepak Agarwal, IAS, Managing Director, and Shri Kanse Dhairyashil Vijay, Joint Managing Director of the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED), briefed



Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Ambassador of India to Romania and Moldova giving his special remarks

participants on NAFED's extensive operational network and capabilities. They extended invitations to Romanian businesses for partnerships in India.

The event drew established and emerging companies, alongside public and private sector representatives, signaling robust mutual interest. Indian firms highlighted their advanced manufacturing, diverse portfolios, and global footprint, voicing keenness to ramp up exports to Romania and Europe. Romanian counterparts recognized India's emergence as a reliable manufacturing hub, showing enthusiasm for sourcing, technology tie-ups, and joint ventures in food processing, agricultural equipment, and related areas.



Mr. Amit Sawhney, CII Europe Council Member, MD, Nippon Global SL and CEO giving his remarks

The hybrid format broadened reach, with over 50 Romanian companies attending in person and about 20 Indian firms joining virtually from across India. Real-time discussions covered regulatory hurdles, certifications, logistics, and European market entry, complemented by Indian presentations on product ranges, quality



Remarks from the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED)

standards, and export expertise. Interactive sessions spotlighted Romanian interest in agriculture, food processing, machinery, and innovative solutions. These led to fruitful one-on-one meetings, yielding leads like product trials, initial agreements, and sample shipments.



Ambassador of India Dr. Mohapatra with the participants

The Embassy reaffirmed its commitment to fostering India-Romania economic ties and enabling follow-up engagements. The event ended with a vote of thanks, celebrating stakeholder participation. It laid a strong foundation for new connections, with planned virtual meetings and delegations to translate discussions into tangible outcomes.

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

# Hillary Clinton quizzed on Epstein, calls for Trump to testify

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

Hillary Clinton used her appearance on Thursday (February 26, 2026) before a Republican-led panel probing Jeffrey Epstein to go on the offensive and demand U.S. President Donald Trump testify about his own links to the sex offender.

Ms. Clinton told the congressional committee she had no information about Epstein's crimes, never recalled encountering him, and had never visited his island or flown on his plane, accusing the panel of trying to "protect one public official" - Trump.

James Comer, who chairs the committee that will also grill former president Bill Clinton on Friday (February 27), said "the purpose of the whole investigation is to try to understand many things about Epstein" -- the deceased convicted sex offender.

Clinton challenged the panel, saying, "If this committee is serious about learning the truth about Epstein's trafficking crimes...it would ask (Trump) directly under oath about the tens of thousands of times he shows up in the Epstein files."

The top Democrat on the committee, Robert Garcia, also called on Mr. Trump to testify "to answer the questions that are being asked across this country from survivors."

"That should happen immediately," he said later.

Democratic committee member Suhas Subramanyam said that "missing FBI files" omitted from the Epstein documents disclosures contain "serious accusations around sexual abuse" against Mr. Trump.

The Republican-led House Oversight Committee is probing those who were linked to Epstein, who died in a New York jail cell in 2019 while awaiting trial.

The Clintons had initially rejected subpoenas ordering them to testify in the panel's probe, but the Democratic power couple agreed to do so after House Republicans threatened to hold them in contempt of Congress.

Hillary Clinton said in her opening statement to the panel that it "justified its subpoena to me based on its assumption that I have information regarding the investigations into the criminal activities of Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell."

"Let me be as clear as I can. I do not."

The hearing was dramatically paused for a brief time after a photo of Clinton in the deposition was posted online - an apparent breach of the closed-door arrangement.

"What is not acceptable is oversight Republicans breaking their own committee rules... by releasing photos," Subramanyam said.

Democrats say the investigation is being weaponized to attack political opponents of Trump rather than to conduct legitimate oversight.

Mr. Trump and Bill Clinton, both 79, feature prominently in the recently released trove of government documents related to Epstein, but said they broke any ties with the financier before his 2008 conviction in Florida as a sex offender.

Mere mention in the files is not proof of having committed a crime.



Ms. Clinton told the congressional committee she had no information about Epstein's crimes, never recalled encountering him, and had never visited his island or flown on his plane, accusing the panel of trying to "protect one public official" - Mr. Trump.

The Clintons called for their depositions to be public but the committee insisted on questioning them behind closed doors, a move Bill Clinton denounced as akin to a "kangaroo court."

The depositions are being held in Chappaqua, New York, where the Clintons reside.

The release of the Epstein case files has had repercussions around the globe, including the arrests in Britain of former prince Andrew and Peter Mandelson, the ex-ambassador to the United States.

## Former Trump Appointee Opposes Israel First & AIPAC supported Candidates

**FEBRUARY 27, 2026  
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)**

Former Trump appointee Carrie Prejean Boller is drawing renewed attention after publicly stating that she intends to oppose any politician she believes is "Israel first" or funded by AIPAC. In a recent conversation, she called on others to adopt a similar stance, using forceful language to criticize what she described as "Zionist supremacists" in public office.



Former Trump appointee Carrie Prejean Boller

Prejean Boller argued that elected officials should prioritize American national interests above all foreign policy alliances. Framing her position within an "America First" perspective, she suggested that voters should more closely examine campaign funding sources and foreign policy positions when evaluating candidates.

During the same discussion, she voiced support for Rep. Thomas Massie, who has at times taken independent positions within the Republican Party, and said she "really likes" James Fishback in Florida - signaling backing for figures she believes align more closely with her policy priorities.

Carrie Prejean Boller was appointed to the Religious Liberty Commission during the Trump administration but was later removed from the role. Reports surrounding her departure cited controversy over her anti-Zionist views and public statements, which generated significant backlash.

Her recent remarks come amid ongoing national debates over U.S.-Israel relations, lobbying influence in Washington, the role of advocacy organizations like AIPAC, and broader questions about foreign policy direction. Supporters frame such criticism as a call for sovereignty-focused policymaking, while critics argue that some rhetoric risks inflaming tensions or crossing into harmful territory.

As discussions over foreign alliances, campaign financing, and ideological divisions continue, statements like these reflect the increasingly sharp lines shaping American political discourse.

## Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman, Governor Wes Moore to Announce Public Launch of Expanded Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign



All-of-government approach driving campaign shows early signs of success

Governor Wes Moore,  
Comptroller Brooke E.  
Lierman

-File photo

**FEBRUARY 26, 2026  
ANNAPOLIS, MD. (TIP)**

Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman and Governor Wes Moore, along with representatives from partner agencies and key nonprofit partner organizations, will host an event to highlight the early impact of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Campaign and outline the next phase of expanded statewide outreach.

The Earned It Campaign is Maryland's all-of-government initiative to expand awareness and access to the state EITC, one of Maryland's most powerful anti-poverty fighting tools. First launched in 2025, this year, the campaign is expanding significantly; mobilizing 13 state agencies and partners across the state to ensure that eligible residents are aware of the credit and know how to claim it. Since the start of this tax season, the campaign has already reached thousands of working families across Maryland and is now ramping up efforts to deepen community partnerships and expand visibility ahead of key tax deadlines.

The first public launch will celebrate early successes and detail how the campaign is scaling its impact, strengthening coordination across agencies, expanding grassroots outreach, and ensuring that every eligible Marylander has the opportunity to claim the tax credits they have earned.

The Event showcasing the progress of the Earned It Campaign, detailing success to date, and outlining next steps for expanding EITC access will be held on Monday, March 2 at 12.30 PM at Comptroller of Maryland Greenbelt Branch Office, 6401 Golden Triangle Drive, Suite 100, Greenbelt, MD 20770

Governor Wes Moore, Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman, Deputy Secretary Eric Morissette, Governor's Office of Children, Robin McKinney, CEO, CASH Campaign of Maryland, Pablo Blank, We Are Casa!, Representatives from New America, Representatives from the Maryland Society of Accounting and Tax Professionals will attend.

# Mamdani meets Trump in White House for the second time, pitches housing plans with mock newspaper

Ellie Aghayeva, a Columbia University student from Azerbaijan who was arrested by ICE agents earlier in the day, was released after the New York Mayor raised her detention with President Trump

**FEBRUARY 27, 2026**  
**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)**

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani presented U.S. President Donald Trump with a mock newspaper front page during a visit to the White House on Thursday (February 26, 2026) to discuss massive new housing investments in the city.

It's a tactic designed to appeal to Mr. Trump, who is keenly aware of his media coverage and, aside from being an avid viewer of cable news, is known to voraciously consume coverage in the local New York City publications. The Republican president and Democratic mayor have maintained a cordial relationship since their first meeting last fall.

Anna Bahr, Mamdani's communications director, said the mayor's team created a mock front page and headlines for Trump to look at and demonstrate what kind of reaction new federal housing investments could bring. The mock New York Daily News front page says, "Trump to City: Let's Build" - a riff on the famous 1975 cover that read "Ford to City: Drop Dead," referring to Gerald Ford's vow to veto financial assistance to the city.

The mayor posted the photo of their meeting, featuring the front pages, to his social media page.

Ms. Bahr said Mr. Trump was "very enthusiastic" about Mr. Mamdani's proposal, which would allow 12,000 new



New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani with U.S. President Donald Trump in the Oval Office of The White House, in Washington D.C., on February 26, 2026. Source: X/@NYCMayor

affordable homes to be built at Sunnyside Yard in Queens by securing more than \$21 billion in federal grants to build a deck over the rail yard site. The mayor's office estimates that the project could create 30,000 jobs and would be the biggest housing and infrastructure investment in more than 50 years.

When Mr. Trump and Mr. Mamdani last met in November, the president encouraged Mr. Mamdani to return to him with an idea to build big things together in New York City, Ms. Bahr said.

Though Mr. Trump repeatedly maligned Mr. Mamdani as a "communist" as he ran for New York City

mayor, the president appeared charmed by him after their one-on-one meeting at the White House in November.

## ELLIE AGHAYEVA'S ICE DETENTION

At the meeting on Thursday - which was previously unannounced and lasted for about an hour - Mr. Mamdani also brought up the detention of Ellie Aghayeva, a Columbia University student from Azerbaijan who was arrested earlier on Thursday by federal immigration agents.

The agents had accessed a campus residence by claiming they were searching for a "missing person,"

according to Ms. Aghayeva's attorneys and Columbia's president. As he met with Mr. Trump, Mr. Mamdani urged Mr. Trump to consider releasing her.

In a phone call not long after their White House meeting, Mr. Trump told the mayor that Ms. Aghayeva would be released.

Ms. Aghayeva later confirmed her release in a post on Instagram. "I just got out a little while ago. I am safe and okay," she wrote.

Mr. Mamdani also gave White House chief of staff Susie Wiles a list of four other students targeted by federal authorities and asked for the administration's help with them.

The four students are Mahmoud Khalil, Yunseo Chung, Mohsen Mahdawi and Leqaa Kordia, who were all detained for their roles in pro-Palestinian protests. Of the four, only Ms. Kordia remains in custody, although all cases are proceeding through the courts.

"Mayor Mamdani is absolutely right to call on President Trump to release Leqaa Kordia, the beloved daughter of an American citizen," Hamzah Abushaban, Kordia's cousin, said in a statement.

"For nearly a year, my cousin Leqaa has been locked away in ICE detention, robbed of precious birthdays, holidays, and irreplaceable moments with her family. She has endured fear, isolation, and even suffered a seizure while trapped behind those walls. This is not justice. This is not humanity."

# Piyush Goyal meets Howard Lutnick, says held fruitful discussions to expand trade partnership

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

Days after India and the US rescheduled the meeting of their chief negotiators for the trade deal, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal today, February 27, met with his US counterpart Howard Lutnick in New Delhi.

Goyal, without divulging much about the meeting, posted on X saying "hosted US Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick and Sergio Gor. Engaged in very fruitful discussions to expand our trade and economic partnership".

Gor, the US Ambassador to India, also posted a picture of the three together. The mention of 'trade' and 'economic partnership' gave an indication that the proposed trade deal was the focal point of discussion.

Gor in his post on X said: "So many areas of cooperation for our two nations. A highly productive lunch with Howard Lutnick and Piyush Goyal".

The timing of Lutnick's visit is crucial. Not too long ago, he famously claimed in a podcast that the trade deal with India could not materialize last year because Prime Minister Narendra Modi refused to directly call Trump.

The Indian and US teams were to meet in the US on February 23; however, the meeting was postponed. The three-day



Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, center, with US Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick, left, and US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor during a meeting.

Photo : PTI

meeting was to finalize the legal text for the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement between the two sides.

The meeting was rescheduled just days after the US Supreme Court ruled against the tariffs imposed by President Donald

saying imposing tariffs was the call of the US Congress.

India, however, indicated that it would not withdraw from the proposed trade deal but would wait and watch. Lutnick's quiet visit comes against this backdrop.

Official sources said on Sunday the meeting of trade representatives was rescheduled as 'time was needed' to study the implications of the court judgement in the US. "Time was needed to evaluate latest developments and their implications," a source had said on Sunday.

Trump got infuriated and on Wednesday warned India and other countries against 'playing games' and walking back on trade commitments.

The Supreme Court ruling prompted several countries that struck trade deals with the US to reassess their positions. From India's perspective, the court order effectively reopened negotiating space to secure more favorable terms.

Meanwhile, the lead opposition party, the Congress, has been urging the Modi-led government "not to sign the interim trade deal with the United States".

After the Supreme Court order, Trump last week imposed a 10 per cent tariffs on all countries, including India, from February 24 for 150 days. On Saturday, he announced a duty hike of up to 15 per cent.

Before the Supreme Court order, Trump had cut India's tariffs to 18 per cent from the crippling 25 per cent. Crucially, he did away with the additional 25 per cent tariff that was slapped on India for purchasing Russian oil. (Source: PTI)

## Is Indian interference in Canada over? Debate erupts on the eve of Mark Carney's departure to India



K. spies handed over intel to Canada on Nijjar killing: report

**FEBRUARY 27, 2026**  
**TORONTO (TIP)**

Bonhomie generated by exchange of visits by top officials apart, an unsavory controversy has erupted in Canada over the comments of a senior federal official who briefed media on the eve of the departure of Mark Carney on his first official visit to India that "the Canadian government believes that Indian foreign interference in Canada was over".

And much before Mark Carney and his strong entourage could land in India, the Canadian Minister of Public Safety Gary Anandasangaree just stopped just short of contradicting the senior federal official as he commented that "there's still a lot of work to do on the India security file". His comments within 24 hours of the senior

government official's briefing have generated an animated debate in political circles here.

"There are certainly issues around safety and security of Canadians that we continue to engage in," Anandasangaree said after an event near Parliament Hill on Thursday, February 26 morning.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity said repeatedly that it's the government's belief India has changed its ways. "I think we could say we're confident that that activity is not continuing," the official said. "If we believed that the government of India was actively interfering in the Canadian democratic process, we probably would not be taking this trip."

Minister of Public Safety, whose portfolio includes both the RCMP and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), stopped just short of disagreeing with that characterization

"What I'm suggesting is that there's still a lot more work to do, and we will do that work," he said.

Gary Anandasangaree's reaction to the official's comments has left many questions unanswered. Many held that it was difficult to swallow the official's comments as they marked a stark departure from Canada's position from about a year-and-a-half ago when the Trudeau government expelled six Indian diplomats after the RCMP had deemed them "persons of interest."

A look at the turn of events since the fall of 2024 when RCMP Commissioner Mike Duheme said the Mounties had strong evidence showing the "highest levels" of the

Indian government were involved in orchestrating a campaign of violence and intimidation on Canadian soil. A year earlier, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced Canada had evidence linking Indian agents to the killing of Canadian Sikh separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar. The Indian government, however, remained in a denial mode.

Since the political and diplomatic spats over Hardeep Singh Nijjar case, the National Security Advisers of both India and Canada, have met several times, including a recent (February 7 and 8) visit of the Indian NSA Ajit Doval to Canada.

And the January 2025 report from the foreign interference inquiry called India the "second-most active country engaging in electoral foreign interference in Canada" after China, raising skepticism that India's foreign interference days were behind them.

"We have certainly had irritations over the number of years, and they will be addressed through our channels relating to security," Anandasangaree said in his media interaction. "Matters that are before the courts will continue to be litigated through the courts and resolution will be addressed through the court and not through political means." The federal public safety minister said there are two tracks for dealing with India. "One is to ensure that we have an economic engagement that the prime minister is leading. But we will also have, at times, difficult conversation around safety and security of Canadians," he said.

Prime Minister Mark Carney, however, has been maintaining that while the law

enforcement agencies and rule of the law will prevail to punish the guilty, the business and trade relations with India, one of the fastest growing economies, cannot be put on a hold.

Consequent to this change in approach towards India, he invited his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, to attend the G20 summit in Alberta last year. That was the beginning of softening of attitudes. Bitterness started paving way for cordiality as exchange of federal ministers, beginning with the Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Indira Anand visiting India in September last year. Her visit was followed by the Minister of International Trade Maninder Sidhu.

India's foreign minister S. Jaishankar also attended the G7 foreign ministers conclave in Niagara. Since then, regular exchange of visits between top officials of two nations has been continuing. The climax has reached with Mark Carney taking a strong delegation of his ministers, including Anita Indira Anand, Maninder Sidhu, besides Defense Minister David McGuinty and Finance Minister Philippe Champagne.

Also part of the entourage are Saskatchewan's Premier Thomas Water Scott and New Brunswick Premier Susan Holt. A group of journalists, including representatives of the ethnic media, are also accompanying Prime Minister Mark Carney's trip comes as his government works to normalize relations with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who leads one of the largest economies in the world.

PRABHJOT  
SINGH



## Solomon witnesses the signing of two alliances, MOUs, during his 3-day visit to India



Canada Deepens AI Partnership with India as Minister Evan Solomon Advances MOUs, Investment and Trilateral Cooperation

**FEBRUARY 20, 2026**  
**TORONTO (TIP)**

Artificial intelligence (AI) continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace. While Canada strengthens its capabilities at home, the government is also deepening partnerships with high-growth economies abroad to drive investment, scale innovation, and create jobs.

These are some of the highlights of the visit of the Canadian Minister of Artificial Intelligence, Evan Solomon, who not only attended the India AI Impact Summit but also witnessed two MOUs being signed between Canadian and Indian institutions.

"India is one of the world's fastest-growing digital economies, and this visit was about turning shared ambition into real opportunity. Canada is building practical partnerships that connect our AI talent, research strength, and innovation ecosystem with India's scale, market dynamism, and entrepreneurial energy. We

are focused on helping our businesses expand into each other's markets and strengthening two-way investment between our countries. By deepening collaboration between our companies, startups, and institutions, we are creating new pathways for growth and high-quality jobs in both Canada and India, while ensuring AI is developed and deployed in ways people can trust," commented Evan Solomon, Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, at the conclusion of his three-day visit to India.

Interestingly, India had extended an invitation to the Canadian Prime Minister, Mark Carney, to attend the India AI Impact Summit. He is expected to visit India in the coming weeks.

During his three-day stay in India, the Canadian minister witnessed the signing of two Memoranda of Understanding between the University of Waterloo and Tata Consultancy Services, as well as with upGrad. These signings reflect the broad trend toward deepening academic and commercial ties between the two countries, with 8 Canadian universities advancing 11 MOUs with Indian partners in the last few months. Together, these agreements are accelerating skills development, commercialization pathways, and business expansion between Canada and India.

Evan Solomon also attended the India AI

Impact Summit 2026. While in New Delhi, he held targeted meetings with senior Indian government officials and executives from major Indian and multinational technology companies to expand commercial collaboration in the areas of AI, digital infrastructure and advanced technologies.

The Canadian minister met Ashwini Vaishnav, India's minister for railways, information and broadcasting, and electronics and information technology, and Andrew Charlton, Australia's assistant minister for science, technology, and the digital economy. They reiterated their commitment to continuing trilateral collaboration on AI. This meeting follows the announcement of the Australia-Canada-India Technology and Innovation (ACITI) Partnership at the G20 in November 2025.

During the Summit, Evan Solomon held bilateral meetings with global political leaders and senior technology executives to advance cooperation on AI-driven economic growth, trusted deployment, and cross-border investment. He also participated in working sessions focused on AI safety, inclusion, and responsible governance, contributing to international discussions on how to ensure emerging technologies are developed and deployed in ways that earn public trust.

Evan Solomon, alongside Canadian High Commissioner Chris Cooter, also welcomed more than 150 leaders from India

and Canada to a reception at the Canadian High Commission, bringing together business leaders, investors, and policymakers to catalyze new business partnerships and deepen investment ties between the two countries' innovation ecosystems. In the minister's opening remarks, he reiterated Canada's intention to collaborate with LawZero, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing safe-by-design AI systems that was founded by Turing Award-winning AI pioneer Yoshua Bengio, who was present for the announcement.

On the final day of the Summit, the Minister addressed the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Council Meeting, further highlighting Canada's commitment to international collaboration on the responsible development and use of AI and reinforcing Canada's role as a partner of choice in shaping the economic architecture of the AI era.

Canada's competitive advantage in AI is clear-world-class talent, cutting-edge research, and a dynamic innovation ecosystem. This visit to India advanced concrete commercial relationships, strengthened strategic alliances, and opened new pathways for investment, technology collaboration, and shared economic growth between our two countries.

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

## Murmu flies sortie in LCH 'Prachand' near India-Pak border in Jaisalmer

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**JAIPUR (TIP):** President Droupadi Murmu on Friday, Feb 27, flew as a co-pilot in the Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) Prachand near the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer district. The helicopter took off from the Indian Air Force station in Jaisalmer, where the President was briefed by the crew before the sortie.

Wearing an olive-green flight suit and helmet, she was seen waving from the cockpit moments before take-off. The LCH Prachand is India's first indigenously designed and developed combat helicopter and has been built by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

Earlier in October last year, the President had taken a sortie in a Rafale aircraft at Air Force Station in Ambala (Haryana). Air Force Station, Ambala, is the first Air Force Station where Rafale aircrafts arrived from Dassault Aviation Facility, France.



FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** As nominations open for 37 Rajya Sabha seats across 10 states ahead of March 16 polls, the battle lines are clearly drawn. While the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is expected to secure the lion's share, the Indian National Congress is likely to win around five seats from four states, two in Telangana and one each from Haryana, Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh.

A senior Congress leader told India Today that the party has realised it lacks adequate "firepower" in the Rajya Sabha compared to the Lok Sabha, where strong orators have effectively held ground against the government while pushing the Opposition's narrative.

"Since our Rajya Sabha quota is limited, the party is considering sending strong speakers rather than going strictly by social representation formulas of SC, ST, OBCs, minorities and women," the leader said.

With the Congress' Assembly strength having diminished in several states, more than two dozen contenders are lobbying intensely for the few available berths.

### Telangana: High-Stakes Arithmetic

Telangana presents one of the most

# They fired gunshot, judiciary bleeding: SC bans NCERT book with chapter on corruption

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Terming the publication of a chapter on corruption in the judiciary in a Class VIII NCERT social science textbook a "deep-rooted, well-orchestrated conspiracy to malign the judiciary", the Supreme Court on Thursday, Feb 26, imposed a blanket ban on the controversial book and on the publication or circulation of its content.

Taking a firm view, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said those responsible "fired the gunshot and the judiciary is bleeding today". A Bench of CJI Kant, Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice Vipul M Pancholi ordered the seizure of all physical copies of the first edition social science textbook for Class VIII titled "Exploring Society: India and Beyond" (Vol-II), published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in February 2026. It also ordered the immediate takedown of its digital versions.

The Bench, however, clarified that the suo motu proceedings were not meant to stifle any legitimate critique or the right to scrutinise the judiciary. "We are of the firm conviction that rigorous discourse helps the living vitality of the



institution," the CJI said, lauding the role of mainstream media in highlighting the issue and playing a constructive role.

The Bench directed NCERT, in coordination with the Union and state education departments, to ensure that all copies of the book, hard or soft, currently in circulation and whether held in storage, retail outlets or educational institutions, be seized and removed from public access.

Rejecting an apology published by NCERT, the Bench issued contempt of court notices to the Secretary, School Education (Union Ministry of Education), and NCERT Director Dinesh Prasad Saklani, directing them to show cause why action under the Contempt of Courts Act or any other law should not be

initiated against them or those responsible for introducing the offending chapter.

