



The INDIAN PANORAMA

Will publish a special edition of The Indian Panorama on April 10, 2026, to mark Vaisakhi- the day of creation of the Khalsa by the Tenth Master of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh, in the year 1699. Sikhism is the fifth largest and the youngest religion of the world. Vaisakhi is also the most popular socio-cultural event of Punjab.

Articles, messages, and advertisements may please be emailed to salujaindra@gmail.com by April 2, 2026.

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193 INDIA bloc MPs submit notice seeking removal of CEC Gyanesh Kumar

The 10-page notice lists seven charges against the Chief Election Commissioner, including 'discriminatory conduct' and 'deliberate obstruction of investigation into electoral fraud'



A view of the Lok Sabha during the second part of Budget session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on March 13, 2026. INDIA bloc MPs have submitted a notice seeking removal of Gyanesh Kumar (Inset) in both the Houses. -Photo: PTI/Sansad TV

MARCH 14, 2026 NEW DELHI (TIP)

The INDIA bloc MPs on Friday (March 13, 2026) submitted a notice in both the Houses of Parliament seeking the removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar.

This is the first time such a notice has been formally submitted in Parliament. In the past, the Opposition had considered similar moves against at least two former CECs, but those efforts never progressed.

"The 10-page notice lists seven charges against Mr. Kumar - ranging from "partisan and discriminatory conduct in office" to "deliberate obstruction of investigation of electoral fraud", and "mass disenfranchisement". Opposition parties have accused the CEC of aiding the ruling BJP on several occasions, particularly during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), which they allege is

CONTD ON PAGE 38

All military targets on Iran's Kharg island have been 'obliterated', says Trump



US President Trump claimed that all military targets on Iran's Kharg Island have been "obliterated". -X photo

MARCH 14, 2026 WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

President Donald Trump on Saturday, March 14, said the United States Central

Command (CENTCOM) carried out a massive "bombing raid" on military targets on Kharg Island in Iran, claiming the operation "totally obliterated" every military site on the island.

In a post on Truth Social, he said the strike was carried out on his orders and asserted that it was one of the most powerful bombing raids in the region's history.

"Moments ago, at my direction, the United States Central Command executed one of the most powerful bombing raids in the History of the Middle East and totally obliterated every MILITARY target in Iran's crown jewel, Kharg Island," Trump said.

CONTD ON PAGE 38

U.S. launches fresh investigation into India, 59 other economies on forced labor charges

This is the second investigation the United States Trade Representative has launched in as many days that has involved India.

MARCH 13, 2026 WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

The U.S. has launched a fresh investigation into 60 countries, including India, to look into whether these countries have failed to ban the import of goods made using forced labor, the office of the U.S. Trade Representative announced late on March 12.

The new investigation is under Section 301(b) of the Trade Act of 1974. This is the same section under which the USTR launched a different investigation on March 11 on India and 15 other countries to examine whether they are



U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer. -File Photo : Reuters

using excess manufacturing capacity to export to the U.S. to the detriment of American industry.

CONTD ON PAGE 38

"Historic \$300 billion deal": Trump announces Reliance investment in new Texas oil refinery



President Donald Trump. - Image credit/AP/PTI Photo

Trump says the deal is "a massive win for American workers, energy and the great people of South Texas"

MARCH 11, 2026 WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

US President Donald Trump has said that India's Reliance

Industries will make an investment in a new oil refinery being opened in Texas, thanking the company and "our partners in India" for the deal.

Describing it as a "historic USD 300 billion deal", Trump in a social media post on Tuesday said the project is being enabled by his administration's "America First agenda". He said the deal is "the biggest in the US history" and "a massive win for American workers, energy and the great people of South Texas".

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**COMMENT**

# New York's Broken Roads: Mayor Mamdani Must Fix the Basics

BY INDRAJIT SALUJA



New York City proudly calls itself the capital of the world. It is a city of towering skyscrapers, global finance, cultural diversity, and extraordinary human energy. Millions of people walk its streets every day, and visitors from every corner of the globe consider it a symbol of opportunity and modern urban life. Yet beneath the shining skyline lies a troubling reality that residents and motorists confront daily—the deteriorating condition of the city's roads and the visible decline in urban cleanliness.

For anyone who drives through New York today, whether in Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, or the Bronx, the experience has increasingly become one of frustration. Potholes, cracked asphalt, uneven surfaces, and poorly patched road repairs have turned driving into a constant exercise in caution. Motorists weave from lane to lane trying to avoid deep craters that appear suddenly, sometimes unavoidable in heavy traffic.

This is not simply an inconvenience. It is a problem that has economic, health, and civic consequences.

Mayor Zohran Mamdani, whose early weeks in office have raised hopes among many New Yorkers, must recognize that maintaining the city's basic infrastructure is an urgent responsibility. Political ideologies and grand visions have their place in public life, but citizens judge governance by results. Smooth roads and clean streets are among the most visible signs of effective administration.

The financial loss caused by damaged roads is considerable, though it rarely receives the attention it deserves.

owners often pay a heavy price for driving on poorly maintained streets. Potholes damage tires, bend wheel rims, weaken suspension systems, and strain shock absorbers. Even a single severe impact can result in repairs costing hundreds, sometimes thousands, of dollars.

For professional drivers—taxi operators, ride-share drivers, delivery workers, and truck drivers—the burden is even greater. Their vehicles are not merely means of transportation; they are instruments of livelihood. Each unexpected jolt shortens the life of their vehicles and increases maintenance costs.

In a city where the cost of owning and operating a vehicle is already high, the additional financial strain created by neglected roads becomes a daily source of irritation and hardship.

There is another dimension to this issue that is rarely discussed—the medical consequences.

Orthopedic specialists frequently note that repeated jolts and vibrations caused by driving on rough roads can contribute to spinal strain, back pain, and joint stress. Drivers who spend long hours behind the wheel—particularly taxi and truck drivers—are exposed to these impacts constantly.

Medical studies on whole-body vibration suggest that prolonged exposure to such shocks can aggravate musculoskeletal problems. While potholes may not be the sole cause of these ailments, the relentless pounding experienced on poorly maintained roads certainly worsens them.

If the medical costs associated with back pain treatments, physiotherapy sessions, and lost productivity were calculated, they would likely exceed the cost of maintaining roads properly in the first place.

Good infrastructure is therefore not merely a convenience—it



is also a matter of public health.

**CLEANLINESS: ANOTHER CONCERN**

The problem of infrastructure neglect is not limited to roads. Cleanliness in many parts of New York City leaves much to be desired.

Nowhere is this more noticeable than in Midtown Manhattan, particularly around Times Square, one of the most visited locations in the world.

Hundreds of thousands of pedestrians pass through Midtown streets every day. On busy days nearly half a million footsteps are recorded in this district alone. Tourists arrive from every continent to witness the spectacle of Times Square and the vibrant life of the city.

Yet the impression many visitors encounter is sometimes disappointing. Overflowing garbage bags, littered sidewalks, and poorly maintained public spaces often create an image that does not match the prestige of the city.

New York prides itself on being the hub of the universe. But a city that claims such status must maintain the standards expected of a global capital.

Clean streets are not simply about appearance. They reflect civic discipline, public health, and respect for residents and visitors alike.

**A QUESTION OF PRIORITIES**

Cities are complex institutions and managing them is never easy. Budgets are limited and competing demands constantly arise. Yet certain responsibilities are fundamental.

Road maintenance and sanitation fall squarely within those responsibilities.

Every year New Yorkers pay billions of dollars in taxes—city taxes, vehicle registration fees, tolls, and gasoline taxes. In return, they are entitled to expect basic civic services.

Unfortunately, infrastructure maintenance often becomes overshadowed by political debate and ideological agendas. Citizens, however, are less concerned with ideology than with results.

They want roads that do not damage their vehicles.

They want sidewalks that are clean and welcoming.

They want public spaces that reflect the dignity of the city.

Mayor Mamdani has an opportunity to demonstrate that governance can be practical and effective. The people of New York are not asking for miracles; they are asking for competence.

Smooth roads and cleaner streets may not be dramatic achievements, but they are essential indicators of a well-governed city. They improve daily life for millions of residents and enhance the experience of the millions more who visit New York every year.

New York has overcome greater challenges in its history—from financial crises to crime waves and national tragedies. Surely it can overcome potholes and sanitation problems.

What is required is attention, planning, and administrative determination.

Political philosophies may inspire debate, but the true test of leadership lies in delivering tangible improvements. Roads must be repaired. Streets must be cleaned. Infrastructure must be maintained with care.

New Yorkers do not need theories; they need results. Hope you hear me, Mayor Mamdani.

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# IOC USA Delegation Interacts with Rahul Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge, and Senior Congress leaders in New Delhi

Leader of the delegation Pradip (Peter) Kothari terms the visit highly productive

**MARCH 9, 2026**  
**EDISON, NJ (TIP)**

A delegation of IOC USA New Jersey Chapter, concluded with a significant three-day visit to New Delhi from March 1 to March 4, 2026.

The delegation was led by New Jersey Chapter President Pradip (Peter) Kothari and Chairman Harkesh Thakur.

Speaking with The Indian Panorama about the objective of the visit, Mr. Kothari said: "The primary objective of the visit was to engage with senior Indian National Congress (INC) leadership to strengthen collaboration, foster cooperation, and plan joint events in the coming year. A key focus was securing participation and support from INC leaders for a major IOC event expected to draw over 10,000 attendees in 2027."

The Press release issued on March 9, 2026 by Hervender Singh, Public Relations Officer of IOCUSA NJ Chapter, described the following highlights of the visit.

- On March 3, the delegation met Shri Rahul Gandhi at his residence, 10 Janpath, New Delhi. Mr. Peter Kothari extended an invitation to Shri Rahul Gandhi to visit New Jersey/New York for the upcoming large-scale event. Shri Rahul Gandhi graciously accepted the invitation.
- The delegation held productive discussions with Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, President of the Indian National Congress and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha. They also met Shri Anil Shastri, former MP and son of a former Prime Minister of India, Late Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri.
- Shri K.C. Venugopal, Member of Lok Sabha, hosted the delegation at his Lodhi Estate residence for an in-depth discussion on various issues.
- Shri Vivek Tankha, Member of Rajya Sabha, hosted a dinner for the delegation, attended by Dr. Aarti Krishna, AICC Secretary in charge of the Indian Overseas Congress. The evening included engaging interactions and light moments, including musical contributions from Dr. Krishna.
- On March 2, the delegation conducted a well-attended



Mr. Peter Kothari IOC delegation leader, along with the delegation members presenting a bouquet to Mr. Rahul Gandhi

press conference at Telangana Bhavan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi with approximately 25 prominent journalists. The session highlighted IOC's recent achievements, outlined future plans, and included a productive Q&A where media representatives shared valuable suggestions.

- Gurdeep Singh Sappal, Permanent Member of the Congress Working Committee welcomed the delegation members and exchanged views with them.

- The delegation visited Rajghat to pay homage to Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi ji.

IOC USA NJ Chairman Harkesh Thakur told The Indian Panorama that the "visit reinforced the strong bond between the Indian National Congress and the Indian diaspora through the IOC, paving the way for enhanced collaboration and impactful initiatives ahead. It was a distinct honor for the team to meet with our senior national leadership".

Besides the IOC USA NJ President Mr. Kothari, and Chairman Mr. Thakur, the following six members of the New Jersey team participated in the historic meetings:

1. Mahesh Patel - Vice President
2. Asif Rajav Ali - Cultural Secretary
3. Raju Desai - Treasurer



Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge, President, Indian National Congress with the delegation Photo Credit: IOC

4. Rekha Desai - Executive Committee Member
5. Gopal Krishna - Coordinator
6. Syed Saleem - Coordinator

Baldev Randhawa (Vice President, IOC USA) and Davinderpal Singh (Saab) Bhullar (IOC Working President, West Coast) also joined the delegation. Both expressed their utmost joy in being a part of the visionary delegation.

## ABOUT INDIAN OVERSEAS CONGRESS (IOC)

The Indian Overseas Congress is the international wing supporting the ideology and objectives of the Indian National Congress, dedicated to promoting democratic values, secularism, and the welfare of the Indian diaspora worldwide.

Mr. Kothari extended his heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved for their hard work in organizing the vital meetings and for the warm hospitality extended to the delegation during their stay in New Delhi.

**For further information, please contact Pradip (Peter) Kothari**  
**+1 (732) 259-6874**

(Based on a Press Release issued by Hervender Singh, Public Relations Officer, IOC USA New Jersey Chapter)

# Siddh Saraff's Initiative Helps Underserved Children Access Art



Siddh Saraff

**MARCH 10, 2026**  
**NEW YORK (TIP)**

Art has long served as a powerful medium through which people share stories, challenge injustice, and express hope. Yet for many children, particularly those in underserved communities, access to art supplies and training remains limited. P@rt, an initiative led by Siddh Saraff, seeks to bridge this gap by making artistic expression more accessible and

meaningful for children regardless of their background.

The philosophy behind P@rt is simple but profound: art should not be a luxury. It should be a space where every child can create, communicate, and feel heard. The initiative underscores a critical truth—talent exists everywhere, but opportunities do not, especially when basic supplies are costly and formal art education is scarce.

To expand its impact, P@rt partnered with PURE Indi Trust (Pushp-Kiran Union for Real Enlightenment), an NGO founded in March 2013 that supports livelihoods through entrepreneurship, skill development, and educational initiatives for women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

As part of this collaboration, P@rt organized an "Art for Change" fundraiser that raised \$50,000 to support PURE Indi Trust's programs and provide art kits for students. Following the fundraiser, the initiative purchased and distributed 97 art kits for children attending programs at the NGO's premises. Each kit included essential materials such as watercolors,



poster paints, pencils, brushes, palettes, easels, and cardstock.

Beyond providing supplies, P@rt also emphasizes learning. Siddh Saraff—who also serves as Youth Coordinator for the Rajasthan Association of North America (RANA)—conducted three in-person workshops introducing students to basic techniques in painting and sketching, with each session focusing on a different artistic medium.

In addition, P@rt has developed a series of children's storybooks titled "Reading for Resistance," illustrating how creative expression—through music, writing, and street art—can challenge social norms and inspire young readers to see art as a force for change.

# Women-led Development and South-South Cooperation - Success Stories from the IBSA Fund



Hon'ble Minister of State for Women and Child Development of India, Smt. Savitri Thakur, underscored that the IBSA Fund's emphasis on women's empowerment is a deliberate choice

**MARCH 13, 2026**  
**UNITED NATIONS (TIP)**

During the ongoing 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70), the Permanent Missions of India, Brazil and South Africa convened an event on 12 March 2026, showcasing the lasting impact of multilateral and South-South cooperation on development and empowerment of women. The event titled "Women-led Development and South-South Cooperation - Success Stories from the IBSA Fund" presented tangible and operational instances of Global South coming together to address women's empowerment.

Speaking at the gathering, Hon'ble Minister of State for Women and Child Development of India, Smt. Savitri Thakur, underscored that the IBSA Fund's emphasis on women's empowerment is a deliberate choice - one that mirrors India's own vision of women-led development and its commitment to placing women at the heart of the country's economic growth story. Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities of South Africa, H.E. Sindisiwe Chikunga, highlighted the tangible impact of IBSA projects across the African continent, citing initiatives in Malawi, Benin, Guinea-Bissau and Gambia that are addressing child marriage, improving access to education, expanding electrification, and fostering agri-entrepreneurship. Vice Minister of Women of Brazil, H.E. Eutália Barbosa Rodrigues Naves, described the IBSA Fund as a living embodiment of South-South solidarity, and championed women-led development as a pathway to economic autonomy, resilient democratic institutions and meaningful transformation within communities.



India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni, in his remarks, outlined the vision behind establishing the IBSA Fund

The Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni, in his remarks, outlined the vision behind establishing the IBSA Fund - a trustworthy, demand driven model that demonstrates the effectiveness of South-South solidarity for development in a world where traditional aid architectures are under strain and development assistance increasingly fragmented.

Minister of Gambia H.E. Fatou Kinteh, Acting Permanent Secretary for Women, Children and Social Protection of Fiji H.E. Selina Kuruleca and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Liberia, Ambassador Baba Sillah, shared their experience on how the projects implemented through the IBSA fund have changed the lives and livelihoods of women in their communities. Mr. Alexander De Croo, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - the implementing agency of the IBSA Fund - expressed pride in UNDP's role in bringing the Fund's vision to life. He shared his perspectives on how women's empowerment



From L to R: Administrator UNDP, South Africa's Representative, India's Minister Smt. Savitri Thakur, and India's PR to the UN, Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni, among others.

serves as a powerful catalyst for economic growth and development, and underscored that gender equality is not an ancillary concern but an integral dimension of development projects within the framework of South-South cooperation.

The event spotlighted several projects implemented through the IBSA Fund that place women at the center of development. These included upscaling of the Rocket Stove initiative in Fiji that created new livelihood opportunities for rural women through skills training and enterprise, the training programme for Women Legislators in Liberia promoting their voice, leadership and gender responsive governance framework, a project to improve food security and household income for rural communities in Gambia through solar-powered irrigation and training in processing/packaging to reduce post-harvest losses.



The Commission on the Status of Women in session at the United Nations on March 12, 2026.

The IBSA Fund was established in 2004 and operationalized in 2006 by India, Brazil and South Africa pioneering the implementation of South-South cooperation. The purpose of the Fund is to identify replicable and scalable projects that can be disseminated to developing countries as examples of good practices in combating poverty and hunger. Spanning themes from food security to education, entrepreneurship and health, the Fund emphasizes knowledge transfer and sustainability. As of December 2025, India, Brazil and South Africa have collectively contributed over USD 55 million, supporting over 50 projects across 40 countries, in partnership with UN entities including UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, FAO, UNESCO and IFAD.

(Based on a Press Release issued by the PMI)

# 11 Indians charged in US over visa fraud scheme

Authorities said the suspects are accused of organizing fake robberies for the purpose of allowing the store clerks to falsely claim they were crime victims on immigration applications towards getting a Green Card

**MARCH 13, 2026  
BOSTON (TIP)**

Eleven Indian nationals, living illegally in the US, have been charged with visa fraud for conspiring to carry out staged armed robberies of convenience shops, according to US federal prosecutors.

Authorities said the suspects are accused of organizing fake robberies for the purpose of allowing the store clerks to falsely claim they were crime victims on immigration applications towards getting a Green Card.

Jitendrakumar Patel, 39, Maheshkumar Patel, 36, Sanjaykumar Patel, 45, Dipikaben Patel, 40, Rameshbhai Patel, 52, Amitabhen Patel, 43, Ronakkumar Patel, 28, Sangitaben Patel, 36, Minkesh Patel, 42, Sonal Patel, 42 and Mitul Patel, 40 have been charged with one count of conspiracy to commit visa fraud.

They all were living unlawfully in various US states such as Massachusetts, Kentucky and Ohio.

Dipikaben was deported to India after unlawfully residing in Weymouth, Massachusetts, the Justice Department said in a statement.

Jitendrakumar, Maheshkumar, Sanjaykumar, Amitabhen, Sangitaben and Mitul were arrested in Massachusetts and released following an initial appearance in federal court in



11 Indian nationals living illegally in the US have been charged with Visa fraud.  
Photo for representation only.

Boston on Friday.

Rameshbhai, Ronakkumar, Sonal and Minkesh were arrested and made their initial appearances in Kentucky, Missouri and Ohio. They will appear in federal court in Boston at a later date.

According to the charging documents, in March 2023, Rambhai and his co-conspirators set up and carried out staged armed robberies of at least six convenience/liquor stores and fast food restaurants in Massachusetts and elsewhere.

It is alleged that the purpose of the staged robberies was to allow the clerks present to falsely claim that they were victims of a violent crime on an application for a U non-immigration status (U Visa).

A U Visa is available to victims of certain crimes who have suffered mental

or physical abuse and who have been helpful to law enforcement in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity. The U visa offers an immigrant work authorization and a path to a Green Card within 5 to 10 years.

Authorities said that in the course of the alleged staged robberies, the "robber" would threaten store clerks or the owners with an apparent firearm before taking cash from the register and fleeing, while the interaction was captured on store surveillance video.

The clerks or the store owners would then wait five or more minutes until the "robber" had escaped before calling the police to report the "crime." The "victims" are alleged to have each paid Rambhai to participate in the scheme.

In turn, Rambhai allegedly paid the store owners for the use of their stores for the staged robbery.

Rambhai, the "robber," and the getaway driver were previously charged and convicted.

The 11 defendants charged on Friday are alleged to have either arranged with the organizer to set up each robbery, or paid for themselves or a family member to participate as a "victim." The charge of conspiracy to commit visa fraud provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of USD 250,000.

**CANADIAN PASSPORT:  
IT WILL COST MORE  
STARTING MARCH 3;  
INDIAN ORIGIN  
ADVERSELY AFFECTED**



Passport fees to rise on March 31 as Canada promises 30-day processing guarantee  
Photo for representation only.

**MARCH 13, 2026  
NEW YORK (TIP)**

Canadians would face higher passport fees starting this spring, as the federal government adjusts costs to reflect inflation and the growing expenses of producing secure travel documents.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced on Tuesday that most passport and travel document fees would rise on March 31, 2026.

The adjustment comes more than a decade after the last increase in 2013, and the government says fees will now be updated annually.

For Canadians applying within the country, a five-year regular adult passport would cost \$122.50, up \$2.50, while the 10-year adult passport would increase \$3.50 to \$163.50. A five-year child passport would rise \$1.50 to \$58.50.

Canadians living abroad will also see higher fees. A 10-year adult passport would jump \$6.25 to \$266.25, while a five-year adult passport would cost \$194.25, an increase of \$4.25.

Fees for urgent pickup, weekend or statutory holiday service, temporary passports, and interim passports would also go up.

In addition to the fee changes, the government is strengthening service accountability. Starting April 1, 2026, complete passport applications are promised to be processed within 30 business days, or the service will be free. Refunds will be issued automatically if processing exceeds the 30-day timeline, requiring no action from applicants.

Currently, Passport Canada processes regular applications in approximately 20 business days, whether submitted in person, by mail, online, or at Service Canada outreach sites.

The government says these measures aim to provide a simpler, more predictable experience for Canadians while maintaining sustainable and consistent passport services.

## Gang steals \$1.7M from Indian-owned jewelry store in just over a minute

The robbery targeted Kumar Jewelers, an Indian-American family-owned business on June 18, 2025

**MARCH 13, 2026  
NEW YORK (TIP)**

Newly released surveillance footage from the US Department of Justice (DOJ) of a "mob-style" heist that saw nearly \$1.7 million in gold and diamonds stolen in just over a minute is going viral on social media.

The robbery, which targeted Kumar Jewelers, an Indian-American family-owned business on June 18, 2025, involved a fleet of vehicles and a crew of approximately two dozen masked suspects. According to federal authorities, the gang rammed a car into the store's front to force entry. Once inside, the group acted like a "tactical unit", using hammers and picks to smash display cases and clear out almost 80 per cent of the store's inventory in approximately 70 seconds.

During the chaotic takeover, one suspect aimed a firearm at a security guard, while another forced the guard to the ground. The crew then fled in multiple stolen getaway cars that peeled off in different directions to evade detection.

According to a DOJ press release, while most of the "robbery crew" remains at large, a federal grand jury has indicted four suspects - all aged 19 or 20 at the time - in connection with the crime: Afatupetaiki Faasisila, Jose Herrada-Aragon, Andres Palestino, and Tom Parker Donegan. If convicted, each defendant faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison.

## 2 Indians killed, 10 injured in drone attack on Oman's industrial hub of Sohar

Oman News Agency reported that two drones crashed in, with one hitting Al Awhi Industrial Zone and claiming the lives of two expatriate workers

**MARCH 13, 2026  
SOHAR, OMAN (TIP)**

Two Indian nationals were killed and 10 others injured in a drone strike in Oman's Sohar city on Friday, March 13, that marked the first Indian fatalities on land since the Iran-US conflict erupted on February 28.

Joint secretary (Gulf) in the Ministry of External Affairs Aseem Mahajan confirmed the killing of the two Indians in Oman at an inter-ministerial media briefing on the crisis in West Asia.

He also said that 1,50,000 Indian nationals have returned to India from West Asia after the conflict began.

"I wish to share with you an incident that happened in Sohar city today. There was an attack and in this incident two Indian nationals have died," he said.

"We express our deepest condolences to their families. Of the 11 injured (in the attack), 10 are Indians. Out of them, five have been discharged after receiving treatment, and five others are receiving treatment in local hospitals," Mahajan said.

"None of them is reported to have serious injuries. Our mission is in close touch with the concerned company and local authorities and is rendering all assistance," he said.

While Mahajan did not provide specific details of the attack, the Oman News Agency (ONA) reported that two drones crashed in Sohar, with one hitting the Al Awhi Industrial Zone and claiming the lives of the two expatriate workers. These latest casualties brought the total number of Indian fatalities in the West Asia conflict to five. While the strike in Oman marked the first deaths on land, three Indian sailors have previously been killed in attacks on merchant vessels since the conflict erupted on February 28.



Photo for representational purpose only. - iStock

# The 15th IAF Women's Achievement Awards Gala Honors Four Women for their Outstanding Achievements; Two Young Achievers Recognized



Honorees with IAF officials: Indu Jaiswal, Honoree Sunita Manjrekar, Honoree Dr Dolly Manwar, Roopam Maini, Honoree Pratima Maldonado, Honoree Prabha Golia, Chanbir Kaur, Shammi Singh



Young Achievers Aarhi Palaniappan and Harnoor Joneja being recognized



Ms. Hitanshi, an RS International student under the guidance of Ms. Shilpa Jhurani, gave a Ganesha Vandana dance performance

**MARCH 9, 2026  
HICKSVILLE, NY (TIP)**

On Sunday evening, March 1st, over 200 distinguished guests gathered at The Sapphire, located at 240 West Old Country Road in Hicksville, NY, to honor the remarkable achievements of this year's honorees at the 15th outstanding Women's Achievement Awards Gala, hosted by The Indian American Forum (IAF). This annual event, held during Women's History Month, is dedicated to recognizing exemplary women for their unwavering courage, commitment, and compassion.

For the past 15 years, the IAF has maintained a tradition of acknowledging and honoring women who have made notable contributions to their communities and respective fields. The event commenced with opening remarks from Mrs. Indu Jaiswal, Chairperson of the IAF, who conveyed sincere appreciation to all attendees. Subsequently, Gala Chair Mrs. Shammi Singh along with Founder President and the Chairman of Human Rights Commission Nassau County, Dr. Bobby Kumar Kalotee, provided an overview and historical context for the event, establishing a formal tone for an evening dedicated to recognition and celebration.

**HONORING EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN AT THE GALA**

The Banquet Hall was packed with elected officials, Entrepreneurs, physicians, community leaders, honorees, and their guests. The event was not just a celebration, but a heartfelt tribute to the strength, resilience, and remarkable spirit of women who rise to challenges, lead with conviction, nurture others, innovate, and transform the world around them.

- successful business empire
- Mrs. Pratibha Maldonado - the first South Asian female to serve as a Commanding Officer of a Police Precinct in New York City
- Mrs. Sunita Manjrekar - Director of Employment at Nassau County's Department of Social Services

honoree thoughtfully addressed the questions posed to them, sharing their insights and experiences with the audience.

**HONORS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS**

To commemorate their outstanding achievements



Diya Lighting Ceremony with past Honorees and IAF Members

**THE EVENT ALSO RECOGNIZED YOUNG ACHIEVERS:**

- Ms. Aarhi Palaniappan - Senior at Herricks High School
- Ms. Harnoor Joneja - Senior at Jericho High School

**ENGAGING DIALOGUE WITH THE HONOREES**

and contributions, each honoree was presented with a plaque, official citations, and elegant flower bouquets. These tokens of appreciation served as a heartfelt acknowledgment of their dedication and service.

A beautifully crafted journal was also unveiled during the event. This special publication featured compliments, best wishes, and messages from elected officials, further highlighting the significance of the occasion. The journal committee, comprising Mrs. Bina Sabapathy, Mrs. Roopam Maini, and Ms. Sanju Sharma, was invited to the podium to release the journal and share this memorable moment with the audience.

**DISTINGUISHED GUESTS AND DIGNITARIES**

The event was graced by the attendance of several distinguished dignitaries. Among them was Hon. Jennifer Rajkumar, New York State Assemblywoman, whose leadership and advocacy have significantly influenced the community. Also, present was Hon. Elaine Philips, Comptroller for Nassau County, who contributed her expertise and support for the occasion. The gathering welcomed Hon. Jen DeSena, Town Supervisor; Hon. Ragini Srivastava, Town Clerk for the Town of North Hempstead, recognized for her vital role in local governance; and Hon. Rose Marie Walker, esteemed Legislative Member. Ms. Deborah Misir - Suffolk County Legislature, while Mr. Harry Malhotra attended on behalf of Town Supervisor Hon. Joseph Saladino from the Town of Oyster Bay.

Additionally, Mrs. Raja Laxmi Kadam from the Consulate office honored the event with her presence.



Students from Columbia University, the Capella Group, and COLUMBIA SUR thrilled the gathering with their engaging contemporary musical performances.

