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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.

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# G7 foreign ministers stress "absolute necessity" of a "toll-free" Strait of Hormuz



MARCH 27, 2026  
PARIS (TIP)

G7 foreign ministers on Friday, March 27, stressed "the absolute necessity to permanently restore safe and toll-free freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz" as Iran continues to throttle the key waterway, reports CNN.

In a statement issued after a meeting in France, the G7 foreign ministers also called for "an immediate cessation of attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure."

US President Donald Trump has threatened to strike Iran's energy infrastructure if Iran does not reopen the Strait, but on Thursday he again pushed back his self-imposed deadline until April 6.

Allies have expressed openness to contributing to efforts to help ensure the Strait remains open but have been maintained that there must de-escalation first. Iran has reportedly sought to pass legislation to impose tolls on vessels transiting the waterway. "We underscored the importance of

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EU High Representative and Vice-President for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas (C), Germany's Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl (2nd L), Britain's Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper (L), US Secretary of State Marco Rubio (3rd L), France's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noel Barrot (C-R), Canada's Foreign Minister Anita Anand, (3rd R) and Japan's Foreign minister Toshimitsu Motegi (2nd R) attend talks on Peace and Security during a G7 Foreign Ministers' meeting with Partner Countries at the Vaux-de-Cernay Abbey in Cernay-la-Ville outside Paris, on Friday, March 2026.

Screen grab / CNN

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## "Iran will exact HEAVY price for Israeli crimes": Araghchi slams Israeli strikes on nuclear sites, steel plants



Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi slammed the recent Israeli attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities and steel plants, warning that Tehran will exact a "HEAVY price" for what he described as crimes by Tel Aviv

MARCH 27, 2026  
TEHRAN (TIP)

Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Friday, March 27, slammed the recent Israeli attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities and steel plants, warning that Tehran will exact a "HEAVY price" for what he described as crimes by Tel Aviv amid ongoing negotiations to end the West Asia conflict.

In a post on X, Araghchi said that Israel has attacked two Iranian steel factories, a power plant and civilian nuclear sites. He further slammed US President Donald Trump, noting that the attack contradicts the latter's extended deadline as part of the ongoing negotiations with Tehran to end the war.

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## A New UN Task Force Aims to Ease Trade Flow Through Strait of Hormuz

BY DAMILOLA BANJO  
MARCH 27, 2026  
NEW YORK (TIP)

The Strait of Hormuz between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman is only about 21 miles wide at the leanest point and roughly 96 miles long. The Mideast war has virtually closed the strait, creating critical maritime chokepoints and a mounting global trade crisis in such essential goods as fertilizer.

The UN has created a task force to find a diplomatic path for restoring the flow of humanitarian goods through the strait amid the conflict. The United Nations is stepping into the multifront war in the Mideast as threats to global food security mount due to the virtual closure of one of the world's most-critical maritime chokepoints, a month into the United States-Israeli attacks on Iran.



Aerial view of the Strait of Hormuz

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## House Republicans revolt over bill to reopen D.H.S., deepening shutdown rift

MARCH 27, 2026  
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)



Representative Chip Roy, Republican of Texas, center, with other members of the House Freedom Caucus at the Capitol on Friday, Mar 27  
Photo Credit: Eric Lee / The New York Times

House Republicans angrily rejected a bipartisan deal to reopen the Department of Homeland Security and pushed through their own plan late Friday, putting themselves on a collision course with the Senate and extending the agency shutdown that has crippled U.S. airports, New York Times reports.

Revolting over an agreement their own party struck with Senate Democrats to end the crisis, which had passed the Senate before dawn on Friday, House Republican leaders - with President Trump's backing - refused to take it up.

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**COMMENT****A COMMON MAN'S PLEA: TIME TO SAY GOODBYE TO WAR**

There are moments in history when the world stands at a precipice-when reason trembles, when power intoxicates, and when humanity appears to lose its moral compass. The unfolding tensions in the Middle East today, particularly the dangerous confrontation involving the United States, Israel, and Iran, represent one such moment. The rhetoric is harsh, the mistrust deep, and the consequences of miscalculation potentially catastrophic.

We are told that ceasefires are being negotiated, that pauses in hostilities may open a window for dialogue. Reports suggest that a temporary halt-five days, perhaps-has been proposed to bring parties to the table. But let us ask a simple, uncomfortable question: must peace always be negotiated under the shadow of annihilation? Must humanity come to the brink of destruction before it learns to step back?

This editorial is not written from the vantage point of power, nor from the corridors of diplomacy. It is, quite deliberately, a common man's plea-a voice that seeks neither victory nor dominance, but survival, dignity, and peace.

**A REGION ENTANGLED IN FEAR AND HISTORY**

The Middle East is not merely a theatre of contemporary conflict; it is a land burdened with centuries of history, faith, empire, and identity. The divide between Sunni and Shia Islam, rooted in events of the 7th century following the death of Prophet Muhammad, continues to echo in modern geopolitics. Iran, predominantly Shia, sees itself as a civilizational state with a long imperial history, predating many of its neighbors. Many Arab nations, largely Sunni, view Iran's ambitions with suspicion and fear.

Overlaying this is the unresolved and deeply painful question of Palestine. Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, the region has witnessed multiple wars, uprisings, and cycles of violence. Israel speaks of existential threats-from non-state actors such as Hezbollah and Hamas, whom it accuses Iran of supporting. Iran, in turn, perceives Israel as an aggressive outpost, backed militarily and politically by the United States, capable of destabilizing the entire region.

Thus, fear feeds fear. Suspicion breeds suspicion. And history, instead of teaching restraint, is often invoked to justify further confrontation.

**THE PERILS OF POWER POLITICS**

The involvement of global powers has only complicated matters. The United States, long a steadfast ally of Israel, has maintained a significant military presence in the Middle East for decades. From Iraq to Afghanistan, from Syria to the Gulf, American bases dot the region, often justified in the name of security and stability.

Yet, for many, this presence has also been a source of resentment. It has fueled perceptions of bias, of selective justice, and of geopolitical maneuvering that prioritizes strategic interests over human lives.

Israel, for its part, has emerged as a formidable military power, technologically

advanced and politically assertive. But strength, when not tempered by restraint, risks breeding isolation. To many observers, Israel appears as a state that reacts with overwhelming force, often blurring the line between defense and domination.

Iran, on the other hand, is frequently portrayed as a destabilizing force-supporting militant groups, challenging Western influence, and pursuing nuclear capabilities that alarm the international community. Yet, Iran too sees itself as encircled, sanctioned, and misunderstood-a nation seeking security in a hostile environment.

In this complex web, there are no simple villains and no simple victims. There are, instead, nations driven by fear, pride, and the dangerous illusion that security can be achieved through supremacy.

**A COMMON MAN'S PLAN FOR PEACE**

It is time to step back and ask: what would a reasonable, humane, and sustainable path to peace look like?

The answer may not lie in grand strategies or secret negotiations, but in principles that are simple, transparent, and just.

**1. A UNITED NATIONS GUARANTEE OF NON-AGGRESSION**

The United Nations must reclaim its moral authority. It cannot remain a passive observer while the world teeters on the edge of conflict.

A binding international framework should be established, under UN supervision, whereby:

Israel and Iran formally commit to non-aggression

Both nations renounce the development or deployment of nuclear weapons

Any violation triggers collective international response-not by a single power, but by the global community

This is not idealism. It is necessity. The alternative-a nuclear arms race in the Middle East-is unthinkable.

**2. A JUST AND PERMANENT SOLUTION TO PALESTINE**

No peace in the region can endure without addressing the Palestinian question.

A two-state solution, long discussed but rarely realized, must be implemented with sincerity:

Clearly defined and internationally recognized borders for Israel and Palestine

Jerusalem treated with sensitivity, acknowledging its sacred significance to multiple faiths

This is not merely a political issue; it is a moral one. Generations have grown up in conflict. It is time to offer them a future in peace.

**3. NEUTRAL GUARANTORS OF PEACE**

Trust cannot be built if mediation is perceived as biased.

Therefore, peace guarantees must come not from parties directly involved in the conflict, but from neutral nations-countries with no strategic stakes in the region. These nations, acting under UN mandate, can serve as:

BY INDRAJIT SALUJA



Observers; Peacekeepers; Mediators  
Their neutrality is their strength.

**4. GRADUAL WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN MILITARY BASES**

The continued presence of foreign military bases in the Middle East has often intensified tensions rather than alleviated them.

A phased and mutually agreed withdrawal of such bases-beginning with major powers like the United States-would:

Reduce perceptions of occupation and control

Encourage regional ownership of peace processes

Signal a shift from dominance to cooperation

True security cannot be imposed from outside. It must emerge from within.

**5. A GLOBAL COMMITMENT TO DIALOGUE OVER WAR**

All nations, not just those in the Middle East, must reaffirm a simple principle: conflicts must be resolved through dialogue, not destruction.

The UN must evolve from a forum of speeches to a mechanism of action-where disputes are addressed promptly, fairly, and effectively.

**A MORAL AWAKENING**

Beyond politics and policy lies a deeper truth: humanity must evolve.

Science has taken us to the moon, technology connects continents in seconds, and yet, in matters of conflict, we remain trapped in primitive instincts. As Charles Darwin explained evolution in physical terms, one must ask: have we evolved morally?

Education, culture, and faith have the power to refine human instincts-but only if we choose to listen.

**THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERS**

Leaders today carry a burden far greater than those of the past. In an age of nuclear weapons, cyber warfare, and global interdependence, a single misstep can have consequences for all humanity.

The United States, as a global power, must move beyond fear-driven policies and rediscover the strength of trust. Israel must temper its power with compassion and foresight. Iran must choose engagement over confrontation.

And all nations must recognize that dominance is fleeting-but peace is enduring.

**A FINAL APPEAL**

This is not a call for weakness. It is a call for wisdom.

War has never brought lasting peace. It has only deepened wounds, destroyed civilizations, and left generations to rebuild what should never have been broken.

The world does not need more victories. It needs understanding.

It does not need more weapons. It needs courage-the courage to forgive, to trust, and to change.

Let us, as a global community, step back from the brink. Let us choose dialogue over destruction, cooperation over conflict, and humanity over hatred.

Let us remember that beyond borders, beyond religions, beyond ideologies, we share a common destiny.

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# TEAM Aid Hosts Landmark Gathering in Boston Honoring Diplomatic Leadership and Advancing Humanitarian Collaboration



Honoree: Consul General Mr. Raghuram S.



Honoree: Mr. Jag Mohan, Minister (Personnel & Community Affairs) at the Embassy of India in Washington, D.C.

**MARCH 21, 2026  
BOSTON (TIP)**

TEAM Aid, a global nonprofit humanitarian organization dedicated to assisting individuals and families facing crises abroad, successfully hosted a distinguished gathering in Boston, bringing together diplomatic leaders and representatives from 66 Indian diaspora organizations across New England. The event marked a significant milestone in strengthening collaboration between the newly established Consulate General of India in Boston and the broader community.

The gathering honored Consul General Mr. Raghuram S, Deputy Consul General Ms. Shruthi Purushotam, Mr. Jag Mohan, Minister (Personnel & Community Affairs) at the Embassy of India in Washington, D.C., and Mr. Prem Bhandari, Chairman of Jaipur Foot USA.

The program commenced with the national anthems of the United States and India, followed by a cultural performance that reflected the spirit of unity and shared heritage.

In his keynote address, TEAM Aid Founder and President Mr. Mohan Nannapaneni outlined the organization's mission and the complex humanitarian challenges it addresses globally. He emphasized the critical importance of timely coordination with governments, consulates, airlines, and local authorities to ensure dignified repatriation of mortal remains and compassionate support to grieving families.

Highlighting the purpose of the event, Mr. Nannapaneni noted that the initiative was designed to foster stronger collaboration between the Consulate and community organizations, enabling a more coordinated and effective response to the needs of the Indian diaspora. He also acknowledged the Government of India,



Chief Guest and Honoree Mr. Prem Bhandari, Chairman of Jaipur Foot USA



TEAM Aid Founder and President Mr. Mohan Nannapaneni outlined the organization's mission and the complex humanitarian challenges it addresses globally.

under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, for enabling key policy reforms that have significantly streamlined repatriation processes and reduced bureaucratic hurdles for families during their most difficult times.

TEAM Aid's impact was prominently recognized during the event. Since its founding in 2017, the organization has assisted over 5,000 families across more than 25 countries, facilitated thousands of dignified funeral services across the United States and Canada, and built a global network of over 3,000 volunteers



Honoree: Deputy Consul General Ms. Shruthi Purushotam

operating 24/7. The organization has also extended support to individuals in distress, including those facing legal, medical, and humanitarian challenges.

Deputy Consul General Ms. Shruthi Prabhakar provided an overview of the Boston Consulate's services, emphasizing its role in supporting students, families, and professionals. Mr. Jag Mohan commended TEAM Aid's humanitarian efforts and underscored the importance of strong collaboration between diplomatic missions and community organizations.

In a significant announcement, TEAM Aid appointed Mr. Prem Bhandari as its Honorary Chairman, recognizing his longstanding guidance and advocacy.

In his address, Mr. Prem Bhandari praised the Consul General of India in New York under Consul General Binay K. Pradhan for its exemplary service to over 2 million diaspora members year-round, urging other consulates to follow its model. He also highlighted the need for more efficient and transparent VFS services.

Recalling his association with Mr. S. Raghuram, Mr. Bhandari referenced their collaboration during the 2019 Jaipur Foot event at Capitol Hill, under the leadership of Ambassador Harsh Vardhan Shringla,

whom he commended for his continued leadership. He appreciated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision in strengthening global diaspora engagement and described the Boston Consulate as a significant step forward.

Mr. Bhandari also commended Mr. Mohan Nannapaneni and TEAM Aid for their selfless, volunteer-driven humanitarian work.

Responding, Consul General Mr. S. Raghuram reaffirmed the Boston Consulate's commitment to accessible, year-round service.

Consul General Mr. Raghuram S reaffirmed the Consulate's commitment to accessibility and service, stating that the Boston mission will strive to support the Indian community with dedication and responsiveness throughout the year.

The event concluded with TEAM Aid honoring Mr. Raghuram, Mr. Bhandari, and Mr. Jagmohan with floral tributes and shawls, with a vote of thanks and special recognitions presented to distinguished guests. With over 250 attendees, the gathering underscored a strong sense of unity, shared responsibility, and collective purpose among diaspora organizations and diplomatic leadership.



A cultural performance

## ABOUT TEAM AID

TEAM Aid is a 501(c)(3) global humanitarian nonprofit organization founded in 2017. It provides end-to-end crisis assistance to individuals and families facing emergencies while living or traveling abroad, including repatriation of mortal remains, funeral coordination, and humanitarian support. With a global volunteer network and strong institutional partnerships, TEAM Aid continues to serve as a vital lifeline for families in distress.

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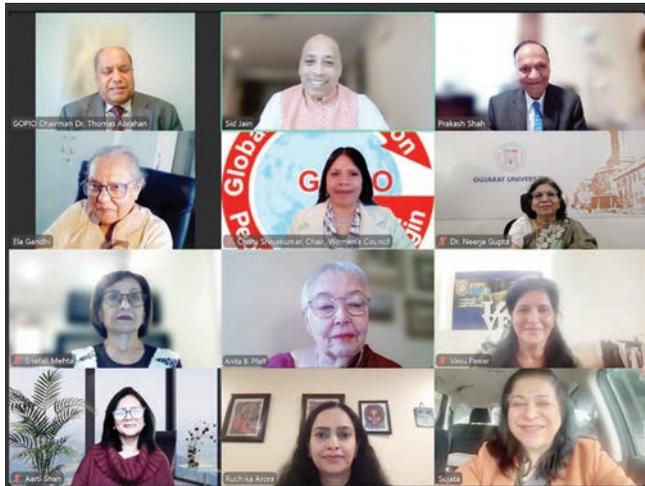
(Based on a Press Release issued by TEAM AID)



TEAM AID : Founder & President, Mohan Nannapaneni, Operations Team-Prasad Ravi, Ramakrishna Penumarthy, Srinivas Gondli (Director), Anil Pottluri, Krishna Majeti, Srinivas Patchu, Shankar Magapu

# GOPIO facilitates direct descendants of Mahatma Gandhi and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose -- Ela Gandhi, Prof. Anita Bose-Pfaff, to be on one platform, for the first time

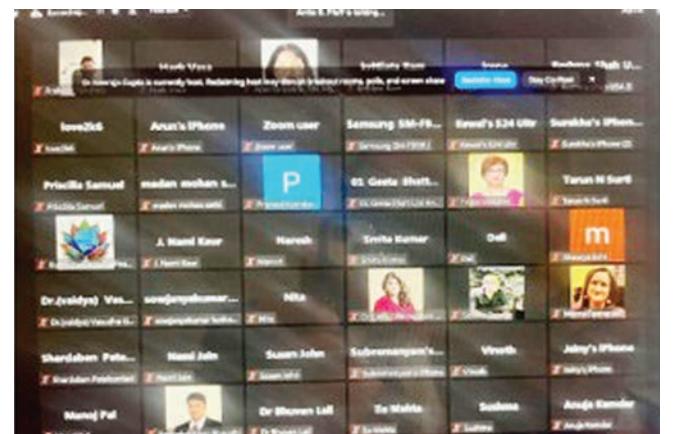
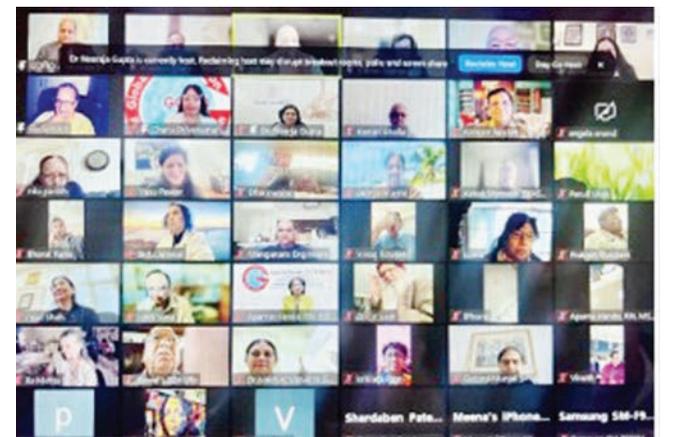
GOPIO's Women's Council Hosts Webinar on Indian Diaspora Women: Leading and Transforming the Social, Educational, Political, and Corporate Spheres.



GOPIO Officials and Speakers at the Webinar: Top Row: L-R: Dr. Thomas Abraham, Siddharth Jain (Sid), Prakash Shah; Second Row: L-R: Ela Gandhi, Charu Shivakumar, Dr. Neerja Arun Gupta; Third Row: L-R: Shefali Mehta; Prof. Anita Bose-Pfaff, Vasu Pawar; Bottom Row: L-R: Dr. Aarti Shah, Ruchika Arora, CT-Senator-Prof. Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox.



GOPIO International Webinar: Celebrating International Women's Day



GOPIO International Webinar: Indian Diaspora Women - Sections of the Audience

**MARCH 19, 2026**  
**STAMFORD, CT (TIP)**

The Women's Council Wing of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) hosted a webinar on March 14th titled "INDIAN DIASPORA WOMEN: LEADING AND TRANSFORMING THE SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, POLITICAL, AND CORPORATE SPHERES." Held virtually, the webinar brought together speakers and participants from South Africa, Germany, India, Mauritius, United Kingdom, Caribbean, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The panel was put together by GOPIO Women's Council Chair Charu Shivakumar from Southern California.

GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham, welcomed participants and highlighted the organization's global reach and advocacy for the Indian diaspora and its achievements in promoting dual nationality. GOPIO President Prakash Shah announced upcoming GOPIO events, including monthly webinars and a biennial convention in Mumbai during December 18-20, 2026.

GOPIO Women's Council Chair Shivakumar introduced the GOPIO Women's Council's mission to empower diaspora women through networking, education, and leadership development. Dr. Neeraja Arun Gupta, the moderator, emphasized the theme "Give to Gain" and introduced the distinguished speakers, including Smt. Ela Gandhi, granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi, and Professor Anita Bose-Pfaff, daughter of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Chief Guest Ela Gandhi, granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi shared her experiences as a politician in South Africa, highlighting the historical struggle for women's political representation and her role in advocating for women's participation in negotiations that led to democratic reforms. She discussed the challenges women still face, including the triple burden of work, home, and childcare, and emphasized the need for shared responsibility and societal change to achieve gender equality.

Prof. Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox, Senator from State of Connecticut, shared her experience as the first Indian-American and first Asian American Woman Senator in Connecticut, highlighting the difficulties women, especially those from diverse backgrounds, encounter in politics due to patriarchy and cultural norms. She stressed the need for grassroots movements to promote equity and change structural barriers, such as pay disparities, to enable more women to enter and succeed in political roles.

Prof. Anita Bose-Pfaff, daughter of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, shared her experiences as a half-Indian

scholar and professor in Europe, discussing the challenges of cultural identity and gender equality across different countries, while highlighting the progress made in education but noting ongoing barriers in professional spheres. The conversation touched on the diverse experiences of women leaders, including cultural challenges and the need for continued advocacy to prevent setbacks during crises. Prof. Bose-Pfaff shared her father Netaji's views on women's rights and their role in society citing an example that the INA's first women leader was Captain Lakshmi Sahgal.

Dr. Aarti Shah, a Board member of NVIDIA, Northwestern Mutual and Sandoz as well as a couple of non-profits, emphasized the importance of heritage, values, and education in achieving success, while also highlighting lessons from her career and the concept of servant leadership. She further emphasized the message of spirituality by listing the Four E's: Energy Energetic Edge Execute.

Dr. Neerja Gupta, the Vice Chancellor of Gujarat University in Ahmedabad, and moderator for the session brought out the challenges women still face in leadership roles and the need for continued efforts to ensure gender equality. Ms. Ruchika Arora shared her journey with the Miss India U.S.A. pageant and her increasing involvement with International Women's Day over the years. She recited a poem highlighting the need for women's rights and justice, referencing the UN's theme for 2026. She emphasized the importance of pageants in developing skills and confidence for young women, encouraging networking and idea sharing.

Writer and author of many books and autobiographies, Dr. Bhuvan Lall commented that this was the first time in his memory that the direct descendants of Mahatma Gandhi and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose - Ela Gandhi and Anita Bose-Pfaff were on one platform. GOPIO celebrates this statement.

The meeting further focused on women's leadership and empowerment, with speakers sharing their experiences and perspectives. Ela Gandhi discussed dealing with resistance by understanding others' viewpoints, while Anita Bose-Pfaff emphasized not caring about being seen as a leader but making her voice heard when necessary. The group discussed creating a global network for mentoring younger women leaders, with a request for established leaders to participate. The conversation concluded with a discussion on spirituality and its role in facing challenges, with speakers emphasizing the importance of universal values across different religions.

Siddharth Jain (SID), GOPIO International General Secretary gave the Vote of Thanks to the Chief Guest Ela Gandhi, Speakers: Prof. Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox, Prof. Anita Bose-Pfaff, Dr. Neerja Gupta, Dr. Aarti Shah, Ruchika Arora, Charu Shivakumar, GOPIO Leadership and members across various chapters and councils in attendance. Sid highlighted the four E's shared by Dr. Aarti Shah, poem by Ruchika Arora and Dr. Neerja Gupta and commented that 50% of all population is women and the balance exists because of them. We recognize the important contributions by all Women.

**GOPIO Women's Council can be reached by contacting its Chairperson: Charu Shivakumar, Tel: +1 626-497-5537 or Charu\_shivakumar@yahoo.com**

**For more info on GOPIO contact Sid Jain at +1 (201) 889-8888 or email at Secretary@GOPIO.net.**

#### ABOUT GOPIO

Founded in 1989, GOPIO is a non-partisan, not-for-profit, secular organization with Individual Life Members and chapter delegates from over 100 chapters in 36 countries. GOPIO's volunteers are committed to enhancing cooperation and communication between NRIs/PIOs and the local communities, building networks, bonds, friendships, alliances, and the camaraderie of citizens and colleagues alike. GOPIO volunteers believe that when they help network the global Indian community, they facilitate making tomorrow a better world for the Indian Diaspora, the countries they live in and India.

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## Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur Elected Chairman of AIA

MARCH 24, 2026  
HICKSVILLE, NY (TIP):

AIA National President Ms Nilima Madan has announced that Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur has been unanimously elected as Chairman of the Association of Indians in America (AIA). Mr. Bhooplapur succeeds Dr. Samin Sharm.

Mr. Bhooplapur has long been a dedicated member of AIA, having served on the National Executive Committee (NEC) and as Chair of the organization's 40th and 50th Year Celebrations. He currently serves as an AIA Trustee and has been a steadfast supporter of all AIA initiatives since 1993. We are proud of his outstanding contributions to society, and under his leadership, AIA will continue to advance its mission and expand its positive impact within the community.

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Ravishankar Bhooplapur is an educational leader and humanitarian whose work has significantly expanded access to healthcare and higher education for underserved communities worldwide. Often described as "a man with the Midas touch who works silently," he is known for transforming ideas into impactful institutions and programs without seeking personal recognition.

As Founder and President of Xavier University School of Medicine in Aruba since 2008, Mr. Bhooplapur has built a mission-driven institution that has graduated more than 1,300 physicians who serve in hospitals and clinics across the United States and around the globe.



Mr Ravishankar Bhooplapur has been unanimously elected as Chairman of the Association of Indians in America (AIA)

Under his leadership, the university has achieved full accreditation and recognition by key regulatory bodies and broadened its academic reach through new programs in veterinary and nursing education, both approved by the Government of Aruba. These initiatives strengthen the global health workforce across multiple disciplines. His educational and philanthropic leadership has earned international recognition, including feature profiles in Forbes India (November-December 2025) and Outlook Magazine. Ravi was Person of the Year from The South Asian Times in 2022.

Mr. Bhooplapur's educational vision extends beyond degree programs to link learning with service. A long-standing trustee of SUNY Old Westbury and co-chair of its fundraising committee, he has helped mobilize resources for students and campus development. He

also played an instrumental role in creating the 50-acre Mahatma Gandhi Peace Garden, an enduring symbol of peace, nonviolence, and intercultural understanding. His leadership roles with the Stony Brook University Center for India Studies, the India Center at Jefferson University, and several community organizations further demonstrate his belief in education as a bridge between societies.

Equally distinguished is Mr. Bhooplapur's humanitarian record. As Founder and Chairman of Gift of Life India and the Gift of India Project, he has helped enable more than 6,500 children with congenital heart disease-most from underprivileged backgrounds-to receive free, life-saving heart surgeries at hospitals across India and neighboring countries. He has also spearheaded major health projects, including the establishment of a 100-bed charitable hospital in Ghataprabha, support for blood banks, ambulance donations, a mobile cancer care bus, and funding for a Linear Accelerator for advanced cancer treatment. His philanthropic initiatives have extended to more than 16 countries, providing vital medical equipment, disaster relief aid, and COVID-19 emergency support.

Through his unwavering commitment to education and humanitarian service, Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur exemplifies visionary leadership grounded in compassion and purpose. His appointment as Chairman marks an inspiring new chapter for AIA, and we look forward to the continued good he will help bring to communities across the globe.

First Indian-origin Mrs South Africa in 24 years steps down, citing 'personal reasons'

**39-YEAR-OLD CHEMICAL ENGINEER AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSULTANT CITES PERSONAL AND FAMILY REASONS FOR HER DECISION**

MARCH 27, 2026  
JOHANNESBURG (TIP)

Verushka Singh, the first Indian-origin Mrs South Africa to be crowned in the pageant's 24-year history, has stepped down just four months after her crowning, citing "personal and family reasons".



Verushka Singh.

Image credit/Instagram:@verushka\_com

In November 2025, Singh's victory was celebrated as a breakthrough for representation of the minority Indian community in South Africa.

The 39-year-old chemical engineer and climate change consultant cited personal and family reasons for her decision.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to have served on this platform and for the incredible women I've had the privilege of standing alongside. This decision is entirely my own, made with my family's needs at heart, and I step away with nothing but appreciation for Mrs South Africa and what it stands for," Singh said in her statement.

During her short tenure, Singh was a vocal advocate for environmental sustainability, frequently using her corporate expertise to bridge the gap between "pageant glamour" and "climate action."

Despite the unexpected nature of her resignation, the Mrs South Africa organization has expressed full support for Singh's choice.

Joani Jacobs, CEO of Mrs South Africa, praised Singh's professionalism and the impact she made during her brief time as the titleholder.

"Verushka has carried the title with dedication and professionalism during her time on the platform. We respect her decision and support her in prioritizing what matters most in this season of her life," Jacobs said.

The organization confirmed that all scheduled programs, charity initiatives, and empowerment workshops for the 2026 cycle of the Pageant would proceed as planned with the First Princess, Carika Bebb, who has now been officially crowned as the new Mrs South Africa 2026.

Singh's short reign was characterized by her use of the title to further her efforts to make climate change "human and accessible".

(Read full story at  
www.theindianpanorama.news)

## Indian-origin man charged for driving with 2 kids atop car boot in Singapore

Prem Anan Sugunakumar was handed one count of rash act that endangered the safety of children below the age of 14

MARCH 27, 2026  
SINGAPORE (TIP)

An Indian-origin man was on Thursday, March 26, charged in a Singapore court for driving a luxury sports car with his two children sitting on the car boot.



Prem Anan Sugunakumar was handed one count of rash act that endangered the safety of children below the age of 14

Prem Anan Sugunakumar was handed one count of rash act that endangered the safety of children below the age of 14, according to a report by Channel News Asia.

He is said to have driven the vehicle along an upmarket housing enclave on October 20, 2025, and allowed the children, aged eight and seven, to sit atop the rear boot of the car.

In court, Prem's lawyer said that his client would be "taking a certain course" and asked the court to reflect an early plea of guilt. He asked for time to take instructions from his client.

The case will return to court on April 22.

In a statement on Wednesday, Singapore police said that children must be properly secured when travelling in vehicles and must not be placed in dangerous positions, such as on car boots.

If convicted of the rash act endangering the life of others, a person may be jailed for up to six months, fined up to SGD2,500 (USD 1,950), or both.

If the victim is below 14, the offender may face up to twice the maximum penalty. (Source: PTI)

## Spitting 'paan' in UK cost over Rs 3 lakh fine for 2 Indian-origin men

Netizens react to viral post, ask for stricter laws

MARCH 26, 2027  
LONDON (TIP)

The internet is going into a frenzy over an incident, which dates back to 2025, where two Indian-origin men were fined over Rs 1.5 lakh each for spitting paan (in two separate incidents).

While littering, spitting 'gutkas' and 'paans' is considered quite normal in South-Asian countries, the first world gives us a different lesson - into morality, civic sense and the need to respect surroundings.

According to Harrow Online, the Brent Council fined these two men in north-west London.

Officials report that both the incidences - one that happened on Kingsbury road, and the other - that took place in Clarendon Gardens, attracted heavy fines of 1391 pounds each (about 1.45 lakh INR).

Authorities in the UK have made it clear to every citizen - to keep public spaces clean.

One user commented, "Please, PLEASE we need this law in ALL of India. Enough of defiled public spaces!"

Another user wrote, "Nasty habit. Has no room in any country."

While a third comment read, "So they're out here acting strict over paan stains now? The same system that turned Jallianwala Bagh massacre into a slaughterhouse under Reginald Dyer suddenly discovered 'civic sense'. Funny how law was nowhere to be found when innocent people were being gunned down. Today it's fines and lectures; back then it was bullets and silence. Don't preach discipline when your history screams double standards." (Source: PTI)



Image for representation only

Image credits/Instagram @mo.of.everything

# FBI and NYPD Avert Targeting of Palestinian Activist

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

The New York Police Department and federal authorities disrupted what officials described as a plot by a member of a pro-Israel terrorist organization to assassinate the leader of one of New York's most active pro-Palestinian protest groups, according to officials and court papers, a New York Times report says.

Members of the F.B.I. and the Police Department's Joint Terrorism Task Force notified the activist, Nerdeen Kiswani, and her lawyer late Thursday, March 26, that an arrest had been made in connection with an imminent attempt on her life, her lawyer and law enforcement officials said.

The man who was arrested, Alexander Heifler, 26, of Hoboken, N.J., was taken into custody after detectives and federal agents searched his apartment and found eight Molotov cocktails.

A police official said Friday, March 27, that Mr. Heifler was a member of the JDL 613 Brotherhood, which was inspired by the Jewish Defense League, a pro-Israel group designated by the F.B.I. as a terrorist organization. Representatives of the J.D.L. and its offshoot did not immediately reply to messages seeking comment.

Mr. Heifler was charged Friday, March 27 morning in a two-count criminal complaint with making and possessing the devices and appeared in federal court in Newark hours later. The complaint did not specify a motive for the planned attack, which was laid out in detail. If convicted, Mr. Heifler could face up to 20 years in prison.

The complaint said the plan had been in the works since at least February, when Mr. Heifler discussed building and using Molotov cocktails for what he described as "self-defense" on a group video call that included an undercover detective.

Prosecutors said in the complaint that Mr. Heifler and the undercover detective met in person the next day and then twice more in the weeks that followed, including on Thursday, when they built the eight Molotov cocktails together in Mr. Heifler's home. He was arrested shortly thereafter.

Mr. Heifler planned to use the devices to target Ms. Kiswani, 31, the co-founder of the pro-Palestinian group Within Our Lifetime, prosecutors said.

He was ordered held without bail after a brief court appearance in which he told the magistrate judge, Stacey D. Adams, that he understood the charges he faced.

He did not appear to have any family members or friends with him in court and was represented by a federal public defender. He swayed and fidgeted nervously in his chair, wearing a gray sweatshirt and a black yarmulke that slipped occasionally off his head.

The complaint said that "components to make the Molotov cocktails" had been found at Mr. Heifler's apartment, including a large bottle of Everclear, a liquor with a high alcohol content.

While making the weapons, Mr. Heifler told the undercover detective that he planned to throw some of them at cars and at least one directly into Ms.



Nerdeen Kiswani at a pro- Palestine rally -File photo

Kiswani's home.

Soon after the weapons were made, law enforcement officers executed a federal search warrant at Mr. Heifler's apartment, which is on a narrow cobblestone street in Hoboken and which he shares with several roommates.

The complaint said Mr. Heifler had originally planned to flee the United States two days after the intended attack, but he told the undercover detective that his travel plans had been pushed to the middle of May. On Friday, Mayor Zohran Mamdani said Mr. Heifler had planned to flee to Israel.

Mr. Heifler attended high school near Princeton, N.J., and studied computer science at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, graduating in 2022. He was working as a machine learning engineer, according to his LinkedIn profile.

In court, the judge noted that Mr. Heifler's income was likely too high for him to continue to be represented by a publicly funded federal defender.

A Police Department official said the investigation began in January, when the undercover detective, who is part of the department's Intelligence Division, first infiltrated a New York and New Jersey-based group chat.

Mr. Mamdani condemned the plan to kill Ms. Kiswani as "a chilling act of political violence" and said it was part of a larger nationwide trend of attacks and threats on pro-Palestinian activists.

"We will not tolerate violent extremism in our city," he added. "No one should face violence for their political beliefs or their advocacy. I am relieved that Nerdeen is safe."

The New York police commissioner, Jessica Tisch, issued a statement crediting the work of the undercover detective, first online and then in person, in exposing and thwarting the attack.

"This is exactly how our intelligence and counterterrorism operation is designed to work - a sophisticated apparatus built to detect danger early and prevent violence before it reaches our streets," she said. The commissioner did not identify the detective.

Gov. Kathy Hochul also praised the police, saying on social media that she was "grateful to law enforcement for

swiftly disrupting this abhorrent plot."

She added: "No one should be targeted or live in fear of violence for expressing their beliefs."

It is not clear how Mr. Heifler came to be affiliated with the JDL 613 Brotherhood, which was formed in the New York area in late 2024 and describes itself online as a revival of the Jewish Defense League.

The J.D.L. was founded in New York in the 1960s by Meir Kahane, a Brooklyn-born anti-Arab militant who later moved to Israel and founded the Kach party. The party was later outlawed in Israel for inciting racism.

The Jewish Defense League and the Kach party have been connected to several high-profile acts of violence. In 1994, Baruch Goldstein, another Brooklyn-born man and J.D.L. activist who immigrated to Israel, killed 29 people and injured 125 more when he opened fire at a West Bank mosque during Ramadan.

In 2005, J.D.L. members were convicted of a plot to bomb a Los Angeles mosque and an office of Representative Darrell Issa in California.

Within Our Lifetime, the group co-founded by Ms. Kiswani, has organized numerous protests to draw attention to the suffering of Palestinians during Israel's war in Gaza.

The organization has become known in New York for its at times inflammatory rhetoric and disruptive tactics, including a demonstration that led the Police Department to shut down Grand Central Terminal.

In a statement to The New York Times, Ms. Kiswani said F.B.I. agents had told her on Thursday night that "a plot against my life was 'about to' take place."

She added: "I will have more to say as additional details come to light. I will not stop speaking up for the people of Palestine. Thank you for your support."

Robert Frazer, the newly appointed U.S. attorney for New Jersey, attended Mr. Heifler's court hearing and in a statement thanked the office's law enforcement partners "for this work in identifying and removing this potential threat."

Ms. Kiswani has drawn the opprobrium of pro-Israel groups for

saying she supports the liberation of the Palestinian people "by any means necessary," including armed resistance. Protesters at events organized by her group sometimes wave the flags of Hamas and Hezbollah.

The group's tactics and its use of certain slogans have led to accusations that it and its members are antisemitic. Ms. Kiswani has long denied those accusations, and argued that her activism opposes Israel, its policies and its structure as a Jewish state. A common chant at Within Our Lifetime protests is: "Judaism, yes, Zionism no! The state of Israel has got to go!"

But pro-Israel and many Jewish groups have rejected that argument, calling it a smoke screen and saying Zionism is intrinsic to the religious or ethnic identity of many American Jews.

Officially, Within Our Lifetime has a small membership that may not exceed a few dozen people. But since the war in Gaza began, its reach has grown significantly. Its protests often attract hundreds of people whose marches have closed bridges and stalled traffic in the city's busy streets.

When Meta shut down the group's Instagram account in February 2024, just five months after the start of the war, it had roughly 180,000 followers.

Ms. Kiswani's activism has made her a reviled target for pro-Israel groups. In February, she filed a civil rights lawsuit against one of those groups, Betar U.S., which she said had used social media to put "bounties" on her head. The group had posted about her frequently in recent years.

She also said the group had harassed her in person with beepers, an apparent reference to an Israeli military attack on Lebanon that used exploding pagers to kill at least a dozen people and injure thousands more in 2024.