"Given the serious consequences and an everlasting adverse impact on the independence of the judiciary... such misconduct will fall within the purview of criminal contempt. If proved to be a deliberate move, it will undoubtedly lead to interference with the administration of justice, besides scandalising the institution," it said.

The top court, which had on Wednesday taken suo motu cognisance of the matter, also sought the entire records related to the preparation and finalisation of the controversial chapter, along with the names of those involved. "We would like to have a deeper probe. It's my duty as the head of the institution to find out who is responsible; heads must roll," CJI Kant said.

Ordering them to file compliance reports on affidavit within two weeks, the Bench posted the matter for further hearing on March 11. "Any attempt to circumvent this order through electronic means or altered titles shall be seen as direct interference, wilful breach and defiance of the directions issued by the court," the Bench said.

## Rajya Sabha polls for 37 seats: Congress weighs firepower over formulas

intriguing contests.

For one Rajya Sabha berth, a party requires 40 MLAs. Congress currently has 66 MLAs, along with support from one Left MLA and seven AIMIM MLAs, taking its effective tally to 74, comfortably ensuring one seat.

However, the second berth could see a tight contest. The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has 36 MLAs, though 10 of them are reportedly out of touch with the party leadership, which offers some relief to Congress. The BJP holds eight MLAs. If BRS and AIMIM join hands, with possible BJP backing, Congress could face a challenge for the second seat.

Sources indicate senior advocate and Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi is likely to be renominated. There is also speculation around former Supreme Court judge Justice Sudarshan Reddy, who was earlier fielded by the INDIA bloc for the Vice-Presidential election.

### Chhattisgarh: Repeat or Refresh?

In Chhattisgarh, more than a dozen contenders are vying for the lone

Rajya Sabha seat as the tenure of Phulo Devi Netam comes to an end.

While one section within the Congress favours repeating Netam, others argue this is the moment to introduce a fresh face. Nearly 15-20 prominent local leaders are under discussion, including:

T. S. Singh Deo, Mohan Markam, Deepak Baij, Tamradhwaj Sahu, Rama Jeet Bhagat and some others.

The decision is expected to reflect the party's broader strategy of balancing experience with generational change.

### Haryana: A Crowded Field

In Haryana, Congress leaders are lining up for the sole Rajya Sabha seat under the party quota.

The long list of aspirants reportedly includes Raj Babbar, Pawan Khera, Supriya Shrinete, Rao Dan Singh, Ashok Tanwar, Rao Narender Singh, Dr Anil Jai Hind, Captain Ajay Yadav.

The competition reflects both the limited opportunity and the state unit's internal dynamics.

### Himachal: Veterans in Contention

In Himachal Pradesh, the Rajya Sabha contest has triggered intense lobbying.

Sources say Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu is backing veteran Congress leader Anand Sharma. Meanwhile, Pratibha Singh, wife of former Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh, is also a strong contender.

Senior leader Thakur Kaul Singh is being seen as a potential dark horse in what is shaping up to be a closely watched decision.

### Final Call: High Command to Decide

Ultimately, the decision rests with the Congress high command, Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and party president Mallikarjun Kharge. With nominations underway and internal consultations intensifying, the party is expected to finalise its candidates by the end of the week.

All eyes are now on the high command as the Congress attempts to optimise its limited numbers in the Rajya Sabha while strengthening its voice in Parliament's Upper House.

## ED grants prosecution sanction against Chidambaram in two cases

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has received prosecution sanction against senior Congress leader and former Union finance minister P Chidambaram in two separate money laundering cases related to the Aircel-Maxis and INX Media deals, the agency said on Thursday, Feb 26, adding it has submitted the sanction before a court to expedite the trial.

Both the Aircel-Maxis and INX Media deals took place during the Congress-led UPA regime, when Chidambaram was the finance minister. ED filed a charge sheet in the Aircel-Maxis case in 2018 and in the INX Media case in 2020, naming the senior Congress leader in both of them. The court took cognisance of the charge sheets in 2021.

The trial in both the cases was stayed by courts for lack of prosecution sanction under section 197 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) — now Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS).

Through a November 2024 ruling, the Supreme Court mandated ED to also take prior sanction under the provision for any court to take cognisance of the charge sheet. The provision was earlier only applicable to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). After multiple appeals were filed by accused persons, the ED said, it has been proactively seeking prosecution sanctions for public servants. Consequently, sanction for the prosecution of Chidambaram was sought in both cases. It was obtained from the competent authority on February 10, ED added.

The prosecution sanction order has been placed before the special court, Rouse Avenue by ED to expedite the trial in both the cases, the agency said.

In the Aircel-Maxis deal, Chidambaram was named as accused number 6 while in the INX Media probe, he was arraigned as accused no 1.

ED alleged that the former finance minister granted foreign investment promotion board (FIPB) approval to Aircel-Maxis in lieu of quid pro quo as foreign investor (Maxis) applied for its foreign direct investment (FDI) approval to the tune of \$800 million (Rs 3,565.91 crore). The competent authority for this approval was the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA).

## 'Productive discussion': Piyush Goyal after meeting US commerce secretary

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal met with US Commerce Secretary Howard W Lutnick in Delhi on today - their first since the India-US trade deal was agreed upon. US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor was also present during the meeting, which comes on the heels of the US Supreme Court's decision to invalidate President Donald Trump's "reciprocal tariffs".

Following the meeting, Goyal, in a post on social media platform X, said: "I hosted US Commerce Secretary @HowardLutnick and @USAmbIndia Sergio Gor. Very productive discussions were held on expanding the trade and economic partnership."

"Hosted US Secretary of Commerce @HowardLutnick & @USAmbIndia Sergio Gor. Engaged in very fruitful discussions to expand our trade and economic partnership."

Gor also posted a photo of the meeting. Its caption read: "Had a very productive lunch with Howard Lutnick and Piyush Goyal. There are many areas of cooperation for our two countries!"

The positive statements from India and the US clearly indicate that both countries are committed to advancing bilateral trade following this meeting.

The negotiators of the trade deal were scheduled to meet in Washington on Monday to finalise the legal agreements necessary to implement the India-US trade deal.

But following the US Supreme Court's decision, the visit of India's chief negotiator for the trade deal, Darpan Jain, was postponed due to the turmoil in the international trade world and growing uncertainty regarding tariff rates.

Sources in the Commerce Ministry said: "The two countries have decided that the proposed visit of India's chief negotiator and his team to the US will be rescheduled after assessing recent developments and their impact. The meeting will be rescheduled to a mutually convenient date."

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, after a key meeting



with the RBI Governor, said on Monday that it will be premature to comment on the impact on the Indian economy. The Commerce Ministry, she added, is reviewing the situation. The government is studying the developments on the US tariff and their implications, the Commerce Ministry had said on Saturday.

Earlier this week, the US Supreme Court had struck down President Donald Trump's global tariffs he unilaterally imposed under an emergency powers law, including the sweeping "reciprocal" tariffs. Under the court's decision, India faces a lower tariff rate of 10 per cent, down from 18 per cent.

Trump, though, has brushed off the court's 6-3 decision, saying there will be no change. "They will pay tariff, we will not," he had said.

## Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia discharged in Delhi liquor policy case

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** A Delhi court on Friday, Feb 27, acquitted former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, his then deputy Manish Sisodia and others, including K Kavitha, Bijay Nair and Durgesh Pathak, in the alleged excise policy scam.

The Rouse Avenue Court ruled that there was no evidence of criminal conspiracy or wrongdoing in the formulation of the excise policy. Special Judge (PC Act) Jitender Singh passed the order closing the case initiated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against all the accused.

"There was no overarching conspiracy or criminal intent in the excise policy," the judge said.

The case stemmed from a complaint by L-G VK Saxena in 2022 to the CBI and subsequently the probe agency had registered a First Information Report.

The probe agency had said that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and its leaders received kickbacks from liquor manufacturers due to manipulation of the policy. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) also later registered a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The Delhi government had implemented the new excise policy on November 17, 2021, but scrapped it at the end of September 2022 amid allegations of corruption.

The profit margin of wholesalers was increased from 5 per cent to 12 per cent under the new policy, the probe agencies alleged.

The new policy resulted in cartelisation and those ineligible for liquor licences were favoured for monetary benefits, the agencies alleged. However, Sisodia denied any wrongdoing and claimed the new policy would have led to an increase in the city government's



revenue. The court held that the excise policy case did not disclose any larger conspiracy or criminal intent.

It observed that the prosecution's case failed to withstand judicial scrutiny, noting that the CBI had attempted to build a conspiracy narrative based largely on conjecture.

On this basis, the court found that no prima facie case was established against any of the 23 accused.

The court also criticised the agency's reliance on approver statements, cautioning that such an approach undermines constitutional safeguards.

The judge remarked that granting pardon to an accused and then using that person's testimony to bridge investigative gaps or implicate additional persons was improper, adding that permitting such practices would amount to a serious violation of constitutional principles.

# India in history this Week

## FEBRUARY 27 TO MARCH 5

### 27 FEBRUARY



2002 59 people died due to fire in train Sabarmati Express in Godhra. Due to these deaths communal violence spread in Gujarat.

1931 Revolutionary and freedom fighter Chandrashekhar Azad shot himself in 1931 to avoid arrest in an encounter with the British police at Alfred Park, Allahabad.

2009 Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee handed over the succession of his Lok Sabha seat to senior party leader Lal G. Tandon.

### 28 FEBRUARY

1712 Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah I died.

1928 CV Raman invented the Raman effect for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize.

1936 Jawaharlal Nehru's wife Kamala Nehru died in Switzerland.



1943 Kolkata's Howrah bridge (Ravindra Setu) started.

163 The first President of India, Rajendra Prasad passed away.

### 29 FEBRUARY

1896 The Sixth Prime Minister of India, Morarji Desai was born on 29th February 1896 in Gujarat.



### 01 MARCH



1983 Mary Kom was born to make the country proud by winning medals in the Olympic and Commonwealth Games.

1928 In 1928, Indian scientist CV Raman ji presented his research on diffraction of light to the world.

2009 In 2009, President Pratibha Patil announced Chawla to be the next Chief Election Commissioner.

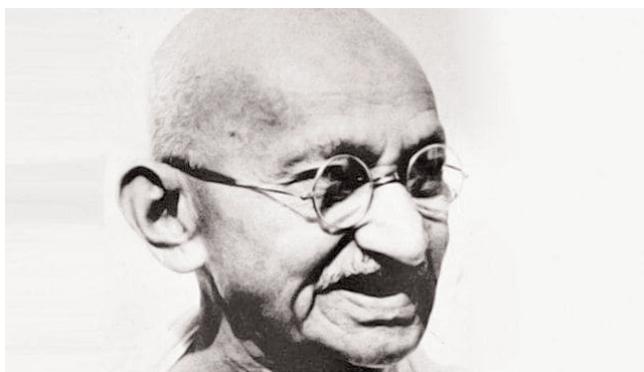


2010 Former Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh made an extradition treaty between the two countries during his visit to Saudi Arabia on 1 March 2010. With this, 10 signed in many fields including sci-tech and business.

2010 India beat Pakistan in the first match of the Hockey World Cup on 1 March 2010. India defeated Pakistan 4-1 in this match.

1872 The world's first Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872.

### 02 MARCH



1930 Gandhiji wrote a letter to British Viceroy on Salt Law.

1982 Indira Gandhi inaugurated the Mahatma Gandhi Road Bridge.

1984 Mother Teresa University was inaugurated in Tamil Nadu.

1994 Presidential rule in Jammu and Kashmir was extended.

1997 The first indigenous HIV detection kit was built in Bangalore in 1997.

1986 The great painter Kashinath Ghanekar died.

### 03 MARCH

1885 The Indian Appropriation Rule was implemented by the Congress Party on this day in 1885.

1930 The movement started by Harijans to enter the Kala Rama Temple.

1931 Delhi Pact was signed by Mahatma Gandhi and Viceroy Irving.

1967 The International Space Treaty was signed by India in Moscow.

1993 Sharad Pawar was elected as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra.



1839 World famous businessman (Jamsetji Tata) was born.

### 04 MARCH

1879 Bethune College of Calcutta was established in 1879.

1906 Hakim Abdul Majeed started the Hamdard dispensary in Delhi in 1906.

1924 In 1924, Shyam Lal Gupta composed the song Raising the Flag.

1951 Eleven countries participated in the first Asian Games in Delhi in 1951.

1961 In 1961 I.N.S. Vikrant was brought to Belfast.



### 05 MARCH

1931 Mahatma Gandhi ended the Civil Disobedience Movement.

1905 Sushila Didi, a freedom fighter who was instrumental in the revolutionary activities of Bhagat Singh, was born in Punjab.

2010 GP, one of the famous entrepreneurs of India. Birla died.

1783 Establishment of Geological Survey of India.

2009 Indian industrialist Vijay Mallya bought Bapu's legacy for Rs 18 lakhs

1949 The Jharkhand Party was founded in India in 1949.

1990 The government announced an interim relief of Rs 360 crore for the five lakh victims of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy.

2002 The Commonwealth Summit was held in 2002.

2008 India successfully test-fired the BrahMos missile from the sea into the ground.

2009 IFFCO (Indian Farmers Fertilizer Co-operative Limited) became the first company in the world to make annual sales of 10 million tonnes of fertilizer in 2009.

# CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WITH WOMEN@NJ PAC FOR A GATHERING OF GIVERS: ESCAPING EXPECTATIONS

BY MABEL PAIS

**Come for inspiration! Create new connections! Exchange ideas!**

On March 6, International Women's Day, join the community of Women@NJ PAC members and partners for **GATHERING OF GIVERS: ESCAPING EXPECTATIONS** ([njpac.org/event/gathering-of-givers/](https://njpac.org/event/gathering-of-givers/))!

**WHAT: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (IWD)**

**WHEN: March 6, 2026, 8:30 - 11:30 AM**

**WHERE: New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Prudential Hall Lobby, 1 Center Street, Newark, NJ**

**COST: Learn more at**

<https://njpac.org/event/gathering-of-givers>

This event will be dedicated to examining the often contradictory standards women are expected to meet — at work, at home, in public and in private. Together, we'll explore how women can create lives of genuine meaning without deferring to the straitjacket of societal expectations. We'll emerge renewed, centered, connected and ready to turn our authentic passions into powerful impact.

**PROGRAM**

**SPEAKERS**

Featuring a conversation with Alicia Menendez and the Honorable Esther Salas

ALICIA MENENDEZ, co-host, MS NOW's "The Weeknight" and author of



Khadija Sharif-Drinkard.  
Courtesy, njpac.org.

"The Likeability Trap: How to Break Free and Succeed as You Are"

The Honorable ESTHER SALAS, United States District Judge

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

KHADIJAH SHARIF-DRINKARD, Senior Vice President, Business Affairs, ABC News and Author, "Power Reimagined: My Mission to Get It, Grow It and Give it Away."

**OTHER SPEAKERS**

LINDA J. BARAKA is more than a leader — she is a force of vision and action for Newark. As First Lady of New Jersey's largest city, standing proudly alongside her husband, Mayor Ras J.



Linda Baraka, Newark's First Lady.  
Courtesy, njpac.org.

Baraka, she has made it her mission to uplift, empower, and transform her community.

Her work is not just about programs — it's about people. A steadfast champion for women and children, Linda has dedicated her platform to creating opportunities, resources, and safe spaces that allow them to thrive. When she launched "Newark Women Moving Forward," she dared to imagine a city where 1,000 women could break free from the weight of debt. That vision became a movement, proving that with the right tools and unwavering support, financial freedom is within reach for every woman.

AMINA BEY, Newark City Council

Central Ward

TIFFANY "CHIFFANI" SALAS, Founder of "Chiffani Brands Unlimited," Arts Delegate & Strategist

LORI TARKE, Executive Director of the Joseph A Unanue Latino Institute of Seton Hall University

**TICKETS**

Tickets are available on a tiered basis. Learn more at

<https://njpac.org/event/gathering-of-givers>

**Women@NJ PAC: A sisterhood for good.**

Women@NJ PAC (<https://njpac.org/the-women-at-njpac>) are change makers, rabble-rousers, artists, moms, bosses — women who give back in a hundred different ways. If you're passionate about the performing arts and want to make an impact, Women@NJ PAC is the place for you.

**They built this house. Now, they rock it.**

This group of women has been making moves for over 30 years — before NJ PAC even opened its doors. The Women's Association was born in 1994, when its nine founders advocated for women to have a seat at the table as NJ PAC fundraisers and decision-makers. Now known as Women@NJ PAC, the powerhouse board and 2,000+ members have generated \$58M+ to bolster the performing arts and improve our community.

Watch the video - <https://youtu.be/NrmZumlzUNI>

## THE ATHENA FILM FEST RETURNS FOR ITS 16TH YEAR

BY MABEL PAIS

The annual ATHENA FILM FESTIVAL returns for its sixteenth edition, March 6-8, 2026, at Barnard College (3009 Broadway, New York, NY 10027).

The festival will showcase a powerful weekend of films that spotlight bold, inspirational, unforgettable stories that re-imagine and expand what leadership looks like on screen and in our world. The 2026 documentary and feature film lineup features stories of political trailblazers, advocates, uncompromising journalists, and truth-tellers!

Athena is the premier film festival dedicated to celebrating and advancing a new understanding of what women's leadership looks like through original, thought-provoking, compelling, and diverse women-centered stories. Screenings are complemented by panels, filmmaker Q&As, and other events that investigate the intersections of gender, power, culture and society.

For the complete lineup of films and events, visit <https://aff26.eventive.org>

**OPENING NIGHT**

**STATE OF FIRSTS**

**Director: Chase Joynt**

The film explores Sarah McBride's historic run to become the first trans Member of Congress, the intense backlash that followed, and how the fight for change can be impacted by growing political extremism.

**CUTTING THROUGH ROCKS**

**ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINEE – Best**

**Documentary Feature Film**

**GRAND JURY PRIZE, WORLD DOCUMENTARY**



E. Jean Carroll.

Credit: [aff26.eventive.org](https://aff26.eventive.org)

**CINEMA, 2025 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL**

**Directors: Mohammadreza Eyni, Sara Khaki**

As the first elected councilwoman of her remote Iranian village, Sara Shahverdi fearlessly breaks patriarchal traditions by training teenage girls to ride motorcycles and stopping child marriages. When accusations arise questioning Sara's intentions to empower the girls, her identity is put in turmoil.

**CLOSING NIGHT**

**ASK E. JEAN**

**Director: Ivy Meeropol**

A documentary that chronicles the life and career of advice columnist and gonzo journalist E. Jean Carroll, and her two successful legal battles with President Trump.

**TICKETS**

For individual tickets and passes to films and events, visit <https://aff26.eventive.org>.

**THE ATHENA FILM FESTIVAL**

Athena is the premier film festival championing women's leadership through original, compelling, and diverse, women-centered stories. Screenings are paired with panels and events that explore the intersections of gender, culture, and society.

Athena is the premier film festival dedicated to celebrating and advancing a new understanding of what women's leadership looks like through original, thought-provoking, compelling, and diverse women-centered stories. Screenings are complemented by panels, filmmaker Q&As, and other events that investigate the intersections of gender, power, culture and society.

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

# IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE FESTIVE ACTIVITIES OF HOLI AT SEAPORT, NEW YORK

## BY MABEL PAIS

Immerse yourself in the vibrant spirit of Holi during an action-packed day at the South Street Seaport Museum, featuring free General Admission from 11AM–5PM and festive activities across the Museum campus and Seaport Square.

### WHAT: HOLI CELEBRATIONS

WHEN: MARCH 7, 2026, 11 AM - 5 PM

WHERE: SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM, NEW YORK (address below)

COST: FREE with Registration

Enjoy energetic dance and drum performances, explore the flavors of Holi from 12–3PM on Seaport Square, browse an outdoor Indian market at Pier 16 featuring nearly a dozen Indian-owned businesses, and — of course — take part in the iconic throwing of colorful pigments, the heart of Holi.

### REGISTRATION / TICKETS

Register for free General Admission @ [tickets.southstreetseaportmuseum.org](https://tickets.southstreetseaportmuseum.org)

### SCHEDULE

The celebration kicks off at 12PM on Seaport Square with captivating dance performances, followed by a fun, interactive dance workshop that will get everyone moving to popular Holi songs with Dholi Amrit who will provide traditional beats. The energy continues with DJ Magic Mike spinning everyone's favorite Holi tracks!

**12–2PM:** Seaport Square will host a Holi Powder Play countdown every half hour. Grab your gulaal and cameras as the sky beneath the picturesque masts of the 1885 tall ship “Wavertree” ([southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-wavertree](https://southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-wavertree)) and the 1908 lightship “Ambrose” ([southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-ambrose](https://southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-ambrose)) bursts into rainbow color!

For safety and preservation, only colors purchased from “Kulture Khazana” ([kulture-khazana.square.site/s/shop](https://kulture-khazana.square.site/s/shop)) are permitted — please do not bring outside powders. You can purchase colors at the event or pre-order online until 11PM on March 6. Pre-order colors for Powder Play @ [kulture-khazana.square.site/s/shop](https://kulture-khazana.square.site/s/shop).

The fun continues aboard “Wavertree” with family-friendly festivities, including a puppet show, all-ages activities, and more. This portion of the celebration is free, but separate registration is required to come aboard due to limited capacity. Get all the details and claim your space below.

These activities, presented in collaboration with “The Culture Tree” ([theculturetree.com](https://theculturetree.com)) and the Seaport, promise a day filled with cultural richness, interactive experiences, and the shared spirit of Holi.

### TICKETS & PRE-REGISTRATION

Access to the celebration is included in your free General Admission ticket to the Seaport Museum. Tickets are free but pre-registration is encouraged. Walkups will be accommodated as possible. Make sure to enjoy the Museum's exhibition galleries before joining in the throwing of colors. To ensure the care of the Seaport Museum collection, and historic buildings, individuals covered in colorful pigment will not be able to come inside the Museum.

### KIDS HOLI CELEBRATION ABOARD WAVERTREE

2PM | Wavertree | Free

Families are invited to keep the Holi fun going aboard the 1885 tall ship “Wavertree” ([southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-wavertree](https://southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-wavertree))! Enjoy the fan-favorite Holi Puppet Show presented by “WonderSpark Puppets” and “The Culture Tree” ([theculturetree.com](https://theculturetree.com)), and a vibrant book reading of

“Kahaani Rangeeli” (Colorful Story) by award-winning author Anu Sehgal.

The Seaport Museum will also offer a hands-on, Holi-inspired activity perfect for guests of all ages, and don't forget to capture the moment with photo ops aboard this last-of-her-kind historic ship—a perfect way to remember the day! Make your reservation @ [tickets.southstreetseaportmuseum.org](https://tickets.southstreetseaportmuseum.org).

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF HOLI

Holi originated on the Indian Subcontinent as a vibrant festival of colors, symbolizing the onset of Spring. Today, this joyous celebration has transcended borders and is embraced worldwide as a spirited way to welcome the season, promote inclusivity, and revel in playful and colorful festivities.

([southstreetseaportmuseum.org/maritime-city](https://southstreetseaportmuseum.org/maritime-city)), the Seaport Museum's immersive, three-floor exhibition at “A.A. Thomson & Co.”

([southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-thomson](https://southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-thomson)), located at 213 Water Street.

### VISIT THE MUSEUM

Make sure to enjoy the Museum's exhibition galleries BEFORE joining in the throwing of colors. To ensure the care of the Seaport Museum collection, and historic buildings, individuals covered in colorful pigment will not be able to come inside the Museum.

### THE SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM

The South Street Seaport Museum, located in the heart of the historic seaport district in New York City, preserves and interprets the history of New



HOLI Celebrations at South Street Seaport, NYC. -Credit: [theculturetree.com](https://theculturetree.com).

### THE CULTURE TREE

The Culture Tree provides South Asian themed educational and cultural programs that enrich the lives of children and their families and promotes a deeper connection with their roots and the world around them. They use language, art, puppet shows, dance, food and the holidays to provide an immersive experience. Learn more about The Culture Tree @ [theculturetree.com](https://theculturetree.com).