**THE HONOREES OF THE NIGHT WERE:**

- Dr. Dolly Manwar - a respected physician and philanthropist
- Mrs. Prabha Golia - entrepreneur and builder of a

During the gala, the honorees participated in an engaging question-and-answer session led by moderators Mrs. Roopam Maini, Mrs. Chanbir Kaur, DR. Nita Mehta, and Dr Pratichi Goenka. Demonstrating both confidence and courage, each

CONTD FROM PAGE 6



A group picture: Roopam Maini, Indu Jaiswal, Bina Sabapathy, Honoree Pratima Maldonado, Honoree Sunita Manjrekar, Legislator Rose Walker, Harry Malhotra, Honoree Dr Dolly Manwar, Shammi Dingh, Anju Sharma, Bina Kothari

Other notable attendees included Mr Jasbir Jat Singh, President of IALI, Mrs. Nilima Madan, President of AIA (National); Mr. Gobind Munjal, Former President of AIA (National); Mrs. Beena Kothari, President of AIA (NY Chapter); Dr. Nirmal Mattoo, President of IAAC; Mr. Vimal Goyal, President of IDP & IAF; Mrs. Bina Sabapathy, Founder President of IACV; members from CHI, Dr. Narinder Kukar and Mrs. Smiti Khanna, both former presidents of AIA; Dr. Rajiv Datta, Surgical Oncologist at South Nassau Hospital; Mrs. Anju Sharma, President of the Indian American Lions Club;

Mrs. Shashi Malik, President of Seva Center For Humanity, prominent businessmen Mr. Kanak Golia, Mr. Shudh Prakash Singh Jasuja, Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur; Dr Adi Sharma, President On Mount Sinai South Nassau, Human Rights Commissioner Ms. Wioletta Dusza; Mrs. Geeta Shukla, realtor; Dr Raj Modi, Former President and Trustee of TLCA Raji Kuncham and Dr Kishore Kuncham. Harvinder Bhatia- a Community Activist, and Ms. Rhea Manjrekar - Miss Metropolitan. Collectively, these guests highlighted the community's recognition of the honorees and underscored the



Officials present : Jenifer DeSena, Town of North Hempstead Supervisor, Jennifer Rajkumar, NY State Assemblywoman, Indu Jaiswal, Elaine Phillips, Nassau County Comptroller, Raj Laxmi, Consul for Trade, CGI

importance of the occasion.

The event commenced with the American and Indian national anthems, performed by Mrs. Jyoti Gupta, Mrs. Bina Sabapathy, Mrs. Roopam Maini, and Dr. Jag Mohan Kalra. A Ganesh Vandana was subsequently presented by Ms. Hitanshi, an RS International student under the guidance of Ms. Shilpa Jhurani. Appreciation is also extended to the students from Columbia University, the Capella Group, and COLUMBIA SUR for their engaging contemporary musical performances.

From appetizers through to the main course, the dinner service was efficiently managed by the management of Banquet Hall.

The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks, recognizing the dedicated efforts of all volunteers who worked diligently in organizing the occasion, as well as expressing appreciation to the IAF Board Members for their wholehearted support. Gratitude was also extended to the sponsors, media representatives, performers, photographers, the Bedi Family for their sponsorship of the fire blankets, and all attendees.

(Based on a Press release issued by Bina Sabapathy)



Honorees with Committee Members and sponsors

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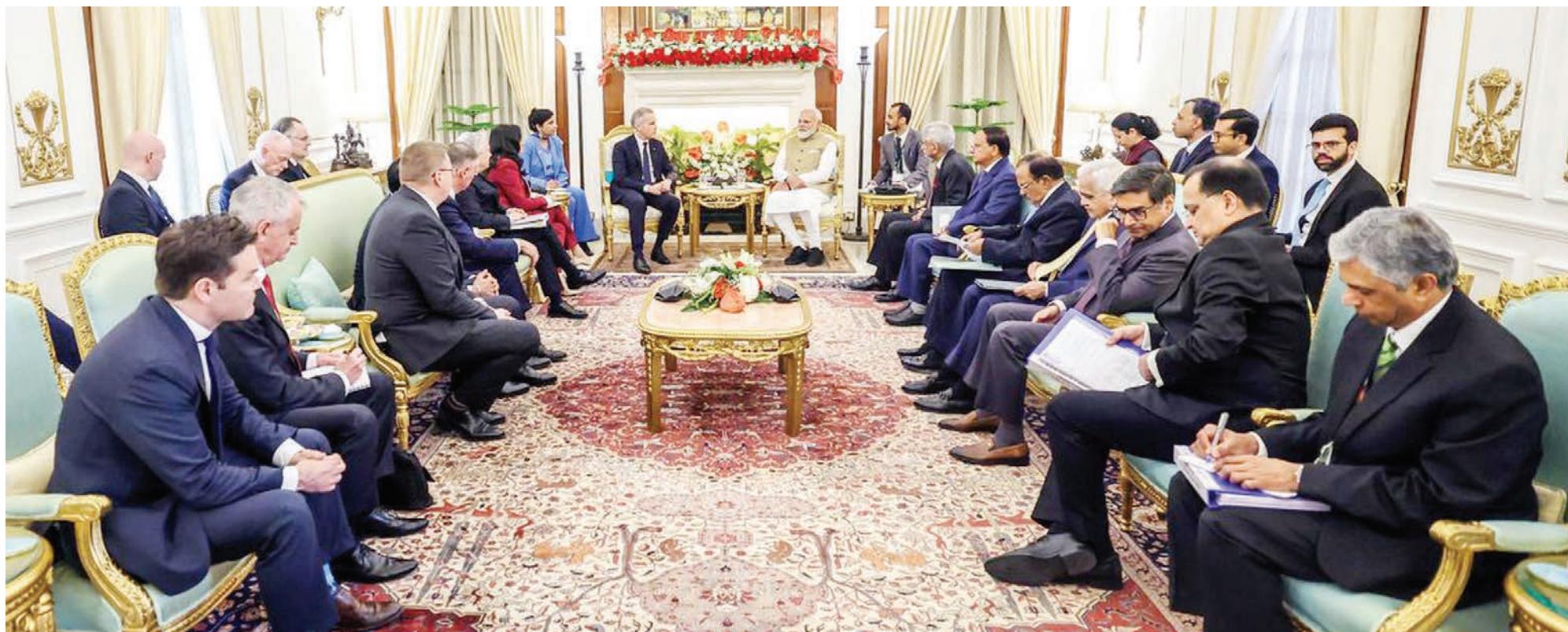
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# The India-Canada turnaround is about deliverables

The Canadian Prime Minister's visit has strengthened India-Canada ties, with a focus on India's needs



HARSH  
V. PANT  
&  
VIVEK  
MISHRA



'The focus on economic issues was unmissable'

-Photo Credit: ANI

"MR. CARNEY'S VISIT FOCUSED ON DELIVERABLES AND AVOIDED GETTING BOGGED DOWN BY PAST ISSUES. THE VISIT ALSO MARKED THE CULMINATION OF BILATERAL EFFORTS TO PUT THE RELATIONSHIP BACK ON TRACK, INITIATED BY PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI'S VISIT TO KANANASKIS (CANADA) IN JUNE 2025 AND, ALSO THE BILATERAL MEETING IN JOHANNESBURG IN NOVEMBER 2025. CANADA HAS SHOWN PARTICULAR PRAGMATISM IN TIDING OVER DOMESTIC POLITICS TO CURATE ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA CAREFULLY, SKIRTING SOME OF THE LEGACY ISSUES."

When the Prime Minister of Canada, Mark Carney, visited India (February 27-March 2, 2026), the bilateral relationship saw a remarkable turnaround, especially in the backdrop of the no-nonsense style ties had taken under his predecessor, Justin Trudeau.

Mr. Carney's visit focused on deliverables and avoided getting bogged down by past issues. The visit also marked the culmination of bilateral efforts to put the relationship back on track, initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Kananaskis (Canada) in June 2025 and, also the bilateral meeting in Johannesburg in November 2025. Canada has shown particular pragmatism in tiding over domestic politics to curate its relationship with India carefully, skirting some of the legacy issues.

#### SPOTLIGHT ON ECONOMIC ISSUES

Coming on the back of significant geopolitical churn, the focus on economic issues was unmissable. Canada has faced pressure from its southern neighbor, the United States, which is among its largest trade partners, due to supply chains concentrated toward Washington. U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff policy, together with unending wars in Europe, West Asia, as well as the broader Levant region, have shaken global powers with economic momentum and purpose. India and Canada perhaps fall in the same spectrum of countries which want to avoid war and focus on deliverables for their countries.

However, with global supply chains deeply interconnected, it is virtually impossible for countries to avoid some of the fallout from conflicts and realignments. India and Canada see diversification in trade, energy, investment, and security as essential.

The Carney visit resulted in at least

eight agreements and contracts, spread over a slew of important sectors. At the top was, of course, the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), for which the terms of agreement have been signed, marking the road map and structure of negotiations.

There was another memorandum of understanding (MoU) under the Australia-Canada-India Technology and Innovation Partnership on cooperation in technology and innovation, designed to support long-term partnership in these areas and enhance Ottawa's engagements with key Indo-Pacific countries.

#### THE FOCUS AREAS

There were other agreements on augmenting research partnership, cultural exchange, and collaboration in the areas of food and nutrition. Perhaps two of the most significant agreements were the commercial contract between India's Department of Atomic Energy and Canada's Cameco for the supply of uranium ore concentrates, as well as the MoU on critical minerals cooperation.

These areas of cooperation are aligned with the current needs of India, but also a future road map in which technology and critical minerals are indispensable. First, there is a global rush to secure critical mineral supply chains, vital for technology and everyday life in the modern age. Second, supply chains for critical minerals are concentrated in the hands of a few countries, most notably China.

After China showed its ability to leverage critical mineral supply chains - most recently against the U.S. in the face of tariffs imposed by the Trump administration - other nations have recognized the need to secure their own supply chains that could be affected in times of crises. As such, the bilateral commitments on critical minerals

between India and Canada are in sync with the U.S.-led Pax Silica coalition, strengthening strategic cooperation in AI and semiconductors, and which includes India among other 10-odd countries.

#### ENERGY AT FOREFRONT

Among the sectors that India and Canada sought to strengthen, it was energy that took center stage. Conventional and renewable energy are critical - Canada as a resource-rich nation, and India facing growing demand. For India, growth has to be a function of the usage of clean energy, given its sustainable development goals and zero-emission targets. The fastest way in which India can ensure energy sustainability and predictability is to reduce its reliance on external imports of energy and gradually increase homegrown production of energy. Arguably, the most efficient way to achieve this is by expanding the role of nuclear energy in India's energy mix. India's passing the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025 was seen as a step toward that goal. If the U.S. could be a source country for nuclear reactors, the long-term agreement with Canada for the supply of uranium ore concentrates can add predictability to fuel supply.

Overall, India's dependence on external actors for its energy sources has left it vulnerable in the new era of unending wars. Thus, the uranium deal with Canada is most apt for India in order to reduce external risks, help meet its development goals and also reach its target of achieving 100 GW nuclear power capacity by 2047.

(Harsh V. Pant is Vice-President, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi. Vivek Mishra is Deputy Director, Strategic Studies Program and Fellow, Americas, at the Observer Research Foundation)

# Iran War Puts India in Tricky Position

Modi's government faces increasing domestic dissent when it comes to working with the Trump administration.

SUMIT  
GANGULY



Two recent developments—one in New Delhi and another off the coast of Sri Lanka—could have important consequences for the future of U.S.-India relations as President Donald Trump wages war in Iran.

On March 5, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau spoke at the annual Raisina Dialogue, an Indian government-supported conference that brings together policymakers, journalists, and analysts to discuss global issues. Landau reiterated the Trump administration's commitment to pursuing a collaborative relationship with India while adhering to an "America First" agenda.

Meanwhile, the Indian National Congress party, the country's main political opposition, bluntly stated that Landau's remarks were "not only insulting but also anti-India" in a post on its official social media accounts. The party's reaction wasn't surprising, in part stemming from a degree of reflexive anti-Americanism that has long strained the party's political culture.

But the comments also reflected the misgivings of many in the Congress party who believe that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has been too eager to engage with the Trump administration and failed to protect India's national interests—most

who are aggrieved in the wake of Shiite cleric and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's assassination. India also receives substantial remittances from expatriate workers in the Middle East, including Iran, and imports a significant amount of oil from the region.

Against that backdrop, it's no wonder U.S.-India relations are fraught. Landau's comments stand in striking contrast to even past Republican administrations: Under President George W. Bush, when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visited New Delhi, she stated that the United States was interested in seeing India rise as a great power.

Subsequent leaders did not back away

decisions demonstrated a willingness to negotiate and compromise, resulting in a February trade agreement. (The eventual fate of the accord, however, is now in abeyance after the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling on Trump's tariffs.)

Still, the Modi government faces increasingly vocal domestic dissent when it comes to working with the Trump administration. In the past, it could fend off these criticisms and pursue policies that it deemed to be beneficial. However, criticism is growing louder—and it is not confined to the opposition benches. Even before the Iran war, influential and relatively



Shia Muslims across India protested killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

However, Landau made a point to add that the administration would not help to boost India's material capabilities: "India should understand that we are not going to make the same mistakes with India that we made with China 20 years ago in terms of saying, we are going to let you develop all these markets, and then, the next thing we know, you are beating us in a lot of commercial things," he said.

The Raisina Dialogue opened in New Delhi just days after the war in Iran had begun, raising the stakes of the debates taking place there. The irony of Landau underscoring Trump's America First foreign-policy agenda is that the conflict, unless swiftly concluded, will lead the United States into yet another quagmire in the Middle East.

The official Indian reaction to Landau's comments was swift: "India's rise will be determined solely by India," Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said in a statement on the conference's last day, without explicitly mentioning the speech. One can surmise that Jaishankar sought to avoid a possible pique with the Trump administration while still conveying his displeasure to both Washington and the Indian public.

notably in the recently concluded trade agreement with the United States.

A day before Landau's speech, a U.S. submarine sank an Iranian naval vessel, the IRIS Dena, off the coast of Sri Lanka, killing at least 87 people. The warship was returning to Iran following a multilateral naval exercise hosted by India that included 18 ships from countries friendly to New Delhi. Segments of Indian civil society reacted harshly. Some argued that the episode punctured Modi's claims that India was a net security provider in its littoral waters.

The ship was in international waters, and it appears the U.S. torpedo attack did not violate international law. But that it happened when the ship was headed home from a major exercise—in which the United States itself was a participant—has upset many people in India. The Congress party took Modi to task for his failure to condemn the sinking of the Iranian vessel.

Apart from the opposition sensing an opportunity, there are more compelling reasons why the Indian government cannot remain neutral amid the U.S. and Israeli attacks against Iran. India has a substantial domestic Shiite population

from this goal—and Trump did little to slow the progress in the bilateral relationship during his first term. On the contrary, the two sides signed a key defense agreement that had been held up for some time. Trump also seemed to develop a personal rapport with Modi, holding a rally with him in Houston, Texas, during a state visit. Modi reciprocated this warmth when Trump visited India in February 2020.

As a result, Landau's speech was not received well in New Delhi, and the sinking of the Iranian warship has further inflamed these sentiments. Given India's long-standing efforts to maintain a semblance of normal relations with Iran while bolstering its ties to the United States, the current moment is an important setback. India's nonaligned foreign policy, which seeks to maintain sound relations with a range of international partners, has now suffered a body blow.

It is obviously in the interest of the Modi government to adopt a nonconfrontational approach toward the United States—it can't afford to alienate the Trump administration. Far too much is at stake, from trade and investment to defense ties. New Delhi's recent

nonpartisan Indian politicians were sounding the alarm about the downturn in U.S.-India ties.

U.S.-India relations, which entered troubled waters after Trump imposed harsh tariffs last year, may now face more turbulence. Key members of India's attentive public are now explicitly warning Modi that his government's unwillingness to express its reservations about the war against Iran could jeopardize India's enduring national interests.

It is too early to say if these misgivings will lead to a permanent drift in bilateral ties. The Trump administration's seeming indifference to what India deems to be its legitimate foreign-policy concerns—not to mention a rebuke to its quest for great-power status—seems to show that decades of bipartisan efforts to forge a strong partnership could now be at needless risk.

(Originally published in Foreign Policy, March 13, 2026)

(Sumit Ganguly is a columnist at Foreign Policy and senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, where he directs the Huntington Program on Strengthening U.S.-India Relations.)

## THE WAY FORWARD FOR PUNJAB

"THE PROBLEM IS THAT PUNJAB IS BROKE. AN INVESTMENT SUMMIT IN MOHALI THIS WEEKEND MAY HAVE COME A BIT LATE IN THE DAY, EVEN IF IT'S TO MAKE GOOD-NATURED PROMISES. UNFORTUNATELY, AAP HAS NOT CALLED UPON THE EXPERIENCES OF PUNJAB'S HUGELY SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURIAL CLASS ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY OR ABROAD - REMEMBER, CANADA'S 4-CRORE POPULATION CAN BECOME PUNJAB'S 24TH DISTRICT - TO REINVENT ITSELF. THE PREVIOUS CONGRESS GOVERNMENT'S PUNJAB INNOVATION MISSION HAD SOME GOOD IDEAS. UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S A CIPHER OF ITS FORMER SELF, BECAUSE BHAGWANT MANN'S BUREAUCRACY IS SO BUSY REINVENTING THE WHEEL THAT THERE'S NO TIME TO PONDER OVER THE IDEAS THAT CAME IN THE PREVIOUS CYCLE."

The Modi government's foreign policy failures resonated in the Punjab Assembly earlier this week, with MLAs cutting across party lines passing a resolution against the Indo-US trade deal. This is certainly a first. It's certainly not the business of legislatures to pontificate on foreign policy, leave alone pass resolutions. But so much bitterness is these days defining the business of politics, that not even the spectacular Le Corbusier-designed building that is the Punjab Assembly was able to insulate itself from the noise of the street.

No wonder the state is bracing itself for a huge rally by Home Minister Amit Shah today in Punjab. The BJP is blowing the bugle, make no mistake, announcing its ambition to stake a claim in the politics of this hugely important border state. Less than a year from now there will be a new government and the BJP is asking itself - and Punjab - why it cannot do the unthinkable, which is to paint Punjab kesariya, saffron, the color of sacrifice, both intimate and familiar, especially to Sikhs.

So far, though, the party has been a bit at sixes and sevens. Even if Amit Shah

takes a leaf out of Lenin's book, who famously said he found power lying on the streets of St. Petersburg, picked it up and that's why he mounted the Revolution, the BJP, at least for the moment, is discovering that the people of the Land of Five Rivers - or three, today - are a slightly different kettle of fish.

It's not that Punjab is in the pink of health - quite the opposite. The drug crisis is dragging down the state into a vortex, from which there's no seeming return - read my colleague, Aparna Banerji's depressing stories about the third drug death in a fortnight, of a 19-year-old boy from Mehatpur, in the Doaba region. Everyday stories of foreign-based gangsters gunning down rivals in Punjab's broad light of day are rife. The ruling AAP has thrown caution to the winds by announcing impossible spends in a Budget that promises a little of everything to everyone - including Rs 1,000 a month policy benefit for women (Rs 1,500 for women belonging to Scheduled Castes, a third of the 3-crore population), which is being seen as a Brahmastra. Only, the problem is no one knows where the money's coming from.

Unfortunately, it's a cipher of its former self, because Bhagwant Mann's bureaucracy is so busy reinventing the wheel that there's no time to ponder over the ideas that came in the previous cycle.

And then there's Bhagwant Mann. The chief minister has been rightfully castigated for his loose comments on women in a speech in Ludhiana some days ago; he was supposedly remembering the escapades of his callow youth, but really, there have to be less colorful ways. (As for the Congress party's Sukhpal Khaira, his outrageous comments linking "dancing women" with the benefits of AAP's Rs 1,000 payout should encourage the party to immediately banish him to Kalapani, where he should repent deeply and seek forgiveness - well, he definitely should beware the rage of Punjab's women.)

As for dancing women, all of Punjab's men, including Khaira, should know that these "naachnewaalis" are doing an honest day's work, and not dependent on anyone for handouts or freebies. As for who's dancing on which master puppeteer's tune - well, the jury is out and the people will decide, not just in

JYOTI  
MALHOTRA



significant sense of self has been scarred by Partition, damaged by terrorism and depleted by the continuing lack of investment into itself, both political and economic. If AAP wants to win Punjab again, it has to do much more than just tokenism - and that includes the Rs 1,000-a-month benefit for women.

AAP - like the BJP elsewhere in the country, where largesse for women has been doled out in amounts that could help wipe out Punjab's debt, in the attempt to create a "women constituency" that will supersede caste - must remember that women are not beneficiaries, or recipients of handouts or "wombs" from which "brave men are born" - some of those phrases that resonated in the Punjab Assembly earlier this week were not just jarring, they were revealing of a deeply patriarchal mindset that doesn't even realize it is patriarchal.

Punjab is special because it isn't interested in tokenism. To rephrase John



Basic truth : Punjab is not a consolation for the loss of Delhi or the pivot to relaunch AAP across the rest of India.

-Photo credit: Tribune

Punjab's debt is an astounding Rs 4.17 lakh crore, interest payments alone totaling Rs 1.16 lakh crore, its state GDP the second lowest in the country after Arunachal Pradesh.

Cunningly, the women-only card is straight out of PM Modi's quiver - AAP's national convenor Arvind Kejriwal has learnt well.

The problem is that Punjab is broke. An investment summit in Mohali this weekend may have come a bit late in the day, even if it's to make good-natured promises. Unfortunately, AAP has not called upon the experiences of Punjab's hugely successful entrepreneurial class elsewhere in the country or abroad - remember, Canada's 4-crore population can become Punjab's 24th district - to reinvent itself. The previous Congress government's Punjab Innovation Mission had some good ideas.

Punjab next year, but in West Bengal, Assam and Kerala this year.

But back to Bhagwant Mann. His occasional visits to the hospital to check his hemoglobin provoke a huge yawn - Punjab's hemoglobin levels have been high for a while. The promise to make the state corruption-free shimmers in the unseasonal heat, an echo from another "na khaonga, na khaane doonga" era. As for the influence from Delhi - Punjab is a worthwhile prize, has never liked to submit to the Dilli Durbar, which is why the return journey, across the political class, is in such high demand.

Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia and AAP's Delhi politicians understand that basic truth. Punjab is not a consolation for the loss of Delhi or the pivot to relaunch the party across the rest of the country. The state's

F Kennedy, as the state goes to the polls in a few months, ask not what Punjab can do for you, but what you can do for Punjab. That's also why Amit Shah's rally will be keenly watched today.

Montek Singh Ahluwalia, former Finance Secretary and right-hand man to former PM Manmohan Singh in the early 1990s - two Punjabis who led the economic reforms in the country and changed the course of the nation - sent me this phrase, quoting a ballad by Bhai Gurdas, much admired by Guru Arjan Dev himself. "Satguru Nanak pargatya/miti dhund/jag chaanan hoya." Guru Nanak manifested himself, the fog of ignorance lifted and the world was bathed in light!

If Punjab has to be bathed in light again, the way forward is clear.

(Jyoti Malhotra is Editor in Chief of The Tribune Group)

## PM Carney decides dates for 3 by-elections



Prime Minister of Canada Mark Carney on Sunday, March 8, announced dates for holding by-elections to three ridings to fill the vacancies

**MARCH 8, 2026  
OTTAWA (TIP)**

Speculations for calling federal elections notwithstanding, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Sunday, March 8, announced dates for holding by-elections to three ridings to fill the vacancies. The vacancies have been caused by recent resignations by two

sitting MPs, while the third followed a judicial adjudication.

Among the by-elections called for next month is the Montreal-area riding of Terrebonne, where the Supreme Court of Canada recently invalidated last year's result. The incumbent represented the ruling Liberals, Tatiana Auguste.

By-elections will also be held on April 13, 2026, in the ridings of Scarborough Southwest and University-Rosedale.

These by-elections will be an acid test for Prime Minister Mark Carney and his ruling Liberal Party, as the main opposition party, the Conservatives, has been gunning for his minority government.

Longtime MP Bill Blair resigned his seat in Scarborough Southwest in order to become Canada's new high commissioner to the United Kingdom, while the University-Rosedale seat opened up after former federal minister Chrystia Freeland resigned in January in order to take up a new voluntary role advising the Ukrainian government.

In the Terrebonne riding, Liberal Tatiana Auguste was initially declared the winner before the result flipped to Bloc Québécois' Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné after the votes went through a validation process. A judicial recount completed on May 10, however,

concluded the Liberals received one more than Sinclair-Desgagné.

But Sinclair-Desgagné challenged the results after a supporter complained that she had tried to vote by mail using a special ballot that was never counted, and on February 13, the Supreme Court sided with the Bloc candidate and invalidated the results.

The Liberals currently have 169 seats in the House of Commons, and if they were to win all three races, they would then have a razor-thin majority government.

The Liberals are running family physician and health care advocate Dr. Danielle Martin in the riding of University-Rosedale, while former Ontario NDP deputy leader Doly Begum has been chosen to run in the riding of Scarborough Southwest. Her decision to quit the NDP and join the Liberals' bandwagon evoked controversy, as she had been a long-time NDP legislator. Both ridings are considered liberal strongholds.

According to Elections Canada, voters in the three ridings can vote in advance polls from April 3 to 6 at their assigned polling stations or at their Elections Canada office any time before April 7. Voters can also cast their vote by mail before April 7.

PRABHJOT  
SINGH



## Carney announces \$35B for defense, infrastructure in Canada's North

Funding includes building military hubs and roads, improving northern airports

**MARCH 12, 2026  
OTTAWA (TIP)**

The Liberal government has unveiled a detailed, multibillion-dollar proposal to modernize and expand Canada's military footprint in the country's Far North.

The comprehensive \$35-billion plan, which also includes improvements to civilian infrastructure, is expected to see northern base upgrades, including runway improvements and expansions, as well as hangar and road construction, in a number of locations across the Arctic.

Most of the investment - approximately \$32 billion - is being drawn from a pool of money set aside almost four years ago by former prime minister Justin Trudeau's government to modernize NORAD, the binational North American air defense command shared with the United States.

That plan was originally pegged at \$38 billion in 2022 and Thursday's announcement in Yellowknife almost certainly means that figure will likely be revised upward.

Prime Minister Mark Carney wouldn't speculate how the spending will unfold. He underlined the difference between project estimates and actual funding that's being allocated.

He said some aspects of the modernization program might change, depending on how threats in the world evolve.

The investments are expected to roll out over the next dozen years.

### BREAKING DOWN THE SPENDING

The initial \$38 billion estimate, as with other Defense Department spending, is presented on an accrual basis - basically accounting for the expense when it occurs. On a cash basis, the NORAD investment represents

roughly \$87 billion, according to officials in the prime minister's office.

Northern infrastructure improvements at four forward operating locations in Canada's North (Inuvik, N.W.T., Yellowknife, Iqaluit and Goose Bay, N.L.) were part of the original announcement made by former defense minister Anita Anand. Improvements in each location are necessary in order for them to host the air force's new F-35 stealth fighters.

Other items on the modernization list and already in the planning or purchasing stages include the recently announced Arctic over-the-horizon radar (\$6.7 billion for phase one); the acquisition of new air-to-air refueling planes and the purchase of short-, medium- and long-range air-to-air missiles; along with other command and communications upgrades.

Carney said two additional operational support hubs - where the military can store equipment and ammunition as well as stage troops - will be created in Whitehorse and Resolute, Nunavut.

Another two operational support nodes - smaller bases and fueling stations - will be established in Nunavut's Cambridge Bay and Rankin Inlet.

The network of bases will enable the Canadian military to deploy rapidly and support year-round response across the North, no matter how remote.

Carney described attempts by previous governments - both Liberal and Conservative - to secure the Arctic as "piecemeal investments" and he noted his government is setting ambitious targets.

"Over my lifetime, successive governments have helped make investments in new mines and ports. Roads and bridges, outposts and satellite systems," Carney said. "But too often these steps have been taken with great caution or after long delays. Too often, investments were made one at a time - piecemeal and

not connected."

"We are securing every corner of this terrain, unlocking its vast resources and delivering the strong, connected network of communities that northerners deserve," he said.

In keeping with Carney's emphasis on leveraging defense spending to boost the economy and investment, the package announced Thursday contains a series of civilian airport improvements - Rankin Inlet and Inuvik - and major road construction projects that will have to be approved by the Liberal government's Major Projects Office.

The roadwork includes a further extension of the Mackenzie Highway, connecting Yellowknife to Inuvik with the intention of opening up commercial opportunities along the route. In addition, the federal government plans on developing the Grays Bay road and port in order to connect it to the national highway system.

When completed, the government said, the 227-kilometre, all-season road will become Canada's first overland connection to a deepwater port on the Arctic Ocean and help smooth the movement of strategic minerals to market.

When approved, the project could represent another \$11 billion in spending.

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

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# Foreign visitors in US must follow law or leave: Harmeet Dhillon

**MARCH 10, 2026**  
**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)**

US Assistant Attorney General Harmeet Dhillon Monday said foreign visitors in the United States - including students on college campuses - must obey American laws or risk losing the right to remain in the country.

Speaking in an interview to The Brief, Dhillon said authorities should enforce strict rules when visitors violate the law or engage in disruptive behavior on campuses.

"Visitors in America must follow the law, especially on college campuses- or leave," she said. "The Justice Dept has zero tolerance for violence or hate against students and will defend their Civil Rights," the Indian American attorney said in a social media post.

Her remarks come amid continuing tensions at several US universities following protests linked to the October 7, 2023, attacks in Israel and the broader Middle East conflict.

Referring to unrest on American campuses, Dhillon said there had been serious concerns about antisemitism and

disruptive protests at leading universities.

"There's almost certainly quite a bit of that at our Ivy League institutions today, vis-a-vis the anti-Semitism and the October 7th, 2023, disruption and agitation on our campuses."

She said authorities should adopt a strict approach when visitors violate the law.

"And we should have a zero tolerance policy for that," she said. "If you're a guest in this country, and Marco Rubio has said this much more eloquently than I just did, you don't have a right to break our laws or disrupt our campuses."

Dhillon emphasized that foreign nationals entering the United States do so as guests and must respect the country's legal framework.

"You're a guest. You're a visitor. You can't come in and put your dirty feet up on the couch and expect to be greeted warmly," she said.

She added that the United States has the right, like any other country, to enforce its laws and control who is allowed to stay.

"And so it's entirely appropriate for our

country, just like all other countries do, police their borders by saying, if you're not going to follow our laws, you can get out," Dhillon said.

Dhillon also suggested that some countries enforce such rules more strictly.

"And other countries do a much better job of this than we do," she said. "And so certainly when someone is convicted of a crime, they lose their right to stay in this ..."