In January, New York's attorney general, Letitia James, announced that Betar U.S. had agreed to stop what her office described as "widespread persecution of Muslim, Arab, Palestinian and Jewish New Yorkers" who disagreed with its views on the Middle East.

She also said the group had agreed to dissolve its New York operations, which run its activities in the United States.

Neither the criminal complaint unsealed Friday charging Mr. Heifler nor the law enforcement officials who discussed the investigation suggested that Betar U.S. or its online activities were connected to the plot on Ms. Kiswani's life.

But in her statement on Friday, Ms. Kiswani accused it of being one of several "Zionist organizations" that "have encouraged violence against my family and me."

In an email to The Times, Daniel Levy, a spokesman for Betar U.S., denounced Ms. Kiswani as "a supporter of violent revolution and no innocent." He said his organization was not connected to the plot against her life.

"We of course know nothing about this threat and have had zero contact with law enforcement on this issue," he said, before adding: "That said, Palestinians are a violent people."

(Source: The New York Times)

# Indian American Forum Hosts Colon Cancer Awareness Session; Experts Stress Early Screening as Lifesaver

I.S. SALUJA  
MARCH 27, 2026  
HICKSVILLE, NY (TIP)

In a significant community outreach initiative aimed at promoting preventive healthcare, the Indian American Forum—one of the oldest Indian American associations on Long Island—organized an informative session on colon cancer awareness on Thursday, March 26. Indu Jaiswal, President of the IAF, the moving spirit behind the commendable initiative, was ably supported by Dr. Jag Kalra and other members of the IAF. The event brought together a large number of predominantly elderly Indian Americans, reflecting growing concern within the community about age-related health issues.

The session featured two eminent gastroenterologists from Digestive Disease Care—Dr. Nilesh Mehta, MD, and Dr. Preeti Mehta, MD—who delivered a comprehensive and highly engaging presentation on colon cancer, its risk factors, symptoms, prevention, and the critical role of early screening.

A central takeaway from the discussion was the revised guideline recommending that colon cancer screening begin at age 45, lowered from the earlier benchmark of 50. The doctors emphasized that this change reflects a worrying rise in cases among younger individuals. They also underscored the importance of family history in determining an individual's risk profile, advising those with a history of colon cancer in the family to undergo screening even earlier.

Colon cancer, the speakers noted, is one of the most common cancers affecting both men and women. Alarmingly, it often develops without noticeable symptoms in its early stages, making routine screening essential.



Organizers. L to R: Flora Parikh, Indu Jaiswal, IAF President, Dr. Preeti Mehta, Dr. Nilesh Mehta, and Dr. Jag Kalra

"Many patients feel perfectly healthy until the disease has progressed," the doctors explained, reinforcing the need for vigilance even in the absence of symptoms.

Highlighting the effectiveness of colonoscopy, the physicians described it as the "gold standard" for detecting colon cancer. They explained that the procedure is not merely diagnostic but preventive as well. By identifying and removing precancerous polyps—small growths in the colon that can become malignant over time—colonoscopy can reduce the risk of colon cancer by as much as 80 to 90 percent.

The discussion also delved into various risk factors associated with colon cancer. These include genetic predisposition, diets high in red and processed meats, obesity, sedentary lifestyles, smoking, alcohol consumption, and exposure to environmental pollutants. The doctors pointed to emerging research linking microplastics, heavy metals, and certain industrial chemicals to increased cancer risk, urging the audience to be mindful of environmental and dietary influences.

Diet and lifestyle, they stressed, play a pivotal role in prevention. The speakers advocated for a shift toward natural, home-cooked meals and a reduction in ultra-



Dr. Nilesh Mehta speaking about Colon Cancer

processed foods. Regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and avoiding harmful habits such as smoking and excessive drinking were highlighted as key preventive measures.

Addressing concerns about the colonoscopy procedure itself, Dr. Nilesh Mehta and Dr. Preeti Mehta reassured attendees that modern techniques have made the process significantly more comfortable and convenient. Advances in bowel preparation—once considered the most challenging aspect—now include easier options such as pill-based regimens and low-volume liquid preparations, improving patient compliance and experience.

The doctors also emphasized the importance of proper preparation and the role of a skilled physician in ensuring accurate results. A clean colon, they explained, is essential for detecting abnormalities, and



Dr. Preeti Mehta speaking about Colonoscopy

appreciation for the Indian American Forum's efforts in organizing such a meaningful event. For many in the audience—especially seniors who may not have had exposure to preventive healthcare practices earlier in life—the session proved both enlightening and empowering.

The overarching message from the experts was clear and unequivocal: colon cancer is largely preventable, and early detection through timely screening can save lives. As awareness grows within the community, such initiatives are expected to play a vital role in fostering a culture of proactive healthcare.

The event concluded with a renewed sense of responsibility among attendees—not only to safeguard their own health but also to spread awareness within their families and the wider community.



A section of the gathering

-Photos: The Indian Panorama

patients must carefully follow pre-procedure instructions.

During the interactive question-and-answer session, attendees raised a wide range of queries—from warning signs such as changes in bowel habits, blood in stool, unexplained weight loss, and abdominal pain, to concerns about medications and genetic conditions like Lynch syndrome and familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP). The doctors addressed each question with clarity, encouraging individuals to seek prompt medical advice if any concerning symptoms arise.

A particularly reassuring point for the audience was the clarification that most health insurance plans cover colon cancer screening, including colonoscopy. The doctors strongly urged attendees not to let financial concerns deter them from undergoing this potentially life-saving procedure.

The session also resulted in practical follow-up initiatives, including plans to organize a group colonoscopy program for community members who have not yet undergone screening, thereby simplifying access and encouraging participation.

Community leaders and attendees expressed deep

## ABOUT DIGESTIVE DISEASE CARE

Digestive Disease Care (DDC) is a leading gastroenterology practice serving communities across New York, with multiple offices in Suffolk, Nassau, and Queens. The organization brings together a team of highly trained, board-certified gastroenterologists and hepatologists dedicated to comprehensive digestive health. DDC offers a wide range of services, including colonoscopy, endoscopy, and advanced diagnostic testing, focusing on the prevention, early detection, and treatment of gastrointestinal conditions such as colorectal cancer, Crohn's disease, and acid reflux. With a patient-centered approach, modern facilities, and broad insurance acceptance, DDC aims to deliver accessible, compassionate, and high-quality care across Long Island and New York City.

For more information, please visit [www.DigestiveDiseaseCare.com](http://www.DigestiveDiseaseCare.com)

Phones:  
631-450-1500 (Suffolk Office); 516-204-4242 (Nassau Office); 718-313-0051 (Queens Office)

## From Vietnam to Iran : Lessons US ignored

ISRAEL IS QUITE POSSIBLY THE LEADING ACTOR. ISRAELI'S MILITARY NARRATIVE RUNS DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENTLY FROM THAT OF THE US

BY REAR  
ADMIRAL RAJA  
MENON RETD



"Most analyses of the American defeat correctly attributed it to political and military failures in the US. American presidents were accused of entering the war without a political objective and reinforcing failure as the Vietnamese escalated the war. US Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, who otherwise reformed the Pentagon, was accused of using statistics to assess the war's progress, like casualties inflicted and the weight of bombs dropped, without understanding the political objective."

The world media is full of events that led to the attack on Iran by the US-Israeli alliance. The ensuing conflict has shaken the economies of all countries, except that of Russia. The story, however, begins much earlier - in April 1975, when the world was shocked by a photograph in the media that showed a US helicopter taking off from the roof of the US embassy in Saigon, evacuating the last Americans from South Vietnam, before Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese army, marking the end of the disastrous 20-year US war in Vietnam.

It was shocking because it marked the first defeat of the world's superpower by a poor undeveloped Asian country. Not so shocking, because 20 years earlier, at a little-known town in Vietnam called Dien Bien Phu, the same North Vietnamese army had recorded the first defeat of a former European army, the French, by its South East Asian colony.

The media then lacked the power it wields today. People soon forgot about the event after ascribing the victory to the patience and tenacity of the charismatic Vietnamese leader, Ho Chi Minh.

Most analyses of the American defeat correctly attributed it to political and military failures in the US. American presidents were accused of entering the war without a political objective and reinforcing failure as the Vietnamese escalated the war. US Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, who otherwise reformed the Pentagon, was accused of using statistics to assess the war's progress, like casualties inflicted and the weight of bombs dropped, without understanding the political objective.

The military was also accused of the same error, particularly by General William Westmoreland, commander of the US forces, during the Vietnam war. He presented an optimistic assessment of the air campaign by the same statistical

methods, stating that more bombs were dropped on Vietnam than were dropped during the Second World War.

The US military, to give it its due, analyzed the causes of the defeat much more deeply. It was startled to realize that the North Vietnamese General who had defeated the French in 1954 at Dien Bien Phu and the General who took Saigon in 1975 was the same person - General Vo Nguyen Giap. A study of General Giap's strategy revealed that he relied entirely on the writings of the Chinese strategist, Sun Tzu of the 5th century BC.

A significant conversation is alleged to have occurred between Westmoreland and Giap after the war. It went like this: Westmoreland said, "You know, General,

that victory goes to him who has the faster decision-making cycle. The Israelis took Boyd's writing much farther, perhaps intended to mean: eliminate the political and military leadership to break the enemy's decision-making cycle.

Israel's own experiences in the wars of 1967, 1973 and the eventual fall of Syria's Assad reinforced its conviction that its own politico-military strategy should be continued in any conflict with Iran. Perhaps one of the principal contributing causes to the, so far, successful Israeli strategy has been the spectacular achievements of Mossad, its external intelligence agency, in penetrating the techno-political military societies of West Asia.



US institutions come to the Iran war with a mixed record.

-Photo credit: Reuters

that in every battle, we have defeated you." Giap is alleged to have replied, "But how is that relevant?" Meaning thereby: what was the political outcome?

But Sun Tzu began to be deeply studied in US war colleges, second only to German strategist Carl von Clausewitz, revered by many other military colleges. His most famous quote is: "War is politics by other means."

Coming to today's Iran war, the other protagonist apart from the US is Israel and it is quite possibly the leading actor. Israeli's military narrative runs dramatically differently from that of the US. Influenced overwhelmingly by its small population and geography, it regards none of the classical strategists canonically.

Instead, it is reliant on the war doctrine of David Ben-Gurion, primary founder and first Prime Minister of Israel, and, if at all, by American military strategist John Boyd, who said

It would appear from the conduct of the Israeli bombing campaign that Iran is perhaps a step ahead. Foreseeing the elimination of its leadership in Israeli attacks, Iran has put in place, under Mohammad Ali Jafari, a decentralized command structure that can prolong the war, but makes the termination of the war or the final negotiations problematic.

The other significant influence on early Israeli military figures like Moshe Dayan was the British strategist Liddel Hart. He made the seminal observation that it was difficult, if not impossible, to achieve a political victory against an autocratic or fundamentalist regime because the regime would not balk at any level of destruction or casualties as long as the regime survived.

To get back to the success or failure of the US theory of war, Donald Trump enters the scene with two strong cases of when the American political class pulled

political defeat out of military victory. The military reorganization after Vietnam created the spectacular US military success in the first Gulf war.

So spectacular that even the Chinese PLA took note and wrote the path-breaking Military Strategic Guidelines (MSG) of 1993, which dumped Mao's People's war doctrine in favor of an 'informational Sed war under local conditions'.

However, in the second Gulf war, US political figures struck again. Then US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld emphasized a "light" military footprint after Iraq's President Saddam Hussein was toppled in 2003. It conflicted with US diplomat Paul Bremer's governance methods in Iraq - which involved the

dissolution of the Iraqi army and de-Baathification, and devolved into disastrous state-building.

Similarly, George Bush figures strongly in the Afghan disaster, which after a brilliant military campaign devolved into a catastrophic Afghan state-building, in which countries have floundered in the past.

As in Vietnam, former US President Barack Obama faced the dilemma of 'evacuating' or 'reinforcing'. He chose the latter, eventually leaving it to Joe Biden to pull out altogether, in defeat in 2021.

So, the American institutions come to the Iran war with a mixed record: A competent military, which pointed out to Trump the danger to the Strait of Hormuz, and a political class neutered with MAGA appointees by Trump. The outcome is, therefore, predictable.

(Raja Menon is a retired Rear Admiral of Indian Navy)

# The key to India's multi-domain deterrence, capabilities

BY HARINDER SINGH



A robust defense-industrial base will shape India's multi-domain deterrence and resilience, especially against China

"India must have two top priorities. First, to identify those military vulnerabilities that present an advantage to China. Its fledgling C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) is one such concern. Dominating the C4ISR battle is key: the side that can see can continue to fight. India needs cheap ISR platforms, in numbers which it can afford to lose, yet maintain ISR capacity. It even needs superior cyber, space and electronic warfare capabilities to deceive and degrade the adversary's ISR platforms. A layered C4ISR - one that enhances one's ISR capacity, while limiting an adversary's ability - is vital."

China's military poses a serious challenge to India. New Delhi has no choice but to pursue a robust industrial strategy to offset China's military advantage. Otherwise, it risks the widening of the capability gap. But bridging this gap requires political expediency to make urgent, hard policy choices - what to buy, what to build, and the potential costs and benefits. The challenge is that technology is evolving faster than doctrine, making precise choices even more difficult. The question is how India should reconceptualize its doctrinal and technological choices and adopt a credible defence-industrial strategy to deter the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

## HARD CHOICES, SYSTEMIC VULNERABILITIES

There could be three contrasting ways to approach the issue. First, India could adopt a bold approach. It would imply betting on the right technological trends and investing in a completely new bundle of war-fighting technologies. The risk is if implementation fails, it can create acute capability vulnerabilities and further weaken the margin of deterrence with India's adversaries. Besides, India lacks the industrial heft to produce technologies at scale and speed to neutralize China's advantage. But, if successful, it could help reduce the capability gap.

Second, India could consider a more conservative strategy. This would entail integrating a wide range of emerging technologies with those in-service to make the existing force more effective. It would also entail enhancing India's cyber, space and electronic warfare capabilities to digitize the battlespace, to streamline and condense the kill chains. This is entirely doable, but it would not alter the balance of power. Perhaps, this strategy is more suited to fight a short war with Pakistan, not a protracted conflict.

Third, India could explore the middle path. While it continues to rely on legacy platforms, it invests in the creation and deployment of enabling layers, to enhance its ability to deter China. While, multi-domain operations (MDO) should be the obvious choice; India is not there yet for a mix of reasons. Besides, MDO as a concept is difficult to define, and even more difficult to operationalize. This would entail fielding a set of crucial enabling layers - of Command and Control (C2), Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR),

deep-strike, close-battle, infrastructure and logistics, which are critical to war outcomes. As these layers evolve, India's military would shape into a syncretic, multi-domain force. Historically, military transformations have adopted well-known paths. It entails aligning research, development and industrial capacity, doctrines and structures and technology and tactics across institutions, and over time, to deter threats. National security institutions, including the military, have to work together to develop a common picture of the deterrence that the state wishes to create. Since India's margin of deterrence against China is uncertain, India's endeavor should be to analyze the factors that explain the systemic challenges to building a robust posture. Two aspects stand out. First, India's industrial challenges are well known. Its ability to translate its military requirements into industrial targets is doubtful. The issue is not its technological competence but its defence-industrial base, which is not structured to deliver at speed and scale. Missiles, munitions and drones are urgent industrial investments



India should fix the critical enabling layers in the deterrence system' -Photo Credit: Reuters

of the day; so are the ISR and C2 networks and shortfalls in legacy platforms. India needs to expand its defence-industrial base in conjunction with private industry; otherwise, it may continue to face constraints.

While there is no one-off solution to coordinating industrial capacity, technology and doctrine, incremental steps can generate benefits in the long term. Removing red tape, ensuring budgetary stability, and providing long-term contracts especially for specialized platforms could prove helpful. A mindset change recognizing that private players can build military systems more efficiently than the government sector, is needed. It is never too late to shore up the system, but the window for industrial reform is clearly shrinking.

Second, India's procurement system has to focus on evolving and not constraining the fighting force. The system has to adapt faster and be rooted in an efficient defence-industrial base that can produce what an evolving force needs. India needs to spend more, but spend smarter by making hard choices in prioritizing key deterrent capabilities. This will require the broadest possible debate and consensus on what needs to be done, and why. It is also the military's job to explain its roles and tasks to the political leadership, the costs of inaction and possible trade-offs, and how they impact the deterrence that India wishes to achieve.

## FIXING THE ENABLING LAYERS

Strengthening India's deterrence would mean altering China's military confidence, while preventing it from

assuming that any single capability could prove decisive. This is more so when India has no single capability which is exquisite enough to alter the military balance. By creating and operationalizing the enabling layers - C2, ISR, deep-strike, close-battle and others - India can aspire to field a capable multi-domain force, to deter the Chinese.

India must have two top priorities. First, to identify those military vulnerabilities that present an advantage to China. Its fledgling C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) is one such concern. Dominating the C4ISR battle is key: the side that can see can continue to fight. India needs cheap ISR platforms, in numbers which it can afford to lose, yet maintain ISR capacity. It even needs superior cyber, space and electronic warfare capabilities to deceive and degrade the adversary's ISR platforms. A layered C4ISR - one that enhances one's ISR capacity, while limiting an adversary's ability - is vital.

There are other layers, as well. For instance, the integration of missiles, aircraft and drones as the strike

layer to dislocate the enemy in depth. The coordinated employment of land-based platforms such as tanks, guns, and infantry vehicles as a layer to fight front-line battles is crucial. A robust logistic layer that integrates all rear-zone elements including logistic installations, supply chains, and infrastructure is essential for fighting a protracted war. Equally important, in India's case, will be its nuclear deterrent, and how much nuclear capability it needs to compensate for a lack of conventional deterrence to dissuade a nuclear adversary such as China.

Second, India needs to incentivize the right parts of the defence industrial base, by making one-off budgetary allocations in select capabilities. China has a sizeable missile inventory and has the industrial capacity to produce thousands more, during conflict. If a conflict erupts, it can use these against India, with devastating effect. Even if India were to withstand the initial PLA strikes, it would put severe pressure on India's surge capacity. This inventory gap is a risky bet. India has to incentivize defence production, in the absence of which, China might be tempted to drag India into a protracted fight.

India should, therefore, be spending less time admiring the service-specific acquisitions, and fix the critical enabling layers in the deterrence system. Besides, theaterization alone might not help create these layers, unless it is rooted in deep doctrinal convergence.

(Harinder Singh is a retired Lieutenant General and a former corps commander)

## India on the sidelines as Trump pauses war

India has abandoned its posture in favor of US & Israel, but not joined the coalition. It has chosen the worst of both worlds

BY MANOJ JOSHI



INDIA'S ABSENCE IS MANIFEST IN OTHER WAYS. LAST WEEK DONALD TRUMP SAID HE HAD ASKED "ABOUT SEVEN" COUNTRIES TO JOIN AMERICA IN KEEPING THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ OPEN. HE NAMED FIVE: CHINA, SOUTH KOREA, JAPAN, FRANCE, BRITAIN. INDIA WAS NOT ON THE LIST. THIS IS ALL THE MORE CURIOUS BECAUSE INDIA IS PROXIMATE TO HORMUZ, HAS A STRONG NAVY, AND IS DEPENDENT ON THE STRAIT FOR A SIGNIFICANT SHARE OF ITS HYDROCARBONS. MORE IMPORTANT, AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR, INDIA HAD ABANDONED ITS CUSTOMARY BALANCED APPROACH AND MADE CLEAR WHICH SIDE IT WAS ON. IN HIS FIRST CALL TO THE UAE, MODI CONDEMNED THE IRANIAN RETALIATORY ATTACK WITHOUT MENTIONING IRAN. IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER HE CALLED NETANYAHU AND CONVEYED INDIA'S "CONCERNS," URGING AN EARLY CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES. HE NOT ONLY SIDESTEPED THE FACT THAT IT WAS ISRAEL AND THE US THAT HAD ATTACKED IRAN AND KILLED ITS SUPREME LEADER, AYATOLLAH KHAMENEI - HE DID NOT OFFER EVEN TOKEN CONDOLENCES TO TEHRAN."