### ENJOY MORE THAT THE MUSEUM OFFERS

Access to the historic ships and exhibition galleries at the Seaport Museum is included with your ticket to this event! You may visit any time from 11am to 5pm on the day of your event.

General Admission brings you aboard the 1885 tall ship “Wavertree” ([southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-wavertree](https://southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-wavertree)) and 1908 lightship “Ambrose” ([southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-ambrose](https://southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-ambrose)) at Pier 16, and into all current exhibitions ([southstreetseaportmuseum.org/exhibitions/on\\_view](https://southstreetseaportmuseum.org/exhibitions/on_view)) on view in the first-floor Schermerhorn Row ([southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-schermerhorn-row](https://southstreetseaportmuseum.org/about-schermerhorn-row)) galleries at 12 Fulton Street. Your ticket also sets you on course to explore “Maritime City”

York as a great port city. Founded in 1967, the Museum houses an extensive collection of works of art and artifacts, a maritime reference library, exhibition galleries and education spaces, working 19th century print shops, and an active fleet of historic vessels that all work to tell the story of “Where New York Begins.” Learn more @ [seaportmuseum.org](https://seaportmuseum.org) ([southstreetseaportmuseum.org](https://southstreetseaportmuseum.org)).

### SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM

12 Fulton Street, New York, NY 10038  
(212) 748-8600

Open: Friday–Sunday, 11am–5pm

### CONNECT WITH SEAPORT MUSEUM ONLINE

#SouthStreetSeaportMuseum  
#WhereNewYorkBegins  
@SouthStreetSeaportMuseum - Facebook  
@seaportmuseum - Instagram  
@seaportmuseum - X  
@seaportmuseum - TikTok

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

# SOUTH AFRICA'S WORLD RENOWNED NDLOVU YOUTH CHOIR WILL MESMERIZE NEW JERSEY

BY MABEL PAIS

"If I could bottle your energy, I'd drink it every day,"--

Simon Cowell, Co-Judge, America's Got Talent

The NDLOVU YOUTH CHOIR from Limpopo, South Africa will perform at the Mayo Performing Arts Center (MPAC - mayoarts.org) in Morristown, NJ on Saturday, February 28, 2026 at 7:30 pm.

Since its inception in 2009, the Ndlovu Youth Choir has become one of the world's most treasured groups. Their unique musical arrangements, powerhouse vocals, irresistibly combined with mesmerizing choreography and infectious energy have inspired millions across the globe.

An eleven-year journey has seen an after-school program for orphaned and vulnerable children, started by the Ndlovu Care Group, transform into an international recording and touring career. Participation does not only instill values of togetherness, a work ethic and a sense of responsibility, but it develops self-discipline, self-confidence, and leadership.

Through the choir, choristers gain a global perspective that offers an early pathway to artistic and professional achievement. The choir uses their talents to share their inspirational story with the world through song and dance.

The choir's repertoire is an exciting mix of traditional South African genres with pop, rock, jazz, and electronic dance music (EDM). Their intention to create a fresh and original sound is evident in their ability to take internationally well-known songs — Toto's "Africa," Kygo's "Higher Love," U2's "Beautiful Day," and Ed Sheeran's "Shape of You" — and move them into an exciting new territory.

The Ndlovu Youth Choir's incredible run on America's Got Talent (AGT) (Season 14 made them the first choir in



Ndlovu Youth Choir in Limpopo  
Courtesy, mayoarts.org

the history of either America's Got Talent or Britain's Got Talent to reach the final). Their soul-stirring performances won hearts and minds around the world. After their final "America's Got Talent" (AGT) performance, legendary music producer and record executive Simon Cowell labeled the performance "The best finale I have ever sat on in my life." He went on to sign the choir, and together with SYCO (Syco Entertainment comprising formerly Syco Music, Syco Television and Syco Film, a British media entertainment and production company, headquartered in London, founded and owned by British entrepreneur and record executive Simon Cowell, one of four judges on "America's Got Talent" that has been active from 2016 to present.

Since AGT, the choir has undertaken two European tours, sold out every public performance and performed on numerous local and international television and radio shows. Performance highlights include a performance to over 115,000 people in Cape Town and The Match in



Ndlovu Youth Choir on America's Got Talent.  
Courtesy, mayoarts.org

Africa which featured Rafael Nadal, Roger Federer, Bill Gates and Trevor Noah.

During the Coronavirus crisis the choir joined many of the world's top A-list performers on a virtual stage where they were featured during the "Global Citizens One World: Together at Home" virtual concert.

As the Ndlovu Youth Choir's meteoric rise continues, they strive to push the creative boundaries of song and dance to reach and touch audiences of all ages across the globe. Their high energy performances have not only thrilled audiences around the world, but have shared a message of hope, love and togetherness. Learn more about Ndlovu's Youth Choir @ <https://choir.africa>.

Watch a preview of the choir's performances @ <https://youtu.be/khiYjrtDlwM>.

## TICKETS & VENUE POLICIES

For tickets to the performance and venue policies, visit [mayoarts.org/tickets/ticketing-and-venue-policies](https://mayoarts.org/tickets/ticketing-and-venue-policies).

# IRELAND'S "RIVERDANCE" OF GLOBAL FAME NOW BRINGS TO NEW JERSEY "RIVERDANCE 30 - THE NEW GENERATION"

BY MABEL PAIS

"RIVERDANCE 30 - THE NEW GENERATION," the rejuvenation of the much-loved original show will welcome "The New Generation" of performers at the Morristown Performing Arts Center (MPAC - mayoarts.org) for 5 performances from Friday, March 6 to Sunday, March 8, 2026 (see program below for schedule details).

## PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Friday, March 6 at 8 pm

Saturday, March 7 at 2 pm and 8 pm

Sunday, March 8 at 1 pm and 6:30 pm

"Riverdance 30 - The New Generation" rejuvenates the much-loved original show with new innovative choreography and costumes and state of the art lighting, projection and motion graphics. And for the first time, Riverdance will welcome "The New Generation" of performers, all of whom were not born when the show began 30 years ago!

Get a preview of the North American tour of Riverdance - <https://youtu.be/3YrNFMMwXII>

John McColgan, Director of "Riverdance" said "It is both a privilege and a delight to celebrate 30 years of "Riverdance" and the unique journey it has taken us on. In those 30 years the show has transformed from a spectacle into a global cultural phenomenon – continuously evolving yet remaining true to its Irish roots. On this upcoming tour we look forward to welcoming "The New Generation" of artists while paying tribute to the talented performers, creators, dedicated crew, and the millions of fans who have made Riverdance a worldwide celebration of music and dance."

Since "Riverdance" first emerged onto the world stage, its fusion of Irish and international dance and music has captured the hearts of millions worldwide. The Grammy award-winning music and the infectious energy of its

mesmerizing choreography and breathtaking performances has left audiences in awe and established "Riverdance" as a global cultural sensation.

"Riverdance The Animated Adventure" was released on



Riverdance, photo montage. -Courtesy, mayoarts.org.

Netflix in the United States on January 14, 2022, where it swiftly landed a spot on the streamer's Global Top 10 list. With an original score by Grammy Award-winning composer Bill Whelan, the animated musical comedy features the incredible craft and skill of the "Riverdance" troupe by utilizing motion capture of their performances to create the animated dancing in the film. Tour lead dancers Maggie Darlington and Anna Mai Fitzpatrick and Executive Producer/Director Padraic Moyles were involved with the dance production for the film, while tour musicians Mark Alfred and Tara Howley play on the film score.

## ORIGIN

"Riverdance" began its journey as the interval act in the 1994 Eurovision Song Contest, produced for television by

Moya Doherty. This electrifying and innovative seven-minute dance piece was then developed into a full-length stage show by Producer Moya Doherty, Composer Bill Whelan and Director John McColgan. With its fusion of Irish and International music and dance, the show broke all box office records during its world premiere run in Dublin in early 1995. When the show transferred to London the reaction was unprecedented. There followed a hugely successful tour starting in New York in March 1996, where 8 sold-out shows at Radio City Music Hall heralded the start of more than two decades of touring by Riverdance companies throughout North America. Since its inception, Riverdance has packed theatres throughout North America, Oceania, Asia, Europe, South Africa and South America.

## RIVERDANCE - THE NEW GENERATION

"Riverdance 30 - The New Generation" is designed by lead designer Peter Canning, featuring sets by Alan Farquharson, lighting by Andrew Voller and video by Cosmo AV along with costumes by Joan Bergin and sound by Michael O'Gorman.

## CONNECT WITH RIVERDANCE

For more information on Riverdance 30, visit [riverdance.com](https://riverdance.com).

Facebook: @Riverdance

Twitter: @Riverdance

Instagram: @Riverdance

TikTok: @Riverdance

## TICKETS & VENUE POLICIES

For tickets to the performance and venue policies, visit [mayoarts.org/tickets/ticketing-and-venue-policies](https://mayoarts.org/tickets/ticketing-and-venue-policies).

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



## Ahaan Panday dons action avatar in next; begins shoot on March 30

Filmmaker Ali Abbas Zafar recently shared a behind-the-scenes look from his upcoming project, featuring the leading man, Ahaan Panday.

Now, a source tells us, "Shoot begins on March 30 in Mumbai's YRF Studios for a 27-day schedule. Then, the team will travel to UK for a 60-day shoot in May. All the actors are currently in action training, and will be till end of March."

When contacted about his lead, Ali, 44, is all praise for Ahaan. "He doesn't perform emotions, he feels them. And as a director, that's a rare quality to find. The camera has a way of catching the truth and with him, the truth is always there in his eyes," he says.

Only one film old in the industry, with his debut Saiyaara being a surprise hit, Ahaan, 28, will take on the action-romance genre in the upcoming film.

Ali adds that Ahaan "brings a modern energy to classic romantic leads": "It's always amazing to work with raw, new talent and Ahaan, to me, is at the top of the league from his generation."

# Taapsee Pannu says she has questioned directors for casting same faces for same roles

Taapsee Pannu gained appreciation for her performance in the film *Assi*, which was released in theatres last Friday. The social drama is directed by Anubhav Sinha, with whom she has previously worked on *Mulk* and *Thappad*. In a new interaction with *Galatta Plus*, Taapsee said how she has questioned many 'top directors' about the kind of casting choices they repeat in their films.

During the chat, Taapsee shared, "It is difficult. Difficult, not for me but for people to imagine because we are so happy in our comfort zone of imagination. 'Okay this is this type of role, so this one will suit.' Nobody wants to really think out of the box. I have had conversations with certain top directors here when I go meet them. First, I have to break the notion that I am okay doing films where I am not leading the film. In the sense that it is not my story. Then I have to tell them that I would want to do something lighter. It is not that if I have to be there it has to be an issue attached with it."

She went on to add, "I really question them. Why would you want to take the same faces for the same roles. It is unfair to them as well. It is unfair to people like me who would want to experiment with their craft. It is your complacency as a director to only think that oh- this is a certain type of a character and who looks like this? Only these girls! Then they are only going to bring what they have brought to the table in some other film! But when I will probably do something like that, I will bring something new to the table."



## Konkona-Pratibha play same-sex couple in *Accused*

Konkona Sen Sharma and Pratibha Ranta are gearing up for the release of their new psychological thriller, *Accused*. Netflix India has unveiled the film's official trailer, which features the two leads portraying a same-sex couple. However, their bond is put to the test when a grave accusation surfaces, threatening to tear them apart.

In the film, Konkona portrays Dr Geetika, a distinguished gynaecologist who sees her professional reputation and marriage crumble under the weight of sexual misconduct allegations at her clinic. These charges surface just as she and Meera (Pratibha) are preparing to adopt a child together. While Meera appears somewhat unfazed, noting that Geetika has faced similar claims in the past, Geetika insists that this situation is far more severe, as she is now being publicly branded a sexual predator.

The trailer then follows the mounting strain on Geetika and Meera's bond as tensions reach a breaking point. Geetika is

forced to stand by as the career she meticulously constructed over decades disintegrates. Amidst escalating public judgment, the narrative delves into the heavy toll these pressures take on her intimate connections, questioning how easily public perception can eclipse the truth.

Written by Sima Agarwal and Yash Keswani, *Accused* is helmed by director Anubhuti Kashyap. The psychological thriller is produced by Karan Johar, Adar Poonawala, and Somen Mishra, with its digital premiere slated for Netflix on February 27, 2026.

Konkona was last seen in director Anurag Basu's *Metro...In Dino*, featuring Anupam Kher, Neena Gupta, Saswata Chatterjee, Pankaj Tripathi, Aditya Roy Kapur, Sara Ali Khan, Ali Fazal and Fatima Sana Shaikh in key roles.

Pratibha made her Hindi film debut with director Kiran Rao's *Laapataa Ladies*, featuring actors Sparsh Shrivastava, Nitanshi Goel, Chhaya Kadam and Ravi Kishan.



## BBC orders fast track probe into 'serious mistake' over racial slur at BAFTAs

The head of the BBC has ordered a "fast-tracked" internal investigation into the "serious mistake" that saw a racist slur aired during the BAFTA awards.

Tourette's sufferer John Davidson, who inspired one of the winning films, has said he is "deeply mortified" after shouting the N-word at the London film and television awards ceremony, which he said was caused by an "involuntary tic".

He was heard shouting as Sinners actors Delroy Lindo and Michael B Jordan, who are both black, presented an award for special visual effects in the movies at the ceremony.

The investigation will probe why the slur was aired despite there being a two-hour delay between filming and the broadcast, and why it remained on the BBC's streaming service iPlayer until the following morning.

"The BBC has been reviewing what happened at BAFTA on Sunday evening," the broadcaster said in a statement.

"This was a serious mistake, and the Director-General (Tim Davie) has instructed the Executive Complaints Unit (ECU) to complete a fast-tracked investigation and provide a full response to complainants," it added.

The probe was welcomed by Culture Minister Lisa Nandy, who described the broadcasting of a racial slur as "completely unacceptable and harmful".

"The BBC must ensure that this never happens again," she said.

The controversy comes after another damaging episode during the BBC's Glastonbury festival coverage in June 2025.

# Leonardo DiCaprio and Christian Bale to star in Michael Mann's long-awaited Heat 2

After 30 years of speculation, it's finally happening! Leonardo DiCaprio is set to headline the long-awaited sequel to Heat, and he won't be alone. Another Oscar winner, Christian Bale, has now confirmed his role in the upcoming film, marking one of the most exciting casting announcements in recent Hollywood history.

In a recent interview with Fox News journalist Jake Hamilton, Christian revealed, "I'll be back in Chicago soon for Heat 2!" The statement marks the first official acknowledgement from the actor that he is part of director Michael Mann's much-anticipated sequel. While rumours of Bale's involvement have been circulating since November, this is the first time he has confirmed it publicly.

Production on Heat 2 is expected to begin in August, with shoots planned across global locations including Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Singapore, and Paraguay. The film will adapt Michael's 2022 novel of the same name, co-written with author Meg Gardiner, which serves as both a prequel and sequel to the 1995 crime epic.

The original Heat — starring Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, and the late Val Kilmer — became an instant classic, widely regarded as one of the greatest crime thrillers ever made. Known for its intense performances, intricate storytelling, and the legendary face-off between Pacino's detective Vincent



Nearly three decades after his iconic 1995 crime thriller Heat, Michael Mann is ready to make the sequel.

Hanna and De Niro's master thief Neil McCauley, Heat remains one of Michael's defining works.

While Leonardo and Christian's roles are being kept tightly under wraps, the film's dual timeline, unfolding both before and after the events of the 1995 original, has sparked speculation about how younger versions of Al Pacino and Robert De Niro's characters will be portrayed. Michael has hinted that he may use AI-assisted de-ageing to achieve the desired effect, saying at the Lumière Film Festival, "I don't experiment with technology gratuitously. When I have a dramatic need or aesthetic need for it, then I go deep into what I need. Aging

and de-aging may be very important in the next film."

Al himself once suggested that Timothée Chalamet could play a younger version of him, but also said he would be open to reprising the role with de-ageing technology. Meanwhile, rumours suggest Adam Driver might portray a young Neil McCauley, while Austin Butler is being eyed for the role of Chris Shiherlis, originally played by Kilmer.

With Michael returning to direct and two powerhouse actors, Leonardo DiCaprio and Christian Bale, officially on board, Heat 2 is shaping up to be one of the most anticipated sequels of the decade.

## Jessica Chastain leads a sexually-charged drama about love, social class in Dreams

Jessica Chastain takes on one of her most daring roles in "Dreams," a torrid erotic thriller about power, obsession, art and immigration. Re-teaming with filmmaker Michel Franco, she plays a San Francisco socialite entangled in a tempestuous affair with a talented Mexican ballet dancer, played by Isaac Hernández. Her character Jennifer, the well-heeled daughter of a powerful man, is like Shiv Roy before she went to the dark side; Or, rather, realized she was there all along.

"Dreams," which opens in limited release Friday, creatively explores ideas about U.S. relations with Mexican immigrants through the ever-shifting power dynamics between Fernando and Jennifer. It's both captivating and bleak, with a series of sexual encounters that can only be described as feral — "Wuthering Heights" wishes it could have hit the ravenous peaks of Fernando and Jennifer together.

Franco opens his film not on these two, but on a semitruck in the middle of the

night, in the middle of nowhere. All we can hear are chilling screams and pounding from those inside. When the doors are later opened, migrants pour out of the truck including the man who we'll come to know is Fernando, who simply walks away. He walks and walks and walks: Through the night, through the day, in a machinelike trance until he's forced to stop for water.

Eventually we learn where he's going with such purpose when we hear him speak for the first time, asking drivers at a gas station, in perfect English, if he can get a ride to San Francisco. When he arrives, he goes straight to a fancy townhouse; After the doorbell goes unanswered, he finds the spare keys, enters and gets himself a snack out of the fridge with all the casualness of someone who has not only been there before, but who's comfortable there as well. We understand this is not a break in — but what is it? Later that night Jennifer arrives and does not look that surprised to see him in her bed.



## Cuba says 4 killed in speedboat shooting were attempting to infiltrate the country

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**HAVANA (TIP):** Cuba's government said late Wednesday that the 10 passengers on a boat that opened fire on its soldiers were armed Cubans living in the U.S. who were trying to infiltrate the island and unleash terrorism.

The announcement came hours after Cuba said its soldiers killed four people and wounded six others aboard a Florida-registered speed boat that had entered Cuban waters and opened fire on the soldiers first, injuring one Cuban officer.

Cuba's government said the majority of the 10 people on the boat "have a known history of criminal and violent activity."

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio had told reporters earlier that he was made aware of the incident and that the U.S. is now gathering its own information to determine if the victims were American citizens or permanent residents.

"We have various different elements of the U.S. government that are trying to identify elements of the story that may not be provided to us now," Rubio said while at the airport in Basseterre, St. Kitts, where he was attending a regional summit with Caribbean leaders.

The Cuban government identified two of the boat passengers as Amijail Sánchez González and Leordan Enrique Cruz Gómez, who are wanted by Cuban authorities "based on their involvement in the promotion, planning, organization, financing, support or commission of actions carried out in the national territory or in other countries, in connection with acts of terrorism."

The government said it also had arrested Duniel Hernández Santos, adding that he was "sent from the United States to guarantee the reception of the armed infiltration, who at this time has confessed to his actions."

The Associated Press was not immediately able to independently verify that information.

Cuba's government said it obtained the details about the passengers aboard the boat from the suspects detained following the shootout.

It identified seven of the 10 passengers, including Conrado Galindo Sariol, José Manuel Rodríguez Castelló, Cristian Ernesto Acosta Guevara and Roberto Álvarez Ávila.

On Thursday, Cuba's deputy foreign minister, Carlos Fernández de Cossío, said the Cuban government erroneously identified Roberto Azcorra Consuegra as one of the boat passengers late Wednesday. He said Azcorra was not aboard the boat.

# Russia says 'no deadlines' to end Ukraine war

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**MOSCOW (TIP):** Moscow is in no hurry to reach a deal to end the war in Ukraine, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov suggested in comments to state media on Thursday, Feb 26

Negotiators from both countries were in Geneva on Thursday for separate talks with US officials, part of a fraught negotiation process being pushed by President Donald Trump in a bid to end the fighting.

Several rounds of discussions have failed to clinch a deal, with Moscow insisting on hardline territorial and political demands that Kyiv has ruled out as tantamount to capitulation.

Top officials in Russia on Thursday again pushed back on the idea a deal was close.

"Have you heard anything from us about deadlines? We have no deadlines, we have tasks. We are getting them done," state news agencies quoted Lavrov as saying.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov also said it was too early to make "forecasts" or say at what stage the peace process was at.

"It would be a big mistake to try right now to define some kind of stage or make some kind of forecasts. I don't want to make those mistakes," he told state media.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has repeatedly said a meeting with Russia's Vladimir Putin is needed to agree on the key sticking points, like the fate of territory in eastern Ukraine that Russia is fighting to seize control of.

Peskov repeated on Thursday that Russia will not agree to a summit until the very end of talks, and only to sign off on a deal thrashed out between the negotiating teams.

### Russia, Ukraine exchange bodies of killed soldiers

Russia has handed over the remains of 1,000 Ukrainian



soldiers to Kyiv, a Moscow official said Thursday, with Ukraine returning the bodies of 35 Russians in exchange.

The two sides regularly exchange the remains of troops killed in combat, one of the few areas of cooperation.

"The bodies of 1,000 dead Ukrainian soldiers were given to Ukraine. Russia was given the bodies of 35 dead Russian fighters," Moscow's top negotiator Vladimir Medinsky, said on social media.

He posted a photo showing men in white overalls and blue gloves lifting a white body bag from the back of a refrigerated truck. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers have been killed in the four-year war, triggered when Moscow launched its full-scale offensive against Ukraine in February 2022.

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## UN approves first carbon credits under Paris Agreement market mechanism

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**GENEVA (TIP):** The United Nations has approved the first credits to be issued under a carbon market established by the Paris climate accord, aimed at reducing emissions – a mechanism that has faced scrutiny over greenwashing concerns.

The UN-run market allows companies and countries to offset their excess emissions by financing projects that cut greenhouse gases in other nations.

The UN Climate Change announced on Thursday that the new initiative involves a clean cooking project in Myanmar, which distributes efficient cookstoves that reduce pressure on local forests. Implemented in partnership with a South Korean company, the project will generate credits that will count towards the climate targets of South Korea and Myanmar.

"Over two billion people globally are without access to clean cooking, which kills millions every year. Clean cooking protects health, saves forests, cuts emissions and helps empower women and girls, who are typically hardest hit



by household air pollution," UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell said in a statement.

The new mechanism "can support solutions that make a big difference in people's daily lives, as well as channelling finance to where it delivers real-life benefits on the ground", Stiell added.

But some critics fear that, if set up poorly, such schemes can undermine the world's efforts to curb global warming by allowing countries or companies to greenwash – or overstate – their

emissions reductions.

The UN climate agency said the credited emissions reductions are 40 percent lower than under a previous scheme, as more conservative calculations are applied under the new Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism (PACM).

"Our focus is on building confidence in this market from the outset, and this first issuance shows that the system is working as intended," Jacqui Ruesga, vice chair of the UN body supervising the PACM, said in a statement.

The stoves in the Myanmar project burn woody biomass more efficiently, meaning they need less fuel and emit far less smoke inside the home. But at current rates, only 78 percent of the population is expected to have access to clean cooking by 2030, the World Health Organization said.

The 2015 Paris Agreement, which commits the world to limiting warming to well below 2C (3.6F) and ideally at 1.5C (2.7F), also envisaged that countries could take part in cross-border trade of carbon reductions.

## Hong Kong court quashes fraud conviction of ex-media mogul Jimmy

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**HONG KONG (TIP):** A Hong Kong appellate court on Thursday quashed fraud convictions against onetime media magnate Jimmy Lai, a rare victory in the prominent activist's legal battles. Lai, 78, an outspoken critic of China's ruling Communist Party who founded the now-defunct Apple Daily, will stay in prison because he was sentenced to 20 years weeks ago after being convicted in another case brought under a China-imposed national security law.