Her remarks highlight an ongoing political debate in the United States over campus protests, immigration enforcement, and the responsibilities of foreign students studying in American universities.

Large demonstrations erupted across several campuses after the Israel-Hamas war began in October 2023. The protests triggered sharp responses from lawmakers and federal officials, with many calling for stronger action against antisemitism while also raising concerns about free speech protections.

International students form a major part of the US higher education system, with more than one million foreign



US Assistant Attorney General Harmeet Dhillon warned foreign visitors in the United States, including students on college campuses, to obey American laws or risk losing the right to remain in the country.

students enrolled in American universities. Their presence contributes significantly to academic research, innovation and the US economy, while visa rules require them to comply with federal and campus regulations.

## Cricket Legend Sunil Gavaskar Renders Support to AAPI's Stem Cell Drive

**BY AJAY GHOSH**  
**MARCH 5, 2026**  
**NEW YORK (TIP)**

"Hi, you could be the miracle that somebody with Blood Cancer is waiting for. Take a Swab. Save a Life," the Legendary Cricket Star Sunil Gavaskar, known around the world as an inspirational speaker, philanthropist, and the chairman of H2H Foundation, told in Videp Post on Instagram, with AAPI's official logo at the background.

Gavaskar was referring to the STEM Donor Drive by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) initiated in the United States by Dr. Satheesh Kathula, a Hematology Oncologist and the immediate past President of AAPI, during his presidency in 2024. Under the leadership of Dr. Amit Chakrabarty, the current President, AAPI launched the AAPI Stem Cell Drive in India during the recently concluded Global Healthcare Summit in Odisha, India.

Dr. Amit Chakrabarty expressed his "deep gratitude and appreciation to the Cricket Legend, Sunil Gavaskar for rendering his support to AAPI's Stem Cell Drive, and for his appeal to everyone to come forward to take a swab and save the lives of those who are diagnosed with the deadly blood cancer."

Dr. Suresh Reddy, a past President of AAPI, who has been instrumental in obtaining the active support of Sunil Gavaskar, said, "The Little Master has been associated with AAPI for several years. During our 40th Annual Convention in San Antonio, TX in June 2022, he addressed the AAPI delegates, describing AAPI members as being part of the greatest profession in the world. During his interaction with AAPI members, Mr. Gavaskar referred to his leadership at the 'Heart to Heart Foundation' and how the Foundation is touching many hearts around the world."

Dr. Sashi Kuppala, Chair of the Stem Cell Drive, who has been leading the AAPI STEM Drive across the United States and India, expressed his "deep gratitude to the hundreds of thousands of individuals, who have come forward to be tested and have committed to be STEM donors with the objective of saving thousands of lives. Thanks to Dr. Amit Chakrabarty, we successfully launched the project in India."

Referring to the need and effectiveness of STEM donation, Dr. Meher Medavaram, President-Elect of

AAPI, said, "Cell-based therapy as a modality of regenerative medicine is considered one of the most promising disciplines in the fields of modern science & medicine. Such an advanced technology offers endless possibilities for transformative and potentially curative treatments for some of humanity's most life-threatening diseases."

Dr. Chakrabarty said, "Stem cell transplants are a vital treatment for blood cancers such as leukemia and lymphoma HLA markers, which determine donor compatibility, are inherited and vary by ethnicity. I'm thankful to our local AAPI Chapter leaders, members and volunteers across the nation who have initiated and are spearheading the Stem Cell Registration in India and the United States, joining hands with the national AAPI in our efforts in creating awareness and enrolling more youth and adults to be part of this noble mission."

This noble initiative for Stem Donors was launched in 2024 under leadership of AAPI's immediate past President, Dr. Satheesh Kathula. Recognizing this urgent need, AAPI partnered with the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP), the world's largest stem cell registry-in 2024 to launch a unified, nationwide campaign.

"Patients of Indian ethnicity are more likely to match with Indian donors-but the existing donor pool is alarmingly small. Until now, families have had to organize donor drives independently, while also coping with the emotional and medical toll of a cancer diagnosis," Dr. Kathula said.

Stem cells are one of the treatment options for certain types of cancers. HLA typing, based on which stem cell donors and patients are matched is ethnicity specific. Indian patients have higher chances of matching with Indian donors. Unfortunately, Indian donor pool is very limited, making it difficult for patients to find a proper match. Moreover, until now, patients and their families are doing these drives on their own to find the match in addition to dealing with the diagnosis. There has been no unified push to increase the Indian donor pool.?"

### MOBILIZING COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE U.S.

Since November 2024, AAPI has organized drives across several cities in the United States and India, with the active support from the local high school and



college students. AAPI provides volunteer certificates to the students who participate in the drives.?"

Dr. Hetal Gor, Chair of AAPI BOT, emphasized the need for commitment. She said,?"You could be someone's only match-their only hope. Registering is a serious promise, but the donation process is safe and complication-free."

### EXPANDING THE EFFORT TO INDIA

Under the leadership of Dr. Amit Chakrabarty, AAPI President this year, AAPI launched the AAPI Stem Cell Drive India during the Global Healthcare Summit in Odisha, with hundreds of students and faculty registering to be Stem donors. AAPI has partnered with the Global Association of Indian Medical Students, and DATRI, the stem cell bank in India.

Dr. Krishan Kumar, Vice President-Elect, while highlighting the disparity, said, "70% of patients lack a family match. For Indians, the odds are even lower due to the limited donor pool." Describing the process, he said, "Registration is simple. Scan the QR code, fill out your details, and return the cheek swab kit. Your HLA data will be stored securely."

Dr. Seema Arora, Secretary, described the donation logistics, stating, "If matched, you'll provide blood samples locally. Travel may be required, but all costs are covered. The process takes 20-30 hours over 4-6 weeks."

Dr. Soumya Nerevetla, Treasurer, in reinforcing the impact of Stem Donors on saving lives, said, "Finding a match is especially difficult for South Asians. Every donor helps save lives."

Dr. Sashi Kuppala pointed to the "tremendous response to this initiative from the AAPI members and the wider Indian community."

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

# Embassy of India Organises Special Screening of Bollywood Blockbuster Border 2 at AFI Cotroceni Cinema City, Bucharest

**MARCH 4, 2026  
BUCHAREST (TIP)**

The Embassy of India in Bucharest successfully organised a special screening of the Bollywood blockbuster film *Border 2* on 4th March 2026 at AFI Cotroceni Cinema City, Bucharest. The screening was held in connection with the celebrations of the Holi Festival, reflecting the spirit of friendship, cultural exchange, and the longstanding ties between India and Romania.



A poster of the Border 2 Movie



Ambassador of India to Romania Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, and Mr. Rahul Walia, CEO of Touchdown Media for the promotion of the Movie at the Cinema

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from members of the diplomatic corps, officials from the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representatives from business and cultural institutions, members of the Indian community, as well as a large number of Romanian friends of India. The gathering created a vibrant and celebratory atmosphere, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to experience the richness of Indian cinema and culture.

More than 250 guests attended the screening, highlighting the growing interest in Indian films and cultural traditions in Romania. The audience responded very positively to the film and appreciated the Embassy's initiative to present contemporary Indian cinema to Romanian audiences. Many participants expressed their desire to see more screenings of popular and modern Indian films in the future. The wide participation further underscored the strong people-to-people connections and the steadily strengthening cultural relations between India and Romania, countries that share a long history of friendly and cooperative ties.

Prior to the screening, H.E. Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Ambassador of India to Romania, addressed



strengthening connections between societies.

The Ambassador also conveyed his sincere appreciation to Mr. Rahul Walia, CEO of Touchdown Media, who travelled from the United States to facilitate the screening rights of the film *Border 2* and support the



presentation of the film to audiences in Romania. The Ambassador extended his sincere gratitude to T-Series for their generous support in facilitating the movie screening at no cost, enabling a seamless and successful



promotional purposes, further amplifying the outreach of the event and strengthening the promotion of Indian cinema in the region.

The event served as an effective cultural outreach initiative by the Embassy, showcasing the vibrancy,



diversity, and storytelling traditions of Indian cinema while further strengthening cultural engagement between India and Romania. The evening concluded on a warm and positive note, with participants expressing



Large number of the Indians and Romanians came to watch the Border 2 Movie

the audience and warmly welcomed the distinguished guests. In his remarks, the Ambassador highlighted the important role of cinema as a powerful medium for cultural exchange and mutual understanding between nations. He emphasized that films provide a unique platform to share stories, traditions, and values, thereby

event. This arrangement was made with the understanding that the Embassy would help promote Indian Bollywood cinema in emerging markets in Eastern Europe. The photographs, videos, interviews, audience interactions, and overall event coverage have been shared with T-Series for their publicity and

their appreciation to the Embassy for organising the screening and for continuing to promote cultural interaction and mutual understanding between the people of the two countries.

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

# India's Ambassador to Romania Dr. Mohapatra Strengthens India-Romania Cooperation Through Regional Engagements in Arges and Bacau

**MARCH 6, 2026  
BUCHAREST (TIP)**

Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Ambassador of the Republic of India to Romania, undertook a series of regional engagements in Arges and Bacau counties aimed at advancing India-Romania cooperation across economic, academic, and institutional partnerships. The visit formed part of the Embassy's broader efforts to deepen engagement with regional authorities, promote trade and investment opportunities, and strengthen people-to-people and educational ties between the two countries.



Ambassador met Vice Rectors Mr. Tudor Petrescu and Mr. Cristian Negrescu of the University of Pitesti

In Arges County, the Ambassador participated in the RIZ Forum Business Conference held in Topoloveni, an event that brought together local authorities, entrepreneurs, and representatives of the business community to discuss economic development and international partnerships. On the sidelines of the forum, Ambassador Mohapatra met Mr. Gheorghita Botârca, Mayor of Topoloveni, and Ms. Alina-Ioana Georgescu, Mayor of Calimanesti. The discussions focused on exploring opportunities for cooperation between Indian companies and local administrations, particularly in areas such as manufacturing, supply chains, technology, and investment-driven development. The meetings highlighted the growing interest in strengthening local-level engagement as an important pillar of the broader India-Romania partnership.

In addition, Ambassador Mohapatra



Ambassador met with Mayor Cristian Genta, Arges Chamber of Commerce President George Caval and representatives in Pitesti

held a productive meeting with Mr. Cristian Genta, Mayor of Pitesti, Mr. George Caval, President of the Argeş Chamber of Commerce, and representatives of the local business community in the City of Pitesti, which is the Capital of the Arges County. The discussions centered on expanding bilateral investment opportunities and strengthening economic cooperation between Indian companies and regional industries. Participants noted that more than ten Indian companies are already active in Pitesti and the surrounding region, contributing significantly to local economic growth, job creation, and the development of supply chain partnerships. The meeting also explored prospects for further collaboration in sectors such as automotive components, information technology services, engineering, and advanced manufacturing.



Ambassador met Mayor Gheorghita Botârca of Topoloveni

The Ambassador also met Ms. Ioana Facaleata, Prefect of Arges County, and Mr. Marius Florin Nicolescu, Vice President of the Arges County Council. The discussions focused on

strengthening institutional engagement and identifying opportunities to further enhance economic cooperation between India and the region. Both sides emphasized the importance of closer collaboration between national and regional stakeholders in promoting investment, facilitating business partnerships, and supporting sustainable economic development.

As part of India's continued commitment to expanding educational partnerships, Ambassador Mohapatra met Mr. Tudor Petrescu and Mr. Cristian Negrescu, Vice Rectors of the University of Pitesti. The discussions highlighted



Ambassador participated in the RIZForum Business Conference in Topoloveni

the importance of academic cooperation in strengthening long-term bilateral relations. Both sides explored opportunities to promote student and faculty exchanges, joint research initiatives, and the development of dual-degree and collaborative academic programs between Indian universities and Romanian higher education institutions. The engagement also emphasized the growing interest among Indian students in pursuing studies in Europe and the potential for Romanian universities to further expand their international academic partnerships.

During his visit to Bacau, Ambassador Mohapatra held meetings with several regional leaders and institutional representatives. These included Ms. Andreea Negru, Prefect of Bacau County; Ms. Ionela Cristina Breahna-Pravat, President of the Bacau County Council; Mr. Lucian Daniel Stanciu-Viziteu, Mayor of Bacau; representatives of the Bacau Chamber of Commerce and



Ambassador met with Ms. Ioana Facaleata, Prefect of Arges County, and Mr. Marius Florin Nicolescu, Vice President of the Arges County Council

and the local business ecosystem, as well as the importance of fostering partnerships that support innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable economic growth.

The Ambassador also participated in a business meeting in Bacau with local industry leaders and entrepreneurs. The interaction provided an opportunity to highlight India's growing economic dynamism and its expanding role as a global hub for technology, manufacturing, and innovation. Discussions explored potential areas for cooperation between Indian and Romanian companies, including supply chain integration, industrial partnerships, and new investment opportunities that could further strengthen the economic dimension of the India-Romania relationship.



Ambassador met Mayor Alina-Ioana Georgescu of Calimanesti

These engagements reflect India's continued commitment to strengthening its partnership with Romania not only at the national level but also through deeper collaboration with regional



Ambassador met Prefect Ms. Andreea Negru, County Council President Ms. Ionela Cristina Breahna-Pravat, Mayor Mr. Lucian Daniel Stanciu-Viziteu, the Bacau Chamber of Commerce President Mr. Doru Simovici

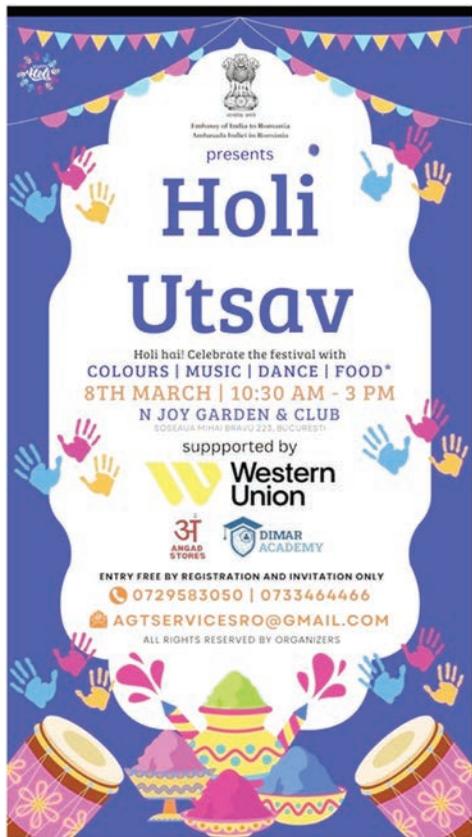


Ambassador participated in a business meeting in Bacau

Industry; and Mr. Doru Simovici. The discussions focused on strengthening cooperation between India and Bacau County in areas such as trade, investment, and regional economic development. Particular emphasis was placed on the potential for increased engagement between Indian companies

authorities, academic institutions, and the business community. By promoting dialogue, encouraging investment, and expanding educational and institutional cooperation, such initiatives contribute to building a stronger and more dynamic framework for India-Romania relations in the years ahead.

# Embassy of India in Bucharest Celebrated Holi Utsav 2026 on 8th March 2026 at N Joy Garden & Club



Invitation for celebrating the Holi Utsav

## MARCH 9, 2026 BUCHAREST (TIP)

The Embassy of India in Bucharest, in collaboration with members of the Indian diaspora and with the support of sponsors Angad Store SRL, Dimar Academy and Western Union, organised Holi Utsav 2026 on 8th March 2026 for members of the Indian community, Friends of India, representatives of the Government of Romania and members of the Romanian business and cultural community.

The event was organised with the objective of promoting the rich cultural heritage and traditions of India, particularly those of the northern states

of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. As Bihar Diwas, commemorating the formation of the State of Bihar, is observed in the month of March, Bihar was highlighted as the focus State during the celebrations, showcasing its vibrant cultural traditions, music and heritage.

Addressing the gathering, H.E. Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Ambassador of India to Romania and Moldova, highlighted the significance of the festival of Holi as a celebration of joy, harmony and the triumph of good over evil. He noted that festivals such as Holi provide a meaningful platform to bring together the Indian community and Romanian friends, while also reflecting the cultural affinities and shared values that connect India and Romania. Ambassador also conveyed his Happy Women's Day on this occasion.

The Ambassador also conveyed his warm greetings on the occasion of International Women's Day, acknowledging the invaluable contributions of women in society and their vital role in strengthening families, communities and nations. The Ambassador noted that celebrating Women's Day alongside the festival of Holi symbolises harmony, respect and the shared commitment to building a more inclusive and progressive society. Holi is one of India's most vibrant and widely celebrated festivals, symbolising the victory of good over evil and the arrival of spring. In states such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the festival is marked by distinctive cultural traditions including folk music such as Phag and Hori, traditional dances and community celebrations, which reflect India's rich and composite cultural ethos. Over time, Holi has also become an important cultural celebration for the Indian diaspora worldwide, serving as a means of preserving and promoting Indian traditions and cultural values abroad. The event highlighted these traditions through curated cultural elements, music and thematic presentations, offering guests an authentic glimpse of India's diverse cultural heritage.

The celebration witnessed the participation of over 500 members of the Indian diaspora and Friends of India, including representatives from Romanian government institutions, the diplomatic corps, cultural organisations,



Ambassador gives his remarks on the occasion of Holi Utsav on March 8, 2026



Ambassador Celebrating Holi with women on International Women's Day

rich artisanal traditions and craftsmanship, with a particular focus on products from Bihar. The initiative provided participants an opportunity to learn more about India's regional

conducted indoors with appropriate audio-visual arrangements, ensuring an engaging and informative experience for the attendees.

The event reflected the growing



Ambassador playing Holi with the Indian community and Romanians



The large crowds of Indians and Romanians to celebrate Holi on March 8, 2026

academia, the business community and the media. The event served as an important platform to strengthen engagement with the Indian diaspora in Romania and to further promote people-to-people ties between India and Romania.

In addition to the Holi celebrations, the event also marked Bihar Day, with a special showcase of ODOP (One District One Product) items, highlighting India's

diversity, cultural heritage and traditional industries. Given the large number of participants, the festivities were organised both outdoors and indoors. The traditional Holi celebrations with colours took place in an open setting, allowing participants to enjoy the festive atmosphere. Meanwhile, presentations related to Bihar Day, cultural highlights and the display of ODOP products were

cultural engagement between India and Romania, while celebrating the spirit of diversity, friendship and togetherness that defines the festival of Holi. It also reaffirmed the Embassy's commitment to strengthening cultural diplomacy and fostering closer connections between the peoples of the two countries.

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

## Indian-flagged vessel Jag Prakash stranded in Strait of Hormuz sails away safely

MARCH 14, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** One of the 28 Indian-flagged vessel stranded in the Strait of Hormuz for two weeks due to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East has sailed away safely, PTI news agency reported on Friday, March 13.

The Indian ship, Jag Prakash, carrying oil from Oman to Africa has set sail from the east of the Strait of Hormuz, which is a key transit route for one fifth of the global energy supplies. Hundreds of ships have been stranded in the maritime lane since the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran, and Tehran targeted the region in retaliation.

Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Shipping, said at a media briefing that one of the four Indian ships stranded to the east of the strait has now set sail, carrying fuel for an African destination, PTI reported. Sinha said that of the total 28 Indian vessels stuck near the strait, 24 of them were to the West of the strategic route, while the remaining four were to the east.

More than 20 million barrels of crude oil pass daily through the Strait of Hormuz that separates the Iranian coast from Oman.

# Lok Sabha clears Rs 57,000-cr fund to tackle global shocks, supply chain disruptions

MARCH 14, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The government sought, and received Rs 57,381.84 crore for the Economic Stabilisation Fund as part of the supplementary grants for 2025-26, with Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman telling the Lok Sabha on Friday that this would "provide fiscal headroom to allow India to respond to the global headwinds."

The fund will allow the government to respond to unanticipated supply chain disruptions and unexpected shocks to the Indian economy, the minister added.

While the fund was not part of the original budget for 2025-26, according to the budget documents for 2026-27 presented on February 1, it was mentioned as part of the revised estimate (RE) for 2025-26, with Rs 50,000 crore being allocated for it. The stabilisation fund was placed under the reserve funds of the department of economic affairs or DEA.

On Friday, March 13, Sitharaman said the Rs 2.01 lakh crore net supplementary demand for grants for 2025-26 would not change the fiscal deficit numbers. The demand was passed on Friday after a debate.

The finance minister sought approval of the Parliament for expenditure



requirements related to 61 grants, involving a gross expenditure of about Rs 2.81 lakh crore, and a net cash outgo of Rs 2.01 lakh crore.

The Union budget presented on February 1 this year stipulated India's fiscal deficit at 4.4% of GDP in the revised estimate (RE) for 2025-26, and continuing on the path of fiscal consolidation, set 4.3% as the fiscal deficit target for 2026-27 (BE).

Details of how the Economic Stabilisation Fund will be utilised were not immediately available, although people familiar with the matter in government said the money would go towards protecting consumers from price shocks caused by the recent spike in energy prices on account of the US-Israel war on Iran, and making supply chains for critical commodities more resilient.

## 'Nobody will hire women': Supreme Court turns down plea on menstrual leaves

MARCH 14, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Mandatory menstrual leave for women could 'adversely impact (their) employment' because employers 'will not hire women if we make such a law', Chief Justice Surya Kant said on Friday, March 13.

Such a law would also 'create a psychological fear or impression among working women... that they are 'less' than men', the Chief Justice argued this morning as the court heard a petition by a lawyer, Shailendra Mani Tripathi, seeking direction to states to frame paid menstrual leave rules.

"Creating awareness and sensitisation is different... but the moment you bring in a law mandating menstrual leave, nobody will hire them (women)," he said, warning the petitioner, "You don't know the mindset of employers. They will not hire women if we make such a law."

"Affirmative action in respect of females is constitutionally recognised. But look at the practical reality in the job market. The more unattractive the human resource, the less is the possibility of assumption in the market. Look at from the business model. Will



any employer be happy with the competing claims of other genders?" Justice Joymalya Bagchi said.

Specifically, the petitioner wanted the Supreme Court to ensure that women, whether students or working professionals, are allowed leave during menstruation. But such pleas, the Chief Justice declared, are "made to create fear..."

"They will call women inferior (and say) menstruation is something 'bad' happening to them."

Senior Advocate MR Shamshad pointed out that in 2013 the Kerala government had granted menstrual

leave for women students in all state-run universities. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had then said the decision was part of a "commitment to realising a gender-just society".

Shamshad also pointed out private companies made similar relaxations.

The Chief Justice, though, pointed out that these are voluntary measures. "The moment you say 'compulsory in law', nobody will give them jobs," he stressed, "Nobody will take them in judiciary or government jobs... their career is over. They will say 'you should sit at home...'"

In January the Supreme Court made a critical ruling on menstrual hygiene, recognising it as an 'integral part of a girl child's right to life, dignity, health, and education'.

A bench of Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice R Mahadevan said governments bear a positive obligation, under Article 21 of the Constitution, to protect girls' and women's right to health

The court also issued mandatory directions to all governments to ensure free sanitary napkins, functional gender-segregated toilets, and menstrual health awareness campaigns.

## SC issues notice to Mahua Moitra in cash-for-query case

**T**he Supreme Court on Friday, March 13, stayed a part of the Delhi High Court's order quashing the sanction granted by the Lokpal to the CBI to file a chargesheet against TMC MP Mahua Moitra in the cash-for-query case.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi issued notices to Moitra, the CBI and BJP MP and complainant Nishikant Dubey on the Lokpal's petition challenging the December 19, 2025 high court order that set aside the Lokpal's decision to grant sanction to the probe agency to file a chargesheet against the TMC MP in the case.

The high court had held that separate sanctions for the filing of a charge sheet and initiating prosecution are not contemplated by the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.

"The learned Lokpal is requested to accord its consideration for grant of sanction under Section 20 of the Lokpal Act, strictly in accordance with provisions thereof as construed hereinabove, within a period of one month from today," the high court had said in para 89 of that judgement.

## 2 Indians killed, 10 injured in Oman drone incidents amid Middle East conflict

MARCH 14, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Two Indian nationals were killed in a drone strike in an industrial area in Oman on Friday, March 13, officials said, marking the first Indian fatalities on land in a West Asian country since the start of the Iran-US conflict on February 28.

Ten Indians were also injured in the drone strike on Al Awahi Industrial Area in Sohar city, located about 200 km from the capital Muscat, and all of them were reported to be out of danger. More than three dozen Indians have been injured so far in drone and missile strikes in several West Asian countries, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Track updates on Middle East conflict

Two Indian nationals died in “an attack” in Sohar city, Aseem Mahajan, joint secretary (Gulf) in the external affairs ministry, said at an inter-ministerial briefing on the situation in West Asia.

“We express our deepest condolences to their families. Of the 11 injured [in the attack], 10 are Indians. Five have been discharged after receiving treatment, and five others are still admitted in local hospitals,” Mahajan said.

“None of them is reported to have serious injuries. Our mission is in close touch with the concerned company and local authorities and is rendering all assistance.”

The Oman News Agency (ONA) cited a security source as saying that two unmanned aerial vehicles crashed in Sohar, and one of the drones struck Al Awahi Industrial Zone, resulting in the death of two expatriate workers.

Since the start of the Iran-US conflict, three Indian sailors have been killed in attacks on merchant vessels and tankers and one more has been reported missing. There had been no reports of fatalities on land so far.

The Indian government has focused on the safety and security of 10 million Indian nationals living in West Asian countries during its outreach to the leadership of these states in recent days.

Mahajan added that 15 Indian crew members of the US-owned oil tanker Safesea Vishnu, which was attacked near Basra city of Iraq on Wednesday, had been safely evacuated to a hotel in the city.

An Indian crew member was killed in the attack on Safesea Vishnu, and Mahajan said efforts were underway to transport his body back to the country. Efforts are also being made for the safe repatriation of the 15 rescued seafarers. “Our mission team is in Basra and is rendering all assistance,” he said. *Source: HT*

# LPG crisis in India hits restaurants, may impact retail rents

MARCH 14, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** A shortage of commercial liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in several parts of India is beginning to disrupt restaurant operations, raising concerns about a wider impact on the hospitality sector and retail real estate. As supplies tighten and prices rise, restaurants are struggling to keep kitchens running, while industry experts warn that the crisis could eventually push up retail rents and operating costs across urban markets.

### Restaurants face operational challenges

Restaurants, hotels, and small eateries across multiple cities have reported difficulties in securing commercial LPG cylinders, the primary fuel used for cooking in the food service industry. The shortage has forced many establishments to reduce their menus, limit service hours, or temporarily suspend operations.

Small eateries and independent restaurants have been hit the hardest, as many rely on just one or two LPG cylinders to run daily kitchen operations. With supply disruptions affecting timely deliveries, owners say they are struggling to maintain regular services, especially during peak dining hours.

In some cities, restaurant associations have reported dozens of eateries cutting down on gas-intensive dishes or simplifying their menus to conserve fuel. Street vendors and small dhabas, which depend entirely on LPG cylinders for cooking, are also facing difficulties in continuing normal operations.

### Rising fuel prices squeeze margins

The LPG supply crunch has coincided with rising prices of commercial cylinders, further increasing the financial burden on restaurants. Commercial LPG cylinders, typically used by restaurants and catering businesses, have seen price hikes in recent weeks, pushing up kitchen operating costs.

For many restaurant owners, LPG accounts for a significant



portion of daily operational expenses. The combination of higher fuel costs and uncertain supply is squeezing profit margins, particularly for small and mid-sized eateries that already operate on thin margins. Some establishments have begun passing on the higher costs to customers by increasing menu prices, while others are absorbing the additional expenses in the short term to avoid losing customers.

### Ripple effects on the retail sector

Industry observers warn that the LPG shortage could also affect the retail real estate sector, particularly spaces occupied by food and beverage outlets in malls and high-street markets.

Restaurants form a major component of commercial leasing in shopping centres and retail hubs. If cooking fuel shortages continue to disrupt operations, some restaurant owners may renegotiate rents or delay expansion plans. In extreme cases, prolonged supply issues could lead to closures, affecting occupancy levels in retail spaces. Real estate analysts note that rising operational costs for food businesses may translate into higher rents or service charges for tenants in certain markets, especially if landlords pass on increasing infrastructure costs.

## Bill to amend Transgender Persons Act introduced in Lok Sabha

MARCH 14, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 12 by Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Dr. Virendra Kumar, proposing significant changes to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

The Bill seeks to narrow the definition of “transgender person”, modify the procedure for recognition of gender identity, and introduce stricter penal provisions for offences involving forced conversion of individuals into transgender identities through mutilation or coercion. One of the key amendments proposed in the Bill is a revised definition of “transgender person”. The new definition recognises persons with socio cultural identities such as kinner, hijra, aravani, jogta and eunuch, as well as persons with intersex variations involving congenital variations in primary sexual characteristics, genitalia, chromosomal patterns, gonadal development or hormone production. The Bill also includes persons who are forced through

mutilation, emasculation, castration, surgical, chemical or hormonal procedures to outwardly present a transgender identity.

At the same time, the proposed definition clarifies that persons with different sexual orientations or self perceived sexual identities will not fall within the definition of transgender persons under the Act.

According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons, the amendment aims to ensure that the protections of the Act reach a specific class of transgender persons who face “severe social exclusion due to biological reasons”, and not “each and every class of persons with various gender identities or self perceived gender identities”. The Bill proposes changes to the procedure for issuance of a certificate of identity as a transgender person.

Under the proposed amendment, the District Magistrate will issue a certificate of identity after examining the recommendation of a designated medical board headed by a Chief Medical Officer or Deputy Chief Medical Officer. The District Magistrate may also seek assistance from other medical experts if necessary.

## Foreign exchange reserves decline to \$716.81 bn: RBI

**I**ndia's forex reserves dropped by \$11.683 billion to \$716.810 billion during the week ended March 6, the RBI said on Friday, March 13.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had increased by \$4.885 billion to an all-time high of \$728.494 billion.

For the week ended March 6, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by \$9.880 billion to \$563.245 billion, according to data released by the central bank.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effects of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units, such as the euro, pound, and yen, held in the foreign exchange reserves.