India is present in the West Asian region but not a participant.

Photo credit : ANI

The changing patterns of the American-Israeli war against Iran are as bewildering as a kaleidoscope. On Monday morning, Trump pulled back from the brink - postponing threatened strikes on Iranian power plants for five days after what he described as "productive conversations" with Tehran. Whether this marks a genuine diplomatic opening or a tactical pause remains unclear.

What is clear is that India was not part of the back-channel diplomacy that produced it. Oman is reportedly mediating. Whether the US envoys remain Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner is not clear. India - proximate, oil-dependent, a self-described balancer - remains on the sidelines.

Prime Minister Modi has been talking, recently again to Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian. He has also spoken to leaders of all the Gulf monarchies, and to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The theme has been a standard condemnation of the attacks on the region, alarm at the destruction of critical infrastructure, and the need to keep international shipping lanes open. If you parse his remarks, they are so finely balanced that they end up saying nothing of note. India has become a spectator in a region where it had played the role of a balancer, with significant ties to all the major actors.

Most tellingly, Modi has still not spoken to the country that started the war and has the power to end it immediately - the United States of America.

India's absence is manifest in other ways. Last week Donald Trump said he had asked "about seven" countries to join America in keeping the Straits of Hormuz open. He named five: China, South Korea, Japan, France, Britain. India was not on the list. This is all the more curious because India is proximate to Hormuz, has a strong

navy, and is dependent on the Strait for a significant share of its hydrocarbons. More important, at the outbreak of the war, India had abandoned its customary balanced approach and made clear which side it was on. In his first call to the UAE, Modi condemned the Iranian retaliatory attack without mentioning Iran. Immediately thereafter he called Netanyahu and conveyed India's "concerns," urging an early cessation of hostilities. He not only sidestepped the fact that it was Israel and the US that had attacked Iran and killed its Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei - he did not offer even token condolences to Tehran.

In a structural sense, India is already part of the region's US-led security architecture. It is a member of the 47-nation Combined Maritime Forces headquartered with the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, and two weeks before the Israeli-American attack on Iran, it assumed command of Combined Task Force 154, which deals with training. So, India is present in the region but not a participant - friendly to the US but not allied, warm but not quite trusted, occupying a geopolitical halfway house.

Just what role Trump envisaged for India is not easy to discern. He has referred to Modi as a "great friend," a "great gentleman," a "tough as hell leader." Modi's references are more modest, usually terming Trump a "dear friend." But the two have not physically met for the past year - a situation attributed to the fallout over Operation Sindoor - and neither have they spoken since the war began in West Asia.

There was another curious development. Despite rising tensions and a visible military build-up in mid-February, Modi chose to visit Israel 48 hours before the war began. According to well-informed journalist Barak Ravid, the attack had originally been

planned a week earlier, and it was important for the Israelis to signal that no imminent threat existed - so that Ayatollah Khamenei and others would feel safe and not take to their underground shelters. They had also kept up the ruse of the Geneva talks to sustain the impression that diplomacy was still the main path being pursued. Was the unwitting Modi also used as cover for Israeli war plans? Asaduddin Owaisi has alleged so; Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar has denied it. It would be useful to know what Modi knew, and when, and whether he had sought advice from the foreign ministry and the intelligence community on the visit's timing.

Modi's subsequent behavior has compounded the surprise. He extended no public condolences for the killing of Ayatollah Khamenei, and offered no condemnation of the Israeli-US attack on Iran - formally a friendly country and a fellow member of both BRICS and the SCO. India currently chairs BRICS.

While India did sign a formal condolence book at the Iranian embassy a week later, Modi had already taken a different track. In a 48-hour period between March 1 and 3, he spoke to leaders of eight West Asian countries - Israel, Jordan, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman - condemning the attacks on them without naming Iran, and calling for an early cessation of hostilities. The clearest indicator that New Delhi remains a bystander in a conflict wracking its neighborhood came on March 4, when the IRIS Derna was sunk while returning from a friendly visit to an Indian Navy Fleet Review at Visakhapatnam. There was no protest, let alone any expression of regret, from New Delhi.

Modi is ultimately the one who shapes Indian policy, and he may have decided that given the new balance of forces in the region and India's national interests, it was prudent to cut Iran loose. But this could still have been done with some subtlety.

Through all of this, Modi did not speak to President Trump - and Trump did not call him, signaling a deeper dissonance. Trump's framework is transactional and coalitional: you are useful or you are not. India's simultaneous commitments to Iran (oil, Chabahar, BRICS), the Gulf states, Israel and the US make it valuable as a balancer in normal times. But Trump is not operating in normal times. He is assembling a wartime coalition, and a country that will not call him during a war he has started is not in it.

The tragedy is that India decisively abandoned its balanced posture in West Asia in favor of the US and Israel - but has still not joined the American coalition. In doing so, it has probably chosen the worst of both worlds.

(Manoj Joshi is a Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi)

# Anita Anand and S. Jaishankar meet again, this time in France



Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand met her Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on the sidelines of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Summit in France on March 26, 2026.  
Photo / Courtesy EAM, India

**MARCH 27, 2026  
PARIS (TIP)**

Anita Anand expressed appreciation for the warm hospitality extended to Prime Minister Mark Carney during his recent visit to India. The two ministers reaffirmed their commitment to continuing to implement the New Roadmap for Canada-India Relations. Anita Anand reiterated Canada's objective of concluding a comprehensive and commercially meaningful agreement this year, that will benefit both Canadian and Indian businesses.

The ministers welcomed upcoming

BY  
PRABHJOT  
SINGH



high-level engagements between the two countries to further deepen bilateral ties, including the ongoing public safety dialogue.

The ministers exchanged views on global and regional developments, including the Middle East conflict and its impact on global energy markets, energy security and supply chains. They underscored the importance of diplomacy to advance peace.

The ministers agreed to remain in close contact as the two countries advance an ambitious agenda in support of bilateral, regional and global stability.

## Canada tightens asylum rules with new law

Major changes in time frame for seeking Asylum

**MARCH 27, 2026  
TORONTO / NEW DELHI (TIP)**

The Canadian government has passed a new law to tighten its asylum rules. The law, called Bill C-12, or the Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders Act, received royal assent on March 26, 2026, and has now come into force.



Image for representational purposes only. iStock

According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the law has four main parts: it adds new rules for asylum claims, streamlines and accelerates the claims process, allows more information-sharing between government departments, and gives the government more power over immigration documents and applications.

Indian nationals are currently the largest group of asylum seekers in Canada. In the first six months of 2025, nearly 9,770 refugee claims were filed by Indian citizens more than from any other country placing India well ahead of nations like Mexico and Haiti. A significant number of these claims come from regions such as Punjab, often linked to political or security concerns.

More than 45,000 asylum claims have been made by Indian nationals since December 2012, according to official records from the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) of Canada.

The biggest changes affect asylum claims made on or after June 3, 2025.

Under the new rules, individuals who file an asylum claim more than one year after their first entry into Canada on or after June 24, 2020, will usually not have their cases referred to the IRB for a full

hearing. This rule applies even if the person has since left Canada and returned later, as the one-year period starts from that initial entry and does not reset.

Additionally, individuals who enter Canada irregularly from the US between official border crossings and file an asylum claim more than 14 days after entry will normally not receive a full IRB hearing.

The aim is to stop misuse of the asylum system and better handle sudden rises in claims, while still protecting people who face real danger of harm or persecution.

The government says the law will help secure borders fight organized crime—including fentanyl smuggling—and improve the overall fairness and efficiency of the immigration system.

Public Safety Canada noted that the legislation gives better tools to police against illegal activities at the border.

The law also enables federal, provincial, and territorial governments to share more personal information to improve checks and coordination. In cases of public interest, the immigration minister can cancel, suspend, or change visas, work permits, study permits, and other documents. The government can also stop accepting or processing new applications in some categories.

However, the law has drawn criticism from many groups. The Canadian Council for Refugees argues it weakens protection for refugees and may break Canada's promises under international rules and the Canadian Charter of Rights.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association and other rights groups have also raised concerns, calling the law an attack on refugee and migrant rights. They fear that it could place thousands at risk of violence or persecution by denying them access to a full hearing before the IRB. In some cases, claimants may only receive a quick risk check before removal—an approach critics argue lacks fairness and independence.

(Source: Tribune)

## Canada moves to ban display of Khalistan terror group symbols under new law

**THIS DEVELOPMENT COMES AS INDIA-CANADA RELATIONS HAVE IMPROVED UNDER PM MARK CARNEY**



A pro-Khalistan parade in Toronto.

Image credit/X

**MARCH 26, 2026  
OTTAWA (TIP)**

Canada's House of Commons has passed a new law that, for the first time, would criminalize the public display of flags and symbols of designated Khalistan terrorist organizations if used to promote hatred.

The Combatting Hate Act (Bill C-9) cleared its third reading on March 25, 2026, with a vote of 186-137. It now moves to the Senate for further review before it can become law.

The bill introduces a new offence under the Criminal Code for the willful promotion of hatred against any identifiable group through the public display of symbols linked to terrorist entities listed in Canada. This includes flags associated with Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) and the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF), both designated as terrorist organizations in Canada and India.

The bill also creates stronger penalties for hate-motivated crimes and creates new offences for intimidating or obstructing people seeking access to places of worship, schools or other religious and cultural sites.

Canadian media reports, including those by CBC News, confirm that the legislation targets the public glorification of terrorism through symbols, while protecting communities from hate incidents and blockades at religious places.

Indo-Canadian, Jewish and Hindu

community groups have welcomed the development, calling it a long-overdue step against years of reported harassment and vandalism. Supporters argue it will make it harder for extremist elements to operate openly.

However, the bill has faced opposition from Conservatives and the NDP, who have raised concerns about free speech. Civil liberties groups have also warned of potential overreach, although the offence requires proof of intent to willfully promote hatred. Private or historical displays are not automatically banned.

This development comes as India-Canada relations have improved under Prime Minister Mark Carney, who took office in March 2025. For decades, sections of the Indo-Canadian community have raised concerns about Khalistani extremist activities in Canada, including public displays linked to the Khalistan movement.

The Khalistan insurgency in Punjab largely ended in the 1990s in India, but some overseas groups have continued activities that have strained bilateral ties in the past.

If passed by the Senate and granted Royal Assent, the bill would mark a significant shift in Canada's approach to combating hate and the public promotion of terrorist symbols. Its enforcement will depend on how police and courts interpret the provisions in specific cases.

(Source: Tribune)

# Bay Area Telugu Association Hosts Grand Ugadi Celebrations 2026 in Milpitas, California

**MARCH 21, 2026  
MILPITAS (TIP)**

The Bay Area Telugu Association (BATA) successfully hosted its flagship annual Ugadi celebrations on March 21, 2026, in Milpitas, California. The day-long festivities began at 9:00 AM and continued through 10:00 PM, bringing together the Telugu community from across the Bay Area in a vibrant celebration of culture, tradition, and community spirit. Traditional Ugadi pachadi was served at the gathering, symbolizing the essence and key traditions of the festival.

The daytime program featured youth competitions in singing and dancing across multiple categories, including Tollywood, classical, and folk. This year marked a significant milestone—the 25th anniversary of BATA's youth talent competitions. Over 600 young participants showcased their talent, reflecting the strong cultural engagement among the next generation. Due to the overwhelming response from the community, multiple rooms were utilized at the venue to accommodate different categories of competitions, ensuring smooth coordination and enthusiastic participation.

With kids, youth, and adults present throughout the event, the entire venue was colorful and crowded, truly reflecting the lively and festive atmosphere of Ugadi celebrations.

The evening program was a major highlight, themed around the golden era of 1990s Telugu cinema. Performances by tiny kids, youth, and adults captivated the audience, with participation spanning generations—from children as young as five to enthusiastic parents joining in group performances. The cultural presentations beautifully captured the essence of Telugu heritage and the festive spirit of Ugadi. BATA team members worked diligently across various locations to train participants and bring out the best in every performance.

As a grand finale, renowned Tollywood playback



Consul Abhishek Sharma with the organizers



Milpitas City Mayor Carmen Montano



Santa Clara County District Attorney Jeff Rosen, Fremont City Mayor Raj Salwan



Renowned Tollywood playback singer Anjana Sowmya delivered a mesmerizing musical performance, rendering beloved Telugu songs that evoked nostalgia and delight.

singer Anjana Sowmya delivered a mesmerizing musical performance, rendering beloved Telugu songs that evoked nostalgia and delight.

The event was graced by several distinguished guests, including Abhishek Sharma from the Consulate General of India in San Francisco. In his address, Mr. Sharma commended BATA for its dedicated efforts in preserving and promoting the Telugu language and culture, while nurturing its relevance among younger generations in the Bay Area. Other prominent dignitaries included Santa Clara County District

Attorney Jeff Rosen, Fremont City Mayor Raj Salwan, and Milpitas City Mayor Carmen Montano, who joined the celebrations, addressed the gathering, and extended their Ugadi greetings to attendees.

In addition to cultural programming, BATA organized a parallel track focused on immigration topics, featuring local legal experts (Attorneys Navdeep Toor Meamber and Manohar T Reddy) who discussed "Protect Your Status: 2026 Immigration Updates for Professionals and Families", and Attorneys Kalpana V Peddibhotla and Komey Vishakan discussed on "Home and Belonging: The South Asian Future in America".

The event received tremendous support from the business community. Sanjiv Gupta CPA was the Grand Sponsor, Realtor Nagaraj Anniah was the "Powered By" sponsor, and the Gold Sponsor was "Srini Goli Real Estates." Other sponsors included Insta Service, PNG Jewelers, APEX Consulting, Kavya Foods, and Paatasala (Telugu School). Sri's Kitchen was the food sponsor.

The event also featured a vibrant exhibition area with numerous vendor booths showcasing clothing, jewelry, fashion, investments, education, and real estate services.

Expressing his gratitude, BATA President Siva K. thanked the attendees, participants, vendors, sponsors, and volunteers for their continued support and contribution to the event's grand success. He introduced the BATA Executive Committee—Varun, Hari S., Sandeep K., and Sanketh. The Cultural Committee includes Sridevi Pasupuleti, Srilu Veligeti, Sirisha Battula, Taraka Deepti, and Kiran Vinnakota. The Logistics Team includes Suresh Sivapuram, Ravi Pochiraju, Harish Inampudi, and Sudhakar Bairy. The Youth Committee includes Uday, Gowthami, and Sindhu. The Art & Design Committee includes Kalyani, Krishna Priya, Deepthi, and Shravanti. The Steering Committee consists of Ravi Thiruveedula, Kamesh Malla, Yashwant Kudaravalli, and Sumanth Pusuluri. The BATA Advisory Board—Jayaram Komati, Vijaya Aasuri, Veeru Vuppala, Prasad Mangina, Karun Veligeti, Ramesh Konda, Kalyan Kattamuri, and Harinath Chikoti—congratulated the team on making the event a grand success.

The Ugadi 2026 celebration stood as a testament to the unity, cultural pride, and enduring traditions of the Telugu community in the Bay Area.

(Based on a Press Release issued by Dr. Ramesh Konda, Advisory Board, Bay Area Telugu Association - BATA.org)



Performances by tiny kids and youth captivated the audience



Bay Area Telugu Association (BATA) Youth

# Bihar Diwas 2026: A Grand Showcase of Heritage and Youth in Houston



Consul General Mr. D.C. Manjunath in his opening remarks lauded the diaspora leaders for their active role in promoting and preserving the Culture of Bihar and Bharat abroad.

**MARCH 24, 2026  
HOUSTON (TIP)**

Building on the incredible momentum of last year's celebration in Dallas, the Consulate General of India, Houston, in association with Bihar Foundation, BANA

(Bihar Association of North America), BAANA (Bhojpuri Awadhi Association of North America) AMBUJ (American Mahasangh of Bihar-UP & Jharkhand) hosted a grand commemoration of Bihar Diwas 2026 on March 22nd. Held at India House, the



Consul General with community



A Welcome Dance



Kids captivated the audience with a graceful dance



Consul General with community



A View of the gathering enjoying the program

event was a testament to the vibrant spirit and cultural depth of the Bihari diaspora in Texas!

The highlight of the afternoon was the mesmerizing cultural performances by the younger generation. Children from the community brought the stage to life, demonstrating the extraordinary richness and diversity of Bihar's culture. Through traditional folk dances and music, these young cultural ambassadors showcased that the roots of Bihar are being nurtured with pride and passion abroad.

Complementing the performances were informative presentations that took the audience on a journey through Bihar's history, its contributions to ancient civilization, and its modern-day resurgence.

Consul General Mr. D.C. Manjunath lauded the diaspora leaders for their active role in promoting and preserving the Culture of Bihar and Bharat abroad. This program is part of the Consulate's ongoing outreach series, dedicated to Engaging directly with the community and Collaborating with grassroots organizations to celebrate our shared identity. A Consular and Tourism Information Desk added value to the event.

The event featured a special video address by Mr. Kundan Kumar (Secretary, Dept. of Industries, Bihar & CEO, Bihar Foundation). He expressed his heartfelt joy at the gathering and reinforced the state's global vision through the three pillars of Bonding, Branding & Business.

Thanks to Bihar Foundation, BANA, BAANA, AMBUJ. A special thanks to India House Houston and other partners for support.

Together, we keep the traditions of Bharat thriving across the globe

# Governor of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Visits Xavier University, Aruba



(L-R) Dr. Prasad Vijayashankar - Dean of Basic Science, Dr. Arun Dubey - Chief Academic Officer, His Excellency Alfonso Boekhoudt - Governor of Aruba, Ms. Bonnie McGowan - Dean of Nursing, Dr. Ravindra Veeranna - Dean of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Kevin Pawlak - Dean of Pre-Health



His Excellency Alfonso Boekhoudt - Governor of Aruba goes round the Xavier University campus



## MARCH 24, 2026 ARUBA (TIP)

Xavier University, Aruba, was honored to welcome His Excellency Alfonso Boekhoudt, Governor of Aruba and representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for an official visit to its campus on March 23, 2026.

The Governor was received by Chief Academic Officer Dr. Arun Dubey, alongside senior academic leadership including Dr. Kevin Pawlak, Dean of Pre-Health Sciences, Dr. Prasad Vijayashankar, Dean of Basic Sciences, Bonnie McGowan, Dean of Nursing, and Dr. Ravindra Veeranna, Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine. The visit marked an important opportunity to showcase the University's continued growth, academic excellence, and long-term investment in Aruba's educational infrastructure.

During the visit, His Excellency was given a comprehensive tour of Xavier's residential campus, where he engaged with leadership and observed the integrated student living and learning environment. The Governor expressed strong appreciation for the University's commitment to creating a supportive and high-quality academic setting for students from around the world.

The tour continued with a visit to Xavier's new academic facility currently under construction on the same campus grounds. The state-of-the-art building, spanning over 130,000 square feet, is scheduled to open for classes in September 2026. Designed to support expanded enrollment and new academic programs, the facility represents a significant milestone in the University's long-term development plan.