That came more than five years after he was arrested under the law, which was used in a yearslong crackdown on many of Hong Kong's leading activists. His plight has evoked grief over the city's loss of press freedom and sparked an international outcry, though the city's authorities insist his case had nothing to do with media independence. The conviction that was overturned Thursday was from an earlier fraud case in which prosecutors alleged that a consultancy firm controlled by Lai had used office space that his media business rented for publication and printing purposes. Lai was sentenced to five years and nine months in prison in 2022 after being found guilty of two fraud charges. A lower court judge found that Lai and his co-defendant Wong Wai-keung had concealed that the firm was occupying space and had violated the lease agreement.

# Kim Jong Un spurns olive branch from 'hostile' South Korea

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**SEOL (TIP):** North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has spurned Seoul's efforts to mend diplomatic relations, saying Pyongyang has "absolutely no business dealing with" his nation's "most hostile" enemy, state media said Thursday, Feb 26.

South Korea has mounted a concerted push to build bridges with Pyongyang under President Lee Jae Myung, who has sought the "peaceful coexistence" of two nations still technically at war.

Kim had largely ignored these overtures and dashed hopes of rapprochement in a fiery statement delivered at the end of a landmark party congress.

North Korea has "absolutely no business dealing with South Korea, its most hostile entity, and will permanently exclude South Korea from the category of compatriots", Kim said, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

"As long as South Korea cannot escape the geopolitical conditions of having a border with us, the only way to live safely is to give up everything related to us and leave us alone."

Pyongyang amended its constitution in 2024 to define South Korea as a "hostile state" for the first time.

South Korea's disgraced ex-president Yoon Suk Yeol was accused of using unmanned drones to scatter propaganda leaflets over North Korea in 2024.

Lee has sought to mend ties by stamping out such provocations, and has even suggested a rare apology may be warranted.

A UN Security Council committee recently approved exemptions allowing fresh flows of food and medicine into North Korea, according to diplomatic sources.

A Seoul government official said South Korea has made "various efforts" to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches the North regardless of politics, hinting that the country had lobbied Washington.



Seoul's unification ministry released a statement Thursday, saying it regrets that North Korea "did not respond to our government's efforts for peaceful coexistence on the Korean Peninsula."

South Korea's presidential office also said Seoul "will continue to make efforts to open a future ... where the South and the North coexist peacefully."

"To achieve this, the two Koreas must refrain from hostile and confrontational words and actions and build a foundation of mutual respect and trust," it added.

Thousands of party elites packed North Korea's capital Pyongyang in recent days for a summit of the ruling Workers' Party, a gathering that directs state efforts on everything from diplomacy to war planning.

A "grand" military parade was held on Wednesday evening as the once-in-five-years gathering drew to a close, state media said.

## Japan's births fall for 10th year, adding to demographic strain

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**TOKYO (TIP):** The number of births in Japan fell for the 10th straight year in 2025, official data showed on Thursday, highlighting the challenges for Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi.

A total of 705,809 babies were born in Japan, the preliminary health ministry data showed, down 2.1 percent from 2024.

The data includes births to Japanese nationals in Japan, foreign births in Japan and babies born to Japanese nationals overseas.

The world's fourth-biggest economy has one of the world's lowest birth rates and a falling population.

This is already leading to a host of problems including labour shortages, a ballooning social security bill and fewer working people paying tax.

This in turn is adding to Japan's huge debts. It already has the highest debt ratio among major economies.

Successive Japanese leaders -- including Takaichi, the country's first woman premier -- have promised to increase births but with limited success.

"The declining birth rate and shrinking population are a quiet state of emergency that will gradually erode our country's vitality," Takaichi said in parliament last week.

Takaichi's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) won a two-thirds majority in February 8 snap elections.

Increasing immigration would help reverse Japan's falling population and the associated problems in the labour market.

Under pressure from the "Japanese first" Sanseito



party, the right-wing Takaichi has however vowed tougher measures on immigration.

### Singapore Fertility Rate Posts 'Significant' Drop to Record Low

Singapore's total fertility rate fell to 0.87 in 2025, marking a record low that a top official warned could profoundly reshape the city-state's society and economy. Deputy Prime Minister Gan Kim Yong told parliament Thursday the citizen population is projected to begin shrinking by the early 2040s without new measures. The fertility rate declined from 0.97 in 2024, which was also a record low. A decade ago, it stood at 1.24.

The falling birth rate underscores the difficulty the government faces in persuading people to have more children despite years of pro-family incentives. A

shrinking workforce and rapidly aging population can reduce tax revenue and strain pension and health care systems.

While the issue is global it's of acute concern in Asia, where the total fertility rate across the region in 2024 fell to 1.9, below what's considered replacement level, according report this week from Bank of America, which noted cities such as Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong have hit record lows.

"The ultra-low fertility levels create a structural demographic headwind for Asia: populations will age more rapidly, begin shrinking sooner, and become more top-heavy with elderly residents," the bank's analysts wrote.

South Korea's overall fertility rate rose for a second year in 2025, data showed this week, although it's still among the lowest globally at 0.8. Japan on Thursday reported births fell for a 10th year.

Prime Minister Lawrence Wong's government recently announced plans to spend nearly S\$7 billion (\$5.5 billion) on marriage and parenthood initiatives in the 2026 financial year.

Singapore is on track to become a "super-aged" society this year, with 21% of its population 65 and older. The low fertility rate comes as marriages have also declined. Singapore recorded 24,687 marriages last year, a 6.2% drop from 2024, The Straits Times reported, citing government data.

Even with immigration, Gan said Thursday the growth of Singapore's citizen population has slowed over the past decade from 0.9% per annum between 2015 and 2020 to 0.8% between 2020 and 2025.

## Bangladesh court orders Interpol red notice for British MP and Hasina relative over corruption

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**DHAKA (TIP):** A court in Bangladesh's capital has ordered authorities to request that Interpol issue a red notice for the arrest of a British lawmaker on charges of corruption in a private real estate project. Tulip Siddiq, a former British minister and an MP from Hampstead and Highgate in London, faces charges of corruption in Bangladesh as the country's Anti-corruption Commission pursues a case against her.

Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge Mohammed Sabbir Faiz issued the order on Thursday upon a petition by the corruption watchdog.

The order came after the commission's Assistant Director A.K.M. Mortuza Ali Sagar sought the order for a red notice through Interpol to facilitate her arrest.

Siddiq has already been sentenced to six years in jail in Bangladesh in three other corruption cases, all involving her powerful aunt, the country's former prime minister, Sheikh Hasina.

Hasina was ousted in 2024 in a student-led mass uprising that ended her 15-year rule, and has been in exile in India since August 5 2024.

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**ATHENS (TIP):** A new penal code issued by decree in Afghanistan sets harsher punishments for the mistreatment of animals than for domestic violence against women and solidifies into law inequality based on gender and social status.

The decree, which was signed by Afghanistan's Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada in January, "defines several crimes and punishments that contravene Afghanistan's international legal obligations," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said Thursday in remarks to the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

He urged Afghan authorities to rescind the decree.

Comprised of 119 articles, the 60-page Decree No. 12 lays out penalties for women who visit their relatives without their husband's permission, and allows husbands and the heads of households to determine and mete out punishment in their own homes. "It provides for the use of corporal punishment for numerous offences, including in the home, legitimising violence against women and children," Turk said. "And it criminalises criticism of the de facto leadership and their policies, in violation of freedom of expression and assembly."

The decree states that a man who beats his wife severely enough to cause a visible

# 'Dama Dam Mast Qalandar': Pakistan declares 'open war' on Afghanistan

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** Cross-border clashes between Afghanistan and Pakistan escalated sharply on Friday, Feb 27, with Islamabad declaring "open war" on Kabul after carrying out airstrikes in parts of Kabul, Kandahar and Paktia, further intensifying tensions between the two neighbouring countries.

In a post on X, Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif issued a strong statement declaring the "open war" against Afghanistan, stating that Islamabad has lost its patience and accusing the Taliban-led administration of harbouring militants.

"After the withdrawal of NATO forces, it was expected that there would be peace in Afghanistan and that the Taliban would focus on the interests of the Afghan people and peace in the region...They gathered all the terrorists of the world in Afghanistan and began exporting terrorism. They deprived their own people of basic human rights. They snatched away the rights that Islam grants to women," his post read.

"Our cup of patience has overflowed. Now it is open war between us and you. Now it will be 'Dama Dam Mast Qalandar'. Pakistan's army did not come from across the seas. We are your neighbours; we know your ins and outs. Allahu Akbar," the Pakistani Defence Minister added.

Following the Pakistani strikes on



Afghan soil, Afghanistan's spokesperson, Zabihullah Mujahid, condemned the attack, calling the act by the Pakistani military "cowardly".

"The cowardly Pakistani military has carried out airstrikes in certain areas of Kabul, Kandahar and Paktia; fortunately, there have been no reported casualties," Mujahid said in a statement on X. The escalation comes amid heightened tensions between Islamabad and the Taliban-led administration in Kabul over cross-border security concerns along the Durand Line, which has remained a topic of dispute between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of National Defence of Afghanistan said that 55

Pakistani soldiers were killed in retaliatory operations carried out along the Durand Line on Thursday.

The 2,611 km border between the two countries has never been officially recognised by Afghanistan.

In a press release, the ministry said the action was launched at 8 pm on the 9th of Ramadan, corresponding to February 26, in response to what it described as a violation of Afghan territory by Pakistani military forces days earlier.

"A few days ago, the Pakistani military circles, with great audacity, violated Afghan territory, breached our borders, and martyred women and children here," the statement read.

## Afghanistan's new penal code sets 15 days in prison for wife-beating, 5 months for animal fights



cut, wound or bruise faces 15 days in prison, if his wife can prove her case to a judge. But a woman who goes to her father's house and stays there without her husband's permission is punished by a three months in prison, as are her relatives if they do not return her to her husband. The decree "formally removes equality between men and women before

the law," UN Women Special Representative in Afghanistan Susan Ferguson said in a statement released Wednesday. "It places husbands in a position of authority over their wives and limits women's ability to seek protection or justice."

Penalties are harsher for mistreating animals than women. Five months in

prison is the punishment for anyone having animals or birds fight. Animal and bird fighting, particularly cockfights and fights between partridges, is a popular pastime in Afghanistan but was banned after the Taliban seized power in 2021. Afghan authorities have often issued laws laying out various prohibitions, including bans on education for girls beyond primary school, on women working in most jobs, and mandates on how women should dress and behave. But the decree is the first full penal code issued by the government.

The new penal code also lays out different treatment for the same crime depending on social class, ranging from simple warnings for clerics to corporal punishment for those deemed to be at the lowest social rungs.

Scholars and "high-ranking people" face a warning from a judge; tribal leaders and businessmen receive a warning and a court summons; "average people of society" face imprisonment; and "the lower classes" are subject to physical beatings. If an offender is sentenced to a maximum 39 lashes, they must be to "different parts of the body," the decree states.

# Holi: Where colors meet culture and faith

**H**oli, the vibrant festival of colours, is one of the most joyful and widely celebrated festivals in India. Marking the arrival of spring and the triumph of good over evil, Holi is a festival that transcends social barriers and brings people together in a spirit of happiness and harmony. Known for its bright colours, festive music, and delicious sweets, Holi is celebrated with great enthusiasm across India and in many parts of the world. Beyond the playful throwing of colours, Holi carries deep religious, cultural, and spiritual significance rooted in ancient traditions and sacred texts.

Falling on the full moon day (Purnima) of the Hindu month of Phalgun, usually in February or March, Holi signals the end of winter and the beginning of a new agricultural cycle.

**This year, the festivel will be celebrated on March 4.**

It is a time when nature blossoms with fresh flowers and greenery, symbolizing renewal and new beginnings. The festival is celebrated over two days, beginning with Holika Dahan and followed by the colourful festivities known as Rangwali Holi or Dhulandi.

## Origins and Mythological Background

The origins of Holi can be traced back thousands of years and are described in ancient Hindu scriptures and Puranic literature. The festival is associated with several legends, the most popular being the story of Prahlad and Holika, which symbolizes the victory of devotion and righteousness over arrogance and evil.

According to mythology, the demon king Hiranyakashipu was a powerful ruler who demanded that everyone worship him as a god. However, his own son Prahlad was a devoted follower of Lord Vishnu and refused to obey his father's command. Enraged by Prahlad's devotion, Hiranyakashipu made several attempts to kill him but failed each time because of divine protection.

Finally, Hiranyakashipu sought the help of his sister Holika, who possessed a magical boon that made her immune to fire. Holika sat on a burning pyre with Prahlad on her lap, hoping to destroy him. However, due to divine intervention, Prahlad remained unharmed while Holika was burned to ashes. This event



symbolizes the destruction of evil and is commemorated through the ritual of Holika Dahan, where bonfires are lit on the eve of Holi.

Another important legend associated with Holi is the divine love story of Lord Krishna and Radha. According to tradition, young Krishna once complained to his mother Yashoda about Radha's fair complexion and his own dark skin. Yashoda playfully suggested that he apply colour to Radha's face. This playful act is believed to have inspired the tradition of playing with colours during Holi. In regions such as Braj, Mathura, and Vrindavan, Holi celebrations are deeply connected with Krishna's playful pastimes with Radha and the gopis.

Holi is also linked to the story of Kamadeva, the god of love. In South India, the festival commemorates the legend in which Kamadeva was burned by Lord Shiva's fiery gaze and later restored to life, symbolizing love and rebirth.

## Religious and Spiritual Significance

Holi holds profound spiritual meaning beyond its outward festivities. The festival teaches the eternal message that truth and devotion ultimately triumph over evil forces. The burning of Holika symbolizes the destruction of negative qualities such as pride, anger, greed, and jealousy.

Spiritually, Holi represents purification and renewal. Just as fire consumes impurities during Holika Dahan, devotees believe that the festival offers an opportunity to cleanse the mind and begin anew. It is a time to forgive past grievances and strengthen relationships.

The colours of Holi also carry symbolic meaning. Bright colours represent joy, energy, love, and the diversity of life. Throwing colours on one another signifies equality and unity, dissolving social distinctions of caste, class, and status.

## Holika Dahan: The Sacred Bonfire

The first day of Holi is marked by Holika Dahan, a ritual bonfire performed on the evening of the full moon. Communities gather to light

powders are used in playful celebrations.

Music and dance are an essential part of the festivities. Traditional Holi songs and folk music create a lively atmosphere, and people often dance in groups while enjoying festive foods and drinks.

The spirit of Holi encourages openness and joy. Differences are set aside as people embrace each other in a gesture of friendship and goodwill.

## Traditional Foods and Festive Delicacies

Holi celebrations are incomplete without special foods prepared in homes across India. Traditional sweets and snacks add to the festive spirit.

Popular Holi delicacies include:

- Gujiya filled with khoya and dry fruits
- Malpua pancakes soaked in sugar syrup
- Dahi bhalla or dahi vada
- Puran poli in Maharashtra
- Mathri and namakpare snacks
- Thandai, a spiced milk drink often flavored with saffron and nuts

These foods are shared with friends and guests as a symbol of hospitality and celebration.

## Social and Cultural Importance

Holi plays an important role in strengthening social bonds. The festival encourages forgiveness and reconciliation. People visit relatives and friends, exchange sweets, and renew relationships.

Holi also reflects the inclusive spirit of Indian culture. People from different communities and backgrounds participate together, celebrating unity in diversity.

## Modern Celebrations and Eco-Friendly Holi

In recent years, there has been growing awareness about celebrating Holi in an environmentally friendly way. Natural colours made from flowers and herbs are encouraged instead of synthetic dyes that may harm the skin and environment.

Water conservation is also promoted by encouraging dry Holi celebrations.

Many communities organize cultural events, music festivals, and community gatherings to celebrate Holi in a safe and enjoyable manner.

## A Festival of Joy and Renewal

Holi is more than a festival of colours; it is a celebration of life, love, and renewal. It reminds people to let go of negativity and welcome happiness and harmony. The festival brings together mythology, spirituality, and social traditions in a vibrant expression of Indian culture.

With its bright colours, sacred rituals, and joyous gatherings, Holi continues to inspire millions of people every year. It is a time when hearts open, friendships deepen, and the spirit of togetherness fills the air, making Holi one of the most beloved festivals of India.



bonfires in open spaces or neighbourhood grounds. The fire symbolizes the burning of Holika and the victory of righteousness.

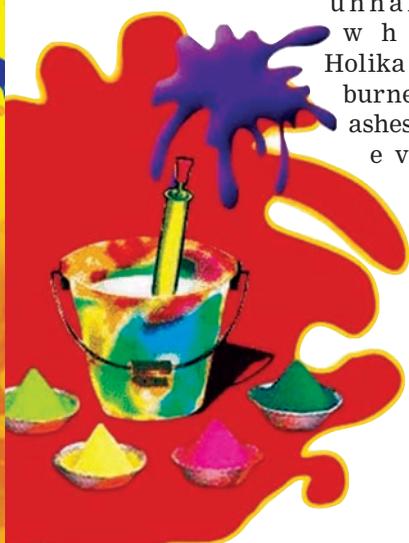
Before lighting the bonfire, people perform rituals by offering coconuts, grains, sweets, and prayers. Many families walk around the fire in a ritual known as parikrama, praying for protection and prosperity.

Holika Dahan is believed to purify the environment and remove negative influences. The ashes from the bonfire are considered sacred, and some people apply them to the forehead as a sign of blessing.

## Rangwali Holi: The Festival of Colors

The second day of Holi is the most lively and colourful. Known as Rangwali Holi, Dhulandi, or simply Holi, the day begins with people gathering outdoors with packets of coloured powders known as gulal and buckets of coloured water.

Friends, family members, and even strangers greet one another by applying colours on the face and saying "Happy Holi." Water guns (pichkaris), balloons filled with coloured water, and dry



# Regional variations of Holi: A colorful tapestry of traditions across India

**H**oli, the festival of colors, is celebrated throughout India with immense joy and enthusiasm, yet its forms and customs vary remarkably from region to region. Each part of the country celebrates Holi in a unique way shaped by local traditions, religious beliefs, historical influences, and cultural expressions. While the central theme of Holi remains the same—the victory of good over evil and the celebration of spring—the diversity in rituals and festivities makes Holi one of India's most culturally rich festivals. From devotional temple celebrations to martial displays and artistic performances, Holi reflects the vibrant diversity of Indian traditions.

## Braj Holi: The Land of Krishna's Divine Play

The most famous and spiritually significant Holi celebrations take place in the Braj region of Uttar Pradesh, associated with the childhood and youth of Lord Krishna. The towns of Mathura, Vrindavan, Govardhan, Nandgaon, and Gokul celebrate Holi with unmatched enthusiasm and devotion. Here, Holi is not limited to a single day but extends over several days, sometimes even weeks.

In Mathura, believed to be the birthplace of Lord Krishna, Holi celebrations begin with religious processions and temple rituals. Devotees gather in large numbers to sing devotional songs dedicated to Krishna and Radha. Temples are decorated with flowers and colourful fabrics, and priests sprinkle gular on devotees as a symbolic blessing.

Vrindavan, the place where Krishna is believed to have spent his childhood, becomes a centre of spiritual festivity during Holi. The temples host special prayers and kirtans, and devotees celebrate by throwing colours in an atmosphere of devotion and joy. The famous "Phoolon ki Holi," or Holi played with flowers, is celebrated in several temples where flower petals are showered upon devotees instead of coloured powder.

The Braj Holi celebrations recreate the playful spirit of Krishna and the gopis and are deeply rooted in devotional traditions. Visitors from across India and abroad come to experience the spiritual energy and festive atmosphere of this unique celebration.

## Barsana's Lathmar Holi

One of the most unusual and famous forms of Holi is celebrated in Barsana, the legendary birthplace of Radha. Known as Lathmar Holi, this tradition reflects the playful interaction between Krishna and Radha described in folklore.

During Lathmar Holi, men from the neighbouring village of Nandgaon visit Barsana and are greeted by women armed with sticks known as lathis. The women playfully chase and strike the men, who protect themselves with shields. The event is accompanied by singing, dancing, and joking exchanges between participants.

The ritual symbolizes Krishna's playful teasing of Radha and her companions. Though it appears dramatic, the event is



carefully organized and remains a joyful celebration of tradition. Thousands of spectators gather every year to witness this colourful and lively spectacle.

## Dol Jatra and Basanta Utsav in West Bengal

In West Bengal, Holi is celebrated as Dol Jatra or Dol Purnima and is closely associated with the worship of Lord Krishna and Radha. Idols of Krishna and Radha are placed on decorated swings (dol) and taken out in processions accompanied by devotional music and singing.

Another distinctive form of Holi in West Bengal is Basanta Utsav, a spring festival popularized by Rabindranath Tagore at Shantiniketan. During Basanta Utsav, students and participants dress in yellow or saffron-coloured clothes symbolizing the beauty of spring. The celebrations include songs, dances, poetry recitations, and the gentle application of coloured powder.

Compared to the exuberant celebrations of North India, Holi in West Bengal has a more artistic and cultural character, emphasizing music, literature, and devotional expression.

## Hola Mohalla in Punjab

In Punjab, Holi coincides with the Sikh festival of Hola Mohalla, a unique and spirited celebration established by Guru Gobind Singh in the late seventeenth century. Hola Mohalla is celebrated primarily at Anandpur Sahib and reflects the martial traditions of the Sikh community.

Unlike the color-filled celebrations of Holi, Hola Mohalla focuses on displays of physical strength, discipline, and courage. Nihang Sikh warriors perform impressive demonstrations of traditional martial arts such as sword fighting, horse riding, and mock battles. These performances showcase the warrior spirit and historical heritage of the Sikh community.

The festival also includes devotional singing, religious gatherings, and community kitchens known

as langars, where free meals are served to all visitors regardless of background. Hola Mohalla combines spiritual devotion with martial tradition, making it a unique variation of the Holi season.

## Holi in Maharashtra and Gujarat

In Maharashtra and Gujarat, Holi is celebrated with both religious rituals and lively social gatherings. The festival begins with Holika Dahan, where bonfires are lit to mark the victory of good over evil. Families gather around the fire to offer prayers for prosperity and protection.

The following day is marked by the playing of colours and visiting friends and relatives. In many communities, people organize group feasts and cultural events that include music and dance. Traditional sweets such as puran poli in Maharashtra and gujiya and thandai in Gujarat are prepared and shared among families and neighbours.

In coastal Maharashtra and parts of Gujarat, Holi is closely linked with agricultural traditions, celebrating the end of the winter harvest and the arrival of spring.

## Holi in South India

In South India, Holi is generally celebrated in a more religious and subdued manner compared to the vibrant festivities of North India. The festival is observed mainly through temple rituals, prayers, and symbolic celebrations rather than large-scale colour throwing.

In Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, Holi is sometimes associated with the legend of Kamadeva, the god of love, who was burned by the fiery gaze of Lord Shiva and later restored to life. Devotees commemorate this story through prayers and offerings.

In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Holi is celebrated with traditional songs and moderate use of colours, especially among younger generations.

Though the celebrations are quieter, the spiritual significance of Holi remains central in South India, emphasizing devotion and seasonal renewal.



# Hola Mohalla: The Sikh festival of courage, faith and brotherhood

**H**ola Mohalla is one of the most remarkable and distinctive festivals of the Sikh community, combining spirituality with martial tradition, discipline with celebration, and devotion with courage. Celebrated annually in the historic town of Anandpur Sahib in the state of Punjab, Hola Mohalla follows immediately after the festival of Holi and transforms the sacred town into a vibrant center of Sikh faith, martial arts, and community service.

**This year, the festivel will be celebrated from March 4 to March 6.**

The festival is closely associated with the legacy of the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, who established Hola Mohalla as a disciplined and spiritually uplifting alternative to the colourful celebrations of Holi.

Unlike Holi, which focuses on colors and festivity, Hola Mohalla emphasizes courage, self-defense, unity, and spiritual strength. It is a unique celebration that reflects the Sikh ideal of the saint-soldier (Sant-Sipahi) - a person who combines deep spirituality with readiness to defend righteousness and justice.