The value of the gold reserves declined by \$1.612 billion to \$130.017 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by \$146 million to \$18.720 billion.

India's reserve position with the IMF also fell \$45 million to \$4.828 billion in the reporting week, according to data.

# India in history this Week

## MARCH 13 TO MARCH 19

### 13 MARCH



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

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

2009 The SAARC Literature Festival began in 2009 in Agra.

1971 Famous Hindi poet Atma Ranjan was born in 1971.

### 14 MARCH



1931 India's first speaking film 'Alam Ara' was screened.

1998 Sonia Gandhi became the first Congress president in 1998.

1983 OPEC, a group of oil producing countries, cut oil prices in 1983 for the first time in 23 years.

### 15 MARCH

1947 Riots erupted in Punjab in 1947.

2007 The agreement between Vodafone and Essar concluded in 2007.

2008 In 2008, Kiran Bedi, the country's first female IPS officer, was selected for the German honor



'Animation Medicine' for her outstanding contribution to prison reform and human rights defense.

1564 Mughal emperor Akbar removed Jiziya tax in 1564.

### 16 MARCH

1846 According to the Amritsar Agreement, Kashmir was taken over in 1846 under Gulab Singh, the Hindu king of Jammu.

1942 The V-2 rocket was launched in 1942, but it exploded at the same time.

2012 India's master blaster Sachin Tendulkar became the first player to score 100 centuries in international cricket in 2012.



1693 Born in 1693 to Malharrao Holkar, the promoter of the Holkar dynasty of Indore.

### 17 MARCH

1527 Rana Sangram Singh of Chittorgarh was defeated by Babur in the battle of Agra.

1782 Salbai's settlement was signed between the East India Company and the Maratha rulers.



1959 The Buddhist religious leader Dalai Lama arrived in India from Tibet in 1959.

1987 Indian cricketer Sunil Gavaskar retired from Test cricket in 1987.

1962 Indian American astronaut Kalpana Chawla was born on 17 March 1962 in Karnal district of Haryana.

2000 On this day in 2000, Lalu Prasad Yadav was processed in case of possessing disproportionate assets.

1991 On this day in 1991, India's first automated satellite IRS-IA became a successful test after completing its three years.

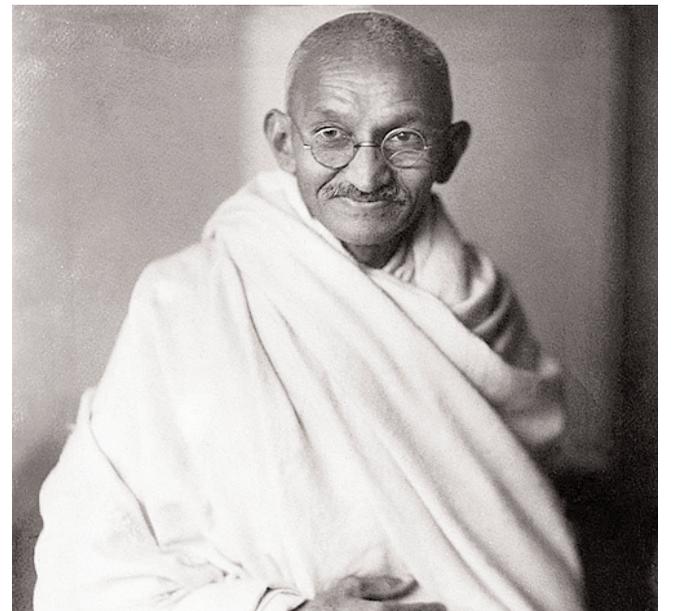
### 18 MARCH



1910 On 18 March 1910, Gopal Krishna Gokhale proposed before the British Legislative Council for the provision of free and compulsory primary education.



1944 On 18 March 1944, Azad Hind Fauj of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose crossed the border of Burma.



1922 The British court sentenced Mahatma Gandhi to six years in the sedition case in 1922 after the Civil Disobedience Movement.

2009 The Union Cabinet recommended imposition of President's rule in Meghalaya in 2009.

### 19 MARCH

1944 The Azad Hind Fauj hoisted the national flag in 1944 in Northeast India.

1972 Friendship Agreement signed between India and Bangladesh in 1972.

1998 Atal Bihari Vajpayee became Prime Minister for the second time in 1998.

1848 On this day in 1848, Shataptra Kaulam was started in a newspaper called Prabhakar.

1954 On this day in 1954, the first helicopter was operated in the country.



सत्यमेव जयते



**Consulate General of India  
&  
Rajasthan Association of North America (RANA)**  
(Supported by Jaipur Foot USA - BRUHUD NY Seniors - American Punjabi Society - Team Aid & AIA)

*Cordially Invite You to the Celebration of*

**Rajasthan Diwas  
&  
Holi Sneh Milan**

*Date: March 28, 2026  
(5:00 PM onwards - Followed by Dinner)  
Venue: 3 E 64th St. New York, NY 10065*

**RSVP is a must.  
Invitation is strictly non-transferable.**

राजस्थान  
दिवस



**We look forward to celebrating the vibrant culture, heritage, and festive spirit of Rajasthan together.**

## EXAMINING WOMEN TRAILBLAZERS IN JAZZ

BY MABEL PAIS

Join NJPAC's Celebration of Women during Women's History Month at Express Newark, for the Creator's Room Series, with a lively conversation featuring innovators in the field. From the stage to the recording booth to the classroom, hear how these women leaders are ensuring jazz culture continues to thrive and inspire.

**TRAILBLAZERS**

Sarah Vaughan, Geri Allen, Esperanza Spalding and Edna White made a lasting impact on jazz. Their trailblazing opened doors for women artists who continue to define the sound of the modern era.

**WHAT: EXPRESS NEWARK: THE CREATOR'S ROOM Series**

**WHEN: Saturday, March 14, 2026 @ 3 PM**

**WHERE: 54 Halsey Street, Floor 1, The Grand Court, Newark, NJ**

**COST: Suggested Donation – \$10 per person**

**REGISTRATION**

RSVP is required. RSVP @ [https://formstack.io\\_wdlMrbzMDtkatoapnuBR94r99mSt8M8dGgjOKHtHm8\\_xPE8fZnmz\\_GmxuhjrzoxxhTg-3NipaK-Oa3aQM1y0A](https://formstack.io_wdlMrbzMDtkatoapnuBR94r99mSt8M8dGgjOKHtHm8_xPE8fZnmz_GmxuhjrzoxxhTg-3NipaK-Oa3aQM1y0A)



Women in Jazz.

Credit: [www.njpac.org](http://www.njpac.org)

### PANEL DISCUSSION

**MODERATOR**

The panel will be moderated by Sheila Anderson, author, emcee, producer and host of multiple shows on WBGO including "Weekend Jazz After Hours and Salon Sessions"

**PANELISTS**

Rosa Hyde, Senior Director of Arts Education Performances and Special Events and former Performance Manager at Frederick P. Rose Hall, the home of Jazz at Lincoln Center

Lauren Sevia, GRAMMY-winning baritone saxophonist, educator, band leader and in-demand performing artist

Nicole Sweeney, a leader in jazz broadcasting, branding, education and cultural promotion who hosts on WRTI 90.1FM

**THE CREATOR'S ROOM**

The Creator's Room is a series of intimate conversations discussing the behind-the-scenes journey of artistic work. These discussions, open to learners of all ages, highlight the variety of pathways to success in the arts. NJPAC's panelists and audiences explore their rights as creatives, as well as how to sustain a career as a performer, creator, or administrator.

Each panel showcases up to 4 field experts providing detailed guidance on topics such as licensing, performing rights, music streaming, marketing, monetizing your talent, theater unions, artist memberships and more. Panelists will share their journey, provide useful resources, and answer any questions from the audience.

## NEW JERSEY SERVES AS NATIONAL ROLE MODEL FOR SHIFTING WOMEN FROM INCARCERATION TO SUPPORT BY ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES

BY MABEL PAIS

**WHAT: SET HER FREE: Exposing the Trauma to Prison Pipeline**

**PROTECTING RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN PRISON: "Standing in Solidarity" Series**

**WHEN: Monday, March 23, 2026 @ 6 PM**

**WHERE: NJPAC's Chase Room**

**COST: Free**

Join WOMEN@NJPAC during Women's History Month's "Standing in Solidarity" conversation on trauma-informed and gender-responsive alternatives to incarceration. Find out how New Jersey is a national role model for protecting the rights of women in prison.

Recognizing that women are the fastest-growing segment in our justice system, there is a powerful opportunity to shift from incarceration to support. By addressing the root causes of women's involvement — such as poverty, abuse and domestic violence — community-based solutions can be created that recognize their humanity, strengthen families and foster true recovery.

**REGISTRATION**

Registration is required. Register @ <https://www.njpac.org/event/set-her-free/#register>

**PROGRAM**

**FILM**

The program includes the world premiere of "Set Her Free: Exposing the Trauma to Prison Pipeline," this month's "PSEG Foundation Social Impact" documentary. The film is executive produced by Newark native Dr. Jamila Davis who is also a featured panelist.

This program will open with a performance by Ritual4Return, an NJPAC Arts & Well-Being program for formerly incarcerated people that uses the arts to create a homecoming rite of passage.

**PANEL DISCUSSION**

**MODERATOR**

The panel conversation will be moderated by Helen



Set Her Free.

Credit: [www.njpac.org](http://www.njpac.org)

Archontou, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Northern New Jersey.

**PANEL**

Dr. Jamila T. Davis, Executive Producer of "Set Her Free"

New Jersey Senator Angela V. McKnight (D-Dist. 31)

Dr. Darcella Sessomes, Chief of Programs and Reintegration Services,

State of New Jersey Department of Corrections  
Cass Severe, Founder of Meet Her At The Gate, a survivor-led, trauma-informed reentry initiative grounded in kinship, dignity and community care

**RESOURCE TABLES**

- NJPAC Membership
- WBGO
- NAACP
- YWCA
- Sierra House
- Shani Baraka Women's Resource Center
- NJ Division on Civil Rights
- Returning Citizens

This event is produced by Women@NJPAC, a powerhouse community of women committed to supporting the Arts Center's social impact work.

**STANDING IN SOLIDARITY**

"Listening. Learning. Sharing. Taking action."

Advancing ideas and solutions to accelerate social justice demands that all of us take these simple, powerful steps. Everyone at NJPAC stands in solidarity with those fighting against structural racism, societal inequity, and police brutality, and for civil rights, multiculturalism and authentic inclusion. Changing the world requires the efforts of everyone. Now, more than ever, each of us has an indispensable part to play."

- John Schreiber, President & CEO, NJPAC

To bring Newark's community together, and to encourage everyone to take part in the movement to ensure civil rights for all, NJPAC has launched a series of events and initiatives focused on promoting racial equality. On these pages, you can find resources that will help you take action, in the voting booth and elsewhere, and join NJPAC for conversations and discussions that can help you understand the issues we're all grappling with today. Join NJPAC here to learn more, do more and help our nation achieve the more perfect union it always promised.

"Standing in Solidarity" programming at NJPAC includes: "PSEG Foundation Social Impact Film Series," "Social Justice Learning Series" and more. The mainstay of "Standing in Solidarity" programming are monthly panel conversations and film screenings, many of which are included in the PSEG Foundation Social Impact Film Series.

In addition, these events feature poets — in partnership with Dodge Poetry — and the in-person ones include resource tables from nonprofit and other organizations.

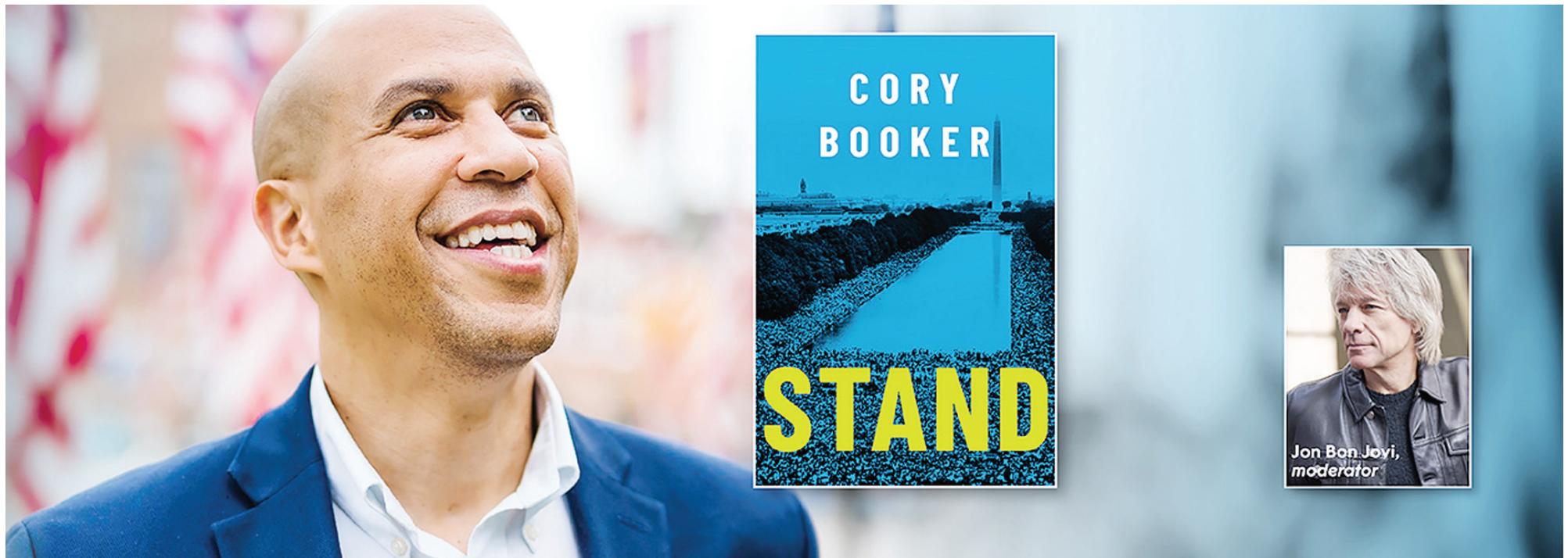
**PARTNERS**

"Standing in Solidarity" curating partners are ACLU of New Jersey, City of Newark Office of Film and Television, Eyes Like Mine and Women@NJPAC.

For partnership inquiries, contact Danielle Vauters at [dvausers@njpac.org](mailto:dvausers@njpac.org).

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

# NEW JERSEY'S SENATOR BOOKER EMBARKS ON HIS BOOK TOUR OF 'STAND,' RECLAIMING AMERICA'S ENDURING IDEALS



Senator Cory Booker, "STAND" Book cover, (inset) Jon Bon Jovi. -Credit: www.njpac.org.

BY MABEL PAIS

"A stirring reminder of the central importance of virtue in a free society. Sen. Booker offers a roadmap not only for realizing the ideals of a more perfect union, but also — and perhaps more importantly — for carrying out the day-to-day practicalities of governance, activism, and community-building. Inspiring, moving, and beautifully written, 'Stand' is mandatory reading for all Americans who seek inspiration in a country and world beset by constant crisis." — Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Alphonse Fletcher University Professor, Harvard University

**U.S. SENATOR CORY BOOKER** releases his highly awaited new book, 'STAND,' and the launch of a nationwide book tour. The tour will begin with a special book talk at the New Jersey Performing Arts Centre (NJPAC) on Sunday, March 22nd, at 2:00 P.M., before STAND's official national release on Tuesday, March 24, 2026.

Senator Booker will be joined at NJPAC by acclaimed musician and philanthropist \*\*\*Jon Bon Jovi for an engaging conversation designed to inspire hope, unity, and positive action. This unique event offers attendees the rare opportunity to gain insights from Senator Booker and Jon Bon Jovi about America's future, the

importance of shared values, moral courage, and our collective responsibility as citizens. \*\*\* Note: this is not a musical performance.

This is an opportunity not to miss witnessing an inspiring conversation that aims to spark hope, encourage, unity, and empower all Americans to stand together for a better tomorrow.

"With energy, insight, and a passion for the best of the American tradition, Cory Booker has issued a compelling

and invaluable summons to what Lincoln called our 'better angels.' In an hour of political and moral crisis, 'Stand' not only illuminates the problem but points us toward solutions. This is an important, suprapartisan work that deserves careful consideration by all Americans who long for a ceasefire to the total war our politics has become." — Jon Meacham, author of 'And There Was Light'

"'Stand' captured my mind and my heart. Through Booker's gifted storytelling, a series of virtues essential to our civil society are made concrete by tales of individuals who stood up in times of danger and adversity. These powerful stories evoke our emotions. They inspire us. They give us strength." — Doris Kearns Goodwin, author of "Leadership: In Turbulent Times"

Centered on 'STAND,' Senator Booker's book tour will feature stirring personal reflections and compelling stories of leadership that will challenge Americans to reclaim our national story and work together to redeem the American dream. At a moment of deep division and uncertainty, STAND offers a hopeful and urgent call to action rooted in enduring American ideals.

In STAND, Senator Booker argues that principles such as justice, compassion, courage, and civic engagement are not luxuries — they are vital, strategic tools essential to our survival and success as a nation. By wielding these tools together, he shows how Americans can reclaim a sense of common cause and help change the course of the country's history.

Through inspiring and actionable insights, STAND speaks to Americans from all walks of life, offering a roadmap for leadership that is both values-driven and results-oriented. The book tour will feature conversations, readings, and audience engagement focused on how individuals and

communities can translate shared ideals into meaningful action.

## TICKETS

To purchase tickets, visit the NJPAC website at [njpac.org](http://njpac.org) or call the NJPAC box office at (1-888-696-5722).

## BOOK TOUR SCHEDULE

Details on his book tour dates, locations, and ticketing can be found @ <https://static.macmillan.com/static/smp/stand-9781250436733/tour.html>

### Sunday, March 22

Newark, NJ — New Jersey Performing Arts Center with Bookends  
2:00 PM ET  
<https://www.ticketmaster.com/event/0000643B948F7795>

### Tuesday, March 24

Washington, DC — Sixth & I with Politics and Prose Bookstore  
7:00 PM ET  
<https://www.sixthandi.org/event/senator-cory-booker-stand/>

### Thursday, March 26

Philadelphia, PA — Philadelphia Free Library with Uncle Bobbie's Coffee & Books  
7:00 PM ET  
<https://freelibraryfoundation.org/events/senator-cory-booker-stand/>

### Friday, March 27

Atlanta, GA — First Baptist Church Decatur with Brave + Kind Books  
7:00 PM ET  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cory-booker-stand-author-event-tickets-1981966972568>

### Saturday, March 28

St. Louis, MO — St. Louis County Library at Shalom City of Peace with Left Bank Books  
7:00 PM CT  
<https://www.slcl.org/events/ticketed-event-cory-booker>

### Sunday, March 29

Chicago, IL — Thalia Hall with WBEZ and Barnes & Noble  
7:00 PM CT

<https://www.ticketweb.com/event/sold-out-an-evening-with-thalia-hall-tickets/14127684?pl=thalia3>

### Tuesday, March 31

New York, NY — Temple Emanuel Streicker Cultural Center with Books & Books  
8:00 PM ET

<https://www.ticketweb.com/event/sold-out-an-evening-with-thalia-hall-tickets/14127684?pl=thalia3>

### Friday, April 3

Los Angeles, CA — Writers Block at Writers Guild Theater with Book Soup  
7:30 PM PT

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/writers-block-and-book-soup-present-senator-cory-booker-tickets-1982105619264>

### Saturday, April 4

San Francisco, CA — Dominican University with Book Passage  
4:00 PM PT  
<https://www.bookpassage.com/event/cory-booker-stand-dominican-university-california>

## SENATOR CORY BOOKER

**Senator Cory Booker** is the senior United States senator from New Jersey. Booker earned bachelor's and master's degrees at Stanford University, attended Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar, and earned a law degree at Yale University. He served as mayor of Newark before becoming New Jersey's first Black senator and only the fourth popularly elected Black senator in US history. Booker is a national leader in the effort to expand economic opportunity and create safe, strong, nurturing communities for every American family. He lives in Newark's Central Ward.

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



## Malaika Arora's rumored new BF Sorab Bedi clarifies they are just friends

There are many celebrities in the Indian entertainment industry who prefer keeping their personal lives private. But no matter how much they try, some or the other intel about their love life manages to sneak online. It may not always be true, but when has that stopped the internet from gossiping? This is exactly what happened when Malaika Arora's pictures and videos with Splitsvilla X6 fame Sorab Bedi went viral recently, after the latter attended a party at the Chaiyya Chaiyya girl's restaurant in Juhu. But are the two really in love, as buzz suggested, or are they just good friends? Well, Sorab has now broken his silence on the matter, clearing the air once and for all.

Ever since Malaika Arora's break-up with Bollywood actor Arjun Kapoor, the internet has been overly invested in who the Munni Badnaam star is hanging out with. Back in 2024, Malaika was linked to fashion stylist Rahul Vijay after the two attended a concert together. And now she's in the news for allegedly finding love again with actor and model Sorab Bedi. However, Sorab has clarified that he and Malaika are just friends. In a chat with Times Now, the Chand Jalne Laga star shared, "Delnaz Daruwala and Vahbiz Mehta gave me a chance to walk the ramp during my modelling days. I became friends with them and started going out for parties. At one of the parties, I met Malaika (Arora) through my mentors. She is also a close friend of Delnaz and Vahbiz. Hence, Malaika and I became friends. There is nothing between us."

Expressing his disappointment with the link-up rumors about him and Malaika, Sorab further stated, "People are talking several things about us. They should think twice before speaking about a girl. It could affect her mental state. Aisa karna nahin chahiye. (They shouldn't do it). I didn't party with them for the first time. I have been partying with Vahbiz, Delnaz and Malaika for many years. I earlier used to share pictures with Malaika, but at that time, I was not a known face. Now, I am a known face; hence, it is now being noticed by people. I have shared such videos and photos before as well. Two people can be friends. We trust each other, but people took it differently."

# Ek Din : Junaid Khan rings a fortune bell to win Sai Pallavi's love

Aamir Khan Productions released the trailer of Ek Din, featuring Sai Pallavi and Junaid Khan in the lead. Directed by Sunil Pandey, the movie is produced by Aamir Khan, Mansoor Khan, and Aparna Purohit. It is slated to release in theaters on May 1, 2026.

The trailer of Ek Din gently opens by setting up a soft and heartfelt world, giving audiences a glimpse into what appears to be a magical, gentle, and classic love story. It shows Junaid explaining a fortune bell that grants a wish for true love when it is rung.

As he speaks, he looks at Sai Pallavi's character, Meera, and quietly wishes that she could be his. He says he wants his wish to come true even if it's for one day. The trailer offers a sweet glimpse into the charming chemistry between the two leads, hinting at a warm and heartfelt love story.

Junaid comes across as an endearingly awkward boy, bringing innocence and vulnerability to his role, while Pallavi appears confident, composed, and self-assured. This contrast creates a chemistry that feels both engaging and relatable.

Pallavi makes a very striking impression in this trailer as well, as this is her debut in a Hindi film.

The makers recently released a video that featured Aamir Khan alongside Arijit Singh. In the clip, the actor thanked the singer for his contribution to the soundtrack of Ek Din.

Ek Din reunites Aamir Khan with filmmaker Mansoor Khan after a significant hiatus. Together, they have collaborated on films like Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak, Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar, Akele Hum Akele Tum, and Jaane Tu... Ya Jaane Na. Ek Din is scheduled for a theatrical release on May 1.



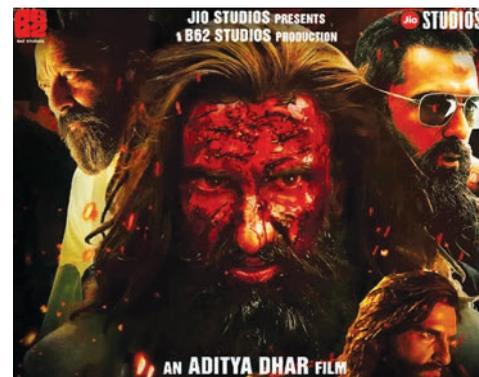
# Dhurandhar 2 advance booking crushes Stree 2 in premiere, juggernaut loading

Dhurandhar: The Revenge is on a phenomenal run at the box office with its paid preview shows. The Aditya Dhar directorial has already surpassed the pre-sales figures of several major Hindi films, including Stree 2, Chennai Express, Padmaavat and 3 Idiots. According to a report by Sacnilk, the Ranveer Singh starrer has sold over 2.8 lakh tickets for its preview shows alone, taking the one-day gross to a whopping Rs 15.64 crore, and Rs 21.19 crore including block seats.

The Hindi market is leading the charge, with over 2.6 lakh tickets sold for the Hindi 2D version alone, generating a gross of Rs 15.28 crore. Dhurandhar: The Revenge surpassed the previous paid preview record set by Stree 2 within a few hours on Saturday. The horror-comedy had recorded around Rs 8.75 crore (nett) and over Rs 10 crore gross from its premiere shows, but the spy thriller is already racing well past that figure.

Trade experts are now expecting the film to post a massive Rs 200-250 crore first long weekend, excluding the paid preview numbers.

Earlier, a report in Variety revealed



that tickets for the film's paid previews are selling like hotcakes. The highest ticket price is Rs 2,900 at Mumbai's INOX Megaplex, while the cheapest ticket is priced at Rs 59 at Chennai's AGS Cinemas.

In the Delhi-NCR region, preview ticket prices start from Rs 450-500 and go up to Rs 2,000. With nine days left before the official release, trade insiders expect these numbers to surge further as more screens and showtimes are added to the final countdown.

From every angle, the film's box office trajectory looks spectacular. Dhurandhar: The Revenge was always expected to be a juggernaut at the box

office, considering the momentum its predecessor created at the ticket window in December 2025. However, the current figures suggest that even the most optimistic expectations may fall short.

Directed by Aditya Dhar and produced by Jio Studios and B62 Studios, the film is headlined by Ranveer Singh. The sequel also features Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Rampal, R Madhavan, Danish Pandor, Sara Arjun and Rakesh Bedi in key roles.

The story picks up right where the first film ended. As the trailer suggests, Pakistan's Lyari town is dealing with the aftermath of its leader, Rehman Dakait's death. Ranveer's character, Hamza Ali Mazari, an Indian spy attempting to infiltrate Pakistan's political and criminal networks, takes control of Lyari as its new leader.

It remains to be seen how Hamza navigates the town's gang wars and powerful terrorist outfits, with the stakes significantly higher this time. Dhurandhar: The Revenge is scheduled to release worldwide on March 19 in five languages -- Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada.



## Harvey Weinstein criticises Gwyneth Paltrow a decade after her allegations of creepy behavior

Disgraced producer Harvey Weinstein has reacted to the allegations levelled by actress Gwyneth Paltrow nearly a decade.

The actress' allegations against him helped trigger the global #MeToo movement, reports 'Female First UK'.

Weinstein, 73, the former film producer who was convicted of sex crimes in cases brought in New York and California, made the comments in an interview conducted from custody with 'The Hollywood Reporter', claiming he "won't forgive" the actress for speaking publicly about an encounter she said occurred early in her career. The fallen movie producer is currently awaiting a retrial after an appeals court overturned his New York conviction, ruling that testimony presented during the original trial had been prejudicial.

He discussed allegations made by Gwyneth Paltrow, now 53, who said she was 22 when the then-producer allegedly made an unwanted advance during a meeting connected to a film role.

As per 'Female First UK', Gwyneth was among dozens of women who publicly accused Harvey of sexual misconduct in 2017, accusations that helped ignite the #MeToo movement.

Weinstein said, "I don't know what drove her to do what she did. To make such a big deal over nothing. I walked out of a nice meeting with her and said, 'How about a massage?' And she just went, 'No, I don't think so'. 'I got the message. I never put my hands on her. She told Brad Pitt. 'Brad Pitt came to me and said, 'Don't do anything like that with my girl'. I said, 'Don't worry, Brad. I got it'. But then Gwyneth goes on Howard Stern and makes a big deal about it all. She knows that nothing happened. But this person who was a friend, who owes her career to me, just stabs me in the back. She wanted to be part of the crowd. I won't forgive her for that".

Gwyneth previously said the incident took place after a meeting in a hotel room during the early stages of her acting career. She added she rejected the alleged advance and later told her then-boyfriend Brad Pitt, 62, about the encounter. Gwyneth later described how Brad confronted Harvey at the opening night of the play Hamlet on Broadway in 1995.

# Penélope shares how 'The Bride' does modern spin on classic story

Penélope Cruz is all praise for writer-director Maggie Gyllenhaal for taking an original and modern spin on The Bride! The Gothic romance film starring Jessie Buckley and Christian Bale in lead roles is based on the 1935 film Bride of Frankenstein, which itself is adapted from Mary Shelley's 1818 novel Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus. The Spanish actor shared how Maggie took a spin on the story in the film.

Penélope said in a statement, "They are not like the obvious monsters that you're supposed to run away from. It's very intriguing, and it feels like trouble, but why? And you want to know. They are very attractive, and very attractive together. And you can feel that energy from kilometers away. I feel like that was a very, very smart decision from Maggie, to make sure that you're also seeing the human in these supposed monsters all the time, and that you're always seeing their souls."

Talking about the film's tone, she added, "Punk—I think it's a very good word to describe the tone. But the tone is not just one thing. It is very wild, very romantic, very smart. There are so many layers to it, so many colors. It's not just one thing. But it is punk in the sense that, yeah, it needs to be wild, because what The Bride and Frank are, and what they represent, and in contrast with all the things in society that don't work, that didn't work then and don't work now."

Bride! also stars Peter Sarsgaard and Annette Bening. The official logline of the film reads, "A lonely "Frank"



(Christian Bale) travels to 1930s Chicago to ask groundbreaking scientist Dr. Euphronious (Annette Bening) to create a companion for him. The two revive a murdered young woman and The Bride

(Jessie Buckley) is born. What ensues is beyond what either of them imagined: Murder! Possession! A radical cultural movement! And outlaw lovers in a wild and combustible romance!"