His Excellency conveyed that he was highly impressed by the scale, quality, and vision of the new development. He noted that the project stands as a meaningful investment in Aruba's future and will serve

as a valuable asset to the island's educational and professional landscape. The Governor also expressed his support, as the representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for the continued growth and success of the institution.

"We are deeply honored by the Governor's visit and his encouraging words," said Dr. Arun Dubey. "This recognition reinforces our mission to provide world-class education while contributing to the development of Aruba as a hub for health sciences and higher education."

Xavier University, Aruba extends its sincere gratitude to His Excellency for his time, support, and thoughtful engagement. The University looks forward to building a strong and lasting relationship with the Office of the Governor and continuing to contribute to Aruba's advancement in the years ahead.

(Based on a press release issued by Xavier University)

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## 12 U.S. Troops Injured in Attack on Saudi Base, Officials Say

MARCH 28, 2026  
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

An Iranian strike injured 12 U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, two of them seriously, on the Prince Sultan Air Base, two U.S. officials, who were not authorized to speak publicly, said on Friday.

The combined missile and drone attack amounted to one of the most serious breaches of American air defenses in the course of the monthlong war with Iran. At least two KC-135 aerial refueling planes also suffered significant damage in the attack.

There were also Israeli strikes on industrial and nuclear sites in Iran on

Friday, more Israeli evacuation warnings in Lebanon and threats from the Iran-allied Houthi militia in Yemen of the possibility of opening another front in the war.

Iranian media reported attacks on two nuclear sites, a uranium processing plant and a nuclear research facility, and the Israeli military claimed responsibility for those strikes. Two steel plants and another industrial complex were also hit. Iran threatened to retaliate against industries in the region with American shareholders or ties to Israel.

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

## Hacked files of Kash Patel before his time as F.B.I. director circulate online



Kash Patel, FBI Director

MARCH 27, 2026  
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

The release of materials from before Mr. Patel's time as F.B.I. chief appeared to be an effort to embarrass him as the war in Iran nears its first month. But

there were questions about who had carried out the cyberattack and when the intrusion had taken place, New York Times reports.

The files were posted on a website that included the name "Handala Team." Handala, a pro-Iranian hacktivist group, is associated with the country's Ministry of Intelligence and Security and is known for conducting "hack and leak" operations.

However, cybersecurity tools indicated that the website was being hosted by a computer server in Russia, which has a long history of hack-and-dump operations, including Democratic emails during the 2016 election.

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

# Embassy of India in Bucharest Hosts Hybrid B2B Meeting on Manpower Mobility



The event commenced with special remarks by Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Ambassador of India to Romania

**MARCH 23, 2026  
BUCHAREST (TIP):**

Embassy successfully organized a Hybrid B2B Meeting on Manpower Mobility on 20 March 2026 at the Embassy premises, bringing together leading Indian recruitment agencies and Romanian companies to explore avenues for enhanced cooperation in the field of workforce mobility. The event commenced with the welcome of distinguished guests and participants from both countries, including representatives joining virtually from India. The hybrid format enabled wider participation and facilitated real-time engagement

between stakeholders across geographies.

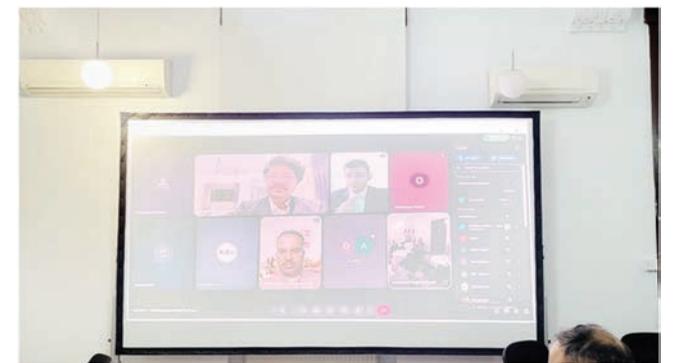
The programme featured special remarks by Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Ambassador of India to Romania. In his address, Ambassador Mohapatra underscored the steady growth in India-Romania bilateral relations and emphasized the immense potential for collaboration in the mobility of skilled and semi-skilled manpower. He highlighted India's global reputation as a dependable source of qualified, adaptable, and professionally trained human resources across a wide range of sectors, including construction, healthcare, hospitality, information technology, and engineering services. He also noted that structured and transparent mobility partnerships could contribute significantly to addressing Romania's workforce requirements while creating gainful employment opportunities for Indian workers.

Ambassador Mohapatra further emphasized that Romania, since its accession to the European Union has witnessed significant outward migration of its workforce to other EU member states, leading to persistent labour shortages across key sectors of its economy. It is estimated that around 4 million Romanians are currently working abroad, creating gaps particularly in construction, manufacturing, transport, hospitality, and healthcare sectors. To address these shortages, Romania has progressively increased its annual work permit quotas approximately 100,000 for foreign workers in recent years. In this context, Romania is increasingly looking towards India as a reliable and significant partner for sourcing skilled and semi-skilled manpower, given India's large talent pool and proven track record in international workforce deployment.

The B2B session witnessed active and enthusiastic participation from a wide spectrum of prominent Indian recruitment companies, including Zen International, Kukje Overseas, Prudential Manpower Ltd., Rokadiya Overseas, Seagull International, Veltrix Global Connect, Diisaa International (Kolkata), Ingress Global Consulting LLP, GM-Recruitments, and BSL Group. Representatives from these organizations delivered concise presentations highlighting their experience, sectoral specialization, international placements, and adherence to ethical recruitment practices. They also shared insights into their operational capabilities and readiness to partner with Romanian employers in meeting specific manpower requirements. Romanian companies participated with equal interest, introducing their organizations and outlining their workforce needs across various sectors.



Romanian companies participated enthusiastically, engaging in introductions and interactive discussions



Several Indian recruitment companies joined virtually and gave presentation

The interactive format of the session enabled both sides to exchange detailed information and gain a better understanding of each other's expectations, regulatory environments, and business practices.

A focused and engaging Q&A session followed, during which participants discussed practical aspects such as recruitment procedures, visa and work permit processes, compliance requirements, worker welfare measures, and potential partnership frameworks. These discussions provided clarity on key operational issues and helped identify pathways for future collaboration.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks, reaffirming the Embassy's continued commitment to facilitating closer economic and people-to-people ties between India and Romania. The Embassy emphasized its role as a proactive facilitator in promoting structured manpower mobility and fostering mutually beneficial partnerships between businesses of both countries.

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



Group photo : Hybrid B2B Meeting on Manpower Mobility

**“Listen with curiosity. Speak with honesty. Act with integrity. The greatest problem with communication is we don't listen to understand. We listen to reply. When we listen with curiosity, we don't listen with the intent to reply. We listen for what's behind the words.”**  
- Roy T. Bennett, Author

## Ambassador Dr. Mohapatra holds talks with Alexandria local authorities and business leaders



Ambassador met with Mr. Victor Dragusin, Mayor of Alexandria



Ambassador participated in the Romania-India Business Forum

**MARCH 25, 2026**  
**BUCHAREST (TIP):**

Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Ambassador of India to Romania visited Alexandria, Teleorman County, on 24th March 2026 to participate in the Romania-India Business Forum and to hold a series of engagements with local authorities and business leaders aimed at strengthening India-Romania economic and investment cooperation at the regional level.

During the visit, the Ambassador took part in the Romania-India Business Forum, where he interacted with representatives of the local administration and the business community. Discussions focused on exploring opportunities for collaboration in key sectors such as industry, energy, agriculture, information technology, and investment, including the promotion of joint ventures and technology partnerships. The engagement highlighted Teleorman County's growing potential as a destination for Indian businesses and underscored the importance of fostering closer economic ties between India and Romania at the regional level.

As part of his visit, the Ambassador toured the Electrotel factory in Alexandria and met with its CEO, Mr. Vasile Velciu. The discussions focused on industrial cooperation, manufacturing capabilities, and opportunities to strengthen India-Romania supply chain partnerships, particularly in value-added manufacturing and component production. The visit provided valuable insights into the region's industrial ecosystem and its potential for deeper collaboration with Indian companies.

The Ambassador also met with Mr. Adrian Ionut Gadea, President of the Teleorman County Council, to discuss avenues for strengthening regional



Ambassador met with Mr. Adrian Ionut Gadea, President of the Teleorman County Council

cooperation and advancing bilateral economic partnerships. The discussions highlighted the county's strong potential in sectors such as automobiles, electrical equipment, electronics, and chemicals, and explored opportunities for increased Indian investment in these areas, including through business delegations and sector-specific missions.

In a separate meeting, the Ambassador met with Mr. Victor Dragusin, Mayor of Alexandria, to explore opportunities for enhancing local-level cooperation and expanding economic and community ties between India and Romania. The discussions emphasized the interest of Indian companies in investing in the municipality, particularly in the automobile, electrical, electronics, and chemical sectors, as well as the importance of fostering people-to-people engagement,



Ambassador toured the Electrotel Factory in Alexandria and met with CEO, Mr. Vasile Velciu

educational exchanges, and cultural cooperation.

The visit underscored India's commitment to strengthening its economic partnership with Romania by engaging closely with regional stakeholders and promoting mutually beneficial investment opportunities. It also reflected the growing interest of Indian companies in contributing to Romania's industrial and economic development and in building long-term, sustainable partnerships with regional and local authorities.

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

## 'Rumors of lockdown false': govt asks people to stay calm amid West Asia crisis

MARCH 27, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The government on Friday, March 27, strongly dismissed rumors of a lockdown in India even as it moved to secure citizens from the impact of high fuel costs by changing excise rules and absorbing duty cut burden on fuel.

Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri said the rumours of a lockdown are false and no such proposal is being considered.

"The global situation remains in a flux, and we are closely monitoring developments across energy, supply chains, and essential commodities on a real-time basis.

"Under the leadership of PM Modi all necessary steps are being taken to ensure uninterrupted availability of fuel, energy, and other critical supplies for our citizens. We are fully prepared to handle emerging challenges.

"India has consistently demonstrated resilience in the face of global uncertainties, and we will continue to act in a timely, proactive, and coordinated manner," Puri said

He said the rumors of a lockdown in India are completely false. "Let me state this clearly, there is no such proposal under consideration by the Government of India. In such times, it is important that we remain calm, responsible, and united. Attempts to spread rumours and create panic in such a situation are irresponsible and harmful," he said.

# Centre cuts excise duty on fuel, raises export costs to save consumers from fuel price rise

MARCH 27, 2026

**GUWAHATI/KOLKATA (TIP):** The Indian government on Friday, March 27, cut excise duty on fuel and withdrew tax rebate and duty exemption benefits on exports of petrol, high-speed diesel and aviation turbine fuel, amending the Central Excise Rules, 2017, with immediate effect.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that in view of the West Asia crisis, the central excise duty on petrol and diesel for domestic consumption has been reduced by Rs 10 per litre each.

The move will provide protection to consumers from the rise in prices.

"PM Modi has always ensured that citizens are protected from vagaries of supply and costs of essential goods. Further, duties have been imposed on exports of diesel at Rs 21.50 per litre and on ATF at Rs 29.50 per litre. This will ensure adequate availability of these products for domestic consumption. Parliament has been notified," she said.

The move, notified by the Ministry of Finance's Department of Revenue, effectively closes two key provisions that exporters of these fuels had long used to either claim refunds on excise duty paid or to lift goods without paying duty before export.

The change in the country's excise tax rules will directly affect the export of petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel from India.

The notification has been amended to say that exporters of these three fuels will no longer be entitled to claim tax rebates and duty-free export benefits that were previously available to them.

The amendment inserts a specific exclusion clause into Rule 18 and Rule 19 of the Central Excise Rules, 2017, barring motor spirit commonly known as petrol, high-speed diesel oil and aviation turbine fuel from the benefits available under both provisions. The notification was issued under the powers vested in the Centre under Section 37 of the Central Excise Act, 1944. The government has carved out a specific exemption for public sector oil companies exporting these three fuels to



Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. State-owned oil companies supplying fuel to these four neighbouring countries will continue to operate under the earlier tax regime and will not be hit by the withdrawal of benefits.

The exemption signals New Delhi's intent to protect its strategic fuel supply arrangements with immediate neighbours even as it tightens the overall export tax framework for petroleum products.

The rules have come into force with immediate effect, leaving no transition window for affected exporters to adjust their operations or financial planning. The notification has been signed by Dheeraj Sharma, Under-Secretary in the Tax Research Unit of the Department of Revenue.

The government has offered no official explanation accompanying the notification for the rationale behind the sudden withdrawal of export benefits. However, the move is widely seen as an effort to discourage fuel exports by private players at a time when the government is keen to ensure domestic availability and prevent any misuse of export promotion incentives on strategically sensitive commodities.

Source: TNS

## India fully secure on fuel for next many months, reserve capacity for 74 days exists: Petroleum Ministry

MARCH 27, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Government on Friday, March 27, reiterated that India was fully secure on fuel supplies for the next many months because of which the talk of dependence on strategic reserves, meant for emergencies, is redundant and secondary. The Petroleum Ministry said needless misinformation is circulating suggesting that only six to ten days of stocks are there in the country.

"India has 74 days of total reserve capacity and actual stock cover is around 60 days right now, including crude stocks, products stocks and the dedicated strategic storage in caverns even as we are on the 29th day of the Middle East crisis. Nearly two months of steady supply is available for every Indian citizen regardless of what happens globally. Next 2 months of crude procurement has also been secured. India is completely secure for next many months

**Fuel reserves are maintained at two levels – Oil Marketing companies IOC, BPCL and HPCL have around 67 to 70 days of reserves and then there are strategic national reserves at three places in India which have 53 lakh metric tonnes of petroleum for emergencies.**

and the quantity in strategic cavern storage becomes secondary in such a supply situation. Therefore, any representation that India's reserves are depleted or insufficient should be dismissed with the disdain it deserves," Ministry said.

Fuel reserves are maintained at two levels — Oil Marketing companies IOC, BPCL and HPCL have around 67 to 70 days of reserves and then there are strategic national reserves at three places in India which have 53 lakh metric tonnes of petroleum for emergencies.

The Ministry said India is an oasis of energy security.

"We are the world's fourth largest refiner and fifth largest exporter of petroleum products, supplying refined fuel to over 150 countries. Because India is a net exporter to the world, domestic petrol and diesel availability is structurally assured. All 1 lakh-plus retail fuel outlets across the country are open and dispensing fuel without interruption. Not a single outlet has been asked to ration supply," officials said.

They said where isolated instances of panic buying occurred at select pumps, they were driven by deliberate misinformation spread by certain videos in

social media.

"Despite the surge in demand on such pumps, fuel was dispensed to all the consumers and oil company depots have been operational through the night to ramp up supplies. Steps have also been taken by oil companies to increase credit to petrol pumps to over 3 days from the earlier allowed one day in order to ensure that there is no shortage of petrol and diesel at any pump due to working capital issues of pump owners," Ministry reiterated today.

Government added that across the world countries are dealing with price increases, rationing, odd-even vehicle restrictions, and forced station closures.

Few countries have declared "National Energy Emergency".

India does not feel the need to take such extreme measures, the officials said, asking people to maintain calm and not heed false news.

## India firms up its promise of emission cuts

MARCH 26, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** India on March 25 approved enhanced climate targets for the 2031-2035 period under the Paris Agreement, raising its commitments on emissions, clean energy, and forests at a time when the United States has withdrawn from the global climate framework and several developed nations are scaling back ambition.

The Union cabinet approved three quantitative goals as part of India's revised nationally determined contribution (NDC) — the formal pledge each country makes under the Paris Agreement to limit greenhouse gas emissions. The new targets represent a step-up from the goals India set for the 2030 period, announced in August 2022.

India now aims to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP — the amount of greenhouse gases produced per unit of economic output — by 47% by 2035 from 2005 levels, up from the earlier target of 45% by 2030. It has committed to drawing 60% of its cumulative installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources by 2035, against the previous goal of 50% by 2030. And it has raised its target for carbon sinks — CO<sub>2</sub> absorbed through forest and tree cover — to 3.5-4 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent by 2035, from 2.5-3 billion tonnes by 2030.

# India not a dalal nation, S Jaishankar tells all-party meet on Pak mediation

MARCH 27, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** India cannot act as a "dalal nation" (dalal meaning broker) in global geopolitics, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said at an all-party meeting on the West Asia crisis, as the Opposition flagged Pakistan's role in mediating talks between the United States and Iran, sources told India Today.

Responding to the concerns, the government said Pakistan's role as a conduit was not new and had been continuing since 1981, with Washington using Islamabad as a channel to remain engaged with Tehran over the years. Jaishankar is learnt to have underlined that there was "nothing new" in such mediation efforts, according to sources.

The government also told the Opposition that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had conveyed to US President Donald Trump that the war in West Asia must end soon as it is hurting all sides.

The meeting, chaired by Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, was held at Parliament and attended by senior ministers including Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri. Leaders from across parties, including Congress, Samajwadi Party, JD(U), and CPI(M), were present.

Jaishankar's remarks came amid



Pakistan's stepped-up efforts to position itself as an intermediary in the conflict. Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said Islamabad was "ready and honoured" to facilitate "meaningful and conclusive talks" between the US and Iran, adding that it was willing to host negotiations for a comprehensive settlement, subject to the consent of both sides.

The statement followed reports that Pakistan, along with Egypt and Turkiye, was engaged in backchannel efforts to broker peace. Sharif also spoke to Iran President Masoud Pezeshkian, expressing concern over the escalating hostilities and calling for de-escalation.

US President Donald Trump amplified Sharif's remarks by sharing his post on Truth Social. Earlier, Trump had said

Washington would pause threatened strikes on Iranian power plants for five days, citing "very good and productive conversations" with Tehran, though he did not identify the interlocutor.

International reports suggest Pakistan has been actively relaying messages between Washington and Tehran. According to the Financial Times, Pakistan's military leadership, including Field Marshal Asim Munir, reached out to Trump, while CNN reported that US proposals were conveyed to Iran through Pakistani intermediaries.

Officials said Pakistan's intelligence channels delivered a US proposal to Tehran, with Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar following up with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araqchi. Iran has acknowledged receiving the proposal and indicated that talks, if held, could take place in Pakistan or Turkey, but no formal response or timeline has been announced.

Despite backchannel activity, Iran has publicly denied that any negotiations are underway and has taken a hardline stance against engaging with the administration of US President Donald Trump.

Senior Iranian officials have dismissed the idea of talks, calling US actions a "betrayal of diplomacy" and asserting that their military remains focused on defending national sovereignty.

## In setback for Nirav Modi, London court rejects his petition against extradition to India

MARCH 26, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** In a major setback for fugitive businessman Nirav Modi, the London High Court has rejected his petition to reopen proceedings against his extradition order by the UK courts, according to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

According to a CBI release, Nirav Modi's petition to reopen proceedings against his extradition order by UK courts was rejected today by the High Court of Justice, King's Bench Division, London.

"The matter was strongly argued by the Crown Prosecution Service advocate, ably assisted by a dedicated CBI team, including investigating officers who travelled to London for the hearing," the statement read. The court observed that the re-open petition and the circumstances surrounding it are not exceptional so as to make it appropriate to re-open it.

Last year, the UK High Court had cleared Nirav Modi's extradition to India. The decision, issued on November 9, 2022, upheld a previous ruling by Westminster Magistrates' Court and dismissed Modi's request to escalate the case to the UK Supreme Court.