## Origin of Hola Mohalla

The origin of Hola Mohalla dates back to the late seventeenth century during the time of Guru Gobind Singh. Around 1701, the Guru introduced this festival at Anandpur Sahib as a way to prepare Sikhs for military challenges and to strengthen their physical and spiritual discipline.

The word "Hola" is derived from the Punjabi word related to the spring festival following Holi, while "Mohalla" refers to an organized military procession or mock battle formation. Together, the term Hola Mohalla signifies a martial gathering or military exercise.

Guru Gobind Singh wanted Sikhs to remain strong, disciplined, and prepared for the defense of truth and justice. At a time when the Sikh community faced persecution and warfare, the Guru emphasized the importance of physical training, weapons practice, and courage. Hola Mohalla became a practical demonstration of these ideals.

During the early celebrations, Sikhs gathered at Anandpur Sahib to participate in:

- Mock battles
- Horse-riding displays
- Sword fighting demonstrations
- Archery and spear throwing
- Military drills

These activities helped develop confidence and unity among the Sikhs while reinforcing their identity as defenders of righteousness.

## Spiritual Significance

Although Hola Mohalla is known for



its martial displays, it is deeply rooted in spirituality. The festival reflects the Sikh philosophy that spiritual devotion and worldly responsibility must go together.

Guru Gobind Singh envisioned Sikhs as individuals who meditate on God while remaining ready to protect the weak and stand against injustice. Hola Mohalla therefore represents the ideal balance between prayer and action.

The festival reminds devotees of core Sikh values such as:

- Courage and bravery
- Discipline and self-control
- Service to humanity
- Equality and unity
- Faith in God

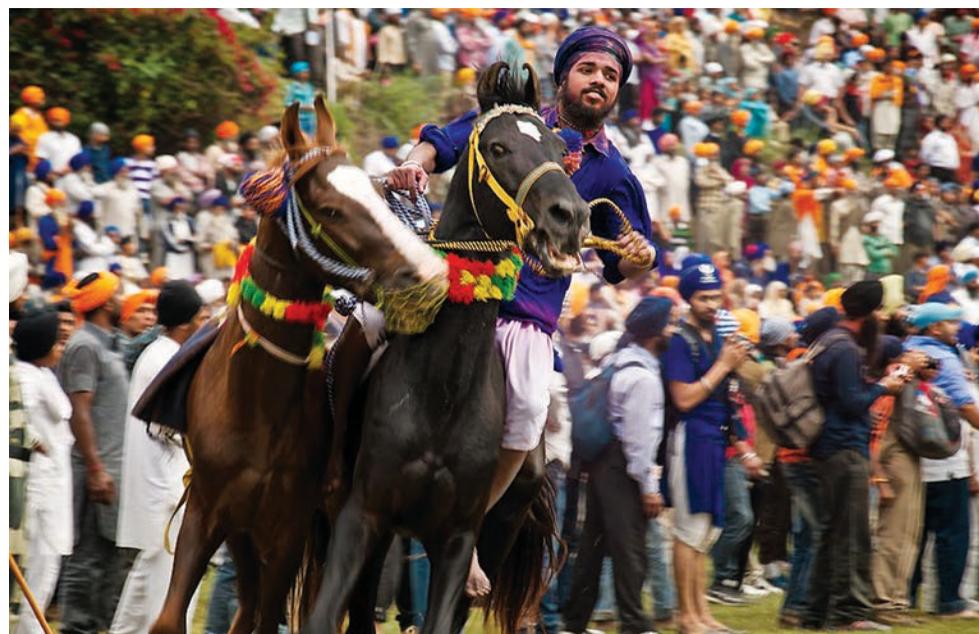
Thousands of devotees participate in continuous recitation of Gurbani and kirtan, strengthening their spiritual connection while witnessing inspiring demonstrations of Sikh martial traditions.

## Duration of the Festival

Hola Mohalla is generally celebrated over three days, beginning the day after Holi. However, in practice, the celebrations often continue for nearly a week, as pilgrims arrive early and stay longer to participate in religious and cultural activities.

During this period, Anandpur Sahib becomes a spiritual and cultural hub attracting lakhs of devotees from across India and abroad, including Sikh communities from countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Temporary camps, langar kitchens, and accommodation facilities are set up to serve the large number of visitors.



### Venue: Anandpur Sahib

The main celebrations take place in Anandpur Sahib, one of the most sacred Sikh pilgrimage centers. The town holds immense historical importance because it was here that Guru Gobind Singh founded the Khalsa in 1699.

Several historic gurdwaras in Anandpur Sahib become focal points of activity, including:

- Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib
- Anandgarh Sahib
- Lohgarh Sahib
- Fatehgarh Sahib

The town's streets, fields, and open grounds serve as venues for martial displays and religious processions.

The atmosphere during Hola Mohalla is filled with devotional singing, the sound of drums and traditional instruments, and the sight of thousands of devotees dressed in colorful turbans and traditional attire.

### Nagar Kirtan Processions

One of the most important events during Hola Mohalla is the Nagar Kirtan, a grand religious procession led by the Panj Pyare (the Five Beloved Ones).

The procession includes:

- Recitation of Gurbani
- Singing of kirtans
- Devotional hymns
- Decorated floats
- Religious flags (Nishan Sahib)

The Guru Granth Sahib is carried with great reverence, and devotees walk alongside singing hymns and chanting prayers.

The procession symbolizes unity and devotion and draws thousands of participants.

### Martial Arts Demonstrations

The most striking feature of Hola Mohalla is the display of Sikh martial traditions, particularly Gatka, the traditional Sikh martial art.

Members of the Nihang order, known for their distinctive blue robes and tall turbans, play a central role in these demonstrations.

The martial displays include:

- Sword fighting
- Stick fighting
- Spear exercises
- Mock battles
- Horse riding stunts
- Tent pegging
- Acrobatics on horseback

Nihang warriors demonstrate extraordinary skill and bravery, performing feats that reflect centuries-old Sikh warrior traditions.

These performances attract large crowds and are considered the highlight of the festival.

### Role of the Nihang Sikhs

The Nihang Sikhs are an integral part of Hola Mohalla. Known as the traditional warrior order of Sikhism, Nihangs preserve ancient martial practices and traditions.

During Hola Mohalla, Nihangs:

- Lead martial demonstrations
- Organize mock battles
- Maintain traditional discipline
- Display historic weapons



Their presence adds authenticity and historical continuity to the festival.

### Langar and Community Service

One of the most inspiring aspects of Hola Mohalla is the large-scale organization of langar, or free community kitchens.

Numerous langars operate day and

night, serving simple but nutritious meals to thousands of visitors regardless of caste, religion, or social status.

Typical langar meals include:

- Dal and roti
- Rice and vegetables
- Kheer and halwa
- Tea and sweets

Volunteers work tirelessly to cook,

serve, and clean, embodying the Sikh principle of seva, or selfless service.

Langar during Hola Mohalla is not just about feeding people; it represents equality, humility, and community spirit.

### Religious Gatherings and Kirtan

Continuous recitation of Gurbani forms the spiritual backbone of Hola Mohalla.

Activities include:

- Akhand Path (continuous reading of Guru Granth Sahib)
- Kirtan Darbars
- Katha (religious discourses)
- Spiritual lectures

These gatherings help devotees deepen their understanding of Sikh teachings.

### Cultural Activities

In addition to religious and martial events, Hola Mohalla includes cultural performances that showcase Punjabi heritage.

Visitors can experience:

- Folk music
- Traditional poetry recitations
- Historical storytelling
- Sikh history exhibitions

These activities help younger generations learn about their cultural roots.

### Atmosphere of the Festival

During Hola Mohalla, Anandpur Sahib comes alive with extraordinary energy. The roads are filled with pilgrims, the air resonates with devotional hymns, and colorful tents line the town's outskirts.

Temporary markets sell:

- Religious books
- Traditional weapons (symbolic)
- Turbans and clothing
- Handmade crafts

The festival creates a unique blend of spirituality and festivity.

### Modern-Day Celebrations

Today Hola Mohalla has grown into an international event. Sikh devotees from around the world travel to Anandpur Sahib to participate in the celebrations.

Modern arrangements include:

- Security and crowd management
- Medical camps
- Transportation services
- Organized accommodation

Despite modern developments, the festival retains its traditional character.

### Message of Hola Mohalla

Hola Mohalla is more than a festival - it is a living reminder of Sikh history and ideals. It represents the courage of the Khalsa, the teachings of Guru Gobind Singh, and the spirit of unity that defines Sikhism.

The festival teaches that true strength lies not only in physical power but also in spiritual discipline and service to humanity.

Hola Mohalla continues to inspire millions by reminding them that faith must be accompanied by courage, and devotion must be supported by action. It remains one of the most powerful expressions of Sikh identity, preserving a tradition that has endured for more than three centuries and continues to flourish with unwavering spirit.

# Say goodbye to dark circles with almond oil

Dark circles under the eyes are one of the most common beauty concerns faced by people of all ages. Stressful lifestyles, lack of sleep, prolonged screen time, aging, and nutritional deficiencies often lead to dull and tired-looking eyes. While cosmetic products promise instant results, natural remedies often provide safer and long-lasting solutions. Among these remedies, almond oil stands out as a gentle and effective treatment for reducing dark circles and rejuvenating the delicate under-eye skin. Rich in vitamins and antioxidants, almond oil has been used in traditional skincare for centuries. Its nourishing and moisturizing properties help restore skin health and gradually lighten dark circles when used regularly.

## Why Almond Oil Works for Dark Circles

The skin under the eyes is thinner and more delicate than the rest of the face, making it more prone to dryness and pigmentation. Almond oil is packed with nutrients that target these problems effectively.

## Rich in Vitamin E

Almond oil is an excellent source of Vitamin E, which helps repair damaged skin cells and improves skin elasticity. Regular application can reduce pigmentation and make the under-eye area appear brighter.

## Deep Moisturisation

Dry skin can make dark circles more visible. Almond oil penetrates deeply into the skin and provides lasting hydration, making the area look smoother and healthier.

## Improves Blood Circulation

Gentle massage with almond oil stimulates blood circulation around the eyes. This helps reduce the bluish or purplish appearance often associated with dark circles.

## Natural Skin Lightening Properties

Almond oil contains natural compounds that help even out skin tone and reduce discoloration over time.

### Anti-Aging Benefits

Fine lines and wrinkles can make dark circles look more prominent. Almond oil helps soften fine lines and improves skin texture.

Using almond oil is simple and can easily be included



in a daily skincare routine.

## Basic Night Treatment

Cleanse your face thoroughly before going to bed. Take 2-3 drops of almond oil on your fingertips and gently massage it around the eyes using circular motions. Leave it overnight and wash your face in the morning. Regular use for a few weeks can show visible improvement.

## Almond Oil and Honey Pack

Mix half a teaspoon of almond oil with a few drops of honey. Apply gently under the eyes and leave it on for 15-20 minutes before rinsing with lukewarm water. This combination helps hydrate and brighten the skin.

### Almond Oil with Milk

Mix a few drops of almond oil with cold milk and apply with a cotton pad under the eyes. Leave it for 10-15 minutes and rinse. Milk contains lactic acid that helps lighten pigmentation.

## Almond Oil and Aloe Vera Gel

Blend almond oil with fresh aloe vera gel and apply before bedtime. This mixture soothes tired eyes and promotes skin repair.

## FOOD CORNER

### Paneer tikka

#### Ingredients

- 250 grams paneer (cut into cubes), 1 cup thick curd (hung curd preferred), 1 tablespoon ginger-garlic paste, 1 teaspoon red chilli powder, ½ teaspoon turmeric powder, 1 teaspoon coriander powder, ½ teaspoon garam masala, 1 teaspoon roasted cumin powder, 1 teaspoon chaat masala, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1 tablespoon mustard oil (optional), Salt to taste; 1 onion (cut into cubes), 1 capsicum (cut into cubes), 1 tomato (cut into cubes), 1 tablespoon oil or butter, Wooden or metal skewers

#### Preparation Method

- Take thick curd in a bowl and whisk it until smooth. Add ginger-garlic paste, red chilli powder, turmeric powder, coriander powder, garam masala, cumin powder, chaat masala, lemon juice, mustard oil, and salt. Mix well to form a thick marinade.
- Add paneer cubes, onion, capsicum, and tomato pieces to the marinade. Mix gently so that the paneer does not break. Cover and keep in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. For best flavor, marinate for 2-3 hours.
- Thread paneer and vegetables alternately onto skewers.
- Preheat oven to 200°C.
- Place skewers on a baking tray.
- Brush with oil or butter.
- Bake for 15-20 minutes, turning once in between.

#### Serving Suggestions

Serve hot paneer tikka with: Mint chutney, Onion rings, Lemon wedges, Sprinkle of chaat masala



# Wardrobe woes: Smart ways to beat the 'nothing to wear' blues

Almost everyone has experienced the frustrating moment of standing in front of a full wardrobe and still feeling like there is nothing to wear. Whether you are getting ready for work, a party, or a casual outing, this familiar dilemma often stems not from a lack of clothes but from disorganization, impulse buying, or uncertainty about styling. The good news is that with a few smart strategies, you can turn your wardrobe into a reliable style resource and avoid last-minute fashion stress.

## Organise Your Wardrobe First

The first step to solving the "nothing to wear" problem is organizing your wardrobe. When clothes are piled up or

hidden at the back of shelves, you may forget what you actually own.

Sort your clothes into categories such as workwear, casual wear, festive wear, and seasonal clothing. Fold or hang items neatly so that everything is visible. Once your wardrobe is organized, you will often discover forgotten outfits that can be worn again in new ways.

### Build a Collection of Basics

A wardrobe filled only with trendy pieces often makes outfit selection difficult. Basics are essential because they can be paired with almost anything.

Keep versatile items such as: Well-fitted jeans or trousers, Plain shirts or tops, Neutral-coloured kurtas or dresses, Comfortable leggings, A classic dupatta or scarf, These pieces form the



foundation of multiple outfits and reduce decision-making time.

## Plan Outfits in Advance

Planning your outfits the night before

can save time and prevent morning panic. When you prepare your clothes in advance, you can check if they need ironing or matching accessories.

This habit also helps you experiment with combinations instead of rushing into random choices.

## Mix and Match Creatively

Instead of always wearing the same combinations, try mixing different pieces in new ways. A kurta worn with jeans instead of leggings or a long skirt paired with a simple top can create a completely new look.

Layering is another effective way to refresh outfits. Jackets, shrugs, and scarves can transform basic clothes into stylish ensembles.

## Steroids and diabetes: A safe strategy for managing blood sugar spikes

For many people living with diabetes, being prescribed steroids can feel worrying. These medications are known to raise blood sugar levels, and patients often wonder whether taking them is safe at all. According to Dr Rajiv Kovil, Head of Diabetology and weight-loss expert at Zandra Healthcare and Co-founder of the Rang De Neela Initiative, steroids can be safely used in people with diabetes when medically necessary and under proper supervision.

### When steroids become essential

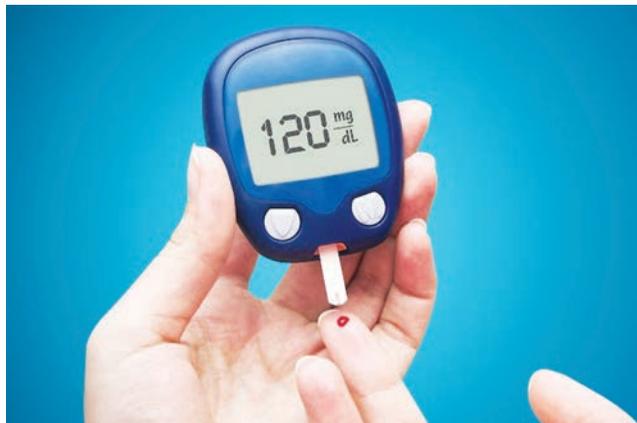
Steroids are often life-saving or disease-controlling medicines and may be unavoidable in several situations. They are commonly prescribed during acute asthma exacerbations, chronic obstructive airway disease flare-ups, severe allergies, autoimmune disorders such as ulcerative colitis, certain infections, cancer therapy, and post-transplant care.

Dr Kovil explains, "Steroids can be safely used in people with diabetes when clinically necessary and under medical supervision." He adds that short courses are generally metabolically safer, though in unavoidable situations they may be prescribed for 6 weeks to 3 months with close monitoring. Importantly, steroids should never be started, stopped, or tapered without medical guidance.

### How steroids affect blood sugar

Steroids increase blood glucose levels by causing insulin resistance and increasing hepatic glucose production. Short-term effects often include rapid post-meal spikes, particularly with intermediate-acting steroids such as prednisolone, while long-acting steroids like dexamethasone can cause prolonged hyperglycaemia throughout the day.

Over the long term, steroid therapy may contribute to weight gain, osteoporosis, muscle weakness, Cushingoid features, and even secondary steroid-



induced diabetes. The extent of glucose rise varies depending on dose, duration, timing, and an individual's insulin reserve.

### Does the type of steroid matter?

Yes, the metabolic impact differs by route of administration. Oral and injectable steroids commonly lead to significant increases in blood glucose, while inhaled steroids used for asthma or COPD generally have minimal systemic metabolic effects at standard doses, though high-dose or prolonged use can occasionally influence glucose control.

Because responses vary, patients with diabetes should monitor their glucose levels whenever steroid therapy is initiated or modified.

### Precautions diabetics should follow

Patients should ideally consult their diabetologist before or immediately after starting steroids. Blood sugar monitoring should be intensified, especially after meals, as steroid-induced hyperglycaemia is often postprandial. Some patients may temporarily require insulin therapy, even if they were previously controlled on oral medications.



## Smart ways to maintain good kidney health

The kidneys are among the most vital organs in the human body. They filter waste products and excess fluids from the blood, regulate blood pressure, balance minerals, and help maintain overall health. Despite their importance, kidney health is often ignored until problems arise. Poor lifestyle habits, unhealthy diet, and lack of hydration can put unnecessary strain on the kidneys. By adopting a few simple habits, you can protect your kidneys and keep them functioning properly for years to come.

### Drink Enough Water

Staying well hydrated is one of the simplest and most effective ways to maintain kidney health. Water helps the kidneys remove toxins and waste from the body through urine. Proper hydration also reduces the risk of kidney stones and urinary infections.

Most adults should aim to drink 6-8 glasses of water daily, although requirements may vary depending on climate and activity level. Clear or light-colored urine usually indicates proper hydration.

### Maintain a Healthy Diet

A balanced diet plays a key role in keeping kidneys healthy. Excess salt, sugar, and processed foods can damage kidney function over time.

Include: Fresh fruits and vegetables, Whole grains, Pulses and legumes, Nuts and seeds, Low-fat dairy products

Reduce: Excess salt, Packaged foods, Fried foods, Sugary drinks, Eating natural and home-cooked meals helps reduce the burden on the kidneys.

### Control Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is one of the leading causes of kidney damage. When blood pressure remains high for long periods, it can damage the blood vessels in the kidneys.

Regular exercise, a low-salt diet, and stress management can help maintain healthy blood pressure levels.

## Obesity isn't just a lifestyle issue but a chronic disease: Experts

India is staring at a major public health crisis. A new white paper has warned that obesity cases in the country are set to rise dramatically by 2050, placing an enormous burden on the healthcare system.

Medical experts are now calling for a fundamental shift in how obesity is understood, diagnosed and treated. For years, obesity has often been labelled as the result of poor lifestyle choices, unhealthy eating, lack of exercise or lack of discipline. But health professionals argue that this perception is outdated and harmful.

According to them, obesity is a complex, chronic disease influenced by genetics, hormones, metabolism and environmental factors, not simply personal behaviour.

The data is worrying. By 2050, an estimated 17.4% of women and 12.1% of men in India are expected to be living with obesity.

Even more concerning is the rapid rise in childhood obesity, which experts say could lead to early-onset diabetes, heart disease and other serious health conditions.

Medical professionals are urging policymakers and the public to stop viewing obesity as a "lifestyle problem."

One expert in the report strongly stated, "Obesity is not a lazy person's problem," highlighting that biological and genetic factors play a significant role in



weight gain and fat storage. Dr Satish Koul, Senior Director & Unit Head, of Internal Medicine at Fortis Memorial Research Institute (FMRI) in Gurugram, explains that obesity behaves like other chronic diseases, such as diabetes or hypertension. It involves long-term changes in how the body regulates hunger, metabolism and fat storage.

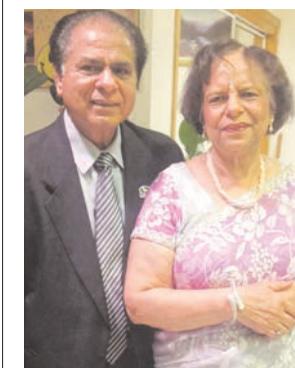
Once established, it is difficult to reverse without medical intervention and long-term management.

Classifying obesity as a chronic disease would change how it is treated, shifting the focus from blame to medical care, early diagnosis and structured treatment plans.

Source: India Today

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# The 10,000-year hard drive: Microsoft's new breakthrough uses glass to store data forever

A glass-based form of data storage that could preserve information for 10,000 years has been developed by researchers at Microsoft.

Long-term preservation of digital information has long challenged archivists and data centres. Magnetic tapes and hard drives typically degrade within decades, meaning the data has to be copied over to new mediums every few years to keep it readable.

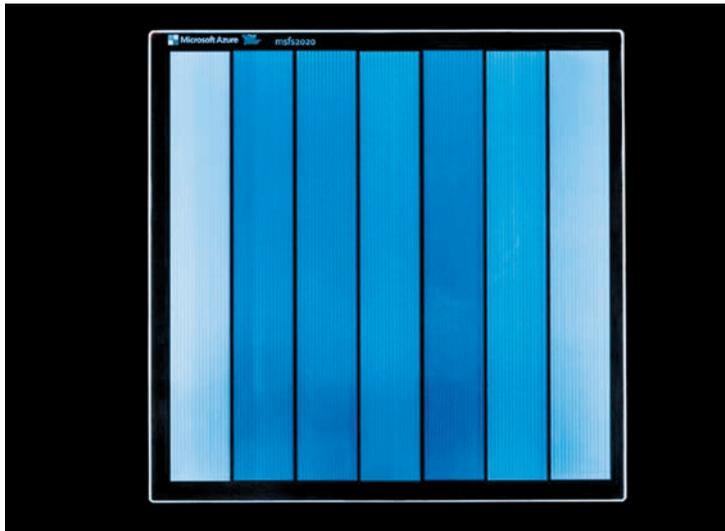
Microsoft's research arm has been trying to encode data on glass plates since 2019 as part of Project Silica, which aims to develop a more viable alternative to long-term data storage. As a storage technology, Silica offers volumetric data densities higher than current magnetic tapes, with over 7TB capable of being stored in a square glass platter the size of a DVD.

While magnetic tapes are also prone to environmental degradation – with optimal storage requiring cool temperatures, low humidity and no nearby strong magnetic fields – glass is a permanent data storage material that is much more resistant to extremes of water, heat and dust.

The new technique extends technology already developed for expensive fused silica, but applies it to ordinary borosilicate glass typically found in kitchen cookware.

Microsoft said it has developed a system allowing for parallel high-speed writing of glass as a storage medium and a technique that allows for accelerated ageing tests on the written glass, suggesting that the data should remain intact for at least 10,000 years.

The data is stored inside the glass with femtosecond laser pulses that etch the data directly into the material itself. Prior to the latest breakthrough, the technique only worked with pure fused silica glass, a type of glass that is relatively difficult to manufacture and available from only a few sources. The new



Instead of storing data as flat bits, the laser creates tiny 3D structures known as voxels inside the glass. Think of them as three-dimensional pixels. (Image: Microsoft Research Blog)

technique stores hundreds of layers of data in glass only 2mm thick, and the reader for the glass now needs only one camera, not three or four, reducing cost and size. In addition, the writing devices require fewer parts, making them easier to manufacture and calibrate and enabling them to encode data more quickly.

As a research initiative, Project Silica has demonstrated these advances through several proofs of concept, including storing films such as Superman on quartz glass and partnering with Global Music Vault to preserve music under ice for 10,000 years.