## Nicole Kidman addresses split from Keith Urban for the first time



Actor Nicole Kidman has spoken publicly for the first time about her split from husband Keith Urban since filing for divorce from the country music star in September 2025. Reflecting on the difficult phase, Nicole said she remains grateful for her family and is choosing to focus on preserving those relationships while moving ahead in life.

In an interview with Variety, Nicole, 58, spoke about her upcoming Practical Magic sequel, Prime Video series Scarpetta, and her personal life over the last year.

"I am, because I'm always going to be moving toward what's good," Nicole told the outlet when asked if she is "doing all right" in the months since she and Keith first separated.

Nicole and Keith's divorce was finalised on January 6 in Nashville court, just over three months after they announced their separation. The couple shares two daughters, 17-year-old Sunday and 15-year-old Faith. Nicole admitted that her priority is keeping her family together while moving on in her life.

She said, "I'm always going to be moving toward what's good. What I'm grateful for is my family and keeping them as is and moving forward. That's that. Everything else I don't discuss out of respect. I'm staying in a place of, 'We are a family,' and that's what we'll continue to be. My beautiful girls, my darlings, who are suddenly women."

# 'Spent months on bullying, now begging': Iran on US waiver for India to buy Russian oil

MARCH 14, 2026

**TEHRAN (TIP):** If oil diplomacy had a sense of irony, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi believes the latest twist would qualify. Araghchi on Saturday accused Washington of hypocrisy over Russian crude, saying the US is now urging countries to buy the very oil it once tried to block.

Araghchi criticised the US in an X post, claiming Washington had spent months pressuring India to stop importing Russian oil but is now encouraging countries to purchase it as the conflict with Iran strains global energy markets.

"The US spent months on bullying India into ending oil imports from Russia," Araghchi wrote on X. "After two weeks of war with Iran, the White House is now begging the world — including India — to buy Russian crude."

Araghchi also accused European governments of backing what he called an "illegal war" against Iran in hopes of securing American support against Russia.

"Europe thought backing illegal war on Iran would win US support against Russia. Pathetic," he said.

The Iranian Foreign Minister posted the remarks alongside a Financial Times headline reporting that rising oil prices were delivering Russia a major revenue boost.



His remarks come as the Trump administration on Thursday announced a 30-day waiver allowing countries to purchase sanctioned Russian oil cargoes currently stranded at sea, a move aimed at stabilising global energy markets after crude prices surged past USD 100 per barrel amid the war in the Middle East.

The waiver was introduced after benchmark crude prices surged above USD 100 per barrel amid supply disruptions caused by the war and Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical oil shipping routes.

According to the US Treasury Department, the temporary licence permits the delivery and sale of Russian

crude oil and petroleum products that were already loaded onto vessels as of March 12. The authorisation will remain in effect until midnight Washington time on April 11.

The move follows after a 30-day waiver issued on March 5 allowing India to purchase Russian oil cargoes stuck at sea, giving importers limited flexibility to secure supplies during the ongoing crisis.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the measure was "narrowly tailored" and temporary, stressing that it was designed to stabilize markets and would not provide significant financial benefit to Moscow.

## IRAN ALLOWS INDIAN SHIPS SAFE PASSAGE

Despite the conflict, Iran has allowed two India-flagged liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) carriers to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, Reuters reported, citing four sources with direct knowledge of the matter.

Iran's ambassador to India, Mohammad Fathali, said Tehran would ensure safe passage for vessels bound for India through the strategic waterway.

"Yes, because India and Iran are friends," Fathali said when asked whether Indian ships would be allowed safe transit. "We have common interests;

we have a common fate," he added. The envoy's remarks came just hours after he indicated that Indian-bound vessels could receive safe passage through the strait within two to three hours, underscoring the longstanding economic and diplomatic ties between Tehran and New Delhi despite the broader regional turmoil.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump said he believes Russian leader Vladimir Putin may be providing some level of assistance to Iran during its war with the United States and Israel, raising new questions about Moscow's role in the escalating conflict.

Trump made the remarks during a radio interview with Fox News host Brian Kilmeade, when asked directly whether Russia could be helping Tehran.

Trump made the remarks during a radio interview with Fox News host Brian Kilmeade, when asked directly whether Russia could be helping Tehran.

"I think he might be helping them a bit," Trump said of Putin. "And he probably thinks we're helping Ukraine, right?"

Pressed further by Kilmeade on whether Moscow could be supporting Iran, Trump repeated his suspicion.

"I think he might be helping them a bit, yeah," Trump said. "I guess, and he probably thinks we're helping Ukraine."

## Iran says no one can exclude it from World Cup after Trump warning

Iran says no one can exclude it from the World Cup later this year, in response to President Donald Trump's warning that their "life and safety" would be at risk in the US.

The Iranian team also said in the social media post on Thursday that the United States should not be allowed to co-host the tournament if it could not guarantee the safety of the teams taking part.

Trump's comments came just two days after he told FIFA chief Gianni Infantino the Iranian players would be welcome despite the Middle East war.

"The Iran National Soccer Team is welcome to The World Cup, but I really don't believe it is appropriate that they be there, for their own life and safety," Trump said on his Truth Social platform on Thursday, March 12. Iran's team responded: "The World Cup is a historic and international event and its governing body is FIFA -- not any individual, country. Iran's national team, with strength and a series of decisive victories achieved by the brave sons of Iran, was among the first teams to qualify for this major tournament. "Certainly no one can exclude Iran's national team from the World Cup; the only country that can be excluded is one that merely carries the title of 'host' yet lacks the ability to provide security for the teams participating in this global event." The war, triggered by US-Israeli strikes on February 28, has thrown into doubt Iran's participation at this summer's tournament, jointly hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico.

## Iran Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei likely in coma, US says he is disfigured

MARCH 14, 2026

**TEHRAN (TIP):** Iran's newly appointed Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, is in a coma and has lost at least one leg after being critically wounded during an air strike that killed his father, according to a report by The Sun. US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth also backed the claim, saying at a press briefing that Mojtaba was likely disfigured as well.

The British tabloid reported that the 56-year-old son of assassinated Ayatollah Ali Khamenei suffered severe injuries and is currently undergoing treatment in Tehran. Sources cited by The Sun claimed the new leader "lost at least one leg and has also suffered serious stomach or liver damage".

The report said it was unclear whether Mojtaba Khamenei was injured during the same strike on February 28 that killed his 86-year-old father, but it added that he is not currently directing Iran's war strategy, which has been blamed for turmoil in global energy markets.



According to The Sun, Khamenei is being treated under tight security at the Sina University Hospital in Tehran. The report cited a source in the Iranian capital who said the leader is in "very serious" condition.

"One or two of his legs have been cut off. His liver or stomach has also ruptured. He is apparently in a coma as well," the source told The Sun. The source claimed the hospital unit treating the leader has been sealed off and placed under heavy security as doctors continue intensive care treatment.

The report said veteran trauma surgeon Mohammad Reza Zafarghandi, Iran's minister of

health and a senior surgeon with experience treating war injuries, is overseeing the treatment.

According to The Sun, Iranian state television has attempted to maintain the appearance of leadership by broadcasting what it described as Khamenei's first statement since taking power.

The statement, read by a news anchor rather than the leader himself, warned that Iran would avenge the blood of Iranians and continue attacks targeting regional shipping routes, including threats to block the Strait of Hormuz.

The report also claimed Iran's leadership structure may be continuing the war without direct orders from Khamenei.

An Iranian analyst quoted by The Sun said the country's military operations could proceed even without an active leader.

The Sun said the claims could not be independently verified due to internet restrictions inside Iran and the tight security surrounding the leader's reported treatment.

# Zelenskyy meets Macron as Iran war overshadows Ukraine

MARCH 14, 2026

**KYIV (TIP):** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris on Friday, as he scrambles to restart the conversation on ending the war in Ukraine.

Zelenskyy's visit to the French capital comes as the US-Israeli war with Iran absorbs military and diplomatic resources away from Russia's war in Ukraine, which entered its fourth year last month.

"The key message of this visit, and its primary purpose, is to show that nothing – no crisis, no development – will divert our attention from Ukraine, which remains for us a major security issue," a French presidency official told reporters ahead of the visit. "Our support for Ukraine will not waver."

Talks between Zelenskyy and Macron are due to center on increasing pressure on Moscow by targeting its so-called "shadow fleet" of aging tankers used to transport oil in breach of sanctions, the French presidency said.

## How has the Iran war affected Ukraine?

The Iran war, which is nearing its second week, has stalled efforts toward ending the war in Ukraine.

Some of the scheduled peace talks were due to take place in Abu Dhabi, which has emerged as among the prime targets of Iranian strikes since the start of the war.

The constant strikes on the oil-rich Gulf countries and Tehran's blocking of



the critical Strait of Hormuz, among the busiest worldwide for oil transfer, have exponentially increased oil prices worldwide, with the price of Brent crude oil hovering around \$100.

In an effort to ease the impact of the surge in oil prices, the Trump administration announced on Thursday said it would allow a 30-day window for the sale of sanctioned Russian oil currently at sea.

Easing the sanctions on Moscow has invited sharp criticism from Ukraine and European allies as petrochemical sales are Russia's main source of income.

In a press conference with Zelenskyy on Friday, Macron stressed France's opposition to lifting Russian sanctions.

"It is entirely true that the United States has granted limited exemptions,"

he said. "As for the G7, the common position has indeed been to maintain sanctions against Russia, and for the Europeans and France, it is also to maintain them. The current situation in no way justifies lifting these sanctions." Zelenskyy also lambasted the US decision.

"This single easing by the US could provide Russia with around \$10 billion for the war. It certainly does not help [to achieve] peace," he said during the press conference.

## How could Iran's strikes on Gulf states impact the war in Ukraine?

Meanwhile, Gulf states fending off constant Iranian drone and missile strikes are in dire need of air defense weaponry, which could create supply

shortfall as they draw down their stocks.

Zelenskyy has warned of this impacting Ukraine's acute shortage of air defense missiles.

He said, without providing a source, that Gulf states had used in a few days more PAC-3 air defense missiles than Kyiv had received from the US over four years.

Still, the Ukrainian leader has tried to use the war to his advantage, offering the Gulf states Ukrainian drone interception technology in exchange for air defense missiles.

Zelenskyy also hopes that forging ties with the Russia-friendly Gulf states could lead them to exercise leverage over Moscow.

## Russian strike in eastern Ukraine kills 3

Meanwhile on Friday, March 13, three people were killed when a Russian strike hit a bus near the embattled town of Kupiansk in eastern Ukraine.

The bus was near the village of Nova Oleksandrivka when it was hit by an Iskandr missile, local investigators said, posting an image of a red bus with blown out windows.

"Three people were killed as a result of the strike: the bus driver and two passengers," local investigators said.

Four others were wounded in the incident, with private houses also damaged, the General Prosecutor's office said.

There was no immediate comment from the Kremlin, which claims its forces do not target civilians.

## Japan ready to join Trump's 'Golden Dome': Report

MARCH 13, 2026

**TOKYO (TIP):** Japanese premier TAKAICHI Sanae is expected to announce Tokyo's participation in the "Golden Dome" US missile defence system when she meets President Donald Trump next week, a report said Friday.

Billed as a next-generation missile defence shield, the Golden Dome for America "will progressively protect our nation from aerial attacks from any foe," including through space-based interceptors and sensors, Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth said last year. Citing several unnamed government sources, Japan's Yomiuri daily said Takaichi is expected to discuss the initiative with Trump during their planned March 19 meeting in Washington, and convey to him Japan's intention to join.

The aim is for the allies to jointly develop interceptors and a satellite network as a counterforce to hypersonic glide vehicles (HGV) pursued by China and Russia, the newspaper said.

# In defiance of Trump, UK & EU refuse to ease oil sanctions on Russia

MARCH 13, 2026

**BRUSSELS (TIP):** In defiance of US President Donald Trump, the United Kingdom and European Union (EU) have refused to ease sanctions on Russian oil.

British energy minister Michael Shanks on Friday said the government would not change its position on Russian oil sanctions despite Trump's action.

The Trump administration on Thursday removed sanctions on Russian oil for a month and said countries could buy Russian oil that was already in the sea. The move was purportedly aimed at easing energy prices that have skyrocketed as a result of the American-Israeli war on Iran, but critics have said it would allow a windfall gain for Russian leader Vladimir Putin, who would use the proceeds to repair his country's ailing economy.

In an interview with Sky News, Shanks echoed the fear and said the Kremlin would see Trump's relief as "an opportunity to fix some of their ailing economy".

"That is a great shame because we have to do everything that we possibly can to make sure that we are bringing all pressure to bear on Russia so that we can win this war in Ukraine. We will keep up our sanctions, and we'll continue to do what we are doing around the shadow fleet, and we're not going to change our position on that at all," Shanks further said.

While the British stance risks invoking a fresh row with Trump, it adds to the European unity in the face of the Russian aggression.

Valdis Dombrovskis, the European Commissioner for the



Economy, said on Tuesday that easing Russian sanctions would be "self-defeating".

"From the European Union's point of view, the situation is very clear: we must continue to exert maximum pressure on Russia and, indeed, the current oil and gas price spike may provide windfall revenues for Russia," Dombrovskis further said.

Echoing the British point of view, Dombrovskis said that easing Russian sanctions would "reinforce Russia's capacity to wage war, undermining Ukraine, undermining our support for Ukraine and also undermining the goals which the US and Israel are trying to reach in Iran".

## 7 policemen killed in blast in northwest Pakistan

**PESHAWAR (TIP):** At least seven police personnel were killed in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast targeting a police vehicle in northwest Pakistan on Friday, March 13, police said.

The banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack.

The incident occurred in the Shadi Khel Bettani area in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Lakki Marwat district when the police vehicle patrolling near the Rasool Khel check post was hit by a roadside IED.

As a result of the explosion, SHO Azam, police driver Shah Bahram, and four other police personnel were killed on the spot.

One policeman, identified as Insafuldin, sustained serious injuries in the blast, but he later succumbed to injuries at the hospital where he was receiving treatment.

Police and other security forces cordoned off the area and launched a search operation. Evidence is also being collected at the blast site.

Security authorities said that efforts are underway to trace the perpetrators involved in the attack. The security in the area has been beefed up.

President Asif Ali Zardari has condemned the attack, saying the state's resolve towards eliminating terrorism remained "unwavering".

# PM Sharif pledges Pakistan's 'full support' to Saudi Arabia

MARCH 13, 2026

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** Pakistan's prime minister pledged "full solidarity and support" for Saudi Arabia following a visit to the Middle Eastern kingdom, as Islamabad steps up its diplomatic engagement in the Gulf region in an effort to mediate the widening war.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif travelled to Jeddah where he met Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, according to a statement from Sharif's office. Sharif said Pakistan would "always stand firmly with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and strive for their mutual desire for peace in the region," the statement said.

The visit came a day after Sharif spoke with Iran's president about the deteriorating situation in the Middle East. Iran has been pummeling Gulf nations, including Saudi Arabia, with waves of missile strikes in response to its war with Israel and the US, pushing up oil prices and disrupting global energy supply chains.

Pakistani officials say the country has been intensifying its efforts to mediate the conflict and prevent the war from escalating further. Its efforts have been complicated by the fact that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a mutual-defense pact last year. Sharif's visit should be seen "in broader context of Pakistan's efforts to facilitate and advocate an early cessation of hostilities and violence in the region," Foreign Ministry spokesman Tahir Hussain Andrabi said at a weekly briefing on Thursday in Islamabad.

Rashid Ahmad Khan, an international relations expert based in Lahore, said it's "highly unlikely" that Pakistan would attack Iran in retaliation for its strikes on Saudi Arabia. Pakistan has a large Shiite Muslim population affiliated with Iran, and deadly protests occurred in places like Karachi and elsewhere in the aftermath of the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Pakistan, however, could come to Saudi Arabia's aid by "defending against drone attacks" and providing technical



During a restricted meeting, the two leaders held an "in-depth exchange of views" on regional developments. Image: X/@KSAmofaEN / Others

military support on Saudi soil, he said.

Sharif's spokesman, Mosharrarf Zaidi, said in an interview with Bloomberg TV that there was "no question" Pakistan would come to Saudi Arabia's aid, "no matter what and no matter when."

"The real question is what is Pakistan doing to make sure things don't come to a point where any of its closest partners are further embroiled in a conflict that could potentially undermine stability and prosperity in the region," he added.

Also present at Thursday's meeting in Saudi Arabia was Pakistan's top military leader, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, as well as Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, the prime minister's office said. The visit to Saudi Arabia followed a phone call between Sharif and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Wednesday, in another sign of back-channel talks to find a resolution to the conflict. Pezeshkian said Wednesday one of the conditions for a ceasefire would be "guarantees against future aggression" and that he'd relayed that message to leaders of Russia and Pakistan.

## Afghanistan accuses Pak of air attacks on homes in Kabul, Kandahar

MARCH 13, 2026

**KABUL (TIP):** Afghanistan's Taliban government has accused Pakistan of targeting civilian homes in overnight air attacks, killing four people in the capital and two in the east, as fighting between the two neighbours entered its third week, overshadowed by the United States-Israel war on Iran igniting the Middle East.

Women and children were among those killed in the attacks, according to the Taliban.

Government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said on X on Friday, March 13, that Pakistan's aircraft also struck fuel depots belonging to the private airline Kam Air near Kandahar airport.

Pakistani security sources said they carried out "successful airstrikes" against "four terrorist hideouts" in Kabul and frontier provinces, and destroyed an oil storage facility at Kandahar airport.

Abdul Wahid, a 29-year-old daily labourer, told the AFP news agency that he and four family members were wounded when his house was hit at about 12:10am local time (19:10 GMT on Thursday).

"Suddenly, a noise came from another house. I don't know what happened



Smoke emits from the Afghan side as trucks are parked along the roadside following cross-border clashes between Pakistan and Afghan forces, near Torkham border crossing point, Pakistan.

afterwards. All these bricks fell on me. Women and children were under the rubble as well," he said.

"I was there for 10 minutes as if it was my last breath. Then my neighbours came and removed the bricks ... and took us to the clinic."

Calls for restraint from the international community have gone unheeded by both sides.

On Thursday, March 12, the Taliban government said four members of the same family, including two children, were killed by Pakistani artillery and mortar fire in eastern Afghanistan.

The deaths reported on Thursday brought the toll to seven people killed in Afghanistan since Tuesday in cross-border clashes, according to authorities in Kabul. That could rise

with the latest attacks on Friday, March 13.

Fighting between the two countries intensified on February 26 when Afghanistan launched an offensive along their shared border in retaliation for earlier Pakistani air attacks on the Pakistan Taliban, just two days before the US and Israel attacked Iran, starting a sprawling regional war.

Pakistan maintains that it does not target civilians, and casualty claims from both sides are difficult to verify independently.

Islamabad accuses Kabul of harbouring fighters from the Pakistan Taliban, which has claimed responsibility for a series of deadly attacks inside Pakistan, and from the ISIS (ISIL) affiliate in Khorasan province. Afghan authorities deny the charge.

The United Nations mission in Afghanistan has said 56 civilians have been killed there, including 24 children, by Pakistani military operations from February 26 to March 5. Pakistani officials have confirmed about 12 soldiers were killed and 27 wounded in the latest bout of fighting, while the Taliban claims to have killed more than 150.

# Eid al-Fitr: The festival of faith, gratitude and the story behind Islam's joyous celebration

**Eid al-Fitr (Eid ul-Fitr) marks the end of the month of Ramadan, a period when Muslims around the world observe fasting, from dawn to dusk for a whole month. Taking place at the beginning of Shawwal, this Eid is a time for celebration with family and loved ones.**

Among the most significant celebrations in the Islamic world, Eid al-Fitr stands as a day of joy, gratitude and spiritual renewal. Celebrated by millions of Muslims across continents, the festival marks the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan and symbolizes the culmination of a deeply spiritual journey of prayer, discipline and compassion.

Known as the "Festival of Breaking the Fast," Eid al-Fitr arrives after an entire month during which Muslims abstain from food and drink from dawn to sunset. Yet the significance of the festival extends far beyond the end of fasting. It represents gratitude to God, the strengthening of community bonds and the reaffirmation of faith and charity.

The celebrations bring together families, friends and communities in prayer, feasting and generosity, making Eid al-Fitr one of the most joyful and spiritually meaningful festivals in Islam.

## WHEN IS EID AL-FITR 2026?

Eid al-Fitr is likely to take place on the evening of Friday, 20th March 2026, depending on the sighting of the moon.

Unlike the more commonly used Gregorian calendar, the Islamic calendar operates on the lunar cycle. This means that all significant days in the Islamic calendar move forward approximately 11 days each year.

Therefore, the sighting of the moon determines the end of Ramadan and the beginning of Eid.

As with each day in the Islamic calendar, the next day begins after the Maghrib prayer (just after sunset) of the same day. Eid begins after the moon has been sighted. Therefore, the last day of

Palestinians attend Eid al-Fitr holiday celebrations by the Dome of the Rock shrine in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem. [AP Photo]



fasting ends at Maghrib.

## The Historical Origins of Eid al-Fitr

The origins of Eid al-Fitr date back to the early years of Islam during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad in the 7th century. Islamic historical traditions recount that when the Prophet migrated from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE—an event known as the Hijra—he observed that the people of Medina celebrated two days of festivity that had existed long before the arrival of Islam.

According to Islamic sources, the Prophet addressed the community and

explained that God had replaced those earlier celebrations with two sacred festivals that would carry deeper spiritual meaning. These were:

- Eid al-Fitr, celebrated after the completion of Ramadan
- Eid al-Adha, commemorating devotion and sacrifice

From that moment onward, Eid al-Fitr became an official Islamic celebration observed by Muslims every year.

## Sacred Month That Precedes the Festival

The meaning of Eid al-Fitr cannot be fully understood without recognizing the

spiritual significance of Ramadan. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and is regarded as the holiest period in the Muslim year.

Muslims believe that during this sacred month the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed to Prophet Muhammad through the angel Gabriel. This moment marked the beginning of the divine revelation that would later form the Qur'an.

Throughout Ramadan, adult Muslims observe fasting from dawn until sunset each day. The fast, known as Sawm, is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, the



People visit the Sultan Ahmed mosque in Istanbul, Turkey, as they celebrate Eid al-Fitr. (AP Photo)



People attend the morning prayer at the start of Eid al-Fitr at Seoul Central Mosque. [AFP]

From page 27

fundamental acts of worship that shape Islamic life.

During this time, believers refrain from food, drink and worldly pleasures while focusing on prayer, charity and self-discipline. The fast is intended to purify the soul, cultivate patience and remind believers of the suffering of those less fortunate.

### The Sacred Story Behind the Festival

The deeper story behind Eid al-Fitr is intertwined with the revelation of the Qur'an and the spiritual transformation that Ramadan represents.

Islamic tradition teaches that during Ramadan, Prophet Muhammad used to retreat for spiritual reflection in the cave of Cave of Hira, located on the mountain Jabal al-Nour.

During one of these meditations, the angel Gabriel appeared and commanded the Prophet to "Read" or "Recite." This marked the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'an, which Muslims believe is the final divine message to humanity.

The event, remembered as Laylat al-Qadr, is believed to have occurred during the last ten nights of Ramadan. Islamic tradition describes this night as "better than a thousand months," meaning that prayers offered on this night are believed to carry immense spiritual reward.

Thus, Ramadan became a month dedicated to worship, reflection and closeness to God. Eid al-Fitr emerges at the end of this sacred journey as a celebration of spiritual accomplishment and divine blessings.

### The Moon Sighting That Announces Eid

Unlike many festivals with fixed dates, Eid al-Fitr follows the lunar Islamic calendar. The festival begins with the sighting of the crescent moon that marks the start of the Islamic month of Shawwal. On the 29th day of Ramadan, Muslims around the world eagerly await the sighting of the new moon. Religious authorities and moon-sighting committees observe the sky after sunset, and if the crescent moon is seen, Eid is celebrated the following day.

This tradition often creates an atmosphere of excitement, with families waiting for the official announcement that Eid has arrived.

### Charity at the Heart of the Festival

One of the most important rituals associated with Eid al-Fitr is the giving of Zakat al-Fitr, a special charitable donation required before the Eid prayer.

This charity is distinct from the annual almsgiving Zakat, which is another pillar of Islam. Zakat al-Fitr is a small contribution that every Muslim who can afford it must give so that the poor may also celebrate the festival.

Traditionally, this charity was given in staple foods such as dates, wheat, rice or barley, but today it is often given in monetary form. The practice reflects one of the central principles of Islam: that celebrations should include everyone in society, especially the needy.

### The Morning of Eid

The day of Eid begins early with a sense of excitement and reverence. Muslims perform a ritual bath known as



Children at the Jama Masjid on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Fitr festival, in New Delhi. (PTI)

ghusl, symbolizing spiritual purification and renewal.

People wear new or their best clothes as a sign of celebration and gratitude. In many cultures, traditional attire reflects regional heritage and adds to the festive atmosphere.

The most important event of the day is the Eid prayer, which is performed in large congregations at mosques or open grounds known as Eidgahs. Thousands of worshippers gather in rows, standing shoulder to shoulder in a powerful expression of unity and equality.

After the prayer, a sermon is delivered emphasizing gratitude to God, compassion toward others and the importance of maintaining the values learned during Ramadan.

The congregation then greets each other with the traditional words:

"Eid Mubarak," meaning Blessed Eid.

### Celebrations, Food and Family Gatherings

After the prayers, the day transforms into a lively celebration filled with family visits, festive meals and community gatherings.

Food plays an important role in the celebrations because it marks the end of a month of fasting. Families prepare elaborate dishes and desserts that vary across cultures. In South Asia, one of the most famous dishes is Sheer Khurma, a sweet vermicelli pudding made with milk, dates and nuts. Biryani, kebabs and sweet delicacies are also common.

In the Middle East, cookies such as maamoul and pastries like baklava are widely enjoyed. In Turkey, Eid is sometimes called the Festival of Sweets, reflecting the tradition of distributing candies and desserts to visitors.

Families spend the day visiting relatives and neighbors, sharing meals and exchanging greetings.

### Joy of Children and the Tradition of Eidi

For children, Eid is one of the most exciting times of the year. A beloved



tradition known as Eidi involves elders giving money or gifts to younger family members. Children also receive new clothes, sweets and toys, making Eid a festival filled with happiness and anticipation for the younger generation.

### A Festival of Unity and Compassion

Beyond the celebrations, Eid al-Fitr carries an enduring message of compassion, generosity and unity.

The festival reminds believers that the lessons learned during Ramadan—patience, humility, charity and gratitude—should continue throughout the year.

Many people take this opportunity to mend broken relationships, forgive past grievances and strengthen family ties.

### The Deeper Meaning of Eid

Ultimately, Eid al-Fitr is a celebration of spiritual triumph. After a month of fasting, prayer and self-discipline, the festival represents a renewed commitment to faith and moral living.

Mosques echo with prayers, homes open their doors to guests and communities come together in joy. The festival embodies the values at the heart of Islam: faith in God, kindness toward others and gratitude for life's blessings.

Through its rituals and celebrations, Eid al-Fitr remains not only a religious observance but also a timeless reminder that compassion, generosity and unity are the true foundations of a harmonious society.

# Sikh History This Week

## MARCH 13 TO MARCH 19

### 13th March

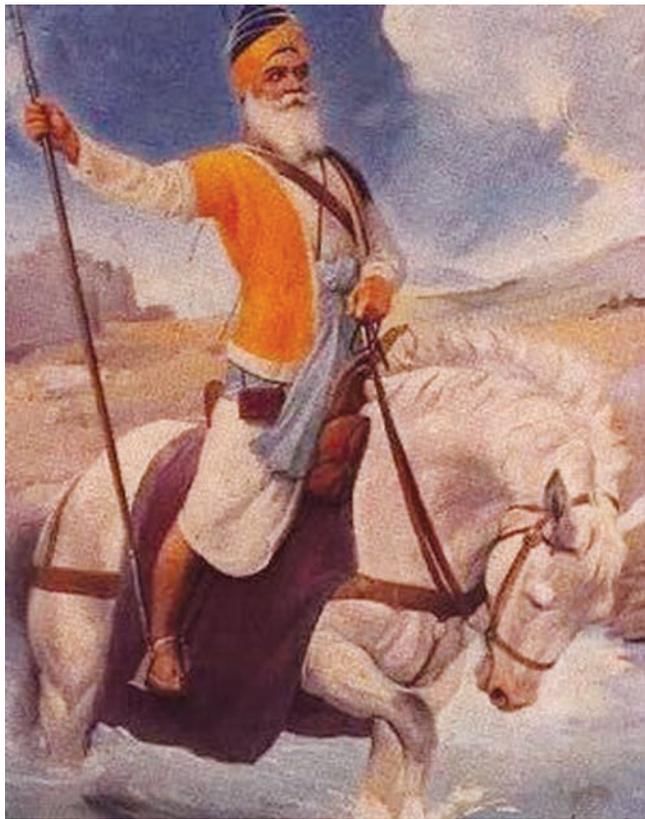
1849 The Sikh army fought the British forces at Gurjrat. The British had vastly superior artillery. Sikhs fought valiantly but were routed. Raja Sher Singh and the remaining army surrendered thus ending Sikhs opposition to British.

1921 To his dismay and amazement, Mahatama Gandhi learnt that the Sikhs did not consider themselves to be Hindus, which he had perceived them to be. Precisely, for his Gujarati audience, he wrote in the Navjivan, "Till today, I had thought of them as a sect of Hinduism. But their leaders think that theirs is a distinct religion." Gandhi went back to add, "Their sacred book is the word of their gurus and, apart from that book, they accept no other scriptures as holy."

1928 Central Sikh Association presented the Sikh case before the Simon Commission.

1940 Sardar Udham Singh of Sunam killed Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who was Lieutenant General of Punjab at the time of the Jallianwala incident in Amritsar. He was killed in London.