Nirav Modi's plea against extradition will also come up before the Westminster Court in April, which will decide his fate on being sent back to India. He can either approach the European Commission for Human Rights to appeal against extradition or



wait for the outcome of the Westminster court.

Modi is an accused in the Rs 13,000 crore PNB fraud, which he orchestrated with his uncle Mehul Choksi. He is accused of siphoning off Rs 6,498.20 crore of the total scam amount.

There are three separate criminal proceedings against Nirav in India. First, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) case of fraud on PNB, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) case relating to the alleged laundering of the proceeds of that fraud and another case pertaining to criminal proceedings involving alleged interference with evidence and witnesses in the CBI proceedings.

## Periasamy Kumaran appointed India's next high commissioner to UK

MARCH 27, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Ministry of External Affairs announced the appointment of Periasamy Kumaran, currently serving as Secretary (East) in the MEA, as the next High Commissioner of India to the United Kingdom.

In an official statement on Thursday, March 26, the Ministry said, "Shri Periasamy Kumaran (IFS:1992), presently Secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to the United Kingdom. He is expected to take up the assignment shortly." Kumaran, a 1992-batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), brings with him extensive diplomatic experience across multiple regions. He began his career as Third Secretary at the Indian Embassy in Cairo (1994-1997), followed by postings in Tripoli (1997-2000) and Brussels (2000-2003). He later served as Deputy Secretary (Europe West) in the MEA (2003-2005) before taking charge as Regional Passport Officer in Bengaluru (2005-2007). His overseas assignments also include serving as Counsellor in Islamabad (2007-2009) and Washington (2009-2011), as well as Deputy High Commissioner in Colombo (2011-2014).

Subsequently, Kumaran held the position of Joint Secretary (Consular, Passport & Visa Division) in the MEA from 2014 to 2016. He went on to serve as Ambassador of India to Qatar (2016-2020) and later as High Commissioner of India to Singapore (2020-2023).



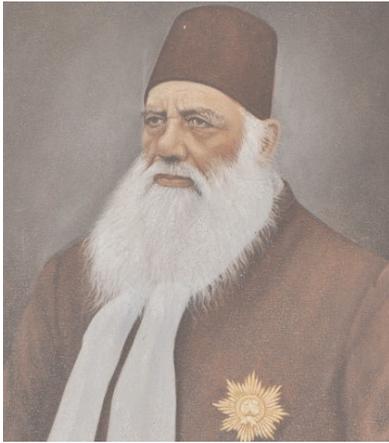
# India in history this Week

## MARCH 27 TO APRIL 2

### 27 MARCH

1898 Death anniversary of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who introduced modern education for the Muslims of India.

2010 India successfully test-fires Dhanush and Prithvi 2 equipped with nuclear technology at Chandipur, Odisha.



### 28 MARCH

1941 Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose escaped from detention and reached Berlin.

1977 Morarji Desai formed the government in India in 1977.

2000 West Indies' Courtney Walls broke Kapil Dev's record 435 wickets.

2013 The Internet's biggest attack on history.



2015 Saina Nehwal became the world's number one female badminton player.

### 29 MARCH

1857 Soldier Mangal Pandey became known as a freedom fighter in the Bengal Native Infantry revolts against the British rule in India and the long-running 1857 Sepoy Freedom Struggle.

1943 Laxman Nayak, a freedom fighter and leader, was hanged in Barhampur jail.

1954 The Indian Institute of Public Administration was inaugurated.

1982 Telugu Desam Party Formed in 1982 by T. Rama Rao.



1999 Nearly 90 people died in the 1999 Himalayan

earthquake in the foothills of the Himalayas.

2008 370 cities of the world started celebrating Earth Hour in 2008 for the first time to save energy.



1913 Famous Hindi poet and writer Bhavani Prasad was born on this day.

### 30 MARCH

1919 Mahatma Gandhi announced his opposition to the Rowlatt Act.

1949 The state of Rajasthan was established in 1949 and Jaipur was made its capital.

1977 Swami Agnivesh merged his Bharatiya Arya Sabha Party with the Janata Party in 1977.

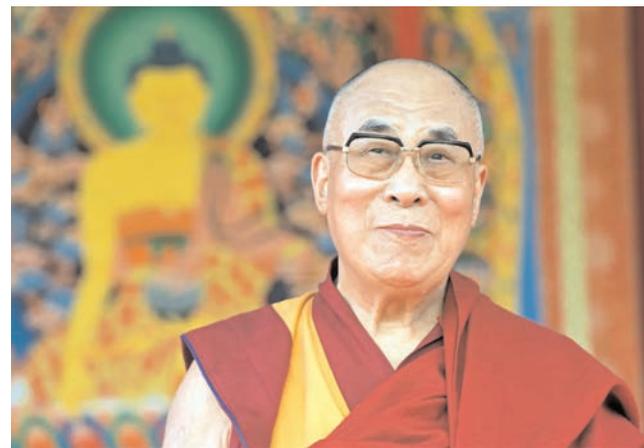


1932 Regal Cinema Hall, one of the famous and old cinema halls of Delhi since 1932, was closed in 2017.

1899 In 1899, Cyril Radcliffe, who drew the line of the India-Pakistan divide, was born.

1664 Guru Har Kishan Singh, the eighth Guru of the Sikhs, died on this day in 1664.

### 31 MARCH



1959 The Buddhist leader Dalai Lama was granted asylum in India after his exile from Tibet.

1964 Electric tram last run in Bombay.

1774 The first post of the Postal Service opened in India in 1774.

1867 Praya Samaj was established in 1867 in

Mumbai.

2011 According to census data, India's population has increased to 121 crore (1 billion 21 crore) in 2011. This is 17.64% more than what was calculated ten years ago.

1504 The second Sikh Guru Guru Angad Dev was born.

1865 India's first female doctor Anandi Gopal Joshi was born.

### 01 APRIL

1935 The Reserve Bank of India started functioning from 1 April 1935. For this, the British made the Reserve Bank of India Act 1934 law.

1839 Kolkata Medical College and Hospital was started in 1839.

1878 The new museum building in Kolkata was opened to the public in 1878.

1912 Delhi was declared the capital and a province of India.

1936 Odisha was carved out of Bihar and created a new state in 1936.

1969 India's first nuclear power station started in the Tarapur region of Maharashtra in 1969.



1973 The 'Tiger Bachao' campaign was launched in 1973 to save cheetahs in India's Corbett National Park.

1976 Doordarshan Corporation was established in 1976 by separating Doordarshan from radio.

1992 The Eighth Five Year Plan started in 1992.

1621 Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru of the Sikhs, was born in 1621.

### 02 APRIL

1849 British Punjab was established in 1849.

1942 The Congress rejected the proposal of the Cripps Mission in 1942.

1984 Astronaut Rakesh Sharma became the first Indian astronaut to go to space.

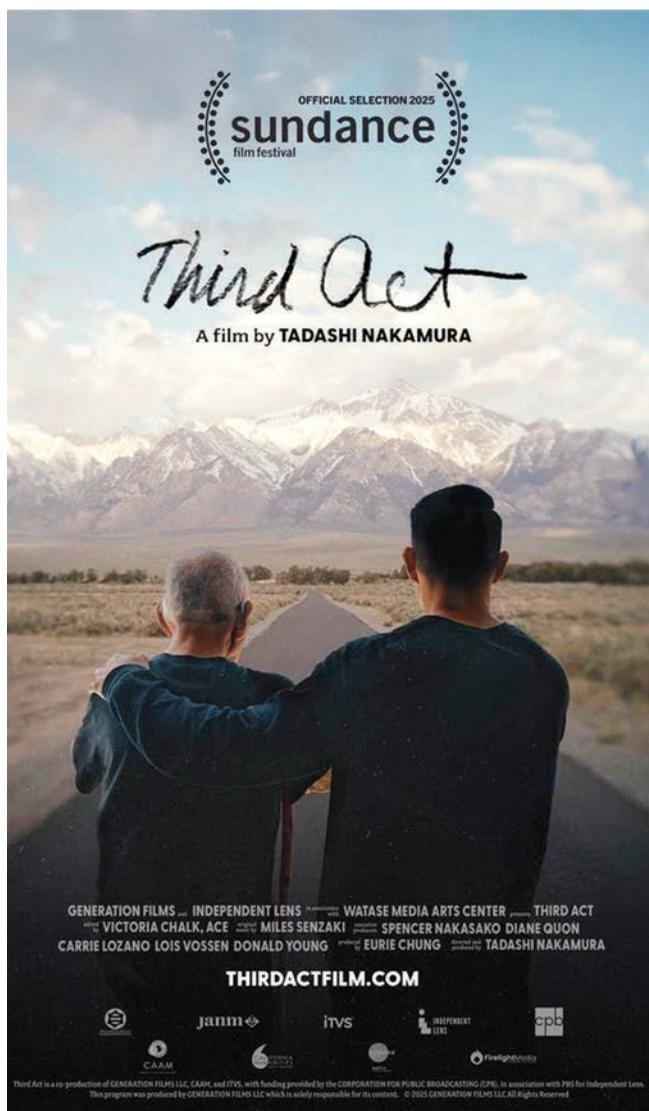


1997 Sumita Sinha set a record in 1997 by allowing her to cross over 3200 kg of trucks.

1983 India won the World Cup for the second time on the same day in 2011, after winning the first World Cup in 1983.

2017 In 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the country's longest, Chenani-Nashri road tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir to the nation.

# “REMEMBRANCE IS RESISTANCE TO ERASURE”: THEME OF UPCOMING FIFTEENTH REMEMBRANCE FILM FEST



Third Act, poster.

Credit [www.2026.filmsofremembrance.org](http://www.2026.filmsofremembrance.org)

## BY MABEL PAIS

“REMEMBRANCE IS RESISTANCE TO ERASURE” is the theme of the upcoming REMEMBRANCE Film Festival. As a response to the current climate of erasure and whitewashing of American history continues in the United States, the 15th Annual Films of Remembrance film program presented by the Nichi Bei Foundation will take place in downtown Los Angeles and in Gardena, California on March 28 and March 29, 2026.

This carefully curated selection of 10 engaging and prolific films will shed light on this little-known chapter of American history while serving as powerful lessons for today’s assaults on civil liberties. The films will be presented together with inspiring discussions with the filmmakers following the screenings. The theme for this year’s showcase, REMEMBRANCE IS RESISTANCE TO ERASURE, is prevalent throughout the programming and feels more important now than ever before.

This annual multi-film event is the premier showcase of films commemorating the forced incarceration of more than 120,000 US citizens of Japanese descent in American concentration camps during World War II in the 1940s. Film selections range from creative animated or narrative shorts to impactful short and feature-length documentaries, including the Showcase Presentation of the award-winning Sundance Film Festival film “THIRD ACT” directed by the renowned local Los Angeles filmmaker Tad Nakamura. He will be in attendance to present the film and lead post screening discussions.



Remembrance Film.

-Credit [www.2026.filmsofremembrance.org](http://www.2026.filmsofremembrance.org)

“At a time when the history of people of color is being sanitized, and celebrations of our experiences are being erased from federal government agencies, it’s all the more important that we remember the destruction of civil liberties during World War II and the lessons for today,” said Kenji G. Taguma, executive producer of Films of Remembrance and president of the presenting organization, the Nichi Bei Foundation. “In the face of such sanitization, remembrance is resistance to erasure. We cannot let our history be marginalized again. There’s just too much at stake.”

This sentiment is echoed by Koji Lau-Ozawa, Ph.D., a Films of Remembrance Committee member who teaches in the Anthropology Department at UCLA: “In over 17 National Parks across the nation, historical signs related to topics like slavery, Native American history, and climate change are being taken down,” says Lau-Ozawa. “The Films of Remembrance program is directly standing up against this kind of historical erasure.” He also serves on the Nichi Bei Foundation board.

“I feel that all of the films are important and relevant,” adds UC San Diego Ethnic Studies Professor Christen Sasaki, Ph.D., a Films of Remembrance Committee member. “In the classroom, I always tell my students that history is alive and occurring in the present. We can all learn so much about the present by learning about the past — from mass incarceration to community building and resistance.”

Films of Remembrance commemorates the signing of Executive Order 9066 by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Order 9066 put the wheels in motion to uproot a people, an active community of residents living in the United States.

According to California State University, Sacramento Ethnic Studies Professor Wendi Yamashita, Ph.D.: “Such films are more important now than ever, as President Donald Trump is invoking the Enemy Aliens Act of 1798 to justify his plans for mass deportation — the very act that was used to justify our incarceration. These films are

always relevant because they document an important moment in U.S. history teaching us about the fragility of American democracy and civil rights. Today, we are seeing the violent erasure of history by the federal government, and these films refuse that erasure. They remember state violence and explore the lingering trauma of state violence in deeply personal and intimate ways.”

“I really loved ‘Kioku: Remembrance’ because it provided me with so much hope,” reflects Yamashita. “It was so powerful to see students of all ethnic backgrounds who were so passionate about preservation and Japanese American incarceration history in their hometown. I also appreciated ‘Yonsei’ and ‘Misadventures of a Nisei Week Queen’ for the way it explored our Japanese American girl/womanhood in relation to incarceration and identity. I really connect with these films.”

“I appreciate the fact that many of the filmmakers are expanding how we think about incarceration and its enduring impact through generations — as generational trauma but also generational healing,” adds Sasaki. “One of the films that I’m particularly looking forward to seeing is Tad Nakamura’s ‘THIRD ACT.’ Having gone through the UCLA Asian American Master’s program and being a part of Asian American Studies, I’ve felt Bob Nakamura’s impact on the community.”

### EVENT VENUES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

**SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2026, 11 A.M. TO 7:30 P.M.**

Tateuchi Democracy Forum (Japanese American National Museum), 100 N. Central Ave., Los Angeles' Little Tokyo

**SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2026, 11:30 A.M. TO 7:15 P.M.**

Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute. 1964 W. 162nd St. (Main Hall), Gardena, CA.

For tickets and more information on the forthcoming event, visit the website - [www.2026.filmsofremembrance.org](http://www.2026.filmsofremembrance.org).

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

## DOCU FILM OF NOTE

BY MABEL PAIS

### AFTER THE RAIN: PUTIN'S STOLEN CHILDREN COME HOME (2024)

**\*\*THE DOC NYC GRAND JURY NOMINEE\*\***

Director: Sarah McCarthy;  
Producers: Olga Bekshmel'nitsyna, George Chignell, Natalia Libet, Sarah McCarthy, Sasha Odynova;  
Executive Producers: Sheila Nevins, Isabell Freer, Sarah Laita, Maria Logan, Jay Taylor  
Cinematography by: Denis Sinyakov; Edited by: Liana Del Giudice, Jeanna Mortimer  
Genre: Documentary; Run Time: 79 minutes;  
Language: Ukrainian with English Subtitles

**"AFTER THE RAIN: PUTIN'S STOLEN CHILDREN COME HOME"** is a powerful and deeply human documentary from director Sarah McCarthy that confronts one of the most harrowing humanitarian crises of the modern era. Set in a forest retreat on the Baltic Sea, the film follows a group of Ukrainian families as they begin the slow and painful process of healing after their children were illegally deported to Russia during the ongoing war.

At the heart of the story are the children themselves – survivors of forced separation – who begin to rediscover trust and joy through animal-assisted therapy with golden retrievers and Palomino horses. In the hands of compassionate counselors, their trauma gradually unfolds, revealing the emotional and psychological toll of displacement, fear, and resilience.



AFTER THE RAIN. -Credit: <https://aftertherainfilm.com>

McCarthy's lens captures not only the quiet moments of recovery but also the families' unwavering determination to reclaim what was taken from them. The result is an intimate portrait of strength and renewal that connects personal healing with global accountability – the very atrocities that led to the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for Vladimir Putin.

Executive produced by acclaimed Academy Award-nominated producer and director Sheila Nevins,

AFTER THE RAIN made its world premiere at DOC NYC, earning praise for its emotional honesty and cinematic restraint, along with a nomination for the Grand Jury Prize in International Competition. It is both a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and a haunting reminder of the cost of war on its most innocent victims.

Watch a preview - [https://youtu.be/V8h7xcZ9R\\_Q](https://youtu.be/V8h7xcZ9R_Q)

**RELEASE DATE: PREMIERES EXCLUSIVELY ON INDIEPIX UNLIMITED ON MARCH 27, 2026**

## DANCE IN THE NEW JERSEY COMMUNITY



Dance classes. -Credit: Courtesy, [www.njpac.org](http://www.njpac.org)

BY MABEL PAIS

Dance In Our Community — NJPAC's series of free dance classes taught by leading choreographers and dancers in the state - comes to New Jersey. Contemporary dance styles include Horton Technique and Jersey Club, and will include choreography from famed companies Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Carolyn Dorfman Dance. The series will culminate with the annual Ailey Day taking place on April 11 at NJPAC.

All levels and movement abilities are welcome and supported; participants are encouraged to wear comfortable clothes and bring your positive energy.

RSVP @ [https://njpac.org/event/dance-in-our-community/?utm\\_source=multiblock&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=dioc](https://njpac.org/event/dance-in-our-community/?utm_source=multiblock&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dioc)

### CLASSES

Date: Apr 4, 2026 @ 2PM

Location: First Presbyterian and Trinity Church

Teaching Artists: Carolyn Dorfman, Freddie Moore and Charles Scheland

With an emphasis on center-driven movement, weight transfer and breath phrasing, this contemporary modern class explores the essence of solo and ensemble performance.

### INSTRUCTORS

Carolyn Dorfman, Freddie Moore & Charles Scheland  
Carolyn Dorfman, Choreographer and Founding Artistic Director of Carolyn Dorfman Dance (CDD), is a creator of evocative dances that reflect her concerns about the human condition. Her interdisciplinary and intercultural approach on the stage and in the community explores the rich tapestry of human experience, tradition and stories. Celebrating 43 years, CDD creates immersive performance and teaching residencies that use art and process to build connection and understanding in diverse communities. Touring nationally and internationally, her 11-member, multi-ethnic company appears at major theaters, festivals, universities and non-traditional performance venues. She has received many artistic and civic awards and is honorary Co-Chair of NJPAC's Dance Advisory Committee.

Freddie Moore, a native of Jersey City, was a featured artist with Ailey II, Donald Byrd/The Group, Forces of Nature, Gallman's Newark Dance Theater and Blue Mercury Dancing Company. Moore has amassed credits in musicals, national television shows, music videos and documentaries. An award-winning dancer and master of the modern Horton Technique, Moore has developed performing arts curricula for schools and

community-based programs and works with churches around the world to develop liturgical dance ministries. He is the Rehearsal Director for Ailey Student Performance Group (ASPG), Ailey Certificate Program Advisor and a faculty member at The Ailey School, Restoration Youth Arts Academy, Hudson Repertory Dance Theater as well as the Founder and Artistic Director of Footprints Dance Company.

Charles Scheland (he/him) is a modern dance artist based in New York City. He joined Carolyn Dorfman Dance in 2021 and is a senior teacher of Dorfman's technique and repertory. He is a certified Ailey Horton Technique instructor and is on faculty at The Ailey School and Kanyok Arts Initiative and has been guest faculty at the Juilliard School, Steps on Broadway, Dance Theatre of Harlem and the School at Jacob's Pillow. He has also danced for Site-Specific Dances, RIOULT Dance NY, Michael Mao Dance and been a guest artist with Alison Cook-Beatty Dance, Buglisi Dance Theater, New England Dance Theater, Neville Dance Theatre and Princeton Dance Theater.