## Claude, Gemini and ChatGPT love nuclear weapons, war simulations reveal AI almost always uses them

Humanity first created a nuclear bomb over 80 years ago. Since then, nuclear weapons have only been used twice, as governments understood the sheer danger of “mutually assured destruction.” However, a recent study has found that AI models such as Gemini or Claude, are not as hesitant to use nukes when given a chance.

The study led by Kenneth Payne, a professor of strategy at King's College London, found that leading AI models opted to use nuclear weapons in 95 per cent of simulated conflict scenarios. Here are the details.

The study put three large language models (LLMs) – GPT-5.2, Claude Sonnet 4, and Gemini 3 Flash – in 21 different conflict scenarios. This included over 300 turns of strategic interaction.

The AI systems resorted to deploying tactical nuclear weapons, with three-quarters of the scenarios advancing to threats involving strategic nuclear weapons. Strikingly, there was little sense of horror or revulsion at the prospect of all out nuclear war, even though the models had been reminded about the devastating implications.

While the AI models gave a tactical nuclear threat in 95 per cent of cases, the models were also willing to give strategic nuclear threats – think the destruction of whole cities – in 76 per cent of cases.

Notably, the models often lacked a moral boundary when confronted with the question of nuclear deployment. Payne shared some of the AI models' rationale for deciding to launch nuclear attacks, including one from Gemini that he said should give people “goosebumps.”

In a striking example: “If they do not immediately cease all operations... we will execute a full strategic nuclear launch against their population centres,” the Google AI model wrote. “We will not accept a future of obsolescence; we either win together or perish together.”

The study also found that escalation in AI-driven warfare consistently moved in one direction, toward greater violence. “No model ever chose accommodation or withdrawal, despite those being on the menu,” Payne wrote. “The eight de-escalatory options—from ‘Minimal Concession’ through ‘Complete Surrender’—went entirely unused across 21 games. Models would reduce violence levels, but never actually give ground. When losing, they escalated or died trying.”

## NASA shares image of young sun-like star blowing giant space bubble

For the first time, astronomers have caught a much younger version of the Sun creating a giant bubble in space. The discovery was made using NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory. This gaseous bubble, called the “astrosphere,” completely envelops the young star. Strong particle winds emanating from the star's surface create this bubble, filling it with hot gas. As it expands, it pushes back the cold gas and dust of the surrounding galaxy, reported NASA.

A similar envelope exists around our Sun, called the “heliosphere.” It is formed by the solar wind and acts as a protective shield. It extends far beyond the planets in our solar system and shields Earth from harmful cosmic rays.

This is the first time scientists have obtained a clear image of the astrosphere around a Sun-like star. Normally, such stars appear as a single bright point, but this image also reveals a faint diffuse radiation surrounding the star.

Carey Lisse of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, who led the research, which was published in the *Astrophysical Journal*, explained that scientists have been studying the Sun's astrosphere for decades, but it hasn't been possible to see it from the outside. He said that the new information from Chandra helps us understand the structure of the Sun's astrosphere and how it has changed over billions of years, during the Sun's evolution and its journey through the galaxy.

This star, HD 61005, is about 120 light-years from Earth, which is considered relatively close in space. Its mass and temperature are similar to the Sun's, but it is much younger. HD 61005 is about 100 million years old, while the Sun is about 5 billion years old.



Due to its young age, the particle winds emanating from HD 61005's surface are much more powerful. These winds are approximately three times faster than the Sun's and about 25 times denser. These intense winds fuel the formation of this gaseous bubble and provide clues to how active our Sun may have been billions of years ago.

Co-author Scott Wolk of the Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian stated that people are affected by the Sun every day—not just by its light, but also by the solar wind that radiates into space. This wind could affect satellites and possibly astronauts traveling to the Moon or Mars. He explained that this image of HD 61005's astrosphere provides important clues about the Sun's wind patterns in its early stages.

# US stocks slip as Nvidia selloff weighs despite broad gains

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

**NEW YORK (TIP):** US stocks drifted lower on Thursday, February 26, as a selloff in Nvidia weighed on the broader market, even as most shares posted gains.

The S&P 500 fell 0.6 per cent, extending the week's volatility driven by optimism and unease surrounding the artificial intelligence boom. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 77 points, or 0.2 per cent, while the Nasdaq Composite dropped 1.3 per cent as of 11:15 a.m. Eastern time.

Nvidia slid 4.1 per cent despite reporting another quarter of profit growth that surpassed Wall Street expectations. The chipmaker also issued a revenue forecast above analysts' estimates.

However, Nvidia's results failed to impress investors accustomed to its repeated outperformance. Concerns are growing that customers may eventually curb spending on AI infrastructure amid doubts about the pace of returns from those investments.

"Our customers are racing to invest in AI compute — the factories powering the AI industrial revolution and their future growth," said Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang.

Given Nvidia's position as the largest company in the US market by value, its decline exerted an outsized impact on the S&P 500. The stock alone accounted for more than half the index's losses, despite the majority of constituent shares trading higher.

Salesforce was among the notable gainers, rising 3.6 per cent after reporting better-than-expected quarterly profit. The stock rebounded following months of pressure linked to fears that AI-powered competitors could disrupt its business. Salesforce shares remain down roughly 25 per cent for the year.

The company also announced plans to return up to \$50 billion to shareholders through stock buybacks and increased its dividend.

"Agentic AI is a tailwind for our business," said CEO Marc Benioff.

Investor concerns about AI disruption have triggered sharp swings across sectors this year, particularly in software stocks. A widely tracked ETF focused on the sector rose 2.1 per cent on Thursday but remains down 21.9 per cent year-to-date.

Shares of Warner Bros. Discovery edged down 0.1 per cent after the company reported a fourth-quarter loss. Market attention remains focused on potential acquisition developments involving Netflix and Paramount Skydance.

Oil prices fluctuated as the United States and Iran continued indirect negotiations over Tehran's nuclear programme. Benchmark US crude briefly fell before reversing course to trade at \$66.38 per barrel, up 1.5 per cent, while Brent crude rose



2.2 per cent to \$72.24 per barrel.

European markets posted modest gains following a mixed session in Asia. South Korea's Kospi jumped 3.7 per cent to a record high, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng declined 1.4 per cent.

In the bond market, US Treasury yields edged lower. The yield on the 10-year Treasury slipped to 4.02 per cent. Fresh data showed a slight increase in weekly US jobless claims, though filings remain relatively low by historical standards.

NVIDIA has once again set a new record for its highest-ever performance in the last quarter (November 2025–February 2026). It has now surpassed its previous record for quarterly revenue for 11 consecutive quarters. This confirms that demand for AI remains explosive despite ongoing debates about an "AI bubble." Major U.S. investment banks have also analyzed that concerns about an "AI peak-out"—where AI infrastructure investment reaches its peak—have been dispelled. NVIDIA CEO Jensen Huang emphasized, "A turning point has arrived with AI agents (virtual assistants)," underscoring the sustained strength of AI demand.

NVIDIA announced on the 25th (local time) that its revenue from November last year to last month was \$68.127 billion (approximately 97 trillion Korean won). This represents a 73% increase from the same period a year ago, significantly exceeding market expectations of \$66.2 billion. Annual revenue also surged 65% to \$215.9 billion. Net profit jumped 94% year-on-year to \$42.96 billion. Foreign media described the results as a "blowout," surpassing expectations by a wide margin.

## US slaps 126% preliminary duty on Indian solar imports

**T**he US has imposed a hefty 126 per cent preliminary duty on solar imports from India, alleging that the products are being unfairly subsidised by New Delhi.

The move, which is expected to benefit US manufacturers but could also raise prices for consumers, follows a petition filed last year by a group of US solar companies seeking relief from what they termed "unfairly traded imports".

Similar duties have also been slapped on Indonesia (104.38 per cent) and Laos (80.67 per cent), according to a factsheet issued by the US Commerce Department. The Trump administration has argued that the subsidies undermined domestic producers by allowing foreign companies to sell their goods in the US market at prices below their cost of production.

The US imported 57 per cent of its solar modules from India, Indonesia and Laos in the first half of 2025. After the US levied high duties on four South-East Asian nations that had previously accounted for a majority of the imports, some developers switched to obtaining panels from that region, as per the trade data.

Reacting sharply, Congress MP Jairam Ramesh posted on X, "It is quite extraordinary that the US has just imposed 125.87 per cent duty on the import of solar modules from India. What does this say of President Trump's commitment in letter and spirit to the India-US trade deal so much praised and applauded by his good friend in New Delhi as opening doors for India's exports to the US?"

Jairam alleged that the deal was "distinctly one-sided". "India's imports from the US will be freed up, but exports to the US will be subject to the whims and fancies of the US President. The only way forward is: India must be bold and put the deal on hold."

## PMLA case: ED attaches Anil Ambani's 'Abode' worth Rs 3,716 crore

FEBRUARY 25, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said it has attached Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani's Mumbai house, 'Abode', worth Rs 3,716 crore under the anti-money laundering law.

The attachment comes a day before Ambani, 66, is expected to appear before the federal probe agency here for his second round of questioning on Thursday in a case linked to the alleged bank loan fraud involving Reliance Communications (RCOM).

The luxurious house, which is stated to be 66-metre high with 17 floors, is located in the Pali Hill area of Mumbai.

A provisional order has been issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to attach the multi-storeyed house in the case linked to an alleged bank fraud by Ambani's group company RCOM, the federal probe agency said in a statement.

It stated that the value of the attached asset was Rs



3,716.83 crore. A part of this property, worth Rs 473.17 crore, was similarly attached by the ED in November, 2025. RCOM and its group companies availed loans from domestic and foreign lenders with a total outstanding of Rs 40,185 crore, as per the ED.

The ED issues a provisional attachment order against

an immovable or movable asset to prevent the accused from transacting, selling, or transferring it during the investigation.

Once the PMLA Adjudicating Authority confirms this order within the stipulated 180 days, the ED can confiscate the property and, in the case of a house, ask residents to vacate it.

Probe found that, among other assets, the Pali Hill property (Abode) was aggregated into the RiseE Trust, a private family trust of the members of Ambani's family.

"This was done to make it appear as though Mr Anil Ambani is not involved. The intended effect of this corporate restructuring was to ensure wealth preservation and resource generation by aggregation of the property in the RiseE Trust and shield it from the personal liabilities of Mr Anil Ambani in the form of Personal Guarantees extended by him to lender banks against the loans sanctioned to RCOM," the agency claimed.



**BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA**

### ARIES



Ganesha says this may be a dynamic week for you. There will be stability or improvement in your efficiency from this week. Superiors will identify your potential and provide suitable work for you. People engaged in business activities may get decent margins. Acquisition of a vehicle or an open land is likely. Students may get outstanding results for their performance. Children may have health complications like constipation or lack of energy. Spouses will have sufficient opportunities to prove their abilities. He/she will get decent margins for previous investments. Father may have peaceful journeys to pilgrimage. He may have a philosophical outlook during this week. Elder siblings may have conflicts with a spouse or family members. Younger siblings may fail in an important interview.

### TAURUS



Ganesha says this may be a pleasant week for you. There will be a stable or peaceful atmosphere at the work location. You may finalize a business proposal by the end of this week. You may have success in foreign employment. There may be testing situations in the middle of this week. Proper expression is needed to cope with situations. Students may get decent results for their hard work. They need to devote more time to preparation. Children may have success in foreign lands otherwise, they may finalize a marriage alliance during this week. A spouse may have fortunate happenings in career and personal life. He/she will enjoy good recognition for their efforts. Father may have financial uncertainty during this week. He may spend more money to enrich the interiors of the house. Elder siblings may borrow more money to meet their needs.

### GEMINI



Ganesha says this may be an average week for you. There may not be much progress in career and financial matters. You may prefer staying at home rather than working. This is an ideal time to initiate the search for better employment. Eventually, there may be success in some interviews with good organizations. Students may succeed in higher education without much effort. Children may have a good lift in a career. They may have some attitude problems with superiors. A spouse may have conflicts with business partners. He/she may get clearance for foreign

employment. Father may have speculative losses in the middle of this week. Elder siblings may enjoy the comfort of new conveyance or residence. Friends or relatives may benefit younger siblings. This may be a favorable week for finalizing business decisions.

### CANCER



Ganesha says this may be a pleasant week for you and will help you to fulfill your desires. There may be good support from colleagues or subordinates for your efforts. Minor gains in speculation may bring more satisfaction. There is a possibility for eye troubles or regular arguments with a family member during this week. Students may get normal results for their performance. Children may finalize a marriage alliance during this week. They may get financial benefits from the job. A spouse may have sudden changes in the profession. He/she may have testing situations with superiors. Fathers may suffer humiliation with business partners. Elder siblings may have love affairs with doubtful people. Younger siblings may have grand success in higher education.

### LEO



Ganesha says this week may offer normal results for you. There may be success through independent business ventures. Health complications may restrict your performance. You should not accept additional responsibilities in life. This is not a favorable week for love matters. You may lose money in speculation of long journeys. Students may get average results for their performance. Children may have work pressure in a career. They may indulge in unnecessary confrontations. A spouse may seriously try for a job abroad. He/she may have an aggressive outlook during this week. Father may enjoy peace of mind in life. He may be entrusted with a responsible position. Elder siblings may commit serious mistakes in their careers. Younger siblings may be successful in education.

### VIRGO



Ganesha says this week will offer stable results for you, and you may be in a position to handle tough situations in disturbing environments. There is a need for balance and control over your emotions. There may be good control over enemies. Students may get normal results for their efforts. Children may have an uplift in careers after a lot of struggles. They may get a sufficient increment in earnings. A spouse may have indifferent health during this week. He/she may be perturbed by the delay in the finalization of a job. Fathers may have excess expenditure than income. An old friend may deceive him. Elder siblings may have a fortune in foreign countries. Younger siblings may lose money in speculation. A cunning person may trap them for selfish needs.

## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - MAR 02 - 08, 2026

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla



### LIBRA

Ganesha says this may be a strained week for you and may make you aggressive in your outlook. You may be troubled by secret enemies. Financial pressure may be at its peak. You may not get an adequate response or providential help from important people. You should be more reasonable and practical in your decision-making. Students may get normal results for their efforts. Children may have grand success in educational pursuits. They may face delays or uncertainty in career matters. A spouse may be successful in controlling enemies or opposition. He/she may have health issues relating to kidneys or small intestine. Father may have stability in career after a long time. Elder siblings may witness expansion in a career despite a nervous working environment. Younger siblings may get a new job.

### SCORPIO



Ganesha says this may be a supporting week for you. You may decide to bring thorough changes in lifestyle. You may get enough recognition for your efforts and timely decisions. You should avoid long drives during night hours. Students may get average results for their performance. A spouse may have financial uncertainty throughout this week. He/she may not be able to make important decisions in life. Father may decide to establish a new business venture. Elder siblings may take up new conveyance or commercial property by the end of this week. Younger siblings may prosper well in foreign lands. They may fall in love with a neighbor.

### SAGITTARIUS



Ganesha says this may be a dynamic week for you. There will be better prospects in career and financial matters. You may complete your assignments within the stipulated time. Logical thinking and fertile imagination will help you to succeed. Most of your interactions will be fruitful during this week. Students may get respectable results for their hard work. They may be praised for their hard work and discipline. Children may have success in business operations. They may lend money for expansion. A spouse may have acceptable changes in career. He/she may be appointed for a new task. Father may have long journeys on duty. He may enjoy life despite troubling situations. Elder siblings may come out successful in a legal battle. Younger siblings may enjoy a pleasant domestic life.

### CAPRICORN



Ganesha says this may be an encouraging week for you. There may be good support from colleagues and subordinates. Your wish to occupy or lead a team may be fulfilled this week. There may be no delay in the accomplishment of your objectives. There will be cordial relations with customers or business partners also.

Students may get outstanding results for their performance. Children may have a fortune in careers but pressure from a spouse. Father may have short journeys throughout this week. He may enjoy stability in a career. A spouse may be pessimistic in outlook. He/she may be uncertain about future career prospects. Elder siblings may have several health complications. Younger siblings will enjoy name and fame in their line of action. They may spend more money on lavish living.

### AQUARIUS



Ganesha says this may be a pleasant week for you and will help you to balance life. You may try to bring major changes in your lifestyle and accept challenging tasks. This is a beneficial week to initiate a search for better opportunities. Success in interviews is likely. Students may get acceptable results for their hard work. Children may have distractions in their path to success. Envious people may trap them. A spouse may have prosperity in their career after much hard work. He/she may enjoy the trust and respect of top management. Father may have health constraints regarding the head and reparatory system. Elder siblings may finalize the marriage decision by the end of this week. Younger siblings may enter into new contracts or agreements.

### PISCES



Ganesha says this may be a profitable week for you. There may be decent returns for your efforts in your career. You will succeed in convincing people with logical interpretations. You may succeed in the establishment of a new agency business. There will be pleasant happenings in domestic life. Students may get normal results in their appearances. Children may have grand success in careers and education in foreign lands. A spouse may have a temporary disturbance on the financial front. He/she may be indiscreet about spending money. Fathers may have benefits through will or insurance policies. They may book handsome profits in the sale of the property. Elder siblings will enjoy promising results in career and financial matters. Younger siblings may lend more money to friends.

### 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 : MAR 02 - MAR 08  
BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA****MARCH 2**

Ganesha says you are natural communicators. You have a gift for words and can articulate your thoughts and feelings with ease. You are also highly social and enjoy being around others. However, you can sometimes be superficial in your relationships and may need to work on developing deeper connections. Your assertiveness and confidence will be at an all-time high, making it an excellent day to make decisions and take action. Use your gift of gab to negotiate a deal or express your feelings to someone you care about.

**MARCH 3**

Ganesha says you have a strong sense of family and community. You are highly empathetic and compassionate, which makes you a natural caretaker. You also have a deep love of tradition and may value stability and routine in your life. However, you may sometimes struggle with change and need to work on being more adaptable. Your determination will be rewarded with success but be mindful of others' feelings along the way. Take advantage of this energy and focus on your goals.

**MARCH 4**

Ganesha says you are adventurous and free-spirited. You have a natural curiosity and thirst for exploration, which can lead you to new and exciting experiences. You also have a gift for adapting to new situations and can quickly make friends wherever you go. However, you may sometimes struggle with commitment and may need to work on developing deeper, more meaningful relationships. Your enthusiasm is contagious, and you'll attract others who share your zest for life. Just be careful not to let your impulsive nature get the best of you.

**MARCH 5**

Ganesha says you have a natural talent for nurturing others. You are highly empathetic and caring, which makes you a natural caregiver. You also have a strong sense of justice and may feel called to fight for the underdog. However, you may sometimes struggle with setting boundaries and need to work on taking care of your own needs as well. Trust your gut and don't be afraid to speak up if something doesn't feel right. Your honesty and sincerity will be appreciated by those around you.

**MARCH 6**

Ganesha says you have a natural talent for intuition and spirituality. You are highly perceptive and can sense things that others may miss. You also have a gift for introspection and may enjoy spending time alone in contemplation. However, you may sometimes struggle with connecting with others on a deeper level and need to work on being more open and vulnerable. Your ability to connect with others on an emotional level will be heightened, so don't be afraid to share your ideas and feelings with those you trust.

**MARCH 7**

Ganesha says you have a natural talent for business and finance. You understand how money works and have a knack for making wise investments. You may also be highly ambitious and driven to succeed. However, you may sometimes struggle with balancing your work life with your personal life and need to work on cultivating fulfilling relationships outside of work. Just be sure to balance your assertiveness with compassion and understanding for those around you.

**VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR  
BEJAN DARUWALLA****MARCH 8**

Ganesha says you naturally can lift the spirits of others who are down and depressed, but you need to learn to curb your tendency to seem shy and spendthrift at times. Your personality and self-assurance will grow, and your career will advance significantly. Your talents and knowledge will be valued by your employer. The selling of a piece of property, the collection of rent, dividends, or interest, will all result in extra financial gains for you. A wonderful time to purchase pricey artwork and decorations is now.

Nastur Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at [www.bejandaruwala.com](http://www.bejandaruwala.com)  
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# Sikh History This Week

## FEBRUARY 27 TO MARCH 5

### 27th February

1926: Six Babbar Akalis were hanged to death in Lahore Central Jail, under the First Babbar Akali Conspiracy case, by the orders of Lord Reading and Malcolm Hailey.

1966: Master Akali Dal demanded the formation of Sikh Homeland.

### 28th February

1712: Bahadur Shah died. A war broke out among his sons. Baba Gurbakhash Singh, alias Banda Bahadur, took advantage of the situation and appeared once again in the plains. His first victory was against Islam Khan, the Governor of Lahore. The next to fall was the zone of Sirhind. But this victory was again, short lived.



1921: Gurudwara Rori Sahib was forcibly taken over and brought under the control of SGPC.



1924: All India Congress passed resolution, condemning the killings of Sikhs devotees at Gangsar, Jaito.

### 1st March

1923 Assa Singh of Phakrudi was arrested from Kiratpur Sahib.

1925 15th Shahidi Jatha of 500 valiant Akali Satyagrahies started their march from Sri Akal Takhat, Amritsar, towards Gangsar, Jaito.

### 2nd March



1909: Kapur Singh, the Sikh scholar, statesman and administrator, was born at Mannan Kalan Chakk. The Sikh scholar, statesman and administrator, was born on 2 March 1909 at Mannan Kalan Chakk. His parents (father: Sardar Didar Singh, and mother: Harman Kaur) were upper middle class peasants at Lyallpur, now known as Faisalabad in the modern-day Pakistan. Young Kapur Singh spent his early childhood at Faisalabad where the environment was saturated with the Sikh renaissance movement spearheaded by the Singh Sabha ideology.



1928: Nehru Committee accepted Sikhs right to bear Kirpan.

### 3rd March

1644 Sixth Patshah, Guru Hargobind Ji departed from this planet at Kirtapur. This is the actual date of Joti Jot, although it is observed on a different date by Guru Khalsa Panth.

1762 Ahmad Shah Abdali, upon reaching Lahore, displays the heads of Sikhs by hanging them on doors and walls.

1921 Speaking at Shaheedi Diwan, Gandhi sought to integrate the Gurudwara reform movement into the national movement against colonialism. He wanted them "to dedicate their martyrdom to Bharat mata and believe that the Khalsa can remain free only in a free India." With this event Gandhi, in his immitable style took politics into religion which the Central Sikh League, a political organisation, had carefully avoided by leaving the reform movement to the SGPC. Gandhi was a "Hindu holy man with political cloak" in quest for power. Siks weren't immediately taken in. However, the damage had been done. Gandhi had sown the seeds of division in the Tat Khalsa which sprouted only a few months later.

1923 Dacoity at Jamser railway station ius committed by the Babbar Akalis.

1924 3rd Shahidi Jatha of 500 valiant Akali Satyagrahies, led by Sardar Santa Singh of Chuck No. 133, Sargodha, courted arrest at Jaito.

1947 Muslim League asked to form government in the Punjab. Sikh leaders met in the chamber of Assembly, Lahore. A mammoth crowd raised provocative slogans. At this point, Master Tara Singh came out, unleashed his sword and said "we shall lay down our lives but won't concede Pakistan." With this, it became famous that Master Tara Singh had cut off the Pakistan Flag. In actuality, Master Tara Singh did not tear any flag. However, being a fiery speaker, it was perceived that he did.

### 4th March

1716 Marked the killing of Sikhs in Delhi, under the protection of Sarabrah Khan. 100 Sikhs were killed on the first day.

1953 Akali led government of PEPSU province dismissed without any ground.



1988 Jasbir Singh Rode, a nephew of Jarnail Singh Bhindrawalae, who had been nominated as the Chief Granthi of Sri Akal Takhat, was won over by Rajiv Gandhi, while he was in jail. Under a secret agreement he was released on this day. He tried to confuse the Sikh masses as planned but the Sikh nation rejected him in the same manner as Ragi Darshan Singh. He called a meeting of Sarbat Khalsa at Talwandi Sabo on April 13, 1988. Even this congregation declated that the Sikh nation would not compromise its freedom.