### 14th March



1822 Akali Phula Singh, a brave Sikh General of Maharaja Ranjit Singh died while fighting near Naushera. He headed one Sikh outfit "Misl Shaheedan" and played an active role in empire building efforts of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

1922 Kishan Singh Gargaj delivers a fiery and anti-British speech at Anandpur Sahib, on the occasion of Holla Mohalla.

1923 First attempt is made to kill Labh Singh Dhadha, responsible for the arrest of Kishan Singh.

1924 2nd Jatha of 500 Akalis, led by Sardar Inder Singh of Village Mirza of Sialkot, was arrested at Jaito.



### 15th March



1553 Bhai Jetha, Guru Ram Das, married Bibi Bhani.

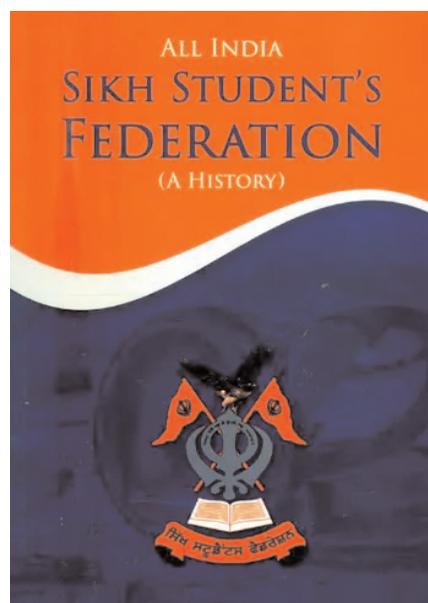


1749 Patiala Forces, under the command of Bibi Sahib Kaur, defeated Marhattha Army in a battle fought at near Ambala.

1766 During the reign of 12 misls, the Khalsa Forces defeated the Maharattas in a battle near Dhaulpur.

1960 Akali Dal executive asked the Sikh members to resign Congress Legislative party and form a separate Group.

1984 Indian Government imposed restrictions on All India Sikh Student Federation. As a result, the Federation threatened to disrupt University exams until these restrictions were lifted. Government attempted to hold university exams in April but they were unsuccessful. These exams were finally held under military rule in the month of July.



### 16th March

1764 Sikhs captured Lahore and issued their own coins.

1781 Sikhs attack Shahdara Patpat, Delhi.

1789 Khalsa Forces invaded Delhi.

1846 A new and separate treaty was signed in Ambala, between Raja Gulab Singh and the British. Kashmir was sold to Gulab Singh for one crore as part of the indemnity due from Lahore Darbar. Lal Singh Wazir opposed the ceding of Kashmir to Gulab Singh. As a result he was removed and banished from Punjab.

1849 Punjab, the domain of the Sikhs, was annexed by the British East India Company, after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

1956 Regional formula for Punjab agreed between Hukam Singh and Jawaharlal Nehru as a secret deal.

1961 The passing away of Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh Ji, a Sikh saint of renown and head of the Akhand Kitani Jatha.

1983 Police force under the command of a Deputy Superintendent of Police, Mr. Pandey, threw a hand grenade on a jeep carrying some Sikh pilgrims. The grenade was followed by a shower of bullets from machine guns of the policemen. During this attack a young Sikh boy, Hardev Singh, was killed and two others seriously wounded.

### 17th March



1823 Maharaja Ranjit Singh victoriously entered Peshawar for the first time, after winning numerous wars with Pathans.

1923 Second attempt to kill Labh Singh Dhadha also fails.

1972 Gurcharan Singh Tohra asked Fateh Singh to retire from active politics. 1973 The Federal Government of the United States of America officially recognizes the Sikh Dharma Brotherhood.

### 18th March

Maharaja Ranjit Singh assumed the governing control of Peshawar.

### 19th March

1922 A diwan at Sangowal is held by Kishan Singh Gargaj.

1923 Labh Singh of Garhshankar is murdered.

1981 Dal Khasal members, took out a procession at Anadpur Sahib during Holla Mohalla festival, in support of Khalistan. They carried a map of the proposed Sikh state on placards.

1984 All India Sikh Student Federation (AISSF) was banned by Indian government. As a result thousands of innocent Sikhs were Punjab formed the Senior Sikh Sophisticates Forum to strengthen arrested from their home.

# Sweat smart: Skincare Tips before and after your workout

Exercise increases blood circulation, delivering more oxygen and nutrients to the skin cells. This process helps nourish the skin and promotes a natural, healthy glow. Sweating also helps cleanse pores by pushing out dirt and impurities. However, when sweat mixes with oil, makeup, or environmental pollutants, it can clog pores and cause breakouts.

Additionally, frequent touching of the face with sweaty hands, using unclean gym equipment, or leaving sweat on the skin for too long can lead to irritation and bacterial infections. Therefore, a mindful skincare routine around workouts is crucial to keep the skin clear, fresh, and balanced.

## Skincare Tips Before a Workout

Preparing your skin before exercise can prevent many common skin problems. A few simple steps can help keep pores clear and protect your skin while you sweat.

### Start with a Clean Face

Before heading to the gym or starting your workout, wash your face with a gentle cleanser to remove dirt, oil, and leftover makeup. Exercising with makeup on can trap sweat and bacteria in the pores, increasing the risk of acne and irritation. A clean face allows the skin to breathe and sweat naturally.

### Skip Heavy Makeup

Foundation, concealer, and heavy cosmetics can mix with sweat and clog pores. If you prefer some coverage, opt for lightweight, breathable products such as a tinted moisturizer or a mineral-based sunscreen. Ideally, it is best to go makeup-free during workouts.

### Apply Sunscreen for Outdoor Workouts

If you exercise outdoors—whether running, cycling, or practicing yoga in the park—sun protection is essential. Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30 about 15-20 minutes before stepping outside. Choose a sweat-resistant and non-comedogenic formula that won't clog pores.

### Hydrate Your Skin

Hydration is key for maintaining healthy skin. Applying a lightweight moisturizer before a workout helps maintain the skin's barrier and prevents excessive dryness caused by sweat and environmental factors.



## Tie Hair Away from the Face

Hair products such as oils, sprays, or gels can transfer to the skin during exercise and clog pores. Tie your hair back in a loose ponytail or bun to keep it away from your face.

## Skincare Tips After a Workout

Post-workout skincare is just as important as pre-workout preparation. Sweat, oil, and bacteria left on the skin can clog pores and cause breakouts if not removed promptly.

### Cleanse Your Skin Immediately

Wash your face as soon as possible after finishing your workout. Use a gentle cleanser to remove sweat, oil, and dirt. This step helps prevent clogged pores and acne.

### Take a Shower

Sweat can accumulate on the body, leading to irritation or body acne. Taking a quick shower helps wash away bacteria and refreshes the skin. Use a mild body wash to cleanse thoroughly.

### Apply a Hydrating Moisturizer

After cleansing, apply a lightweight moisturizer to replenish lost hydration and restore the skin's natural barrier. Exercise can sometimes leave the skin feeling dry, especially if you sweat heavily.

## FOOD CORNER

# Mutton Curry

### Ingredients

- 500 g mutton (washed and cut into pieces), 2 medium onions (finely chopped), 2 tomatoes (pureed or finely chopped), 1 tablespoon ginger-garlic paste, 3 tablespoons oil or ghee, 1 teaspoon turmeric powder, 1½ teaspoons red chilli powder, 1 teaspoon coriander powder, ½ teaspoon cumin powder, 1 teaspoon garam masala, Salt to taste, 2 cups water (adjust as needed), Fresh coriander leaves for garnish, 1 bay leaf, 1 cinnamon stick, 3-4 cloves, 3-4 green cardamoms

### Method

- Heat the oil in a pressure cooker or deep pan. Add bay leaf, cinnamon, cloves, and cardamoms. Sauté for a few seconds until fragrant.
- Add chopped onions and cook until they turn golden brown. Add ginger-garlic paste and sauté for about a minute until the raw smell disappears.
- Add tomatoes and cook until the mixture softens and oil begins to separate.
- Add the spices—turmeric, red chilli powder, coriander powder, cumin powder, and salt. Mix well.
- Add the mutton pieces and sauté for 5-7 minutes so that the meat absorbs the spices.
- Add water, mix well, and cover the cooker. Cook for about 4-5 whistles or until the mutton becomes tender. (If using a pan, cook on low heat for 40-50 minutes.)
- Once done, sprinkle garam masala and simmer for a few minutes.
- Garnish with fresh coriander leaves and serve hot.



# Mantras to make a long-distance relationship work

Long-distance relationships can be challenging, but distance does not have to weaken love. In fact, when handled with patience, trust, and understanding, being apart can strengthen the emotional bond between partners. With careers, education, and personal commitments often taking people to different cities or countries, many couples today find themselves navigating love across distances. The key to making such relationships work lies in maintaining connection and commitment despite the miles.

One of the most important elements of a long-distance relationship is honest communication. Regular conversations through calls, messages, or video chats help partners stay involved in each other's daily lives. Sharing experiences, emotions, and even small moments of the day creates a sense of closeness and keeps the relationship alive.



Trust is another crucial pillar. When partners are far away from each other, doubts or insecurities can sometimes arise. Building mutual trust, being transparent, and respecting each other's boundaries

can help eliminate misunderstandings and strengthen the relationship.

Couples should also set clear expectations about communication, visits, and future plans. Knowing when you might see each other next or how often you will connect can provide reassurance and stability.

Even from afar, partners can spend quality time together by planning virtual dates—watching a movie online, cooking the same meal, or simply chatting over a video call. Such shared activities help maintain emotional intimacy and keep the relationship fun.

Celebrating special occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, or festivals is equally important. Sending thoughtful messages, gifts, or surprise calls can make your partner feel loved and valued.

Finally, it helps to focus on the bigger picture. Most long-distance phases are temporary, and keeping future plans in mind can make the separation easier to handle.

# Pre-workout supplements may cut sleep in half for young users

A popular fitness trend among young people may be quietly undermining their sleep. A new study led by researchers at the University of Toronto has found that teenagers and young adults who use pre-workout supplements are significantly more likely to experience extremely short sleep durations.

According to Science Daily, the research, published on March 9, draws on data from the Canadian Study of Adolescent Behaviors and highlights a potential health risk linked to the growing popularity of energy-boosting fitness products.

According to the study, individuals aged 16 to 30 who reported using pre-workout supplements within the past year were more than twice as likely to sleep five hours or less per night compared with those who did not use such products. Health experts generally recommend around eight hours of sleep per night for people in this age group.

As per Science Daily, pre-workout supplements, including widely used products such as Bang!, Jack3D, and C4, are commonly marketed to improve exercise performance and increase energy levels. However, researchers say the stimulant-heavy formulas in many of these products could be interfering with sleep patterns. "Pre-workout supplements, which often contain high levels of caffeine and stimulant-like ingredients, have become increasingly popular among teenagers and young adults seeking to improve exercise performance and boost energy," said lead author Kyle T Ganson, assistant professor at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto.

"However, the study's findings point to potential risks to the well-being of young people who use these supplements," Ganson added.

One of the main concerns is the high caffeine



content found in many pre-workout formulas. Researchers note that these products can contain anywhere from 90 milligrams to more than 350 milligrams of caffeine per serving. By comparison, a typical can of cola contains about 35 milligrams of caffeine, while a standard cup of coffee has roughly 100 milligrams.

Health guidelines recommend that adolescents sleep between eight and ten hours per night, while young adults should aim for seven to nine hours. Insufficient sleep during these developmental years can affect mental health, physical growth, and academic performance.

The researchers say stimulant ingredients in pre-workout supplements may worsen existing sleep problems among young people who are already not getting enough rest.

To address the issue, the research team is urging health professionals, including pediatricians, family physicians, and social workers, to discuss supplement use with young patients. They also recommend practical steps such as avoiding pre-workout supplements 12 to 14 hours before bedtime.

Source: ANI



## Negative people in your life could make you age faster: Study

"Hasslers", or people in one's close social network who make life difficult, may have consequences on aging, with each additional hassler responsible for about 1.5 per cent faster speed of aging and nine month older biological age, a study has found.

Aging effects were found to be especially pronounced when a hassler is a family member. Women, daily smokers, people in poorer health and those with adverse childhood experiences are more likely to report having hasslers in their social networks.

Findings published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) showed that negative social ties are not rare within close relationships, with nearly 30 per cent of the participants reporting at least one hassler in their network.

"Importantly, exposure to negative social ties follows patterns of social and health vulnerability, with women, daily smokers, people in poorer health, and those with adverse childhood experiences more likely to report having hasslers in their networks," the authors wrote.

"Having more hasslers is associated with accelerated biological aging in both rate and cumulative burden: Each additional hassler corresponds to approximately 1.5 per cent faster pace of aging and roughly 9 mo (months) older biological age," they said.

The researchers also found that hasslers tend to occupy peripheral network positions and more likely to be connected through weak, uniplex relationships defined by a single type of interaction such as only business.

They added that hasslers do not on their own cause ageing processes — alternative mechanisms may be involved.

For example, individuals experiencing an accelerated biological aging may become more irritable, thereby eliciting more negative interactions, the team said.

Source: PTI

## Basic habits that may block your weight loss

You may be the most disciplined person when it comes to hitting the gym or showing up for a yoga class without fail. You finish your workouts feeling accomplished, convinced you're doing everything right. But the moment you step onto the weighing scale, the feeling shifts. The number staring back at you refuses to move, leaving you disappointed and wondering how you can still be so far from your goal weight.

That moment often triggers a familiar question: if you're working out regularly, why isn't it showing when it comes to weight loss? The effort is there, the consistency is there; so what's missing?

The answer often lies in your everyday habits, the small, almost invisible ones you don't consciously track. Weight loss isn't only about sweating it out in the gym or holding poses on a yoga mat. It's also shaped by what you do in the remaining hours of the day: how you eat, move, sleep, snack, and even how you manage stress. These seemingly minor choices quietly add up and can influence the number that shows up on your weighing scale far more than you realise.

Many people assume that sweating it out automatically means they're burning a significant number of calories. However, this belief is largely a myth, as workouts often burn far fewer calories than we tend to assume.

Dr Vipul Lunawat, fitness expert and founder-director, Institute of Sports Science and Technology, shares that exercise is valuable, but the calorie expenditure is often overestimated.



"When it comes to weight loss, we often assume that a gruelling workout session will torch a significant number of calories. But the truth is, our bodies are cleverer than we think. Research suggests that our bodies compensate for the energy expended during exercise by reducing energy expenditure elsewhere," he tells India Today.

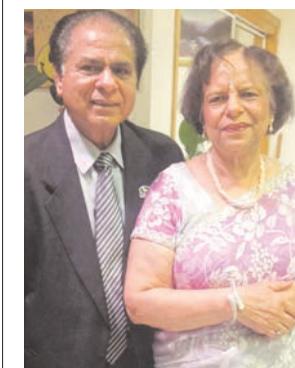
While this doesn't mean you should ditch workouts altogether, instead, focus on making your workouts more efficient.

And one way to do this is by incorporating strength training. By building muscle, you can boost your resting metabolic rate, helping your body burn more calories at rest.

Source: India Today

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# iPhone Fold may get iPad-like multitasking features

Apple is rumored to be making its debut in the foldable smartphone segment later this year, with a foldable iPhone. The new device may come with some features, akin to the iPad, when it comes to multitasking, allowing users to maximise the large inner screen when unfolded.

According to a report by Bloomberg, the Cupertino giant is working on bringing new features to iOS that would make multitasking easier for the iPhone fold – making the device almost like a hybrid between the iPhone and the iPad. Here is how it may work.

## iPhone when folded, iPad when unfolded

As per the report, the iPhone fold will work similar to any other iPhone when the inner screen is folded. That is, when you use the outer display, you can expect the usual iOS experience, such as the app dock on the homescreen.

However, things get interesting when it comes to the inner display. The inner screen is rumored to be around 7.8 inches in size, making it ideal for multitasking. Apple may implement new UI features that would allow users to use two apps side-by-side, something that has been restricted to iPads so far.

The Cupertino giant is also said to be working on a sidebar that may make it easier to open different apps. Developers will likely be given the option to adapt their existing apps for the new interface. If the report is accurate, users will be able to maximise the screen real estate via this new interface.

The new features will likely come as



part of the iOS 27 update. However, Apple is not expected to showcase the new interface when it previews the update at Worldwide Developers Conference (WWDC) in June this year.

When it comes to the hardware, the iPhone fold is expected to come with a 4:3 aspect ratio, making it wider than foldables such as the Samsung Galaxy Z Fold 7. Though Apple's foldable is said to be more compact with an outer screen of 5.5 inches, while the inner display may measure 7.8 inches. Both screens will likely use AMOLED panels.

However, Apple is unlikely to bring Face ID to the iPhone fold. Instead, the displays will have cutouts only for the cameras, along with a Touch ID sensor

on the power button. The foldable iPhone is also expected to pack two rear cameras.

Under the hood, the iPhone fold will likely use the yet-to-be-announced A20 Pro chipset, the same processor that is expected to power the upcoming iPhone 18 Pro models.

The iPhone fold launch and expected price The iPhone fold will likely be the most expensive iPhone ever. Reports suggest that the device may be priced at \$2,400 (roughly Rs 2,15,000) in the US. To give you some perspective, the Samsung Galaxy Z Fold 7 starts in India at Rs 1,74,999.

The foldable iPhone is expected to launch in September 2026.

## Why has Nasa delayed Artemis moon landing?

SpaceX's massive Starship rocket, chosen by Nasa to land astronauts on the Moon, has accumulated at least two years of development delays, raising fresh concerns about the timeline for the United States' return to the lunar surface.

A report by Nasa's inspector general found that technical challenges and the complexity of SpaceX's design have slowed progress since the rocket was selected in 2021 as the lunar lander for the agency's Artemis program.

The delays have pushed the program well beyond its original 2026 lunar landing target, which officials had long considered optimistic. Nasa currently aims to land astronauts using Starship around 2028, though the report warned that additional hurdles could push the schedule further.

Nasa's Artemis program, involving partnerships with companies including Elon Musk's SpaceX and Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin, is central to US plans to establish sustained human exploration of the Moon.

The effort has gained urgency as China pursues its own goal of sending astronauts to the lunar surface by around 2030.

At the heart of the challenge is Starship's unprecedented mission architecture. Before a lunar landing can occur, SpaceX must first demonstrate the ability to refuel Starship in orbit, a complex procedure never attempted at such scale.

According to the report, a single crewed lunar landing would require more than a dozen Starship launches. Multiple tanker versions of the rocket would carry propellant to Earth orbit, where they would transfer fuel to a storage depot spacecraft. That depot would then refuel the Starship destined for the Moon.

Each vehicle is powered by roughly 1,200 metric tons of liquid methane and liquid oxygen, propellants that must be kept at extremely low cryogenic temperatures below 150°C.

The inspector general noted that transferring such super-cooled propellants in orbit at least ten times presents one of the most difficult engineering challenges facing the project.

Nasa officials consider demonstrating reliable cryogenic fuel transfer to be a major technical milestone that has yet to be proven.

The process must also occur in low-Earth orbit, an increasingly crowded region filled with satellites and spacecraft, adding operational complexity.

Since 2023, SpaceX has conducted 11 Starship test launches, gradually improving the system's performance. Nasa recently added another Artemis test mission to the schedule as engineers work through technical challenges.

# Google set to power Pentagon with AI agents after Anthropic fallout

Google has announced that it is expanding its ties with the Pentagon for AI use. The company will now allow personnel to create custom AI agents using Gemini via the Pentagon's enterprise AI portal, GenAI.mil. The announcement comes at a time when the US Department of Defense is at odds with Anthropic with the latter filing a lawsuit after being designated as a supply chain risk.

In a blog post, Google announced that 3 million civilian and military personnel will have access to custom agents via the portal. Users will be able to design their own agents for tasks such as creating drafts and planning projects. However, it is restricted to unclassified work.

US Defense Undersecretary Emil Michael told Bloomberg, "We're starting with unclassified because that's where most of the users are, and then we'll get to classified and top secret."

According to Google, users will not



need to have prior knowledge of coding. Rather, they can create custom AI agents via natural language prompts through the Agent Designer. The company claims that this will allow users to "design digital assistants to automate repetitive, multi-step administrative tasks"

Google had first provided access to Gemini via the GenAI.mil portal in

December 2025.

The Pentagon has faced scrutiny recently after it terminated Anthropic's contract over disagreements on AI use. The Dario Amodei-led firm wanted specific safeguards to prevent mass domestic surveillance or the development of autonomous weapons. On the other hand, the US Defense Department asserted that it wanted access to AI for "all lawful purposes"

The fallout has grown deeper since. While the Pentagon did reach an agreement with OpenAI, it has designated Anthropic as a supply chain risk. With Amodei's firm has sued the Pentagon.

However, Emil Michael believes that Google will be a reliable partner as the department plans to use its AI agents on classified work in the future. He explained, "I have high confidence they're going to be a great partner on all networks."

# How Iran war laid bare the world's reliance on Gulf oil and gas

MARCH 13, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The US-Israel war with Iran has made startlingly clear how much the world relies on energy from the Gulf region.

Since the conflict began, the price of oil has soared and is currently trading at over a third higher at \$100 a barrel, pushed up by air strikes on shipping and energy infrastructure, and the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway for energy shipments, which carries a fifth of global oil supplies.

Nowhere is feeling the effects of the current energy crisis quite like Asia. Last year, nearly 90% of all the oil and gas that passed through the Strait of Hormuz was bound for the region.

Ordinary people rely on it to heat their homes, fuel their vehicles and generate electricity. Businesses need it to power the region's vast manufacturing base.

South East Asia, in particular, is highly exposed to the blockage in the Persian Gulf. Even countries that produce oil themselves, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, have gradually started producing less and importing more over the past decade.

The vulnerability is also partly to do with the type of oil produced in the Middle East and how countries in the region refine it.

"Middle Eastern crude is generally 'heavy sour' or 'medium sour'," says Jane Nakano, a senior fellow in the Energy Security and Climate Change Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Refineries in South East Asia, Nakano explains, have been set up to process this type of crude oil and simply switching to another provider, such as the US, is not straightforward.



"It would take significant investment to alter refinery specifications," she says.

It puts many countries in a bind. The Philippines, for example, gets around 95% of its crude oil from the Middle East. The country's president has already told public workers to switch to a four-day working week to save fuel.

Vietnam is also feeling the strain. The price of diesel has gone up there by nearly 60% since last month. In some cities this week there were long queues of moped riders at petrol stations panic-buying fuel. There have been similar scenes in Bangladesh.

Prices at the pumps have been going up around the world, although to a lesser extent than seen in Asia.

In the US average petrol prices are up 23% on a month ago, while diesel prices are up by a third. In the UK diesel is up 9%.

It is something that governments are keeping an eye on.

South Korea has ordered a temporary cap on the price of fuel to ease anxiety over the rising price of oil.

Japan has said it will provide subsidies to oil wholesalers, in order to contain

retail petrol prices.

In France, TotalEnergies has said it will cap the price of petrol and diesel at its service stations from Friday until the end of the month, according to Reuters.

Asia's biggest economy, China, is certainly the best placed to weather the storm. Over the years, it has built up one of the world's largest oil reserves, which would last it a few months.

Unofficially, China also buys millions of barrels of Iranian oil, which is under US sanctions. Vessel-tracking data suggests that some of this is still arriving.

This is in addition to more than 46 million barrels of Iranian crude oil, which is currently in floating storage in the South China Sea, according to data from the trade analytics group Kpler.

Rises in petrol prices will be felt less keenly in China, given that one third of all new cars sold there are electric.

Compared to other Asian countries, China is also far less reliant on oil when it comes to generating electricity - most of that is powered by coal.

The continent's other major economies, Japan and South Korea, have agreed to release millions of barrels from national stockpiles, in line with an International Energy Agency (IEA) agreement announced on Wednesday.

Even so, both countries' dependence on Middle Eastern energy has increased since they decided to buy less Russian oil and gas in the wake of the invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

When it comes to gas, the Ukraine war also had a major impact on where Europe gets its supplies from as it sought to turn away from its reliance on Russia. The UK and the EU now get most of their liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Norway and the US. *Source: BBC*

## India plans \$10.8 billion fund to support local semiconductor manufacturing

MARCH 13, 2026

**MUMBAI (TIP):** India plans to unveil a more than 1 trillion rupee (\$10.8 billion) fund aimed at bolstering domestic chipmaking, advancing its ambitious bid to become a global manufacturing hub.

The fund, which will provide subsidies for chip design projects, manufacturing equipment and supply chain development, may be launched in two to three months, people familiar with the matter said, asking not to be named as the plan isn't yet public. The plan is still under discussion and may change.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to accelerate India's chip campaign, which is in early stages with just a handful of major projects under way. Governments around the world are ramping up support for their chip industries to become more self-sustaining and fulfill rising demand from developers of everything from AI and smartphones to cars and appliances.

## India's easing of FDI rules gives limited opening to China firms

**I**ndia's decision to ease FDI rules for neighbouring countries may reopen the door to China, but strict ownership limits mean large firms such as BYD Co. and Great Wall Motor Co. will still face same screening requirements.

New Delhi has relaxed FDI rules for investments from countries sharing a land border with India, allowing automatic approval for non-controlling stake of up to 10%, subject to compliance requirements. The changes underscore India's push to attract capital, while highlighting continued caution toward China.

"We are opening up in a strategic and calibrated manner," Amardeep Singh Bhatia, secretary in the Department of Commerce told reporters in New Delhi. "It's a changing world and the opening up doesn't mean that concerns with regards to security have gone away."

The easing stops well short of restoring full parity for investors from neighboring countries, who will continue to face additional scrutiny and restrictions compared with other foreign firms. While the move signals a cautious thaw with China and an effort to bolster growth amid Middle East-driven uncertainty, companies such as BYD and other major investors would still face ownership and regulatory hurdles before making major commitments.

# India's inflation rose to 3.21% in Feb, but US-Israel-Iran war impact yet to be felt

MARCH 13, 2026

**MUMBAI (TIP):** India's inflation rate rose in February even before the full impact of the Iran war shows on the world's fourth largest economy. However, it's still below the RBI's inflation target.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI), a measure of retail inflation, rose to 3.21% last month as against a revised 2.74% in January, according to government data on Thursday. That compares with the Reserve Bank of India's estimate of 2.1% in FY26, 4% in Q1 FY27 and 4.2% in Q2 FY27. The RBI's inflation target is set at 4% with a tolerance band of 2% to 6%.

Food inflation was at 3.47% in February as compared with 2.13% a month ago.

The ongoing Iran war—which has pushed crude oil prices to four-year



highs—is certain to weigh on New Delhi's inflation math as India is the world's third-largest oil importer. Earlier

this week, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the government does not expect a sharp rise in inflation, but a government report released last week said that a prolonged Iran war could weaken the rupee and widen India's current account deficit.

According to CLSA, every 10% increase in crude oil prices raises retail inflation by 40 to 60 basis points. One basis point is one-hundredth of a percentage point.

Oil prices soared over \$119/barrel earlier this week, the highest intraday prices since June 2022, but hopes of the war de-escalating and the International Energy Agency's decision to release a record 400 million barrels of oil from strategic stockpiles has brought down prices of the commodity.

# Chaitra Navratri: The sacred festival celebrating the divine feminine & Hindu New Year

**Chaitra Navratri is a famous Hindu festival. Chaitra Navratri, also known as Vasant Navratri, is a Hindu festival celebrated in the month of Chaitra (March–April) every year. It is a nine-day festival that honors the nine forms of Goddess Durga or Shakti. It marks the beginning of the Hindu New Year. During this festival, devotees fast, pray and perform traditional rituals. The nine days of the festival are dedicated to nine different forms of the Goddess and each day is devoted to worshipping a different form. On the ninth day, the Goddess is worshipped in her full form. Chaitra Navratri is celebrated with much enthusiasm across India and is a joyous occasion for Hindus.**

As winter fades and spring spreads new colours across nature, millions of devotees across India prepare to celebrate Chaitra Navratri, one of the most spiritually significant festivals in the Hindu calendar. Observed during the lunar month of Chaitra, the nine-day festival is dedicated to the worship of the Divine Mother and symbolizes the victory of good over evil.

Chaitra Navratri holds a special place in Hindu tradition because it coincides with the beginning of the Hindu New Year in many regions of India. The festival culminates with Ram Navami, commemorating the birth of Rama, one of the most revered deities in Hinduism. More than a religious celebration, the festival represents spiritual renewal, inner purification, and devotion to the eternal power of Shakti, the cosmic feminine energy.

## The Meaning of Navratri

The word "Navratri" is derived from two Sanskrit words-Nav meaning nine and Ratri meaning night. The festival literally translates to "nine nights," during which devotees worship the divine feminine energy represented by Durga and her nine manifestations known collectively as Navadurga.

In Hindu philosophy, Shakti represents the dynamic force that sustains the universe. Without this energy, even the divine trinity-Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva-cannot function. Navratri therefore celebrates the creative and protective power of the goddess, acknowledging her as the ultimate source of strength, wisdom, and prosperity.

## Why Two Navratris Are Widely Celebrated

Hindu scriptures mention four Navratri periods throughout the year. However, two of them are widely celebrated:

- Chaitra Navratri (March-April)
- Sharad Navratri (September-October)

These festivals occur during seasonal transitions-spring and autumn-when nature undergoes a significant change. According to traditional Indian knowledge systems, these periods influence the body's internal balance and energy.

Spiritual practices such as fasting, meditation, and prayer during Navratri are believed to purify the body and mind, allowing devotees to align themselves with cosmic rhythms.