Learn more @ <https://njpac.org/event/dance-in-our-community>

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

# NJPAC WITH OTHER COLLABORATORS CELEBRATES APRIL JAZZ APPRECIATION MONTH

## BY MABEL PAIS

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) with SOPAC (South Orange Performing Arts Center) presents Jazz concerts during April Jazz Appreciation Month.

Below is the schedule of performances

### THURSDAY, APRIL 2 @ 7:30 P.M. JULIAN LAGE QUARTET @ SOPAC

Julian Lage - guitar  
Jorge Roedor - bass  
Kenny Wollesen - drums  
John Medeski - keyboard

As part of NJPAC's continued partnership with SOPAC, the organization is committed to presenting exceptional jazz artists to launch the April 2026 Jazz Appreciation Month with this intimate concert bridging tradition and innovation with remarkable ease. Widely regarded as one of the most distinctive guitar voices of his generation, Julian Lage is joined by an acclaimed quartet of longtime collaborators: bassist Jorge Roeder, drummer Kenny Wollesen, and keyboardist John Medeski. Together, the ensemble explores music that is dynamic, conversational, and deeply collaborative — music that evolves in real time through interplay and shared intuition.

Tickets can be reserved @ SOPAC.org. This event will be held at the South Orange Performing Arts Center at One SOPAC Way, South Orange, NJ.

### SATURDAY APRIL 4 @ 6:00 P.M. BAPTIST CHURCH JAZZ VESPERS | WINARD HARPER & JELI POSSE

Co-presented by Bethany Baptist Church and NJPAC, the free monthly Bethany Vesper Concert Series continues combining jazz music and worship. Jazz Appreciation Month welcomes drum wizard Winard Harper with his juicy jazz combo, Jeli Posse. Their big sound swings from sophisticated to soulful to hard bop to blues. Featuring Ted Chubb on trumpet, Jalin Shiver on sax, Anthony Perez on bass, Brandon McCune on piano, and Ahadu Chase on percussion.

Tickets: FREE. This event will be held at Bethany Baptist Church, 275 W. Market Street, Newark, NJ.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 16 @ 7:30 P.M. - JAZZ JAMS AT CLEMENT'S PLACE

Co-presented by NJPAC's Jazz Advisory Committee and Rutgers RU\_N's Institute for Jazz Studies, Jazz Jams at Clement's Place is a monthly Jazz Jams Session concert series featuring top-flight New Jersey musicians directed by pianist and bandleader, James Austin, Jr. T. Audience members immerse themselves in the relaxing sounds of jazz music that stimulate the player's and listeners' minds. All novice and seasoned jazz musicians and singers are welcomed to jam and improv with the professional band throughout the night.

Co-producers: Wayne Winborne, Executive Director, IFJS and EYESHA MARABLE, AVP, COMM ENGAGEMENT, NJPAC.

Tickets: FREE. This event will be held



Julian Lage Quartet.

Credit : Courtesy, www.njpac.org



Coltrane 100.

Credit : Courtesy, www.njpac.org

at Clement's Place, 15 Washington Street, Newark, NJ.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 18 @ 7:30 P.M. - COLTRANE 100: BOTH DIRECTIONS AT ONCE

Joe Lovano – tenor saxophone  
Melissa Aldana – tenor saxophone  
Nduduzo Makhathini – piano  
John Patitucci – bass  
Jeff "Tain" Watts – drums

It's been 100 years since the birth of John Coltrane, the boundary-pushing jazz icon who inspired and influenced generations of musicians. Coltrane once explained to fellow saxophonist Wayne Shorter that his musical approach was akin to "[starting] a sentence in the middle and then going to the beginning and the end of it at the same time... both directions at once." Saxophonists Joe Lovano and Melissa Aldana, pianist Nduduzo Makhathini, bassist John Patitucci and drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts pay tribute in this centennial celebration. They'll look "both directions at once" with modern interpretations of classic Coltrane repertoire, plus originals inspired by his legacy.

Tickets are available at [njpac.org](http://njpac.org). This event will be held at NJPAC's Victoria Theater.

### SUNDAY, APRIL 26 @ 4 P.M. - INTERNATIONAL JAZZ DAY CELEBRATION

Co-produced by NJPAC's TD Jazz for Teens and Jazz House Kids, this annual International Jazz Day concert includes 50+ young local musicians performing

together on the iconic NJPAC stage. This one-night only concert unites some of the brightest youth ensembles of New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania: NJPAC's TD Jazz for Teens featuring The George Wein Scholars Ensemble, Jazz House Kids featuring students from their CHiCA Power initiative, Riverdale Country School, Lebanon Valley College Jazz ensemble, and more to be announced. This special event marks the 10th anniversary of TD Jazz for Teens and Jazz House Kids co-hosting this event as well as the 10th anniversary of WBGO Radio's Sheila Anderson hosting the event. This year's concert will also celebrate George Wein's Centennial with a special tribute and performance by the 15-member George Wein Scholars Ensemble.

Tickets: FREE. This event is located in NJPAC's The Chase Room.

### SATURDAY, MAY 2 @ 6:00 P.M. BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH JAZZ VESPERS | ORRIN EVANS TRIO

Co-presented by Bethany Baptist Church and NJPAC, the free monthly Bethany Vesper Concert Series continues combining jazz music and worship. On May 2nd, three-time GRAMMY®-nominated jazz pianist Orrin Evans (Walk a Mile in My Shoe) will lead his elite trio (with bass and drums) embodying everything we love about good jazz: joyful spontaneity, fierce musical intelligence and a crackling interplay between the performers. They swing with blues-infused hardcore jazz, spiritual jazz, avant-garde traditions and

more.

Tickets: FREE. This event will be held at Bethany Baptist Church, 275 W. Market Street, Newark, NJ.

### THURSDAY, MAY 28 @ 7:30 P.M. JAZZ JAMS AT CLEMENT'S PLACE

Co-presented by NJPAC's Jazz Advisory Committee and Rutgers RU\_N's Institute for Jazz Studies, Jazz Jams at Clement's Place is a monthly Jazz Jams Session concert series featuring top-flight New Jersey musicians directed by pianist and bandleader, James Austin, Jr. T. Audience members immerse themselves in the relaxing sounds of jazz music that stimulate the player's and listeners' minds. All novice and seasoned jazz musicians and singers are welcomed to jam and improv with the professional band throughout the night. Co-

producers: Wayne Winborne, Executive Director, IFJS and EYESHA MARABLE, AVP, COMM ENGAGEMENT, NJPAC.

Tickets: FREE. This event will be held at Clement's Place, 15 Washington Street, Newark, NJ.

### THURSDAY, JUNE 18 @ 7:30 P.M. JAZZ JAMS AT CLEMENT'S PLACE

Co-presented by NJPAC's Jazz Advisory Committee and Rutgers RU\_N's Institute for Jazz Studies, Jazz Jams at Clement's Place is a monthly Jazz Jams Session concert series featuring top-flight New Jersey musicians directed by pianist and bandleader, James Austin, Jr. T. Audience members immerse themselves in the relaxing sounds of jazz music that stimulate the player's and listeners' minds. All novice and seasoned jazz musicians and singers are welcomed to jam and improv with the professional band throughout the night. Co-producers: Wayne Winborne, Executive Director, IFJS and EYESHA MARABLE, AVP, COMM ENGAGEMENT, NJPAC.

Tickets: FREE. This event will be held at Clement's Place, 15 Washington Street, Newark, NJ.

### NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJPAC)

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

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



## Alaya F reacts to lip and nose job rumors: 'Not the type to hide or lie'

**B**uzz around Alaya F going under the knife picked up on social media after her recent runway appearance at a fashion show in Mumbai. However, the actor was quick to shut down the speculation, stating that she hasn't undergone any cosmetic procedures.

Addressing the chatter, she added that she isn't someone who would ever feel the need to hide it if she had.

Recently, Alaya F took to Instagram to address the buzz around her going under the knife, rumors that began doing the rounds after she walked the ramp at Lakmé Fashion Week in Mumbai recently.

The actor shared that her comment section has been flooded with remarks from social media users, many of whom have been suggesting that she has undergone procedures like a lip and nose job. She put the video on her Instagram Stories.

"Guys, I want to address something that I'm seeing in my comments right now. For some reason, a lot of you guys think that I've gotten some surgery done. I'm getting like nose job and lip comments. I have not done anything, I promise," Alaya said, while zooming in on her face.

She continued, "If I had, I would have told you, see, it's the same nose, the same lips... Kuch nahi kiya hai. It's just different lighting I don't know, good habits, hydration, face massages. I don't know."

"But surgery nahi kiya hai maine. If I would have done it, I would have happily told you I'm not the type to hide all of this or lie about all of this at all. But see, it's the same, promise. God knows why you guys think I've gotten something done. Nothing. Same only. Promise," Alaya said while concluding the video.

Back in 2021, Alaya admitted to having considered cosmetic surgery for her nose. She said that she has a 'slight bump' on one side and thought about going under the knife to fix it.

During an appearance on Zoom TV's By Invite Only, Alaya was asked if she has ever considered cosmetic surgery. She candidly confessed, "Yes, I have. I have considered it, I have not done it. I think everyone has been like, 'Maybe I should do...'. It is the smallest thing, I don't even know if people can see it. So, this side of my nose is the nice one (shows right profile), this one (showing the left side) has a slight bump here. It's like the tiniest thing in the world."

# Modi's 2014 win, demonetisation, Atiq Ahmed: The real events that fuel Dhurandhar 2

**T**he internet is busy extracting "peak detailing" moments from Dhurandhar: The Revenge. And why not? Director Aditya Dhar has chosen to blur the lines between fiction and reality with a carefully woven chain of real-life incidents in both India and Pakistan to deepen his narrative.

The idea is to give the audience a lasting experience – by making them recall emotions and incidents that they have heard before, read before or discussed around. This is also why Dhurandhar 2 seems to be standing the test of time. But what are these flashpoints?

Dhar draws from several high-profile incidents to ground the undercover mission of Hamza Ali Mazari (Ranveer Singh), an Indian agent in Pakistan. From gangster Atiq Ahmed's killing to demonetisation in India, and even Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2014 victory speech, the espionage-thriller uses recent history to lend unsettling authenticity to its narrative.

The key events depicted in Dhurandhar: The Revenge include:

- **NARENDRA MODI'S 2014 VICTORY AND RISE TO POWER:** Portrayed as a decisive turning point, the 2014 election victory and Modi's oath-taking usher in an assertive era, enabling bolder anti-terror strategies in the film's world.
- **DEMONETISATION OF 2016:** An entire chapter dramatises the November 8, 2016 announcement, showing PM Modi's late-night address (with real footage) crippling terror funding through fake currency networks, collapsing syndicates overnight.
- **ATIQ AHMED'S KILLING (APRIL 15, 2023):** A



chilling sequence recreates the Prayagraj encounter where the gangster-politician was shot dead in police custody, mirroring the real-life media spectacle and Ahmed's ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) links based on documented news reports.

- **YOGI ADITYANATH'S MITTI MEIN MILA DENGE STANCE:** Viral clips and dialogues from the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister's tough anti-mafia rhetoric are referenced, reinforcing the film's "ghar mein ghus ke marenghe" theme against underworld figures tied to cross-border networks.
- **TERRORIST ELIMINATIONS:** Reported deaths of figures like Azam Cheema, Sajid Mir, Abdul Bhuttovi, Altaf, and Javed Khanani - individuals linked to Pakistan-based terror networks - are reimagined as outcomes of covert operations, tying into Hamza's revenge arc.

**A**jay Devgn's association with horror and supernatural cinema has always been significant. His foray into horror began with Bhoot (2003) and he followed it up with Kaal (2005). Golmaal Again (2017) was a highly successful horror comedy before the genre became mainstream. Exactly two years ago, his supernatural flick, Shaitaan (2024), co-starring R Madhavan and Jyotika, worked big time at the box office. And now, the versatile actor is working on yet another horror film.

A source told Bollywood Hungama, "The makers are toying with the idea of naming the film Griha Pravesh. Another title that has caught their eye is Vaastu Shastra. But it's Griha Pravesh that they feel is apt for the film and the subject. A final call will be taken in the near future, after which the makers will make an official announcement."

The source further said, "Ajay Devgn will shoot the film in the United Kingdom in a start-to-finish schedule. The team is already planning meticulously to ensure that they are able to finish the shoot in the stipulated time."

Meanwhile, Pinkvilla reported earlier in the day that the film will be directed by Rohit Jugraj. He began his career as a director with the Mohit Ahlawat-Nisha Kothari starrer James (2005) and then made Kunal Kemmu's double role

## Ajay Devgn's horror film likely to be titled Griha Pravesh



drama, Superstar (2008). He later moved to Punjabi cinema and made successful films like Sardaar Ji (2015) and Sardaar Ji 2 (2016), both of which starred Diljit Dosanjh. Recently, he directed the musical thriller web series Chamak. It starred Gippy Grewal, Manoj Pahwa, Rakesh Bedi, Isha Talwar, Navneet

Nishan and others and was aired on Sony LIV.

Interestingly, this is the second time that Rohit Jugraj would work with Ajay Devgn in a horror film. He had earlier assisted Ram Gopal Varma on Bhoot. It was RGV who produced Rohit's debut directorial as well.



## Kim Kardashian, Lewis Hamilton walk arm-in-arm in Japan

Kim Kardashian and Lewis Hamilton have once again set off global chatter after a video of the two walking arm-in-arm in Tokyo went viral. The sighting, captured over the weekend, has further fuelled ongoing dating rumours surrounding the pair.

Clips circulating widely on social media show the duo strolling through the streets of Tokyo, appearing relaxed and comfortable in each other's company. The public outing, which also included Khloe Kardashian, has quickly become a talking point among fans tracking their rumoured relationship.

In the now-viral footage, Kim is seen holding onto Hamilton's arm as they walk together and browse through stores. She opted for a sleek grey dress paired with black heels, while Hamilton kept things understated in a coordinated brown outfit.

In one clip, Hamilton acknowledges fans gathered nearby, waving as Kim smiles alongside him. Another moment shows her exiting a Vivienne Westwood store, interacting briefly with onlookers. Their easy body language and visible comfort have drawn significant attention online.

The Tokyo appearance comes weeks after reports first linked the two. In February, they were said to have travelled together to the UK, where they reportedly spent time at the exclusive Estelle Manor, known for its private setting.

Soon after, they were also seen in Paris, arriving at a hotel together after flying in on a private jet. The speculation intensified when they attended the Super Bowl 2026 together on February 8, marking a more public phase of their appearances.

Kim and Hamilton have known each other for years. One of their earliest public appearances together dates back to the GQ Men of the Year Awards 2014, where they were seen alongside their then-partners, Nicole Scherzinger and Kanye West. Their current appearances, however, suggest a shift from low-key interactions to more visible outings, keeping speculation around their relationship firmly in the spotlight.

# Harry Potter first look reveals Hogwarts, Gryffindor Quidditch Pitch scene

The magical world of Harry Potter is coming alive once again, as HBO has dropped the first official glimpse of Hogwarts from its upcoming series adaptation. The newly released image offers fans a nostalgic yet fresh take on the iconic school of witchcraft and wizardry.

The photo, shared on the show's official Instagram page, features young Harry — played by Dominic McLaughlin — from behind as he walks towards the Quidditch pitch. Draped in a red and gold cloak symbolising Gryffindor house, his name and player number can be seen on the back, adding a personal touch to the visual.

Ahead of him, a large group of students gathers at the pitch, with flags representing Gryffindor and Hufflepuff fluttering in the background. The scene hints at a major Quidditch moment, instantly transporting fans back to the beloved universe.

The production design, led by Mara LePere-Schloop, known for her work on *Interview With the Vampire* and *Pachinko*, appears to blend grandeur with authenticity, setting the tone for a visually rich retelling.

The series is currently being filmed at Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden, the same location where the original films were shot — a detail sure to excite longtime fans.

Alongside McLaughlin, the cast features Alastair Stout as Ron Weasley



and Arabella Stanton as Hermione Granger. The ensemble also includes John Lithgow as Albus Dumbledore, Janet McTeer as Minerva McGonagall, Paapa Essiedu as Severus Snape and Nick Frost as Rubeus Hagrid.

Helmed by showrunner Francesca Gardiner and director Mark Mylod, the

series promises a faithful adaptation of J.K. Rowling's globally celebrated books.

The story will follow Harry's journey from discovering his magical identity to forming lifelong friendships with Ron and Hermione, while facing the looming threat of Lord Voldemort.

## Miley Cyrus sparkles as Hannah Montana at premiere, poses with fiancé Maxx Moranda



Singer Miley Cyrus attended the red carpet premiere of the Hannah Montana 20th anniversary special in El Capitan Theatre in Los Angeles, California with her fiancé, Maxx Morando, and family members. The Grammy-winning singer appeared cheerful as she posed for photographers. Joining Miley at the premiere were her mother, Tish Cyrus, Tish's husband Dominic Purcell, her sister Brandi Cyrus, and Brandi's fiancé Matt Southcombe.

Miley wore a custom-made Hannah Montana outfit featuring an imprint of her character from the original series. The event marked a reunion for the cast and crew, celebrating two decades since the show first aired on Disney Channel in 2006.

The anniversary special, titled *Hannahversary*, will stream on Disney+ from March 24. It revisits memorable music and moments from the original series and includes never-before-seen archival footage. The show was filmed in front of a live studio audience.

In the trailer of the special, Miley revisits recreated sets such as the iconic Hannah Montana closet and the Stewart family living room. She is seen exploring these locations alongside her mother, Tish Cyrus, and her father, Billy Ray Cyrus. The programme also features an in-depth conversation between Miley Cyrus and Alex Cooper, host of the podcast *Call Her Daddy*. Cooper described the show as defining a generation. Miley responded, "This anniversary is for them. It's for us."

# Iran mobilises over 1 million ground troops to counter US invasion threat

MARCH 27, 2026

**TEHRAN (TIP):** Amid the deepening conflict in the Middle East, Iran is mobilising more than one million ground troops to fight against the United States, Iran's local news outlet Tansim News reported, citing a source from the military.

The development came amid a possibility of the US launching a ground invasion on the southern front of Iran. The report mentioned that the possibility of a potential US attack has triggered enthusiasm among the ground fighters of the country, who now want to offer the US "historical hell" on the soil of Iran.

The military source further told Tansim News that, in addition to the mobilisation of over one million ground troops, there has been a significant surge in recruitment interest among Iranian youth. In recent days, a massive influx of requests has been directed toward the Basij, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and the Army, as young volunteers formally petition for deployment to the front lines.

"The US wants to open the Strait of Hormuz with suicide and self-destructive tactics; that's fine. We are ready for both their suicide strategy to be executed and for the Strait to remain



closed," the source added.

## Trump ridicules UK carriers amid Iran war tensions

US President Donald Trump has taken a fresh swipe at Britain's military capabilities, dismissing its aircraft

carriers as "toys" and exposing widening cracks among Western allies as the Iran war intensifies.

"The British said 'we'll send our aircraft carriers' — which aren't the best aircraft carriers by the way, they are toys compared to what we have," Trump said.

"I said 'that's wonderful, thank you very much — don't bother'."

He said he was very disappointed that the UK did not allow the use of the joint Diego Garcia base for strikes using US B-2 bombers, describing it as a missed opportunity in the conflict.