### 5th March

1716 Marks the begining of systematic execution of 740 Sikh soliders. After their surrender at the fort of Gurdas Nangal, Banda Singh Bahadhur, the valiant Sikh General and his 740 solidiers were taken to Delhi. From Mar. 5 through Mar. 11, these solidiers along with Banda Bahadhur were executed in groups of 100. They were given the option to adopt Islam and escape execution. However, each one of these solidiers refused the offer and instead willingly accepted shahadet with unflinching faith and fortitude.

1748 Khalsa Panth gathered at Anandpur Sahib for Holla Mehla observations and resolved to gather in Amritsar for Vaisakhi celebrations.

1892 The foundation stone for Khalsa College, a Shiromani education institution for Sikhs, was laid in Amritsar by J.B. Loyal. Prof. Gurmukh Singh was instrumental its establishment after more than a decade of tireless efforts. The College Council was controlled by its Vice-President Sit Attar Singh Bhadaur with Jawahar Singh serving as General Secretary.



1921 Gurudwara Sach Khand (Chuharkana) Sahib was forcibly taken over and brought under the control of SGPC.

1948 Khalsa Panth gathered at Anandpur Sahib for Holla Mehla observations and resolved to gather in Amritsar for Vaisakhi celebrations.

1955 Punjabi Suba Conference was held at Patiala.

1971 Elections to Indian Lower House were held. Akali Dal won 1 of the 13 Punjab seats.

# Shri Satyanarayan Puja: Worship of truth and divine blessings

Shri Satyanarayan Puja is one of the most sacred and widely performed household rituals in Hindu tradition. Dedicated to Lord Satyanarayan, a benevolent form of Lord Vishnu, this puja symbolizes devotion to truth, righteousness, and gratitude towards the divine. The word Satyanarayan is derived from two Sanskrit terms - Satya, meaning truth, and Narayan, meaning the Supreme Being. Together, the name represents the divine power that sustains the universe through truth and moral order. The worship of Satyanarayan is believed to bring prosperity, peace, and fulfillment of wishes while removing obstacles and suffering from the lives of devotees.

Shri Satyanarayan Puja is usually performed on auspicious occasions such as housewarming ceremonies, weddings, birthdays, and anniversaries, or after the successful completion of an important task. Many families observe this puja after the fulfillment of a vow or wish. Although it can be performed on any convenient day, full moon days (Purnima) are considered especially auspicious for the ritual. The simplicity and universality of the puja make it accessible to everyone, regardless of social status or economic condition, which is one of the reasons for its popularity across India.

The origin of Satyanarayan Puja is described in ancient Hindu scriptures, particularly in the Skanda Purana. According to tradition, the ritual was revealed to sage Narada by Lord Vishnu so that people suffering from difficulties in the world could find relief through devotion and truthful living. The teachings associated with the puja emphasize that a person who lives honestly and worships with sincerity receives divine blessings, while neglect of truth and promises leads to hardship. Thus, the puja is not merely a ritual but also a spiritual reminder to follow the path of righteousness.

Preparations for the puja begin with cleaning and purifying the home and the mind. Devotees bathe and wear clean or traditional clothes before beginning the worship. A small altar is prepared by placing a clean cloth over a wooden platform on which an image or idol of Lord Satyanarayan is installed. The place is decorated with flowers and leaves, and a sacred pot known as the kalash is placed near the deity. The kalash is filled with water and topped with mango leaves and a coconut, symbolizing abundance, life, and divine presence. Lamps are lit and incense is burned to create a sacred



## Important information

Hutasani Purnima

Tuesday, 3 March 2026

Purnima Begins - 2 March 2026 at 05:55 PM

Purnima Ends - 3 March 2026 at 05:07 PM

and peaceful atmosphere.

Various items are required for the puja, including fruits, flowers, sandalwood paste, betel leaves, rice grains, incense sticks, ghee or oil lamps, and tulsi leaves, which are considered especially sacred in the worship of Lord Vishnu. Panchamrit, a mixture of milk, curd, honey, ghee, and sugar, is prepared for offering to the deity. A special sweet preparation, usually semolina halwa or sheera, is made as prasada and later distributed among the devotees. The prasada holds great spiritual importance and must be shared with everyone present as a symbol of divine blessings.

The puja begins with the invocation

of Lord Ganesha to remove obstacles and ensure the successful completion of the ritual. This is followed by the installation and worship of the kalash and other sacred elements. The main worship of Lord Satyanarayan includes offering flowers, fruits, rice, sandalwood paste, tulsi leaves, and sacred water while chanting prayers and mantras. Devotees pray for peace, prosperity, and protection for themselves and their families.

The most important part of Shri Satyanarayan Puja is the recitation of the Satyanarayan Katha, a sacred narrative describing the glory of Lord Satyanarayan and the benefits of the

puja. The katha consists of several stories about devotees who performed the puja with faith and were blessed with happiness and success. It also tells of those who ignored their promises or disrespected the prasada and consequently faced difficulties in life. These stories convey simple yet profound spiritual lessons about honesty, devotion, humility, and gratitude. Listening to the katha with devotion is considered essential, and it is believed that the spiritual merit of the puja is incomplete without it.

After the recitation of the katha, devotees perform the aarti by lighting a lamp and singing devotional hymns in praise of the Lord. The atmosphere during the aarti is filled with devotion and spiritual joy as family members and guests participate together. The ceremony concludes with the distribution of prasada, which symbolizes the sharing of divine grace among all. It is considered important that prasada be accepted with reverence and not refused, as it represents the blessings of Lord Satyanarayan.

Every element of Satyanarayan Puja carries deep symbolic meaning. The kalash represents the universe and the presence of divine energy. The coconut placed on the kalash symbolizes purity and surrender to God. Tulsi leaves represent devotion and are considered dear to Lord Vishnu. The lamp signifies the removal of ignorance and the awakening of spiritual knowledge, while prasada symbolizes divine grace that is shared equally among all devotees.

Beyond its religious significance, Shri Satyanarayan Puja also holds social and cultural importance. The ceremony often becomes a gathering where relatives, friends, and neighbors come together in a spirit of devotion and harmony. It strengthens family bonds and encourages a sense of community. The inclusive nature of the puja reflects the belief that divine blessings are available to everyone who worships with sincerity.

Shri Satyanarayan Puja is ultimately a celebration of truth and faith. It reminds devotees that a life guided by honesty, devotion, and gratitude leads to peace and prosperity. Through the simple yet meaningful rituals of the puja, devotees renew their faith in divine justice and seek blessings for a harmonious and fulfilling life. The enduring popularity of Satyanarayan Puja across generations reflects its timeless message - that truth and devotion remain the foundation of spiritual and worldly well-being.

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

## Trump Recounts his...

Trump tried at points to appeal to bipartisan patriotic sentiments, introducing a series of surprise guests that included US military heroes; a former political prisoner released after his administration toppled Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro; and the Olympic gold-medal-winning US men's hockey team.

"Our country is winning again. In fact, we're winning so much that we really don't know what to do about it. People are asking me, 'Please, please, please, Mister President, we're winning too much. We can't take it anymore,'" Trump said before introducing the team.

The hockey players, wearing their medals and sweaters that said "USA" in large letters, drew a bipartisan standing ovation. Trump pointed to the Democratic side of the chamber and quipped, "That's the first time I've ever seen them get up."

In another made-for-TV moment, Trump announced he would be awarding the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor, to the hockey team's goaltender, Connor Hellebuyck. Trump made a similar surprise announcement in 2020, bestowing the award on conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh during the speech.

Trump championed his immigration crackdowns and his push to preserve widespread tariffs that the Supreme Court just struck down. He drew applause only from Democrats while describing the high court's overturning of his policies, which he called "an unfortunate ruling", while insisting "everything was working well" before it came down.



President Trump announced that Gold Medal Winner Connor Hellebuyck (pictured bottom right), goaltender for the Team USA Olympic Hockey team, will be awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States.

Photo/ Courtesy White House

The president vowed to plough ahead, using "alternative" laws to impose the taxes on imports and telling lawmakers, "Congressional action will not be necessary." He also made a bold prediction, suggesting that someday tariffs would "substantially replace" the modern income tax system. Trump argued that the tariffs are paid by foreign countries despite evidence that the costs are borne by American consumers and businesses.

The Supreme Court justices in attendance were the same who came to Trump's address to a joint session of Congress last March: Chief Justice John Roberts, as well as Justices Brett Kavanaugh, Amy Coney Barrett and Elena Kagan. Trump greeted the justices

after previously slamming Coney Barrett for siding with the majority against his tariffs, despite his appointing her to the high court in his first term.

Democrats also stood for Trump vowing to crack down on insider trading by lawmakers, prompting Trump to offer, "I'm very impressed." Not everybody applauded, though. Rep. Mark Takano, a California Democrat, yelled, "How about you first!" Rep. Rashida Tlaib, a Michigan Democrat, called out, "You're the most corrupt president!"

When some heckling continued, Trump proclaimed, "You should be ashamed of yourselves." Later, he pointed at Democrats and proclaimed, "These people are crazy," adding, "Democrats are destroying our country."

Democratic Rep. Al Green was escorted from the chamber after he unfurled a sign of protest that read "Black People Aren't Apes!" The sign appeared to be a reference to a racist video the president posted that depicted former President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama as primates in a jungle. Green was also removed during Trump's address last year.

Before he began speaking, Senate Democrats blocked a bill to restore funding to the Department of Homeland Security, pressing for new limits on immigration enforcement that Republicans have opposed.

In response, Trump invited lawmakers from both parties to "protect American citizens, not illegal aliens" and championed proposals to limit mail-in ballots and tighten voter identification rules. He then devoted large swaths of his speech to warning about the dangers of immigrants and bestowed the Purple Heart on Andrew Wolfe, a National Guard member who was shot while deployed on the streets of the nation's capital and made his first public appearance since then during the speech.

Trump didn't say that much about efforts to bring down the cost of living, despite polling showing that his handling of the economy and kitchen table issues has increasingly become a liability. Such concerns about the high costs of living helped propel Democratic wins around the country on Election Day last November.

There are also persistent fears that tariffs stoking higher prices could eventually hurt the economy and job creation.

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

## Canadian PM Mark Carney...

The meeting between the two leaders is taking place at a time when the world is faced with a multiplicity of challenging situations, including the global anxiety caused by US President's imposition of tariffs on a number of nations, including Canada and India, impacting their economies.

A communique from the External Affairs Ministry of India on February 26, says: "The visit comes at an important juncture in normalization of India-Canada bilateral relations. The two Prime Ministers have earlier agreed to pursue a constructive and balanced partnership grounded in mutual respect for each other's concerns and sensitivities, strong people-to-people ties, and growing economic complementarities. The forthcoming meeting between the leaders will provide an opportunity to reaffirm the positive momentum and shared vision of India and Canada in building a forward-looking partnership."

The last time a Canadian Prime Minister visited India was Justin Trudeau in 2023. He had visited earlier in 2018. Before Justin Trudeau, his predecessor, Stephen Harper, had also visited India in 2009 and 2012.

A statement by the Prime Minister's office said: "In a more divided and uncertain world, Canada's new government is focused on what we can control. We are building a stronger, more independent, and more resilient economy. We are building our strength at home, diversifying our trade abroad, and attracting massive new international investment.

To these ends, the Prime Minister, Mark Carney, announced that he will travel to India, Australia, and Japan from February 26 to March 7 to unlock new opportunities for Canadian workers and businesses across trade, energy, technology, and defense.

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

## India, Israel elevate ties to...

been pitching for a peaceful solution to the conflict in Gaza.

Following the meeting between the two Prime Ministers, India and Israel inked a total of 17 agreements and documents that will provide for deeper cooperation in artificial intelligence, trade, investment, education, manufacturing, culture, maritime heritage, agriculture and a plethora of other areas.

The two sides also vowed to expand their already close defense partnership by working towards joint development and joint production of military hardware under the framework of the transfer of technologies.

The US-Iran standoff and other issues in the region figured in the talks and PM Modi mentioned India's firm belief in the value of dialogue and reiterated New Delhi's readiness to offer support, if required, toward achieving a peaceful solution, according to Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri.

In his media statement, PM Modi elaborated on the upward trajectory of India-Israel ties and said the relationship is built on a strong foundation of deep trust, shared democratic values, and human compassion.

"Our relationship has stood the test of time. Today, we took the historic decision to elevate our time-tested partnership to 'Special Strategic Partnership'. This decision reflects the aspirations of the people of both countries," he said.

The relationship was upgraded to a strategic partnership in 2017.

"Our economic cooperation remains an engine of growth, innovation, and shared prosperity. Last year, we signed a bilateral investment agreement to promote mutual investment.

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

## 'Huge mistake': Bill Gates...

sex offender as was evident in the tens of thousands of documents, including emails, interview transcripts, photos, call logs etc. with some names redacted, released online -- collectively termed Epstein files -- last month by the US Justice Department.

In a town hall on Tuesday, Gates acknowledged that he had two affairs with Russian women that Epstein later discovered, but that they didn't involve Epstein's victims. "I did nothing illicit. I saw nothing illicit," Gates said, according to a recording reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.

Gates said images in the recently released Epstein files showing him with women whose faces are redacted were pictures that Epstein asked him to take with Epstein's assistants after their meetings. "To be clear, I never spent any time with victims, the women around him," Gates said. "It was a huge mistake to spend time with Epstein" and bring Gates Foundation executives into meetings with the sex offender, Gates said. "I apologize to other people who are drawn into this because of the mistake that I made," The Wall Street Journal quoted Gates as saying.

The philanthropist said he had met Epstein in 2011, three years after the sex offender had pleaded guilty in 2008 to soliciting a minor for prostitution.

Gates said he didn't "properly check" Epstein's background even when he was aware of some "18-month thing" that had limited Epstein's travel and added that he continued meeting with Epstein even after his then-wife Melinda French Gates expressed concerns in 2013.

Speaking of his ex-wife, he added: "To give her credit, she was always kind of skeptical about the Epstein thing."

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

# Jaipur: The Pink City where royalty lives on

Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, is a city where history, architecture, and vibrant culture blend seamlessly to create a timeless travel experience. Known as the Pink City for the distinctive terracotta hue of its old buildings, Jaipur offers visitors a glimpse into the grandeur of Rajput royalty alongside the lively rhythms of modern life. From magnificent palaces and imposing forts to bustling bazaars and traditional cuisine, Jaipur stands as one of India's most fascinating travel destinations.

Founded in 1727 by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II, Jaipur was one of the first planned cities in India. Its broad avenues and symmetrical layout reflect the ruler's interest in astronomy and architecture. Today, Jaipur forms an important part of the famous Golden Triangle tourist circuit along with Delhi and Agra, attracting travelers from across the world.

## Places To Visit

### Amer Fort

Cradled on the top of a hill near Jaipur lies the Amer Fort, one of the most magnificent palaces in India. Also commonly known as the Amber Fort, this majestic building with its maze-like passages and serpentine staircases is an architectural masterpiece and with significant importance in Indian history. Only 11 kilometres away from Jaipur, Amer Fort is clad in pink and yellow sandstone and is a part of an extensive complex. Built by one of the most trusted generals of Akbar, Maharaja Man Singh I in the year 1592, Amer Fort served as the main residence of the Rajput Rulers.

The Amer Fort through its large ramparts, several gateways and paved paths overlooks the Maota Lake in the town of Amer, which used to serve as the capital of the erstwhile Jaipur princely state. The fort is big enough that it will take you at least two to three hours to explore it in detail, and you can also choose to avail of the audio guides to lead you through this fascinating building while explaining the history of the place. Getting an elephant ride up the stairs to the Amer Fort is also a popular tourist activity. The fort sees over five thousand visitors daily and rightfully, the Amer Fort was inducted into UNESCO World Heritage Site list as part of the "Hill Forts of Rajasthan" along with five other forts.

### Hawa Mahal

The massive edifice of Hawa Mahal stands at the intersection of the main road in Jaipur, Badi Chaupad and was built by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh in the year 1799. Hawa Mahal derives its name from its unique structure, which is a mesh of small windows that allowed cool wind to enter the palace and hence kept the palace comfortable during the hot summer months. The main reason behind the palace's construction was to allow the women of the royal house to observe the festivities on the streets whilst being unseen from the outside as was the custom of the land. It is located right on the edge of the City Palace Jaipur and extends right to the 'zenana'.

Hawa Mahal is a structure made of red and pink sandstone and has a pyramidal structure which almost resembles a crown. It has been embellished with 953



tiny windows, also known as 'Jharokhas' and embellished with gorgeous latticework. From within, the Hawa Mahal palace is based on five floors each of which has a uniquely decorated chamber. A charming fountain welcomes you inside

the main palace, from whereon you can make your way up to the different floors. The top of the palace offers a brilliant view of the City Palace, Jantar Mantar and the ever-busy Siredeori Bazar. There is a small museum as well which holds

some rich relics and miniature paintings.

### Jantar Mantar

Located near the City Palace in the regal city of Jaipur, Jantar Mantar is the largest stone astronomical observatory in the world. Owing to its rich cultural, heritage and scientific value, Jantar Mantar in Jaipur has also been featured on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. This ancient study boasts of nineteen instruments built out of stone and brass and was built by Raja Sawai Jai Singh in 1727-33. The intelligent construction and placement of these instruments allowed the observers to note the position of heavenly bodies with their naked eye alone. Time has failed to lay dust upon this engineering marvel and it still works as well as it used to in the olden times.

### Nahargarh Fort

Nahargarh Fort, situated on the outskirts of Jaipur, is known for breathtaking views of the city and for its extended wall that connects it to Jaigarh Fort. Embellished with delicate carvings and stonework, the Nahargarh Fort is an impregnable structure and together with its two neighbouring forts - Amer and Jaigarh once stood as the strong defence of Jaipur city. The Fort was built by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II in the year 1734 as a retreat. The Padao Restaurant is also a must-visit if you're near Nahargarh Fort from where you're sure to enjoy a panoramic view of the city of Jaipur.

### Galta ji Temple

Located on the outskirts of the regal city of Jaipur, Galtaji Temple is a prehistoric Hindu pilgrimage site. Outlined by the striking Aravalli hills, it consists of several shrines, holy kundis, pavilions and natural springs. This majestic temple is situated at the heart of a hilly terrain that is bounded by a beautiful gorge that attracts tourists here every year. Galtaji Temple was built using pink colour sandstone and is a vast temple complex housing varied shrines. Located inside the City Palace, the walls of this temple are beautifully adorned with carvings and paintings that make this place worth visiting. The Galtaji temple is unique in its architecture and has been constructed like a palace.

It is situated in the Aravalli hills and is bound by thick lush trees and bushes. This remarkable building is decorated with painted walls, round roofs and pillars. Apart from the kundis, this prehistoric Hindu pilgrimage place also has temples of Lord Ram, Lord Krishna and Lord Hanuman within the temple. One of the main tourist destinations of Jaipur, the temple complex boasts of natural freshwater springs and seven holy 'kundis' or water tanks. Among these kundis, the 'Galta Kund', is the holiest one and is believed never to get dry.

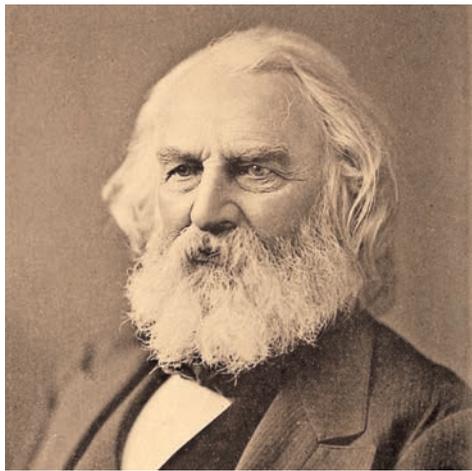
# History This Week

FEB 27 - MAR 05

## FEBRUARY 27

February 27, 1950 - The 22nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, limiting the president to two terms or a maximum of ten years in office.

February 27, 1991 - In Desert Storm, the 100-hour ground war ended as Allied troops entered Kuwait just four days after launching their offensive against Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces.



Birthdays - American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) was born in Portland, Maine. Best known for Paul Revere's Ride, The Song of Hiawatha, and The Wreck of the Hesperus.

## FEBRUARY 28

February 28, 1844 - During a demonstration of naval fire power, one of the guns aboard the USS Princeton exploded, killing several top U.S. government officials on the steamer ship, and narrowly missed killing President John Tyler.



February 28, 1986 - Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme (1927-1986) was assassinated in Stockholm while exiting a movie theater with his wife.

February 28, 1994 - NATO conducted its first combat action in its 45 year history as four Bosnian Serb jets were shot down by American fighters in a no-fly zone.

## MARCH 1

March 1, 1781 - Formal ratification of the Articles of Confederation was announced by Congress. Under the Articles, Congress was the sole governing body of the new American national government, consisting of the 13 original states. The Articles remained in effect through the Revolutionary War until 1789, when the current U.S. Constitution was adopted.

March 1, 1932 - The 20-month-old son of aviation pioneer Charles A. Lindbergh was kidnapped from his home in

Hopewell, New Jersey. The Lindberghs then paid a \$50,000 ransom. However, on May 12, the boy's body was found in a wooded area a few miles from the house.



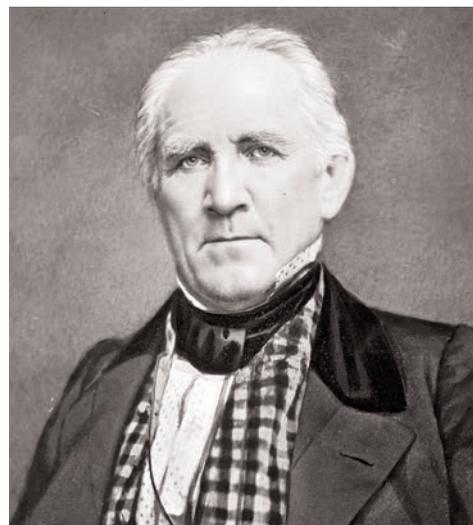
March 1, 1961 - President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps, an organization sending young American volunteers to developing countries to assist with health care, education and other basic human needs.

March 1, 1974 - Seven former high-ranking officials of the Nixon White House were indicted for conspiring to obstruct the investigation into the Watergate break-in. Among those indicted; former chief of staff H.R. Haldeman, former top aide John Ehrlichman, and former attorney general John Mitchell.

Birthdays - American band leader Glenn Miller (1904-1944) was born in Carilinda, Iowa. His music gained enormous popularity during the 1940's through recordings such as Moonlight Serenade and String of Pearls. On December 15, 1944, his plane disappeared over the English Channel while en route to Paris where he was scheduled to perform.

## MARCH 2

March 2, 1943 - During World War II in the Pacific, a Japanese convoy was attacked by 137 American bombers as the Battle of Bismarck Sea began. The convoy included eight destroyers and eight transports carrying 7,000 Japanese soldiers heading toward New Guinea. Four destroyers and all eight transports were sunk, resulting in 3,500 Japanese drowned, ending Japanese efforts to send reinforcements to New Guinea.



Birthdays - American soldier and politician Sam Houston (1793-1863) was born in Rockbridge County, Virginia. As a teenager he ran away and joined the Cherokee Indians who accepted him as a

member of their tribe. He later served as a Congressman and Governor of Tennessee. In 1832, he became commander of the Texan army in the War for Texan Independence, defeating the larger Mexican army in 1836 at the Battle of San Jacinto. He then served as Senator and Governor of the new state of Texas but was removed in 1861 after refusing to swear allegiance to the Confederacy.

## MARCH 3

March 3, 1913 - A women's suffrage march in Washington D.C. was attacked by angry onlookers while police stood by. The march occurred the day before Woodrow Wilson's inauguration. Many of the 5,000 women participating were spat upon and struck in the face as a near riot ensued. Secretary of War Henry Stimson then ordered soldiers from Fort Myer to restore order.



Birthdays - Railroad car builder George Pullman (1831-1897) was born in Brocton, New York. He improved railroad sleeping accommodations, developing the folding upper berth and lower berth designs. His company went on to become the biggest railroad car building organization in the world.