## Mythological Legends

### Associated with Navratri

The Victory of Durga Over Mahishasura

One of the most famous legends



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### Chaitra Navratri 2026 Tithi

- Navratri Day 1: Maa Shailputri Puja Thursday, 19 March 2026
- Navratri Day 2: Maa Brahmacharini Puja Friday, 20 March 2026
- Navratri Day 3: Maa Chandraghanta Puja Saturday, 21 March 2026
- Navratri Day 4: Maa Kushmanda Puja Sunday, 22 March 2026
- Navratri Day 5: Maa Skandamata Puja Monday, 23 March 2026
- Navratri Day 6: Maa Katyayani Puja Tuesday, 24 March 2026
- Navratri Day 7: Maa Kalaratri Puja Wednesday, 25 March 2026
- Navratri Day 8: Maa Maha Gauri Puja Thursday, 26 March 2026
- Navratri Day 9: Maa Siddhidatri Puja Friday, 27 March 2026
- Navratri Day 10: Navratri Parana Saturday, 28 March 2026



connected with Navratri comes from the sacred text Devi Mahatmya. According to the story, the powerful demon Mahishasura obtained a boon that made him nearly invincible. Drunk with power, he began tormenting the gods and spreading chaos across the universe.

To defeat him, the gods combined their divine energies to create the fierce goddess Durga. Riding a lion and wielding weapons gifted by the gods, Durga fought Mahishasura for nine days and nights before finally slaying him. The victory symbolizes the triumph of righteousness over arrogance and evil.

## The Ramayana Connection

Chaitra Navratri is also closely linked to the epic Ramayana. According to tradition, Rama prayed to Goddess Durga to seek divine strength before confronting Ravana.

The ninth day of the festival marks Ram Navami, celebrating the arrival of Rama, who represents truth, righteousness, and ideal kingship.

## The Nine Forms of Goddess Durga

Each day of Navratri is dedicated to a specific manifestation of the goddess, symbolizing stages of spiritual awakening:

- Shailaputri - Symbol of purity and strength
- Brahmacharini - Represents devotion and penance
- Chandraghanta - Embodiment of courage and grace
- Kushmanda - Creator of the cosmic universe
- Skandamata - Symbol of motherhood and compassion
- Katyayani - Warrior goddess who destroys evil
- Kalaratri - Fierce destroyer of darkness
- Mahagauri - Symbol of peace and purity
- Siddhidatri - Bestower of spiritual powers

Together, these forms represent the spiritual journey from ignorance to enlightenment.

## Rituals and Traditions During Chaitra Navratri

### Ghatasthapana (Kalash Sthapana)

The festival begins with Ghatasthapana, where a sacred pot filled with water and topped with a coconut and mango leaves is placed on an altar. Barley seeds are often sown around the pot, symbolizing prosperity and growth.

### Fasting and Spiritual Discipline

Many devotees observe fasts throughout

From Page 34

the nine days. The diet during fasting usually includes fruits, milk, and special foods made from buckwheat flour, water chestnut flour, and tapioca pearls.

Fasting is believed to purify the body, sharpen the mind, and strengthen spiritual discipline.

### Chanting and Devotional Worship

Devotees chant sacred hymns such as the Durga Saptashati and perform daily prayers and aarti. Temples dedicated to the goddess witness large gatherings of devotees seeking divine blessings.

### Kanya Puja

On the eighth or ninth day, devotees perform Kanya Puja, where young girls are worshipped as living embodiments of the goddess. They are offered traditional food such as puri, halwa, and chana along with gifts and blessings.

### Regional Celebrations Across India

Chaitra Navratri is observed with unique traditions across different regions.

In northern India, temples dedicated to Durga witness heavy pilgrim footfall, especially at the sacred Vaishno Devi Temple, where thousands of devotees undertake a pilgrimage during Navratri.

In Maharashtra, the festival coincides with Gudi Padwa, while in southern states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana, the New Year is celebrated as Ugadi.

Thus, Chaitra Navratri marks both a spiritual festival and the beginning of a new cycle of time.

### Spiritual Symbolism of the Festival

At its deepest level, Chaitra Navratri represents the eternal struggle between light and darkness within human consciousness. The worship of the goddess symbolizes awakening inner strength, wisdom, and compassion.

The nine days remind devotees that divine power resides within every individual. By practicing self-discipline, devotion, and righteous living, one can overcome negativity and achieve spiritual growth.

### A Festival of Renewal and Divine Energy

As spring renews the earth with blossoms and fresh life, Chaitra Navratri inspires a similar renewal within the human spirit. Through prayer, fasting, and devotion to the Divine Mother, devotees seek strength, prosperity, and spiritual enlightenment.

Ultimately, the festival celebrates the



eternal power of the feminine divine-reminding humanity that compassion, courage, and faith will always triumph over darkness.

### 9 days, 9 colors, 9 bhogs for each goddess form

In 2026, Chaitra Navratri will begin on 19 March and conclude on 27 March, with the last day celebrated as Ram Navami. Each day is dedicated to a different form of Durga, along with a specific colour and prasad offering.

#### DAY 1: WORSHIP OF MAA SHAILPUTRI

Date: 19 March 2026  
Color: Yellow  
Bhog: Desi ghee

The first day begins with Ghatasthapana (Kalash Sthapana), marking the start of Navratri rituals. Devotees worship Shailputri, the daughter of the mountains. Offering desi ghee is believed to bring strength and good health.

#### DAY 2: WORSHIP OF MAA BRAHMACHARINI

Date: 20 March 2026  
Color: Green  
Bhog: Sugar

The second day honours Brahmacharini, who represents devotion, wisdom and spiritual discipline. Devotees offer sugar or sweet

prasad to seek blessings for a peaceful and successful life.

#### DAY 3: WORSHIP OF MAA CHANDRAGHANTA

Date: 21 March 2026  
Color: Grey  
Bhog: Milk and milk-based sweets

On the third day, devotees worship Chandraghanta, known for symbolising courage and protection. Milk or kheer is offered as bhog to seek strength and remove negativity.

#### DAY 4: WORSHIP OF MAA KUSHMANDA

Date: 22 March 2026  
Color: Orange  
Bhog: Malpua

The fourth day is dedicated to Kushmanda, believed to have created the universe with her divine smile. Devotees offer malpua or sweet dishes to seek happiness and prosperity.

#### DAY 5: WORSHIP OF MAA SKANDAMATA

Date: 23 March 2026  
Color: White  
Bhog: Bananas

On the fifth day, Skandamata, the mother of Lord Kartikeya, is worshipped. Bananas are offered as prasad, believed to bring wisdom and blessings for children.

#### DAY 6: WORSHIP OF MAA KATYAYANI

Date: 24 March 2026  
Color: Red

Bhog: Honey

Devotees worship Katyayani on the sixth day. Honey is offered as bhog to attract positive energy and divine blessings.

#### DAY 7: WORSHIP OF MAA KALARATRI

Date: 25 March 2026  
Color: Royal Blue  
Bhog: Jaggery

The seventh day honours Kalaratri, the fiercest form of the goddess who removes fear and negativity. Jaggery or sweets made from jaggery are offered as prasad.

#### DAY 8: WORSHIP OF MAA MAHAGAURI

Date: 26 March 2026  
Color: Pink  
Bhog: Coconut

On the eighth day, devotees worship Mahagauri, symbolising purity and serenity. Coconut or coconut-based sweets are offered to seek peace and prosperity.

#### DAY 9: WORSHIP OF MAA SIDDHIDATRI

Date: 27 March 2026  
Color: Purple  
Bhog: Halwa, chana and puri

The final day is dedicated to Siddhidatri, who grants wisdom and spiritual powers. Many devotees also perform Kanya Puja, offering halwa, chana and puri to young girls as a symbol of divine feminine energy.



## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - MAR 16 - 22, 2026

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

### ARIES

 Ganesha says there may be little problem related to the family. Speaking good and soft words will be good for you. There are chances of getting indulged in arguments due to your harsh speaking. There are chances to get progress for the people involved in media, art, beauty, telecommunication, jewelry, and precious items. Students will be able to concentrate more on their studies this week. Some disturbances may happen in a marital relationship due to which you may lose your mental happiness. Professionals should keep their focus on work and finances. Maintaining good relations with a boss or other superior will give you the advantage of receiving a quick promotion.

### TAURUS

 Ganesha says this period will give fewer problems to unmarried people and for people their parents. But for married people, this week may bring bad experiences. There may be a few differences in a marital relationship. Someone elder or head of the family may have to come in front to solve the matter. Do not be overconfident or over-critical about any subject. The clear picture will only appear after a while. For professionals, this week bring new opportunities and advancements in their career. Gradual progress is very good for you.

### GEMINI

 Ganesha says your mental processes are speeded up now. You grasp new concepts very quickly but nervous anxiety, hasty or erratic behavior or speech, rushing, and coming to judgment too quickly are likely at this time. Support from close friends, family, and the woman in your life gives you confidence now. Your career, reputation, and most importantly personal goals receive a boost now, primarily through your initiative and willingness to assert yourself. For married people, this week may bring bad experiences. There may be a few differences in a marital relationship. For professionals, this week bring new opportunities and advancements in their career. Gradual progress is very good for you. People involved in businesses like restaurants, food, brokership, clothes, etc. will get more benefits.



### CANCER

Ganesha says this week may not fulfill all your desires and give you a little difficulty in completing planned work. People having bad Saturn in their horoscopes need to be alert this week. Some mishappening may disturb your daily routine. Students need to give more stress and attention to science and Arts subjects. Married people need to give little attention and love to their spouse. A small argument may happen if you don't control your harsh words. If you are planning to propose to anyone, keep a hold. This is not the right time. People involved in business related to marketing, accountancy, and water products would get good chances to grow. A little care is needed for the professionals working in the banking and semi-government sectors.

### LEO

 Ganesha says a good time for gaining knowledge for you. If you are a student or involved with the educational department, recognition is seen as guaranteed. Little efforts and gains are very near to you. Good relations with love/spouse help in giving more happiness to the family. During the end of this week, a small argument may happen with any family member. It will be good for you to keep control over your words. Nervous and emotional problems may disturb you at that time. Maintaining secrecy in professional life will be good for you. Some people may try to harm your image. Be alert.

### VIRGO

 Ganesha says the time for Enjoyment and Relaxation is over now. Get ready to work hard. You will be filled with courage and strong determination throughout this week. Keep care of your health a lot of pending work may give you little mental tension. It will be good to help and respect your mother or an elderly lady in the family. Her blessings will help you to reach the top. Married people need to pay more attention if they have extramarital affairs. It will be good for you to keep away from another person except for your spouse, otherwise, there are chances of getting trapped. People working in the army, military services, engineering, fire or red-colored objects will be able to grow professionally.

### LIBRA

 Ganesha says students will be able to concentrate and get good results. Though gains and support are seen everywhere you will not be able to become fully happy. There is something inside you, that stops you from becoming enlightened. This week will be good for preachers, teachers, and people who are involved in

communication work. Try to keep patience while saying anything to anyone as sometimes, wrong words may disturb your image. Professionals will put a lot of effort into completing pending work and be able to show results to their superiors. If you are married and looking for a house, this week will fulfill your desires and bring a chance for you to buy a new home.

### SCORPIO

 Ganesha says to try to speak less as your harsh words may disturb or pinch someone dear to you. If you are trying to visit abroad for studies, go ahead, this week is favorable for you. Avoid driving fast and always remain attentive while crossing the roads. Old people need to keep a watch on their health. Though they will get support from their family members some expenses are seen on their medicines and as fees to the doctor. Students should put more effort into their studies. If you are religious, this week is going to be fantastic for you and give you good results in meditation and performing religious activities.

### SAGITTARIUS

 Ganesha says this week gives you all the good news related to family, profession, and income. But try to maintain good relations with co-born. There may be a chance of disputes with younger ones in the family or with neighbors. No one is able to harm you as all stars are in your favor. Students will make more effort and be able to succeed in their studies. Professionals need to keep courage and just go on completing their work with full energy. Your superiors are watching you. You will get recognition but you should not lose your courage and try to complete your work a little faster.

### CAPRICORN

 Ganesha says this may be a stable week for you. There may not be sufficient progress in your career and personal life. You may prefer to spend most of the time at home. There is a possibility for the acquisition of a new conveyance. Students may get admission to a reputed institution. They may have sufficient opportunities to prove their abilities. Children may have success in foreign countries. They may spend more money on lavish living. Spouses will have a comfortable life in a career. He/she may be successful in impressing superiors. Father may have ultimate pressure for money. You may have to pay more for his previous mistakes. Elder siblings will have financial prosperity through business. Children may benefit from younger siblings. They may not be able to capitalize on the emerging opportunities for various reasons.



### AQUARIUS

Ganesha says this may be a challenging week for you and face a lot of obstructions in your way. You might face strong opposition from your close ones and may cause conflicts with superiors. However, you may enjoy financial growth throughout this week. You should not be involved in the personal matters of your co-workers. Students may get normal results for their hard work. Children may get promising results in careers and education. A spouse may have the fortune to grab foreign opportunities. He/she may be successful in completing a Herculean task. It is better to lead a simple and pious life. Fathers should be cautious in their financial decisions. He may develop on the career side but experience troubles in his personal life. Elder siblings may face ultimate financial problems. Younger siblings may face accidents during night hours.

### PISCES

 Ganesha says this may be a promoting week for you. You will enjoy excellent growth in earnings. There may be optimistic changes in career after a long time and will improve the standard of working conditions. The people running their business might expand with a visionary viewpoint. Students will do well in spite of tough competition. Children may have unnecessary relations or attraction towards unethical activities. A spouse may have a good time with business partners. He/she should strictly avoid speculative activities. Father may have grand success in his career. He will have the respect and faith of his superiors. Elderly siblings may suffer from different health complications. Younger siblings will establish the new business as a partnership venture. They may have a quarrel with neighbors.

### AUTHOR BIO

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**BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : MARCH 16 TO MARCH 22  
BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA****MARCH 16**

Ganesha says the task you undertake this time will provide you with a lot of satisfaction. They would be supportive, and some of them would end up being your closest friends. You would make good money from your job, but it would be difficult for you to keep your profits. There will be nice romantic entanglements and good opportunities to form a marriage union. Expect to get gifts and treats in both cash and kind. Some of you have plans to travel abroad for business.

**MARCH 17**

Ganesha says that for your efforts, you can anticipate receiving fantastic benefits. You would spend extra on comforts and amusement to mark your triumph, especially. Your income would increase, and you would make some wise long-term investments. Better communication between you and your partner would make every time you share truly special. Your parents' health could be a source of worry and concern.

**MARCH 18**

Ganesha says for best results, make

your plans far in advance. Long-term gains will be attained as a result of your efforts during this time, when investing in real estate is advantageous. Your priority list will include romance. A new arrival also appears to be a possibility. As you take a job with more responsibility and position, your financial situation will get better. The entire family's spirits will rise if some exciting news comes in from distant relatives.

**MARCH 19**

Ganesha says that although there will be financial improvements, the increase in expenses will prevent you from being able to save. Your professional improvement should have your whole attention because it will rapidly produce the necessary effects. Businesspeople will establish useful contacts. Children and spouses will be extremely demanding but supportive. Minor health conditions like backaches, stiff necks, or body aches will cause issues. If you get out and participate in clubs and social gatherings, your social life will go smoothly.

**MARCH 20**

Ganesha says that to achieve the clear goal of success, you are likely to take advantage of all the opportunities that come your way as soon as possible. You keep up the good effort and attempt to imitate it constantly. It will be successful if you make an effort to change your sour attitude. Sometimes you become lost in pleasant ideas that give you a boost. Messy situations could make you feel anxious, yet supportive grins from your loved ones can make you feel better. You always have the best of intentions for your family members.

**MARCH 21**

Ganesha says you must examine your vacillating and spreading modes. You have a wide range of skills. Wherever you go, people will notice you. Because of your bewilderment trait, you successfully attempt to recover your former appeal. When you are a channel anchor, you will eventually have well-planned interactive sessions with some well-known individuals. Your knowledge will be needed to do that. You are modern and a strong follower of Western culture, where there is no room for superstitions.



**VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR  
BEJAN DARUWALLA**

**MARCH 22**

Ganesha says you enjoy going to events and parties, mixing with people, and being around a large number of people. You will have an enjoyable time with your family, which will make you feel better. You'll be blessed on all fronts. Without many hassles or delays, you will get whatever you want. You always decide to choose to work on your projects before doing anything materialistic. You are a man of your word. Gather all of your thoughts and sift out the most significant issues.

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# Vote Mama & CPC PAC Endorse Representative Grace Meng's Re-Election Campaign

Progressive organizations rally behind longtime ally in Congress

**MARCH 13, 2026**  
**QUEENS, NEW YORK (TIP)**

Vote Mama and the Congressional Progressive Caucus PAC (CPC PAC) today, March 13, announced their endorsement of Representative Grace Meng's re-election campaign in New York's 6th congressional district, applauding the work she's done in Washington to uplift working families in Queens and across the United States.

Vote Mama is a grassroots political organization dedicated to helping mothers with young children run for office. They promote candidates and policies that prioritize family-friendly initiatives such as flexible legislative schedules, paid leave, and childcare support to make elected office more accessible to parents and families.

"Rep. Meng brings the lived experience of a mama who gave birth while serving in elected office; she understands what it's like to have babies and raise them in

this country," said Liuba Grechen Shirley, Founder and CEO of the Vote Mama PAC. "We all see the way Rep. Meng centers the needs of working families as she fights to advance menstrual equity and end period poverty. I am grateful to have her as a friend, and Vote Mama PAC is proud to continue partnering with her to break down barriers and put more mamas in power."

CPC PAC raises money from progressive supporters and grassroots donors to elect and defend candidates who back policies that expand healthcare access, bolster climate action, and strengthen labor protections. The PAC directs its support towards leaders associated with the Congressional Progressive Caucus, the largest ideological caucus of Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"Grace Meng is exactly the kind of leader the Congressional Progressive Caucus PAC fights to protect - someone

who shows up every day for her constituents and delivers real results for working families," said CPC PAC Co-Chairs Pramila Jayapal, Greg Casar and Maxwell Frost. "She has been an indispensable partner in pushing forward our legislative priorities, from healthcare to housing to an economy that works for everyone, not just the wealthy few. Her devotion to the people of Queens is admirable, and every New Yorker is better off for her leadership. We are proud to support her re-election and look forward to keep fighting for America's future together."

"Everyone knows the hardest-working Americans come from Queens," said Rep. Grace Meng. "I am proud to have fought and won policies that make it possible for working people to thrive professionally without compromising their family and personal lives. I am excited to continue working with my colleagues in the Congressional Progressive Caucus and



Representative Grace Meng

Photo / Clinton Foundation

partners at Vote Mama to ensure every New Yorker has the opportunity to grow, flourish financially, and achieve success."

(Based on a Press Release)

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

## 193 INDIA bloc MPs submit notice seeking removal of CEC Gyanesh Kumar

being used to benefit the ruling party. They have cited examples from West Bengal, Bihar, and other States where SIR has been done.

The Trinamool Congress is considering releasing the transcript of its delegation's meeting with the Election Commission on February 2. After that meeting, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had told reporters that Mr. Kumar had "insulted" and "humiliated" the delegation.

Article 324(5) of the Constitution states: "Provided that the Chief Election Commissioner shall not be removed from his office except in like manner and on the like grounds as a Judge of the Supreme Court and the conditions of service of the Chief Election Commissioner shall not be varied to his disadvantage after his appointment."

Under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, if notices for such a motion are submitted in both Houses on the same day, no inquiry committee may be constituted unless the motion is admitted in both Houses. Once admitted, a committee must be constituted jointly by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

The rules require at least 50 MPs to sign the notice if it is moved in the Rajya Sabha and 100 if moved in the Lok Sabha. The Opposition's notice exceeds these requirements, with 130 signatures in the Lok Sabha and 63 in the Rajya Sabha.

According to sources, the Trinamool Congress, which spearheaded the effort, debated whether to move the notice in only one House, either the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha. "But Opposition members of both Houses want to sign the notice to register their protest against the CEC's recent actions," a senior leader said.

(Agencies)

## All military targets on Iran's Kharg island have been 'obliterated', says Trump

He added that the United States deliberately avoided striking oil infrastructure on the island.

"Our Weapons are the most powerful and sophisticated that the World has ever known but, for reasons of decency, I have chosen NOT to wipe out the Oil Infrastructure on the Island," he said.

Trump also warned that the decision could change if shipping in the strategic Strait of Hormuz remains disrupted.

"However, should Iran, or anyone else, do anything to interfere with the Free and Safe Passage of Ships through the Strait of Hormuz, I will immediately reconsider this decision. During my First Term, and currently, I rebuilt our Military into the Most Lethal, Powerful, and Effective Force, by far, anywhere in the World," he said.

The US president added that Iran would not be able to stop American military strikes.

"Iran has NO ability to defend anything that we want to attack --There is nothing they can do about it!" he said.

Trump reiterated that Tehran would not be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons.

"Iran will NEVER have a nuclear weapon, nor will it have the ability to threaten the United States of America, the Middle East or, for that matter, the World!"

He also warned Iran's military and its allies to surrender.

"Iran's Military, and all others involved with this Terrorist Regime, would be wise to lay down their arms, and save what's left of their country, which isn't much!" he said.

Earlier, the United States CENTCOM said B-2 stealth bombers had taken off to carry out a mission as part of Operation Epic Fury, aimed at "eliminating threats" posed by the Iranian "regime" and preventing the Persian Gulf country from rebuilding its capabilities in the future.

CENTCOM said the bombers launched to deliver long-range firepower during the operation. (Source: ANI)

## U.S. launches fresh investigation into India, 59 other economies on forced labor charges

While the first investigation was on 16 countries, the second one's scope covers 60 of the U.S.' largest trading partners.

According to the U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, the investigations will determine whether foreign governments have taken "sufficient steps" to prohibit the import of goods produced with forced labor and how the "failure to eradicate" these abhorrent

practices impacts U.S. workers and businesses.

If the results of the investigation warrant it, the U.S. can use this to levy tariffs on the countries it has found have failed to take these sufficient steps to ban the import of goods made using forced labor.

"Despite the international consensus against forced labor, governments have failed to impose and effectively enforce measures banning goods produced with forced labor from entering their markets," Mr. Greer said. "For too long, American workers and firms have been forced to compete against foreign producers who may have an artificial cost advantage gained from the scourge of forced labor."

Once the investigation begins, the USTR must seek consultations with the economies that are under investigation. The USTR on March 11 said it has requested consultations with the governments of these economies in connection with these investigations.

The USTR will hold hearings in connection with the investigations on April 28, 2026. (Agencies)

## "Historic \$300 billion deal": Trump announces Reliance investment in new Texas oil refinery

However, there has been no official communication from Reliance Industries on the deal so far.

"Thank you to our partners in India, and their largest privately held energy company, Reliance, for this tremendous investment," Trump said.

Infrastructure platforms built by Adani Group strengthen India's trade, logistics and energy security: Karan Adani'

Trump said the new refinery at the Port of Brownsville will fuel US markets, strengthen national security, boost American energy production, and generate thousands of jobs.

A press release by America First Refining (AFR) said that it received a nine-figure investment in February from a "global supermajor" at a 10-figure valuation.

AFR said it also "signed a binding 20-year offtake term sheet with the same global supermajor that secures commitments to purchase, process, and distribute American-produced energy exclusively sourced from American shale oil".

The press release did not mention Reliance Industries or specify the amount it plans to invest in the project.

The company said it plans to break ground on the refinery in the second quarter of 2026.

# Papmochani Ekadashi: The sacred observance for liberation from sins

Among the many spiritually significant fasting days in the Hindu calendar, Papmochani Ekadashi is regarded as a powerful occasion for spiritual purification and redemption. Observed on the eleventh day (Ekadashi tithi) of the Krishna Paksha in the Hindu month of Chaitra, the day is dedicated to the worship of Vishnu. Devotees believe that sincere fasting and prayers on this day can free a person from accumulated sins and help them progress on the path of spiritual enlightenment.

The term "Papmochani" is derived from Sanskrit words-Paap meaning sin and Mochani meaning remover or liberator. Thus, Papmochani Ekadashi is revered as the sacred day that removes sins and purifies the soul.

## Origin and Scriptural References

The significance and origin of Papmochani Ekadashi are described in the ancient Hindu scripture Bhavishya Purana, where the importance of the fast is explained through a dialogue between Krishna and Yudhishtira.

According to the narrative, King Yudhishtira asked Krishna to explain which Ekadashi had the power to remove sins and grant spiritual merit. In response, Krishna described Papmochani Ekadashi and narrated a powerful story illustrating its spiritual importance.

## The Legend of Medhavi Rishi and Manjughosha

The most well-known legend associated with Papmochani Ekadashi revolves around the sage Medhavi Rishi.

Medhavi Rishi was a young ascetic known for his deep meditation and strict penance in a sacred forest. His spiritual practices were so intense that they began to worry the celestial beings. To disturb his meditation, the gods sent a heavenly dancer named Manjughosha.

Manjughosha used her beauty, charm, and melodious singing to attract the sage. Gradually, Medhavi Rishi lost his concentration and became deeply attached to her. What seemed like a short period of time turned out to be many years.

When the sage finally realized that he had abandoned his spiritual discipline, he became angry and cursed Manjughosha to become a ghostly spirit. However, she pleaded for mercy and asked for a way to be freed from the curse.

Later, Medhavi Rishi sought guidance from his father, the wise sage Chyavana Rishi. Chyavana advised him to observe the fast of Papmochani Ekadashi. By performing the sacred vrat with devotion, both the sage and Manjughosha were freed from the consequences of their actions.

This story highlights an important spiritual message-that sincere repentance and devotion can purify even serious mistakes.



## Important information

**Papmochani Ekadashi 2026**

**Sunday, 15 March 2026**

**Ekadashi Tithi Start : 14 March 2026 at 08:10 am**

**Ekadashi Tithi End : 15 March 2026 at 09:16 am**

**Vrat Parana Time : 16 March 06:30 am - 08:54 am**

## Spiritual Significance of Papmochani Ekadashi

Papmochani Ekadashi carries deep philosophical meaning in Hindu spirituality.

First, it emphasizes the concept of karma and redemption. Human beings inevitably commit mistakes, but Hindu teachings stress that spiritual practices such as prayer, fasting, and repentance can purify the soul and reduce karmic burdens.

Second, the observance symbolizes control over desires and senses. The story of Medhavi Rishi illustrates how even great spiritual practitioners can be distracted by worldly temptations. Ekadashi fasting serves as a reminder to remain disciplined and focused on spiritual goals.

Third, the day is associated with spiritual cleansing and mental purification. Devotees believe that fasting and meditation remove negative energies and help cultivate peace, clarity, and

devotion.

Papmochani Ekadashi is therefore not just about avoiding food but about transforming the mind and renewing spiritual commitment.

## Rituals and Observances

### Preparations on Dashami

The observance usually begins on the tenth lunar day, known as Dashami. Devotees prepare for the fast by eating a simple, sattvic meal before sunset and avoiding foods such as grains, onions, and garlic.

They also focus on maintaining purity in thoughts and actions.

### Ekadashi Fasting (Vrat)

On the day of Ekadashi, devotees wake up early before sunrise and take a ritual bath. Many people wear clean or traditional clothes and set up an altar for worship.

Fasting on Ekadashi is considered extremely important. There are different types of fasting observed:

- Nirjala fast - complete fast without food and water
- Phalahar fast - consuming fruits and milk
- Partial fast - eating special vrat foods such as buckwheat flour, water chestnut flour, and sabudana

The purpose of fasting is to discipline the body and mind while focusing on spiritual activities.

## Worship of Lord Vishnu

Devotees perform elaborate worship of Vishnu or his incarnations. Idols or pictures of Vishnu are decorated with flowers, tulsi leaves, incense, and lamps.

Sacred mantras and hymns dedicated to Vishnu are recited, and devotees often read passages from scriptures such as the Bhagavata Purana.

Many temples conduct special prayers and religious gatherings on this day.

## Night Vigil (Jagran)

Staying awake during the night of Ekadashi is considered highly auspicious. Devotees spend the night chanting devotional songs, meditating, and remembering the divine.

This practice is believed to enhance the spiritual merit of the observance.

## Breaking the Fast (Parana)

The fast is traditionally broken on the following day, known as Dwadashi. Devotees perform morning prayers and then break the fast by eating a simple meal.

Before eating, many people offer food to Brahmins or donate to the poor, believing that charity multiplies the blessings of the vrat.

## Papmochani Ekadashi in the Annual Cycle of Ekadashis

Hindu scriptures mention 24 Ekadashis in a year, each with unique spiritual significance. Papmochani Ekadashi occurs toward the end of the Hindu lunar year, just before the beginning of the spring festival Chaitra Navratri.

This timing symbolically represents spiritual cleansing before the arrival of a new cycle of worship and renewal.

## A Path Toward Spiritual Renewal

Papmochani Ekadashi reminds devotees that spiritual growth is a continuous journey. Through fasting, prayer, and self-reflection, individuals attempt to purify their minds and reconnect with divine consciousness.

The observance encourages humility, repentance, and compassion-qualities that strengthen both personal spirituality and moral character.

Ultimately, Papmochani Ekadashi stands as a powerful reminder that sincere devotion and righteous actions have the ability to cleanse the soul and guide human beings toward peace, liberation, and divine grace.

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### NOTICE

#### NAME CHANGE

We, Santhakumar A and T.S. Arulsree Mozhi, residing at 1247 Glenmeade Drive, Maryland Heights, Missouri 63043, USA, hereby declare that the name of our minor daughter, born on 28th May 2010, has been changed from A.S. Yagshini Shubha alias S. Yashica to Yagshini Saai Shree S.A for all future purposes.

Place: Maryland Heights, Missouri, USA

Date: March 08, 2026

#### NAME CHANGE

I, T.S. Arulsree Mozhi, born on July 10, 1988, and residing at 1247 Glenmeade Drive, Maryland Heights, Missouri 63043, USA, hereby declare that my name was formerly S. Arulmozhi and has been changed to T.S. Arulsree Mozhi for all future purposes.

Place: Maryland Heights, Missouri, USA

Date: March 08, 2026



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# Hidden shores of India: Secluded beaches perfect for a peaceful summer escape

As summer slowly pushes the pleasant days of spring off the calendar, the urge to head toward the water becomes irresistible. It is the perfect time to splash in the sea, enjoy a picnic by the shore, soak up the sun, and momentarily forget the worries of everyday life. But in a world where travelers are increasingly seeking quiet and uncrowded spaces, the idea of escaping the busy tourist beaches has gained even more appeal.

Fortunately, India's vast coastline hides several lesser-known gems where turquoise waters, soft sands, and tranquil surroundings create the ideal summer retreat. Away from the noise of popular destinations, these beaches promise serenity, scenic beauty, and the chance to reconnect with nature.

## Ottinene Beach, Karnataka

Tucked away along the Karnataka coastline, Ottinene Beach is a peaceful spot known for its dramatic cliffs and stunning sunsets. The origin of the beach's name remains unclear, but visitors often leave impressed by its natural charm.

One of the most fascinating sights here is where the Byndoor River meets the Arabian Sea, creating a picturesque confluence. Adventurous swimmers sometimes attempt to swim across this meeting point, though caution is advised. Visitors can reach the beach by walking down from Kshitija Nesara Dhama, but the return climb uphill can be physically demanding.

Where: About 440 km from Bengaluru and 125 km from Mangaluru. The nearest railway station is Byndoor, located just 4 km away.

## Mandvi Beach, Gujarat

Located in the Kutch district, Mandvi Beach is a long stretch of golden-brown sand that offers a peaceful alternative to crowded seaside destinations. The beach lies near the historic town of Mandvi, founded in 1580 by Khengarji I.

Once a thriving port, Mandvi still carries echoes of its maritime past. Today, the beach is loved for its calm atmosphere, especially during the evening when the sun slowly dips into the sea and local vendors line the shore selling snacks and sweets.

Where: Around 59 km from Bhuj, which has both an airport and railway connections.

## Bakkhali, West Bengal

Situated on one of the deltaic islands of southern Bengal, Bakkhali Beach stretches for nearly eight kilometres from Bakkhali to Frazergunj Beach along the Bay of Bengal.

Unlike the golden beaches seen



elsewhere, Bakkhali's grey sands are a result of its deltaic landscape. The firm shoreline makes cycling possible in some areas, though visitors should remain cautious of softer patches. Nearby Henry's Island adds to the

charm with its mangroves and scenic views. Frazergunj itself carries a historical anecdote linked to Andrew Fraser, who once attempted to build a seaside resort there in the early 1900s.

Where: About 130 km from Netaji

Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport. The nearest railway station is Namkhana.

## Jalandhar Beach, Diu

Despite sharing its name with the city of Jalandhar, Jalandhar Beach is named after the mythological demon Jalandhara, who was slain by Vishnu using the Sudarshan Chakra.

A small shrine dedicated to the demon stands on a hillock near the beach. Calm waters, swaying palm trees, and opportunities for water sports make this beach a relaxing spot. The shoreline becomes particularly attractive in the evening when the surrounding area lights up.

Where: Only 1 km from the town of Diu, which also has an airport.

## Butterfly Beach, Goa

Those wanting to escape Goa's crowded beaches such as Baga Beach, Calangute Beach, or Anjuna Beach can head to the tranquil Butterfly Beach.

Hidden between forested hills, this beach is accessible by trekking through the woods or taking a boat from nearby shores. Sometimes referred to as "Honeymoon Beach," it is known for its romantic setting. During low tide, visitors may spot sea urchins, starfish, and other marine life along the shore.

Where: Around 61 km from Dabolim Airport. Boats can be taken from Palolem Beach or Agonda Beach.

## Neil Island, Andaman & Nicobar Islands

Often overshadowed by the popular Havelock Island, Neil Island is a small but stunning destination.

The island is famous for its vibrant coral reefs and rich marine life, making it a favourite among scuba divers. Tourists often explore three main beaches—Bharatpur, Sitapur, and Laxmanpur. Lucky visitors may even spot the Dugong, the state animal of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Where: About 37 km south of Port Blair, accessible by ferry.

## Gopalpur-on-Sea, Odisha

With a fascinating maritime past, Gopalpur-on-Sea once served as a busy port for traders from ancient Kalinga. Later, it became a military port during World War II.

The town also holds a special place in Odisha's tourism history. In 1914, an Italian hotelier, Signor Maglion, built the state's first hotel here. Today, though relatively uncrowded, Gopalpur attracts visitors for its breathtaking sunrise and sunset views. However, the sea here can be rough, so swimming is discouraged.

Where: Around 174 km from Bhubaneswar. The nearest railway station is Berhampur.

## Asima Chatterjee - International Woman Trailblazer in Science and Medicine

CHAITRAM  
AKLU



An individual who has made the world a better place through their work and accomplishments, especially finding solutions to pressing problems, through seeking knowledge and then giving back to the benefit of fellow man is truly worthy of recognition.

Asima Chatterjee may not be known or even heard of by most of the world's 8.1 billion people, yet her life's work has benefited and continues to benefit millions of people receiving medical treatments for diseases such as gastroenterology, cancer, epilepsy, and malaria worldwide across all borders.

Asima Chatterjee, an Indian woman was born on September 23, 1917 in Calcutta (now Kolkata). At an early age she developed a love for botany (the study of plants) from her father, a medical doctor.

At university she majored in organic chemistry, specializing in research on vinca alkaloids, which in oncology is "any agent that inhibits CA growth (proliferation cancer cells) by stopping cell division." Vinca is the well-known flowering plant periwinkle. Chatterjee's research on the medicinal properties of plants that were native to India over a period of 40 years, helped scientists train their research interests on the great potential of medicinal plants. Vinca alkaloids "from the Madagascar periwinkle plant are used today in chemotherapy treatment because they help slow down or stall the multiplying of cancer cells" reports Google.

During the four decades of research on the chemical compounds called alkaloids, she developed several drugs, one of which when used in chemotherapy, inhibits the division of cancer cells, which usually divide faster than other cells, causing the cancer to spread rapidly.

Chatterjee also isolated a group of chemical compounds called coumarins in vascular plants native to India and other South Asian Countries. These chemical compounds commonly found naturally in many medicinal plants are used in the treatment of a wide variety of diseases. According to the website thebetterindia.com "Asima also chemically analyzed (sic) coumarins, which essentially came from the bael tree, a native species in India. It was she who brought to



Asima Chatterjee

Photo / Biswarup Ganguly/Wikimedia Commons / MedboundTimes.com/ Mail@Medbound Times.com

light that the fruits and bark of this tree could treat a variety of gastrointestinal disorders." She developed and patented (among others) two other significant drugs: Ayush-56 and Ayush-64. The Ayush-56 developed from a water fern (marsilia minuta) is used in antiepileptic drugs and the Ayush-64 an antimalarial drug developed from the blackboard tree (alstonia scholaris) and an herb (swertia chirayita) all native to India. In addition to Ayush-64, she also developed several other antimalarial drugs. These drugs are used in the production of medicines and marketed by major drug companies worldwide.

According to Asish De, writing in Resonance Journal in June 2015, Chatterjee "was able to isolate a large number of natural products from many species of plants indigenous to the Indian subcontinent, and unravel their structure by degradative, spectroscopic and synthetic procedures."

She has received numerous recognitions for her 40-year research activities and dedication to the scientific field for over 60 years - publishing some 400 scientific papers in Indian and international professional journals. In 2017 Google observed her 100th birthday with a special Doodle: "This serene bespectacled woman, a world class scientist, Dr. Chatterjee primarily studied the medicinal properties of plants native to India. Throughout her career, her research contributed

to the development of drugs that treated epilepsy and malaria. Dr. Chatterjee's most noted contributed to the field, however, was her work on vinca alkaloids."

She was the first or second woman to be conferred a Doctor of Science Degree from an Indian university (University of Calcutta) in 1940. Some reports say she was the second and named Janaki Ammal as the first.

In 1940 she founded the Department of Chemistry at the University of Calcutta; in 1961 she was the first woman to be awarded the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Science Award - the most prestigious in India; she established the Natural Resource Institute of Ayurvedic Drug Development (NRIAD) that research the chemical, botanical and pharmacological potential of drugs from India's medicinal plants. Ayurvedic medicine, which began over 5 000 years ago uses mainly plant based drugs and uses a holistic approach to maintaining a healthy life. Regarded as the one of the world's oldest medical systems, it is still the traditional system in Indian healthcare system.

In 1975 she was the first woman elected general president of the Indian Science Congress Association; she was also appointed to the upper house of the Indian Parliament.

Chatterjee was born at a time when education of girls, especially in India, was not encouraged and education was expensive to begin with. Funding for scientific research was also scarce during her career. However, as a devoted "karma yogi," one dedicated to selfless service in work, deed, and action and who focuses on doing good and not expecting rewards, Chatterjee led the way in ground-breaking research that has led to improvement in medical treatment and healthcare worldwide.

Known during her lifetime as India's "Doyenne of Chemistry" Chatterjee passed away November 22, 2006. The September 23, 2017 Google Doodle sums up her life in its tribute: "Today's Doodle pays homage to this trailblazer and her accomplishments in the name of science."

(Chaitram Aklu is a retired NYC veteran teacher and writer. He writes on a variety of topics ranging from education, environment and labor and current events. He can be reached on Phone 718 647 7610)

## NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi | North Central Bronx welcomes Angela Carter, DNP, NE-BC, CPHQ as chief nursing officer

MARCH 13, 2026  
BRONX, NY (TIP)

Christopher Mastromano, CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi | North Central Bronx announced on Friday, March 13, the appointment of Angela Carter, DNP, NE-BC, CPHQ as Chief of Nursing for the Jacobi and North Central Bronx campuses. Dr. Carter is a dedicated nursing professional who brings more than two decades of experience to her new role. A native of Nashville, Tennessee, she has committed her professional life to patient safety, teamwork and quality improvement. During her tenure at Vanderbilt Health, Dr. Carter oversaw an acute care facility with a comprehensive range of inpatient and outpatient services. She helped lead the hospital's transformation to a nationally recognized institution committed to patient safety, achieving seven consecutive "A" safety grades from the Leapfrog Group, demonstrating excellent patient outcomes. She also helped ensure the

facility's four-star rating from CMS, exemplifying nursing excellence in all aspects of evidence-based, multidisciplinary, and patient care and satisfaction.

Dr. Carter also comes with extensive experience in the Veterans Affairs system, serving as the network Chief Nursing Officer and Quality Management Officer, overseeing five level-one academic hospitals and several dozen outpatient clinics in Tennessee and Kentucky, and Associate Director of Patient Care Services for the Memphis VA Medical Center, one of the leading healthcare systems in the mid-south region. In these roles, she fostered physician-nurse partnerships, supported shared governance, helped drive protocols to reduce hospital related infections, expanded the implementation of state-of-the-art technologies, implemented policies to prevent patient falls, achieved top-performing employee engagement scores in the nation and promoted evidence-based practices resulting in

innovations shared nationally.

"We are thrilled to welcome Angela Carter as Chief of Nursing for the Jacobi Campus," said NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi | North Central Bronx CEO Christopher Mastromano. "Dr. Carter is an accomplished, well respected nursing leader who has committed her professional life to patient safety, teamwork and quality improvement. We believe she will make an excellent addition to our team and hospital community."

NYC Health + Hospitals/ Jacobi | North Central Bronx Chief Nursing Officer Dr. Angela Carter said, "I am honored to join NYC Health + Hospitals/ Jacobi | North Central Bronx. I look forward to advancing the mission by ensuring patients and their families receive compassionate, high-quality care, supporting exceptional clinical practice, strengthening interprofessional partnerships, and actively engaging with the communities we serve."

Earlier in her career, Dr. Carter



Dr. Angela Carter is a dedicated nursing professional who brings more than two decades of experience to her new role

served as the Chief Nurse for Specialty Clinics at the Tennessee Valley Healthcare System, an academic healthcare system with 23 locations, including 21 outpatient clinics in three states where she developed staffing models to improve clinic operations, and improved patient access for outpatient services. She also served as the Patient Safety Program and Deputy Quality Manager at the US Naval Hospital in Naples, Italy.

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

# History This Week

MAR 13 - MAR 19

## MARCH 13

March 13, 1943 - A plot to kill Hitler by German army officers failed as a bomb planted aboard his plane failed to explode due to a faulty detonator.



Birthday - Scientist and clergyman Joseph Priestly (1733-1804) was born in Yorkshire, England. He discovered oxygen and advanced the religious theory of Unitarianism.

## MARCH 14

Birthday - Albert Einstein (1879-1955) was born in Ulm, Germany. His theory of relativity led to new ways of thinking about time, space, matter and energy. He received a Nobel Prize in 1921 and emigrated to the U.S. in 1933 where he was an outspoken critic of Nazi Germany. Believing the Nazis might develop an atomic bomb, he warned President Roosevelt and urged the development of the U.S. Atomic bomb.

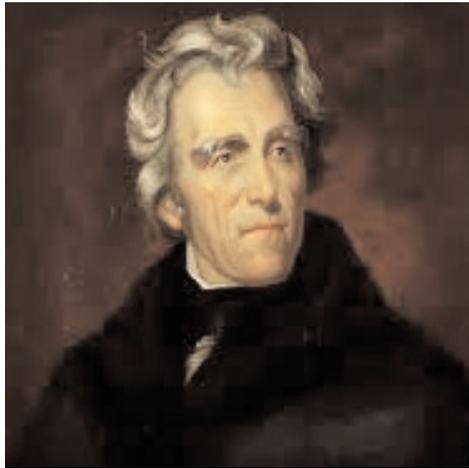


Birthday - The first female dentist, Lucy Hobbs (1833-1910) was born in New York state. She received her degree in 1866 from the Ohio College of Dental Surgery and was a women's rights advocate.

## MARCH 15

March 15, 44 B.C. - Julius Caesar was assassinated in the Senate chamber in Rome by Brutus and fellow conspirators. After first trying to defend himself against the murderous onslaught, Caesar saw Brutus with a knife and asked "Et tu, Brute?" (You too, Brutus?) Caesar then gave up the struggle and was stabbed to death.

Birthday - Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) the 7th U.S. President was born in a log cabin in Waxhaw, South Carolina. As a boy he volunteered to serve in the American Revolution. Captured by the British, he refused an order to clean an officer's boots and was slashed by his



sword. Jackson later gained fame as a hero during the War of 1812. In politics he helped form the new Democratic Party and became the first man from an impoverished background to be elected President, serving from 1829 to 1837.

## MARCH 16

March 16, 1968 - During the Vietnam War, the My Lai Massacre occurred as American soldiers of Charlie Company murdered 504 Vietnamese men, women, and children. Twenty-five U.S. Army officers were later charged with complicity in the massacre and subsequent cover-up, but only one was convicted, and later pardoned by President Richard Nixon.



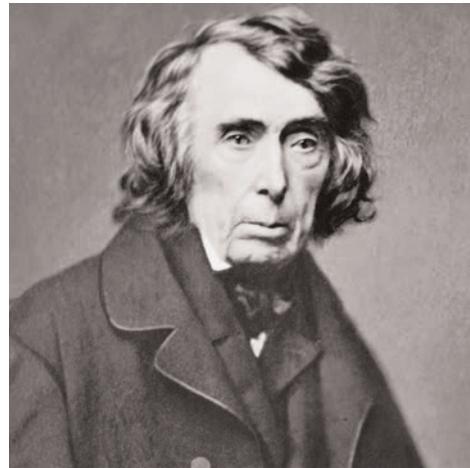
March 16, 1968 - New York Senator Robert Kennedy announced his intention to run for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Birthday - James Madison (1751-1836) the 4th U.S. President was born in Port Conway, Virginia. He played an important role in the formation of the new U.S. Constitution following the American Revolutionary War. During the War of 1812, President Madison was forced to flee Washington, D.C., while the British attacked and burned the White House and other important public buildings.

## MARCH 17

March 17th - Celebrated as Saint Patrick's Day commemorating the patron saint of Ireland.

March 17, 1776 - Early in the American Revolutionary War the British completed their evacuation of Boston following a successful siege conducted by Patriots. The event is still commemorated in Boston as Evacuation Day.



Birthday - U.S. Supreme Court Justice Roger B. Taney (1777-1864) was born in Calvert County, Maryland. He became the 5th Chief Justice in 1836, best known for the Dred Scott decision.

## MARCH 18

March 18, 1974 - The five-month-old Arab oil embargo against the U.S. was lifted. The embargo was in retaliation for American support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War of 1973 in which Egypt and Syria suffered a crushing defeat. In the U.S., the resulting embargo had caused long lines at gas stations as prices soared 300 percent amid shortages and a government ban on Sunday gas sales.



Birthday - Grover Cleveland (1837-1908) the 22nd and 24th U.S. president was born in Caldwell, New Jersey. He was the only president to serve two nonconsecutive terms and was also the only president to be married in the White House.

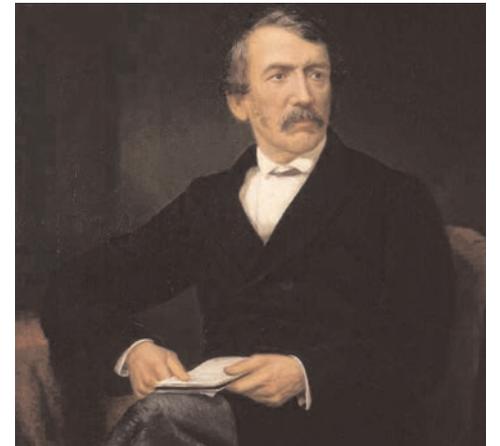
## MARCH 19

March 19, 2003 - The United States launched an attack against Iraq to topple dictator Saddam Hussein from power. The attack commenced with aerial strikes against military sites, followed the next day by an invasion of southern Iraq by U.S. and British ground troops. The troops made rapid progress northward and conquered the country's capital, Baghdad, just 21 days later, ending the rule of Saddam.



Birthday - William Bradford (1589-1657) was born in Yorkshire, England. He

sailed aboard the Mayflower during its 66-day voyage from Plymouth, England to Massachusetts in 1620. The small ship carried over 100 passengers and a crew of 30. It was originally bound for Virginia but landed far north on Cape Cod. The Mayflower Compact was then drawn up as a form of government. Bradford became the first governor of the new Plymouth Colony, serving a total of 30 years, and was largely responsible for its success.



Birthday - Explorer and medical missionary David Livingstone (1813-1873) was born in Blantyre, Scotland. He arrived at Cape Town, Africa, in 1841 and began extensive missionary explorations, often traveling into areas that had never seen a white man. In his later years, he sought the source of the Nile River. He also became the subject of the famous search by news correspondent Henry Stanley who located him in 1871 near Lake Tanganyika in Africa after a difficult search and simply asked, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?"

Birthday - Wyatt Earp (1848-1929) was born in Monmouth, Illinois. He became a legendary figure in the Wild West as a lawman and gunfighter, best known for the shootout at the O.K. Corral in 1881, in which the Earp brothers (Wyatt, Virgil and Morgan) fought and defeated the Ike Clanton gang.



Birthday - American politician William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925) was born in Salem, Illinois. He was defeated three times as a candidate for the presidency. He advocated a "free silver" monetary standard through unlimited coinage of silver rather than the gold standard. During a speech at the 1896 Democratic convention he electrified the delegates, stating, "You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold!" In 1925, he was the successful prosecutor in the Scopes 'monkey' trial in which a teacher was convicted of violating Tennessee's Anti-Evolution Bill forbidding the teaching of the theory of evolution. However, he died just 5 days after the verdict.

## India edged past Italy 1-0 in the FIH Hockey World Cup Qualifiers

PRABHJOT SINGH



MARCH 13, 2026  
DELHI (TIP)

India could not have asked for more. A goal in the 40th minute warmed the cockles of hearts of not only thousands of the game enthusiasts who made it to the venue but also the lovers of Indian hockey worldwide.

The Indian team earned its well-deserved spot in the Final of FIH Hockey World Cup Qualifiers 2026 Hyderabad, Telangana as it beat Italy 1-0 in the second semifinal after England had already made the gold medal round with an emphatic 2-0 win over Scotland in the first semifinal. The packed G. M. C. Balayogi Hockey Ground (Gachibowli Hockey Complex) on Friday, ride as one after Manisha Chauhan (40') scored the winning goal for India

It was an extremely tight contest in the first quarter as both sides constantly battled for possession in the midfield. India started the match well with a couple of strong circle entries, however, Italy eventually started attacking aggressively and created a few good chances on goal.



Team India Women's hockey team -Photo by @Media\_SAI

India won the momentum back in the second quarter. The hosts used their flanks to push the ball ahead and started attacking in numbers and made crucial circle entries. In the 18th minute, India won the first penalty corner of the evening but Navneet Kaur's shot on goal

was stopped well by Italian goalkeeper Lucia Ines Caruso. In the 27th minute, India was awarded another penalty corner as India played out an interesting variation. The ball was played back to the injector, Captain Salima Tete, but her shot was stopped on the line by Italy's

last defender, denying them a goal. In the 29th minute, India had another opportunity to score through a penalty corner but Navneet Kaur's shot went off target.

In the early minutes of the second half, Italy launched a strong attack on goal as Emilia Munitis was through on goal but India's goalkeeper Bichu Devi Kharibam came out and made a crucial save. In the 40th minute, India were awarded yet another penalty corner and this time it successfully converted it to break the deadlock. Manisha Chauhan (40') delivered a powerful drag flick down the middle that pierced through the Italian defense and found the net.

India won two early penalty corners in the final quarter as it pushed to increase its advantage in the late stage but Italy remained resilient with their defending. Italy gave it their all in the final minutes of the match and won a crucial penalty corner in the 59th minute but India managed to deny their opposition the equalizer and emerged victorious.

India will next face England in the final on March 14.

## Volunteers and scribes make up for the absence of India in the Winter Paralympics



Volunteer Soumik Chatterjee



Photojournalist Ranjith Mani

Photos / Maninder K. Chandhoke

After a superb performance by its athletes in the last summer Paralympics in Paris two years ago, many expected India to showcase its strength in the winter Paralympics. Located in a tropical warmer zone, India has yet to make its debut in the Winter Paralympics.

Though two of its athletes-Arif Mohammad Khan and Stanzin Lundup, both from Kashmir-participated

in the Winter Olympic Games, finished at inconsequential positions. It went unrepresented in the Paralympics.

Interestingly, in the Paris (summer) Paralympics, India finished an impressive 19th with a rich haul of 29 medals, including seven gold, its best tally in any Olympic event. Though China, like the Winter Paralympics, finished at the top in Paris with a massive

tally of 221 medals, including 94 gold, India was the third among the Asian nations. Japan had finished 11th with 41 medals, including 14 gold. Canada was 13th with the same number of medals-29-as India had.

Canada, however, had more gold, 10.

The Summer Paralympics were a much bigger show with 4433 athletes from 170 nations, with 549 gold medals at stake. Here, there are 71 gold medals at stake, and the number of athletes is 611 from 55 nations.

In the ongoing Winter Paralympics, China is the undisputed leader with a total haul of 27 medals, including 10 gold and seven silver, while Canada has logged in 10 medals, including a gold and a silver.

Participation is more important than winning medals alone. Indian athletes may be missing from competition arenas, but sports enthusiasts from the fastest-growing economy are a visible minority here.

A journalist, Ranjith Mani, has travelled all the way from Bengaluru to do freelancing. It is his first experience covering the Olympics/Paralympics, and he is excited about it. He has been to Corina and other venues in the mountains, as well as watching Para Ice Hockey at Santa Giulia Ice Hockey Arena.

Also here, but in a different role, is a medical scientist, Soumick Chatterjee, working in AI medical imaging. He was in Germany for five years before moving to Italy three years ago with his girlfriend. His field of work has been medical imaging and genetics. He likes his assignment as a volunteer at the Santa Giulia Ice Hockey Media Centre.

There are several volunteers from other South Asian nations, including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal, as none of these nations has any athletes here.

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

## SunRisers face backlash for buying Pakistan spinner in Hundred

HYDERABAD (TIP), MARCH 13, 2026

The inaugural auction of The Hundred's private era on March 12, 2026, was expected to be a celebratory milestone for the ECB. Instead, it has ignited a fierce geopolitical controversy in India. SunRisers Leeds, a franchise owned by the Sun Group and linked to the IPL's SunRisers Hyderabad, sparked a social media firestorm after winning a bidding war for Pakistan's mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed.

The signing, worth £190,000 (approx. Rs 2.34 crore), is a landmark event. It marks the first time in many years that a franchise with Indian ownership has actively recruited a Pakistani international. While the move was praised in the UK as a victory for meritocracy, it has drawn severe backlash from Indian fans, many of whom have called for a boycott of the SunRisers brand.

The Hundred, an eight-team tournament, will be played in the UK from July 21 to August 16.

The primary driver of the outrage is a series of controversial social media posts allegedly made by Abrar Ahmed in mid-2025. Following a period of heightened cross-border tension, Abrar reportedly shared content that Indian fans claim mocked the Indian Armed Forces. As news of the signing broke, hashtags like #ShameOnSRH and #BoycottSunrisers began trending on X. Critics argued that by handing a lucrative contract to a player who had publicly disparaged Indian security forces, the franchise owners had ignored national sentiment for tactical gain.

# Trophy is home: Suryakumar thanks Team India fans after T20 WC win

MUMBAI (TIP), MARCH 13, 2026

Suryakumar Yadav sent a special message to the Indian cricket team fans after their T20 World Cup 2026 win, with the trophy finally coming back home. India put on a clinical performance with bat and ball in the final in Ahmedabad on March 8 to beat New Zealand by 76 runs and become the first team in the history of the tournament to retain their title.

The BCCI posted a special video dedicated to the fans with Suryakumar thanking them for their support and blessings throughout the journey. The Indian skipper said that the trophy win belongs to the entire country, and it was the victory of the kids who dream about making it big in cricket.

"Dear Team India fans. First of all, a heartfelt thank you. We are here only because of your support and blessings. This World Cup trophy belongs to the entire country. When we won, it wasn't just our victory."

"It was the dream of those kids who hold a bat and ball and imagine a future. It was for the fans who fill the stadiums. And for the millions who support us from their homes. Your prayers and unconditional love have given us the strength to bring this trophy home. In India, cricket is not just a game — it's an emotion. And this victory belongs to all of you."

"Thank you for believing in us. The trophy is home," said Suryakumar in the video.

The T20 World Cup 2026 win was a major achievement for Suryakumar as India have remained unbeaten in bilateral series and multi-team tournaments during his



tenure. However, the Indian captain isn't ready to slow down and is aiming for Olympic glory in LA in 2028 and doing a hat-trick in the T20 World Cup.

"Next goal is Olympics gold and the T20 World Cup which is also in that year," said Suryakumar.

Suryakumar will next be in action during the IPL where he will play for Mumbai Indians.

### Hardik Pandya in legal trouble

India all-rounder Hardik Pandya has landed in legal trouble after a Pune-based advocate filed a complaint with the police, alleging disrespect to the Indian national flag during the T20 World Cup victory celebrations in Ahmedabad on March 8.

The complaint, submitted at the Shivaji Nagar police station in Pune, pertains to India's on-field celebrations

at the Narendra Modi Stadium after the team lifted the T20 World Cup for a record third time.

A police officer confirmed that advocate Wajid Khan had submitted the complaint application seeking appropriate action in the matter, but did not elaborate further.

According to the complaint, several videos of the Indian team's post-match celebrations have gone viral on social media. In one such clip, Pandya is seen celebrating with the Indian Tricolour draped over his shoulders while dancing and running across the field.

The complaint also alleges that during the celebrations, Pandya was seen lying on the stage alongside his girlfriend Mahieka Sharma while the Tricolour remained draped over him, which the complainant claims amounts to disrespect towards the national flag.

## FIH WOMEN'S WC QUALIFIERS

# Manisha's strike propels India into final against England

HYDERABAD (TIP), MARCH 14

India, capitalising on a precise third-quarter penalty-corner strike from Manisha Chauhan, edged past Italy 1-0 in a tense semifinal to set up a highly anticipated title clash with England in the FIH Women's World Cup Qualifiers here on Friday, March 13.

Midfielder Manisha netted the decisive goal in the 40th minute after a fiercely contested first quarter, with both sides locked in a tight battle, relentlessly vying for possession.

India, having already secured a spot in the World Cup to be jointly hosted by the Netherlands and Belgium from August 15 to 30 this year, began assertively with a couple of powerful circle entries, but Italy quickly responded, mounting aggressive attacks and creating several promising goal-scoring opportunities.

However, India seized the momentum in the second quarter, with the hosts exploiting sharp flank runs, attacking in numbers, and making key circle entries



to assert control over the game.

In the 18th minute, India won the first penalty corner of the game but Navneet Kaur's shot at goal was stopped well by Italian goalkeeper Lucia Ines Caruso. In the 27th minute, the hosts were awarded another penalty corner as India played

out an interesting variation.

The ball was played back to the injector, captain Salima Tete, but her shot was stopped on the line by Italy's last defender, denying them a goal. In the 29th minute, India had another opportunity to score through a penalty

corner but Navneet's shot went off target.

In the early minutes of the second half, Italy launched a strong attack on goal as Emilia Munitis was through on goal but India's goalkeeper Bichu Devi Kharibam came out and made a crucial save.

In the 40th minute, India were awarded yet another penalty corner and this time they successfully converted it to break the deadlock. Manisha delivered a powerful dragkick down the middle that pierced through the Italian defence and found the net.

India earned two early penalty corners in the final quarter in a bid to extend their lead, but Italy held firm with resolute defending.

Italy gave it their all in the final minutes of the match and won a crucial penalty corner in the 59th minute but India managed to deny their opposition the equaliser and emerged victorious.

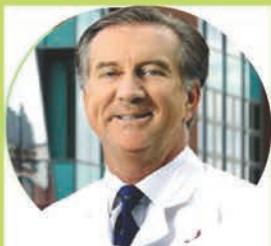
Source: PTI



## An Eye Institute in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh combating avoidable blindness in children.

On behalf of all my colleagues of the Wilmer Eye Institute in Baltimore, MD. I send my best wishes and congratulations to our friends in Goutami on this extremely important occasion. This beautifully facility will match the wonderful world class work of your doctors, nurses, and staff in preserving and restoring the vision of so many patients. We in the United States are inspired by your dedication and admire your tireless efforts to serve so many who need your skills and compassion.

Best Wishes, Peter



Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



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