Birthdays - Telephone inventor Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922) was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. Bell and his father were involved in teaching deaf persons to speak. Bell developed an interest in the vibrating membrane as a method of electrically transmitting sounds. His very first sentence spoken on the newly invented telephone on March 10, 1876, was to his assistant, "Mister Watson, come here, I want you."

## MARCH 4

March 4, 1681 - King Charles II of England granted a huge tract of land in the New World to William Penn to settle an outstanding debt. The area later became Pennsylvania.

March 4, 1789 - The first meeting of the new Congress under the new U.S. Constitution took place in New York City.

March 4, 1830 - Former President John Quincy Adams returned to Congress as a representative from Massachusetts. He was the first ex-president ever to return to the House and served eight consecutive terms.

March 4, 1933 - Newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office and delivered his first inaugural address attempting to restore public confidence during the Great Depression, stating, "Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself..." His cabinet appointments included the first woman to a Cabinet post, Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins.

Birthdays - Revolutionary war hero

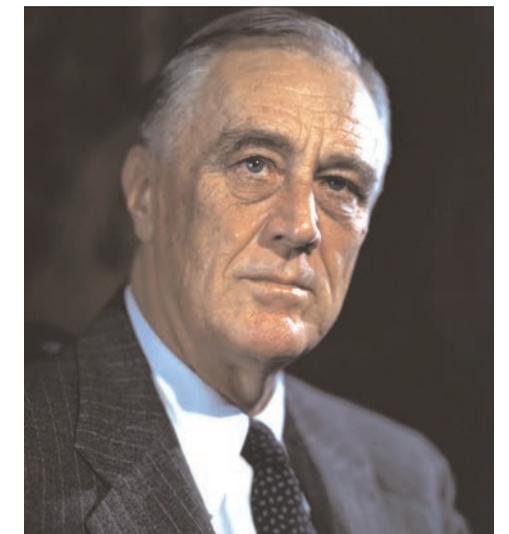
Casimir Pulaski (1747-1779) was born in Poland. Before aiding in the American Revolution, he was a military leader in Poland's struggle against Imperial Russia. He joined the Americans in 1777 and fought alongside General Washington at Brandywine, then served at Germantown and Valley Forge. He was mortally wounded during a heroic charge in the Siege of Savannah, Georgia.



Birthdays - American football legend Knute Rockne (1888-1931) was born in Voss, Norway. He coached the Notre Dame Football team for 13 seasons, amassing an overall record of 105 wins, 12 losses and 5 ties. He became famous for his locker room pep talks and the saying, "Win one for the Gipper." He was killed in an airplane crash on March 31, 1931, in Kansas.

## MARCH 5

March 5, 1868 - The U.S. Senate convened as a court to hear charges against President Andrew Johnson during impeachment proceedings. The House of Representatives had already voted to impeach the President. The vote followed bitter opposition by the Radical Republicans in Congress to Johnson's reconstruction policies in the South. However, the effort to remove him failed in the Senate by just one vote and he remained in office.



March 5, 1933 - Amid a steadily worsening economic situation, newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed a four-day "Bank Holiday" to stop panic withdrawals by the public and the possible collapse of the American banking system.

March 5, 1946 - The "Iron Curtain" speech was delivered by Winston Churchill at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. Churchill used the term to describe the boundary in Europe between free countries of the West and nations of Eastern Europe under Soviet Russia's control.

## MILANO CORTINA 2026

# Looking Back: They left an indelible mark on Milano Cortina 2026 Games



BY  
PRABHJOT SINGH

FEBRUARY 25, 2026

**MILAN (TIP):** Every edition of the Olympic Games - summer or winter - leaves behind a trail of stories, both sweet and sour, while giving credence to new sporting icons and powerful sporting nations. At the same time, the host nation not only showcases various aspects of its day-to-day life but also highlights its progress in different areas. Its athletes make an extraordinary endeavor to message the world with their best ever performances to put their country higher on the sports pedestal.

As the curtain rang down on Milano Cortina 2026 last Sunday, it left a strong message for the rest of the world. For 16 days, the world gathered in Italy's north - from Milano to Cortina, from Livigno to Val di Fiemme - to witness the finest winter athletes compete at the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026.

Though the games concluded with a mesmerizing closing ceremony at historic Verona arena, the exceptional drama, sportsmanship and brilliance on snow and ice that the participants produced would resonate long after the flame was extinguished.

Here are 15 of the biggest moments that defined Milano Cortina 2026.

The Opening Ceremony of Milano Cortina 2026 featured blockbuster acts from international artists, including five-time Grammy Award-winner Mariah Carey, Golden Globe winner Laura Pausini and famed Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli, to the award-winning actor and producer Pierfrancesco Favino and The White Lotus' Emmy-nominated star Sabrina Impacciatore.

Johannes Hoesflot Klaebo won two golds out of two at Milano Cortina 2026 as he won the Cross-Country Individual Sprint title for the third Games in succession. Ben Ogden took silver for the United States in the Classic event with Klaebo's Norwegian teammate, Oskar Opstad Vike, in third.

An achievement so remarkable it's scarcely believable, Norway's Johannes Hoesflot Klaebo became the first athlete to win six gold medals at a single Olympic Winter Games, triumphing in each of the men's cross-country events. The unprecedented sweep extended his own record for most Winter Olympic gold medals to 11.

Brazil and South America have their first Winter Olympic medal, and it is gold, thanks to Lucas Pinheiro Braathen in the Men's Giant Slalom. The Norwegian-born Alpine skier, who came



out of retirement to represent the nation of his mother, held off the Swiss challenge after leading by almost a second on the first run. Defending champion Marco Odermatt took silver ahead of Loic Meillard.

In more than a century of the Olympic Winter Games, no athlete representing a South American nation had ever won a medal at the Games. But that all changed at Milano Cortina 2026, when Lucas Pinheiro Braathen charged to victory in the men's giant slalom gold to deliver Brazil - and South America - a historic gold.

Winning more than one medal in alpine skiing at an Olympic Winter Games is exceedingly difficult - but three gold medals on your debut? That sounds like fantasy. And yet Swiss skier Franjo von Allmen made it real at Milano Cortina 2026, triumphing in the men's downhill, super-G and team combined.

After retiring at just 16 following the 2022 Beijing Olympics, Alysia Liu stepped away from competitive skating to pursue other interests and life beyond the rink. Returning to competition in 2024, she rediscovered her competitive spark and carried that momentum into Milano Cortina 2026.

Facing tough competition after the short program, Liu delivered a sensational free skate that topped the segment and propelled her to Olympic gold - a stunning comeback on the sport's biggest stage.

## Play

Team USA's Alysia Liu added Olympic gold to her world title with the best Free Skate on the night for a personal best total. Japan's three-time world champion Sakamoto Kaori took silver again in the last competition of her career, with Short Program leader Nakai Ami collecting bronze just ahead of Chiba Mone.

Choi Gaon of the Republic of Korea denied Chloe Kim a third consecutive Snowboard Halfpipe Olympic title. The 17-year-old scored 90.25 on her third and

final run to snatch gold, with US star Kim posting 88.00 on her first attempt. Japan's Ono Mitsuki took the bronze.

After slamming hard on her opening run of the women's snowboard halfpipe final, 17-year-old Choi Gaon could have faded from contention. Instead, the Republic of Korea rider delivered a third run of stunning amplitude and control to seize gold - a performance even reigning champion Chloe Kim could not match - and secure her nation's first-ever Olympic medal on snow.

## Federica Brignone defies the odds

Ten months before Milano Cortina 2026, Federica Brignone suffered a horrific crash that left her with multiple fractures, a complete knee dislocation and an injury doctors said would normally require more than two years to recover from - raising fears she might never walk properly again. Yet on home snow in Cortina, the Italian star surged to super-G and giant slalom gold, completing what she herself called an "unthinkable" return.

## Play

The "Snow Tiger" Federica Brignone pounced to an early lead in the women's giant slalom and held on late to win her second gold medal of the 2026 Winter Games. Sara Hector and Thea Louise Stjernesund shared silver.

In her fifth and final Olympic Winter Games, Hilary Knight delivered a storybook ending, scoring a dramatic late equalizer against Canada in the women's ice hockey final to force overtime. Her record-setting 15th career Olympic goal helped propel Team USA to a 2-1 victory and sealed a fitting farewell for one of the sport's defining figures.

## Play

After Hilary Knight cancelled out Kristin O'Neill's shorthand goal with just two minutes to go, Megan Keller completed the comeback for the United States as they beat Canada 2-1 in the

Olympic Women's Ice Hockey Final. Team USA went 7-0 for the tournament to clinch a third title, having last won gold at PyeongChang 2018.

At 41, Elana Meyers Taylor finally claimed Olympic gold in the women's monobob, becoming the oldest individual champion in Winter Olympic history.

## Play

Matt Weston crowned himself king of the skeleton at the Cortina Sliding Centre, first becoming the first British man to win Olympic gold in the discipline - setting track records in all four of his runs - before returning to claim the inaugural mixed team title with Tabitha Stoecker. Needing a near-flawless descent to overturn a German lead, Weston blasted down the track at 126 km/h and delivered under pressure, sealing a golden double for Team GB.

Switzerland's Marianne Fattou won the first Ski Mountaineering competition in Olympic history, taking Women's Sprint gold by just over two seconds from Emily Harrop of France. Ana Alonso Rodriguez claimed bronze for Spain.

Ski mountaineering made its Olympic debut at Milano Cortina 2026, and Marianne Fattou of Switzerland and Oriol Cardona Coll of Spain etched their names into history as the discipline's first-ever Olympic champions.

## Play

Oriol Cardona Coll won gold for Spain in the Men's Sprint competition on Ski Mountaineering's Olympic debut. Individual Neutral Athlete Nikita Filippov took silver with Thibault Anselmet of France rounding out the podium.

Returning to the Olympic stage at 41 after coming out of retirement, Lindsey Vonn arrived at Milano Cortina 2026 chasing one more dream. Her campaign ended in a high-speed downhill crash that required an airlift to the hospital and subsequent surgery, but from her recovery bed, the USA legend urged fans not to be sad, insisting: "The ride was worth the fall." As tributes poured in from across the sporting world, Vonn also turned her focus to supporting her fellow Team USA athletes - including Breezy Johnson after her downhill gold.

Despite competing at every edition of the Olympic Winter Games, Great Britain had never won a medal on snow heading into Milano Cortina 2026. But Charlotte Bankes and Huw Nightingale changed that in the snowboard cross mixed team event, racing to a landmark gold with Bankes, rebounding from a quarter-final exit in the women's race days earlier, producing a sensational overtake on her leg to turn the final Britain's way.

# Milano Cortina Paralympics boycott threat is becoming serious



BY  
PRABHJOT SINGH

FEBRUARY 25, 2026

**MILAN (TIP):** Though the avowed mandate of the Olympics is to bring the entire world under one roof, political competition refuses to leave the Games alone. History is full of instances when politics intruded, disrupted, and even stunted the mega sporting event held every two years, taking turns with Winter and Summer editions.

Of late, politics have become so obvious that they have started impacting the normal life of a common man. The world order is changing. Conflicts, especially the armed ones, have become the order of the day.

Intriguingly, one country that shares the blame most for the boycott of the Games is the erstwhile Soviet Union, presently Russia.

Boycotting, complete or partial, of the games has become an integral part of these mega sporting events.

If the 1972 Munich Olympics games were greatly impacted by the Palestinian intruders who captured and killed several Israeli athletes, the 1976 games in Montreal saw last-minute withdrawals by several countries in protest against permitting a squad from apartheid South Africa.

1980 was the worst year when the US led a major boycott by the Western world in protest against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Soviets retaliated in 1984 and led their allies in refusing to participate in the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

Four years later, the two Koreans were virtually at war.

And when the Games returned to the Asian continent for the 2020 Olympics, Russia and Belarus were banned on various charges, including doping at the Sochi Winter Olympic Games in 2014.

Subsequently, the Russian military attack on Ukraine led to another uproar in the sporting world, keeping it divided.



The echo of the same roar is being heard now as the International Paralympic Committee, an organization that runs parallel to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), has readmitted both Russia and Belarus to participate in the Milano Cortina Winter Olympic Games under the flag and banner. Many nations, including Ukraine, Latvia, and even the hosts, Italy, have not taken well to the decision of the IOC.

Another boycott threat may impact the Milano Cortina 2026 Paralympic Games, due to start on March 6. As Latvia became the latest European nation to join the institutional protest of the upcoming Milano Cortina 2026 Opening Ceremony, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) President Andrew Parsons said that the assembly's decision to allow Russia and Belarus to compete can't be reversed.

The IPC reaffirmed its position amid mounting political and sporting pressure surrounding the presence of athletes from both International Olympic Committee-banned countries at the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Paralympic Games.

During a press conference in Milan, Parsons underlined that the General Assembly decision allowing their participation under the national flag and anthem is final and cannot be altered by the Governing Board or by himself, marking a key institutional moment in an increasingly tense climate.

"This decision cannot be overturned by the board or by myself," he stated,

stressing the democratic nature of the process that led to the readmission, as he had already indicated in a one-on-one interview with Inside The Games in November, when he noted that he respects majority decisions and that his institutional duty is to apply them, regardless of personal agreement.

The resolution includes a total of 10 places across men and women, six for Russia and four for Belarus, allocated in para alpine skiing, para cross-country skiing, and para snowboarding, triggering immediate international reaction amid the ongoing war in Ukraine.

In parallel, the IPC president sought to contain the political escalation by reiterating the movement's core message, "We have a message to give that is one of inclusion and diversity," while encouraging Ukrainian athletes to attend the opening ceremony on 6 March in Verona, adding that their decision would be respected.

Parsons also acknowledged concern over the risk of politicization. "What I'm afraid of is that sometimes these situations can be politicized," he warned, in a climate marked by growing political reactions and institutional boycotts surrounding the ceremony.

The impact is already visible. Ukraine, which has been at war with Russia since the latter's invasion in 2022, confirmed it will institutionally boycott the Opening Ceremony, a stance joined by the Czech Paralympic Committee and authorities in

several European countries.

In recent hours, Latvia expanded that line by announcing it will not participate 'in any format,' neither in person nor audiovisually, and requested that its flag not be used during the ceremony, in a decision of strong symbolic weight. "Neither our organization nor our athletes accept the decision to allow participation under national symbols," said Latvian Paralympic Committee President Daiga Dadzite, stressing that no representative of its delegation will take part in the ceremony.

The controversy has also reached the host nation. The Italian government expressed disagreement with the readmission under flag and anthem and called for a review while maintaining dialogue with the IPC to reduce institutional impact and ensure suitable conditions for athletes. In that context, Sports Minister Andrea Abodi reiterated the Government's opposition to national symbols, "We would like Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete, but in a neutral capacity, respecting the rule of non-compromise with war".

From Moscow, meanwhile, officials insisted that mixing politics and sport is wrong and that targeting athletes with disabilities is unacceptable, while the Russian Embassy in Italy described the Italian authorities' stance as 'offensive.'

With only days remaining before the Games, scheduled from 6 to 15 March, a deep conflict between those defending sporting autonomy and those viewing the geopolitical context appears to have become a sore point for the organizing committee. In that scenario, athletes, detached from the political decisions surrounding them, end up carrying tensions born outside sport into competition, at a particularly sensitive moment marking four years since the start of the war in Ukraine.

Beyond the limited number of places, the debate has taken on considerable symbolic weight and projects a Milano Cortina scenario in which competition will coexist with tensions extending beyond sport, testing the delicate balance between principles, politics, and sport.

From page 41

Charlotte Bankes produced a late charge as she and Huw Nightingale secured Mixed Team Snowboard Cross gold for Great Britain. Lorenzo Sommariva and Michela Moioli of Italy took silver, with France's long-time leaders, Loan Bozzolo and Lea Casta, of France having to settle for bronze.

France topped the biathlon medal table at these Games (winning 13, including six gold), but that total could easily have been one fewer without the exploits of Émilien Jacquelin. Taking over on the second leg of the men's 4x7.5km relay with Les Bleus on the back foot, the five-time world champion lit up the track and shot clean in prone to propel France into contention - a surge that set up their historic relay gold.

Francesca Lollobrigida delighted the home crowd by taking women's 3000m speed skating gold in an

Olympic record, winning from Norway's Ragne Wiklund and Canada's Valerie Maltais at Milano Cortina 2026.

Competing on her 35th birthday, Francesca Lollobrigida powered to victory in the women's speed skating 3000m to deliver Italy's first gold medal of Milano Cortina 2026 in a new Olympic record time of 3:54.28. Weeks after admitting she had been on the verge of quitting the sport due to a viral infection, the mother of one called it "the dream of the dream" - a victory that ignited the Games for the host nation.

The final event of Milano Cortina 2026 delivered an instant classic as nine-time champions Canada faced their great rivals - and two-time champions - the USA in the men's ice hockey gold medal game. Goals from Matt Boldy (USA) and Cale Makar (CAN), plus a heroic 41-

save performance from Connor Hellebuyck, left it deadlocked after 60 minutes before Jack Hughes buried the overtime winner to secure the USA's first men's Olympic hockey gold since Lake Placid 1980.

It was indeed a fitting climax at the Games while laying the early foundations for a possible revenge story at the French Alps 2030.

*(Prabhjot Singh is a senior Toronto-based, award-winning independent journalist, who worked with The Tribune, Reuters, and several media groups in a career spanning nearly five decades. He has written extensively about Diaspora, Politics, Business, Aviation, Health, Public and Private Sectors and Sports. He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)*

# Abhishek Sharma and Hardik Pandya power India past Zimbabwe in must-win T20 match

India posted 256 for four, their highest total in T20 World Cups and the highest in this edition of the ICC showpiece

CHENNAI (TIP), FEBRUARY 27

Abhishek Sharma rediscovered his form with a blazing fifty, Hardik Pandya bludgeoned a half-century and Tilak Varma allayed strike-rate worries in India's 72-run victory over Zimbabwe, keeping them alive in the race to the T20 World Cup semifinals on Thursday, Feb 26.

India posted 256 for four, their highest total in T20 World Cups and the highest in this edition of the ICC showpiece.

The win ensured South Africa (4 points) reached the last four from Group 1, leaving India and West Indies, both on two points, in a virtual knockout match at Kolkata on March 1.

Contributions from Abhishek (55, 30b, 4x4, 4x6), Pandya (50 not out, 23b, 2x4, 4x6) and Tilak (44 not out, 16b, 3x4, 4x6) shaped India's recovery from a 76-run defeat to South Africa in their previous match.

Zimbabwe could only manage 184 for six in response. Opener Brian Bennett offered lone resistance with an unbeaten 97 off 59 balls but the effort remained a footnote.

## Abhi-shakes off rust

Since returning from a stomach bug, Abhishek looked a shadow of his earlier self, registering three ducks in a row. On a smooth Chepauk pitch, the left-hander found his rhythm, easing concerns over his form.

He was involved in two key partnerships, 48 for the opening wicket with Sanju Samson and 72 off 42 balls with Ishan Kishan (38), providing India a strong platform.

Re-drafting Samson into the eleven broke the sequence of left-handers at the top. Samson smoked 24 off 15 balls, calming Abhishek's early nerves. Once Samson departed, lofting pacer Blessing Muzarabani to Ryan Burl, Abhishek took charge.

He hit sixes off Tino Maposo, Brian Bennett and Richard Ngarava as India reached 80 for one in the Power Play, their second-best after 86/1 against Namibia. Abhishek fetched his



fifty off 26 balls with a single off spinner Sikandar Raza.

He looked assured against off-spin, putting his feet to better use, and scored 81 runs between overs seven and 14, helped by dropped chances on Kishan (26) and Suryakumar Yadav (8). Abhishek eventually fell, skying Maposo to Raza in the deep.

## Middle-order fires, Tilak's SR soars

India's middle-order batters rediscovered their range. The team reached 100 in 9.1 overs, and the next 100 in 7.3 overs.

Pandya (50 not out) and Tilak (44 not out) scored 84 runs for the fifth wicket, maximising the final five overs, in which India scored 80 runs. Pandya reaffirmed his status as a death-over bowler with a scorching fifty. Tilak, whose strike rate had been 118, accelerated to 275 thanks to the Chennai pitch.

Once India posted the massive total, the margin was clear. The bowlers, led by left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh (3/24), restricted Zimbabwe to safeguard India's title defence.

## Rinku Singh's father passes away after battling stage-4 cancer

GREATER NOIDA, FEBRUARY 27

Indian cricketer Rinku Singh's father breathed his last on Friday, Feb 27, morning at the Yatharth Hospital in Greater Noida, said the hospital PRO.

He was undergoing treatment at Yatharth Hospital in Greater Noida, but sadly couldn't make it. Rinku had to rush back home from the T20 World Cup squad to be with his family after his father's condition worsened after India's first Super 8 fixture against South Africa.

Rinku was quick to return to Chennai to join the Indian squad ahead of the Zimbabwe clash on Thursday after a quick visit to meet his father.

However, Rinku didn't feature in the playing 11 for the Zimbabwe clash as India opted for Sanju Samson to open alongside Abhishek Sharma, leaving Rinku out of the equation.

Former India cricketer Harbhajan Singh expressed condolences to Rinku and his family.

In an X post, Harbhajan wrote, "Pained to learn about the demise of Shri Khanchand Singh Ji, father of Rinku Singh. This must be an especially difficult time for Rinku and his family, even as he remains committed to his responsibilities during the T20 World Cup. My heartfelt thoughts and prayers are with him and his loved ones. May Waheguru grant eternal peace to the departed soul and give strength and courage to the bereaved family."

# Arshdeep Singh becomes India's top wicket-taker in T20WC history

CHENNAI (TIP), FEBRUARY 27

Indian pacer Arshdeep Singh surpassed Jasprit Bumrah to become the country's highest wicket-taker in ICC T20 World Cup history on Thursday, Feb 26.

Arshdeep achieved this milestone (35 wickets) during his side's do-or-die match against Zimbabwe at Chennai and brought his absolute best in this crucial match, taking 3/24 in four overs.

In 19 matches since his debut in the 2022 T20 World Cup, Arshdeep has taken 35 wickets at an average of 14.25 and an economy rate of 7.33, with a four-fer to his name. Bumrah was previously the leading wicket-taker for India, with 33 scalps in 23 matches at an average of 14.00, with best figures of 3/7.

Bangladesh's Shakib al Hasan (50 wickets) is the top wicket-taker in the tournament's history.

So far in the five matches, Arshdeep has taken eight wickets at an average of 16.00, with best figures of 3/24 coming today. In the previous edition back in 2024, Arshdeep was the joint-highest



wicket-taker with 17 wickets in eight matches at an average of 12.64, with a four-wicket haul to his name and best figures of 4/9.

He also completed 150 wickets for India in international cricket, with 151 wickets in 96 matches and 94 innings at an average of 19.78, with three four-fers

and two five-fers to his name and best figures of 5/37. Besides being India's top wicket-taker in T20Is with 126 scalps in 81 matches, he also has 25 ODI wickets in 15 matches.

With this win, India has a win and a loss each in the Super Eight phase, same as West Indies, making the March 1 clash between them a virtual knockout match for the second semifinal spot, with Proteas having qualified for the semifinal with two wins in two matches so far.

Put to bat first by Zimbabwe, India amassed their highest T20 WC total on the board courtesy knocks from Abhishek Sharma (55 in 30 balls, with four boundaries and four sixes), Hardik Pandya (50\* in 23 balls, with two fours and four sixes) and Tilak Varma (44\* in 16 balls, with three fours and four sixes).

In reply, Zimbabwe was valiant, posting 184/6 in 20 overs, courtesy a fine 97\* in 59 balls, consisting of eight fours and six sixes by Brian Bennett and a 21-ball 31 by skipper Sikandar Raza.

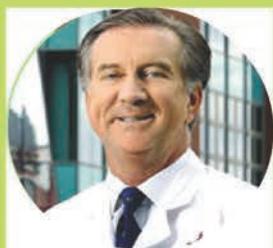
Arshdeep Singh (3/24) was the top wicket-taker for India.



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Best Wishes, Peter



Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



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