Trump's remarks land at a sensitive moment for Britain's defence posture. The Royal Navy's operational strength has come under scrutiny after Germany stepped in to support a Nato maritime mission. Berlin deployed a frigate with a British officer in command, replacing HMS Dragon, which had been redirected to defend Cyprus amid Iranian attacks.

UK Defence Secretary John Healey acknowledged concerns, saying he was not happy with the current state of British warships, though he did not specify how many are fit for combat.

Trump also used the moment to criticise Nato more broadly, accusing the alliance of failing to support US and Israeli operations.

"Nato nations have done absolutely nothing," he said, adding in a social media post that the US "needs nothing from NATO" but would not forget the lack of support.

He pointed to Iran's recent strike on the Diego Garcia base as evidence of Tehran's capabilities, suggesting allies underestimated the threat.

## Gulf Arab bloc says Iran charging fees for ships to safely transit Strait of Hormuz

MARCH 27, 2026

**DUBAI (TIP):** Iran is forcing oil tankers to take a new route in the Strait of Hormuz through a narrow passage controlled by its Revolutionary Guard, with some ships charged millions of dollars to transit, according to maritime data shared with NBC News.

The new system — dubbed "the Tehran toll booth" by shipping industry experts — indicates Iran remains firmly in control of the critical waterway despite intense strikes on the country, and may be looking to cement that control over the longer term.

Before the U.S. and Israel launched their bombing campaign on Feb. 28, around 110 ships were passing through the Strait of Hormuz every day, data from Lloyd's List Intelligence shows. Since then, that number has plummeted to fewer than 10 a day, according to the London-based maritime intelligence service. Instead of sailing down the middle of the strait, those ships are now taking a new route into Iran's territorial waters and through a tight passage between the islands of Qeshm and Larak.

# Iran is earning more from oil. War has barely dented its lifeline

MARCH 27, 2026

**TEHRAN (TIP):** Iran's oil revenue has soared since the outbreak of the war as the Islamic Republic has become the only major exporter still able to ship crude through the Strait of Hormuz, reported Bloomberg.

While US and Israeli airstrikes have targeted various parts of Iran, including military targets at the country's biggest oil export terminal on Kharg island, Tehran's key oil export infrastructure has largely escaped serious damage. Tankers continue to load Iranian crude at the main Kharg Island terminal and successfully navigate out of the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz. As a result, Iran's exports have remained close to pre-war levels, averaging around 1.6 million barrels per day this month, according to data from tanker-tracking services cited by Bloomberg.

This uninterrupted flow has given Tehran a significant financial advantage at a critical time. The country is benefiting on two fronts.



First, the international benchmark Brent Crude has surged above \$100 per barrel since the conflict intensified.

Second, Iran's flagship Iranian Light crude is now selling at its narrowest discount to Brent in nearly a year, just \$2.1 per barrel at the start of this week, compared with more than \$10 before the war began. The majority of these cargoes are destined for buyers in China. Based on export estimates from TankerTrackers.com and prevailing prices for Iranian Light grade, Bloomberg reported that Tehran is estimated to have earned roughly \$139

million per day from its main crude blend so far in March. That marks a substantial increase from approximately \$115 million per day in February. Overall, Iran has likely pocketed hundreds of millions of dollars in extra income from oil sales since the start of the war, the Bloomberg article states.

Satellite imagery from the European Union's Copernicus Browser and other sources shows continued activity at Kharg Island, with very large crude carriers (VLCCs) regularly mooring and loading cargo. Bloomberg reported that activity appears to have gained pace in recent weeks. Iran has also made greater use of its Jask terminal, which lies outside the Hormuz chokepoint. Shipments from Jask have historically been infrequent, but recent images cited by the Bloomberg report confirm supertankers loading there as well. In addition to crude sales, Iran is reportedly generating extra revenue by charging transit fees of up to \$2 million on certain commercial ships still permitted to cross the strait.

## In veiled dig at US, Beijing says India, China's growth built on hard work, not generosity

MARCH 27, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** India and China achieved "remarkable" development in the last few decades because of their "hard work" not due to the "generosity" of others, Chinese ambassador Xu Feihong said on Thursday, March 26, rejecting claims that outside powers fuelled Beijing's economic rise.

Xu's remarks are largely seen as a rebuttal to recent remarks by US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau, who recently characterised past US economic support for China as a "mistake" that Washington will avoid repeating with New Delhi.

In a thinly veiled dig at the US, the Chinese ambassador, speaking at an event, without naming any country, said certain elements do not want to see China and India live in harmony and "hype up" the "so-called China threat", hoping to profit from the "discord".

"In recent decades, both China and India have achieved remarkable development. These achievements are built on the hard work and wisdom of our own people, supported by global cooperation, and are by no means the result of others' generosity," the envoy said.

He was speaking at the 14th China-India Youth Dialogue.

# India, 5 others on Iran's 'friendly nation' list for safe Hormuz passage

MARCH 27, 2026

**TEHRAN (TIP):** In a major diplomatic victory, Iran has said the strategically critical Strait of Hormuz will remain open for India amid the escalating conflict in the Middle East. The waterway, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of the world's oil is normally shipped, has been under an Iranian chokehold since the United States and Israel launched a war against Iran last month.

Talking to Iranian State TV, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi clarified that the Strait, contrary to the Western media claims, is not completely closed.

"Many of the shipowners, or the countries that own these vessels, have contacted us and requested that we ensure their safe passage through the strait. For some of these countries that we consider friendly, or in cases where we have decided to do so for other reasons, our armed forces have provided safe passage," Araghchi said, according to a report by Reuters.

"You have seen on the news: China, Russia, Pakistan, Iraq, and India. Two of its ships passed through a few nights ago, and some other countries, and even Bangladesh, I believe. These are countries that spoke with us and coordinated with us, and this will continue in the future as well, even after the war," he added.

Araghchi also indicated that vessels linked to countries seen as adversaries or



those involved in the ongoing conflict would not be allowed passage. He said ships from the United States, Israel and certain Gulf nations playing a role in the current crisis would not be given clearance to transit through the strait.

"We are in a state of war. The region is a war zone, and there is no reason to allow the ships of our enemies and their allies to pass through. But it remains open to others," he said on Wednesday.

Notably, earlier this week, Iran stopped a Pakistan-bound container ship from crossing the Strait of Hormuz. The vessel, SELEN, sailing from the United Arab Emirates' Sharjah anchorage toward Karachi, was forced to reverse

course at the entrance to the crucial waterways due to the absence of transit authorisation, according to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Iran maintains its chokehold on the Strait through drone and missile attacks on shipping. With the conduit for a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas effectively closed, fuel shortages are occurring around the globe, and businesses from airlines to supermarkets and used car dealers are grappling with challenges including rising costs, weakening demand and disrupted supply chains. Some governments are weighing support measures last used during the COVID pandemic.

# Soaring airfares are about to ruin a whole lot of vacations

MARCH 27, 2026

**HONG KONG (TIP):** Travellers hoping for a drop in long-haul summer airfares are in for a brutal reality check. Ticket prices on major routes connecting Asia and Europe have surged up to 560 per cent this month and are likely to stay elevated through the summer and into fall as war-related disruptions ripple through the Persian Gulf, the world's busiest transit corridor, according to Alton Aviation Consultancy.

For June travel, fares across seven popular Asia-Pacific to Europe routes are averaging about 70 per cent higher than a year ago, based on Alton's analysis of data from analytics firm Cirium and online travel agencies. A Sydney-to-London ticket now averages more than US\$1,500, roughly double last year's price. Fares include direct and one-stop flights, as well as transits through Gulf airports.

There's little relief in sight. Prices are expected to remain about 30 per cent above last year's levels even as far out as October.

The pressure is just as evident in the opposite direction. Europe-to-Asia fares have jumped sharply, with June prices up by as much as 79 per cent year on year and some long-haul routes now costing almost three times more than a year ago.

The disruption, which began Feb 28 when the US and Israel attacked Iran, has triggered about 70,000 flight cancellations and exposed the fragility of global aviation networks. Airspace closures, reduced capacity at Gulf hubs and rising fuel costs have combined to push fares higher – and are expected to keep them there for months.



Demand is already starting to soften due to travel uncertainty and higher fares. Summer bookings from Europe to the US are down 15 per cent from a year earlier, while traffic in the opposite direction has fallen 11 per cent, according to Cirium. Bookings from Asia to Europe have slipped as well, declining 4.4 per cent, including routes that connect through the Middle East.

Even if the conflict ends soon, flight pricing pressure will persist, said Bryan Terry, a managing director at Alton. "It would take up to three months for the price reductions to work their way through the jet fuel supply chain," he said. "What we are seeing is not just a short-term pricing shock. Even as the immediate disruption eases, longer routings, tighter capacity and higher fuel costs will keep upward pressure on prices for an extended period."

### 560 percent jump

Hardest hit are flights linking Asia and Europe, many

of which pass through Middle Eastern hubs such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha – a corridor that typically handles about a third of annual traffic between the regions, according to Roland Berger data.

The disruption to this corridor is compounding pressure on fares. Tickets from Hong Kong to London Heathrow are averaging US\$3,318 as at Mar 23 – a 560 per cent jump from the month before, according to Alton Aviation. Prices for Bangkok to Frankfurt flights surged 505 per cent to US\$2,870. The classic "Kangaroo Route" between Australia and the UK has also been hammered, with fares from Sydney to London soaring 429 per cent in the period. Since the war began, both demand and prices on these routes have climbed even as European and Asian carriers scramble to add capacity. Nearly a month into the conflict, aviation networks are still struggling to adjust, while rising fuel costs – driven in part by constraints on shipments through the Strait of Hormuz – are compounding the pressure.

Airlines have started passing those costs onto customers. Jet fuel, which represents about a third of operating expenses, has surged alongside oil prices, stoking fears of shortages. Carriers including Air France-KLM, Cathay Pacific Airways and Air New Zealand, raised fuel surcharges this month.

"Things are very uncertain right now, with so much travel chaos," said Hanming Li, an independent travel analyst. "If travellers see that flights are getting cancelled, delayed and disrupted, they will carefully consider whether to travel and how to travel."

Source: BLOOMBERG

## Pak resumes military ops against Afghanistan after temporary pause due to Eid

MARCH 27, 2026

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** Pakistan's military resumed operations against Afghanistan after a temporary pause, Pakistan's foreign ministry said on Thursday, March 26, dashing hopes of a permanent ceasefire.

Pakistan and Afghanistan's worst fighting in years erupted last month, claiming heavy human losses on both sides. Kabul said more than 400 people were killed in a Pakistani air strike on a drug rehabilitation centre in the Afghan capital last week before the neighbours suspended fighting.

Pakistan rejected the Taliban's statements about the strike, saying it had "precisely targeted military installations and terrorist support infrastructure".

A pause in hostilities was announced for the Islamic festival of Eid al-Fitr, which Islamabad says was also requested by Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. "The pause has concluded midnight between, I think, 23rd and 24th March," said Tahir Andrabi, the spokesperson at a weekly foreign ministry briefing in Islamabad.

He said the operations would continue until the objectives are achieved, and until the Afghan Taliban administration reviewed what he called its misplaced priority of supporting terrorist infrastructure.

## Bus falls into river while boarding ferry in Bangladesh, killing 24

MARCH 26, 2026

**DHAKA (TIP):** At least 24 people died after a passenger bus carrying around 40 passengers plunged into the Padma River while attempting to board a ferry in Bangladesh, officials said Thursday, March 26.

The accident occurred Wednesday when the bus lost control approaching a ferry at Daulatdia in Rajbari district, about 62 miles from Dhaka. The bus overturned and sank nearly 30 feet into the river, according to police and the Fire Service and Civil Defense.

Rescuers recovered 22 bodies from inside the submerged bus, including six men, 11 women and five children, Fire Service official Talha Bin Zasim said.

Twenty-four people have been confirmed dead so far, including two women who died after being rescued, he said.

Four fire service units and 10 divers were leading the search and rescue efforts, supported by the army, police, coast guard and local authorities.

Officials fear more passengers may still be missing. Hundreds of people die each year in road and ferry accidents in Bangladesh.

# Balen Shah sworn-in as youngest Nepal PM after massive poll victory

MARCH 27, 2026

**KATHMANDU (TIP):** Rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah, popularly known as Balen, took oath as the youngest Prime Minister of Nepal on Friday, March 27. The development came after the 35-year-old was elected as the Parliamentary leader of the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) on Thursday, March 26.

"The Parliamentary party meeting unanimously elected Balen as its leader, formally qualifying him for the top executive post of the country," said Shanker Shrestha, secretary of the RSP's central organisation committee, as reported by news agency PTI.

The central committee of RSP also gave Shah the authority to form the new cabinet under his leadership, Shrestha confirmed. The members of the new cabinet are likely to be announced in the evening.

Earlier this month, the RSP, under the leadership of Shah, ensured a handsome victory in the Parliamentary elections as it secured 182 out of 275 seats in the House of Representatives (HoR). It decimated the traditional parties in the first general elections since last year's violent Gen Z protests that sought generational change and a corruption-free regime.

Of the 275 members of the HoR, 165 are elected through direct voting and 110 through proportionate voting.

Shah, popularly known as Balen, defeated four-time prime minister K P Sharma Oli in the Jhapa-5 constituency, a long-standing stronghold of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), by a huge margin.

The newly elected members of the HoR took the oath of office at the federal parliament building, beginning the process of government formation three weeks after the voting concluded. The eldest member of the House, Arjun Narasingha KC, 78, administered the oath of office and secrecy to the newly elected lawmakers at the federal parliament secretariat in Singha Durbar.

After the completion of the oath-taking ceremony, Shah was



sworn in as the Prime Minister in Sheetal Niwas (President's House). He is likely to form a cabinet with 15-18 members.

The emergence of RSP and the landslide victory have ushered in a sea change in the politics of Nepal. The RSP wiped out traditional parties, with the Nepali Congress winning only 38 seats, followed by the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) with 25, and the Nepali Communist Party with only 17.

## Bangladesh PM calls 1971 genocide a pre-planned massacre by Pak forces

MARCH 26, 2026

**DHAKA (TIP):** As Bangladesh observes Genocide Day, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on Wednesday said the genocide of 25 March was a 'pre-planned massacre' as the Pakistani forces carried out 'one of the most heinous genocides in history'.

Paying obeisance to all the people who were martyred in the genocide, Rahman put out a post on social media, stating, "In the history of freedom-loving Bangladesh, 25 March 1971 remains one of the most disgraceful and brutal days. On that dark night, the Pakistani occupation forces carried out one of the most heinous genocides in history against the unarmed people of Bangladesh in the name of 'Operation Searchlight'."

Rahman alleged that the Pakistani forces indiscriminately opened fire on teachers, intellectuals and innocent civilians at various places, including Dhaka University, Pilkhana and Rajarbagh Police Lines, killing many people.

"The genocide of 25 March was a pre-



planned massacre. Why this organised killing spree could not be resisted remains a matter of historical research regarding the visible role of the political leadership of that time," said the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chief.

In the post, Rahman said on the night of 25 March, the 8th East Bengal Regiment in Chattogram formally initiated armed resistance against the genocide by declaring 'We Revolt'. Through this resistance to genocide, the long nine-month armed Liberation War began.

"To convey the value and significance of independence to the present and future generations, it is essential to

know about the genocide of 25 March as well. Let us all strive to honour the sacrifices of the martyrs by establishing in the state and society the spirit of the great Liberation War - equality, human dignity and social justice," said the Bangladesh Prime Minister.

"Let us work together to build a just, developed, prosperous, self-reliant and democratic Bangladesh," he said.

Tarique Rahman is the son of Ziaur Rahman, a key figure in the 1971 war who declared Bangladesh's independence on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the nation's founder and the first Prime Minister. Ziaur Rahman was assassinated on May 30, 1981, in the port city of Chittagong.

On March 25, 1971, Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) saw one of the darkest and bloodiest chapters in its history after the Pakistani army launched "Operation Searchlight" - a brutal military crackdown to suppress the Bengali nationalist movement. According to various accounts and reports, the Pakistani army killed an estimated three million people.

# Sikh History This Week

## MARCH 27 TO APRIL 2

### 27th March

1843 Raja Suchet Singh murdered. Raja Suchet Singh was brother of Raja Dhiyan Singh Dogra and Gulab Singh Jammu. He was a popular proponent of Sikh Raj. Sher-e-Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, personally bestowed the honor Raja on Suchet Singh.

1923 Hazara Singh Sirbrah of Behbalpur is murdered.

1924 The 4th shahihi jatha of 500 valiant Akali satyagrahies, led by Sardar Puran Singh Bahawal, marched from Anandpur Sahib to Gangsar, Jaito.

### 28th March



1552 Gur Gadhi Diwas, Sri Guru Amar Das Sahib.

1620 Guru Hargobind Ji had to marry Nanaki despite his refusal. This was an unfortunate upshot of the jubilation in Sikh community caused by Guru Sahib's release from seven years of incarceration. Within a few months two brides were pledged to him by their parents. Under the customs prevalent at that time, on Guru Hargobind's refusal, those girls would have remained unmarried throughout their life. So he had to marry Nanaki on March 28, 1620, and Mehrai also called Marwahi on July 10, 1620. The first incident occurred too close to his release. Taken aback at the second incident, he announced that no one should pledge his daughter to him in future.

1965 SGPC resolves at its general meeting to establish Punjabi Suba.

### 29th March



1552 Second Patshahi, Guru Angad Dev Ji departed this planet from Khadur Sahib. He served as Guru for 12 years and none months. Today is the actual date of joti jot, though its is observed on a different date by Guru Khalsa Panth.

1552 Third Patshahi, Guru Amar Das Ji ascended to Guruship of Sikhism. Amardas was influenced to

Sikhism by Bibi Amro, daughter of Guru Angad Dev Ji. She was married to Amardas's nephew. Bibi Amro was a very pious woman. She would get up early in the morning, take a bath and start reciting the hymns of Guru Nanak. One day Amardas heard Bibi Amro sing Guru Nanak's Jap Ji and pauris of Asa-di-var. He was touched by the divinity and peity of the hymns. He learnt those gymns from her and started reciting them every morning.

1699 Baisakhi day, Guru Gobind created the Khalsa order at Anandpur Sahib. Earlier Hukamnamahs were sent to Sikhs all over Hindustan and beyond to visit Anandpur. The people were asked to visit with their hair unshorn. The hill chiefs, who, according to one account, were taken into confidence about Guru's program, were present in strength. He Abolished the corrupt and debased institution of 'masands'. Created a small regular army and fortified Anandpurs with a ring of smaller fortresses around it.

1748 The Sikhs assembled at Amritsar on Baisakhi day and by a gurmatta, decided to form Dal Khalsa by reorganization of over 60 arms jathas, bands, into eleven associatios (misls) under the overall command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Nawab Kapur Singh because of his age sought retirement from active overall leadership.

1922 Akali Dal renamed as "Shiromani Akali Dal".

1940 The Khalsa National Party at its meeting in Lahore, under Sunder Singh Majithia, saw danger in the division of India into Hindu and Muslim independent states, and said that the Sikhs would not tolerate for a single day the unadultrated communal rule of any community. As a logical sequence, it asked for restoration of Sikh sovereignty of Punjab, which was held in trust by the British during the minority reign of Maharaja Dalip Singh.

1981 SGPC adopted the motion "Sikhs are a Nation". When the Presdient Gurcharan Singh Tohra, was asked the question that the SGPC was turning political, he answered "On October 10, 1946, Ishar Singh Mahjaiol, had moved in the house a resolution for the creation of a Sikh State. The resolution was seconded by Sardar Swaran Singh. The "Sikhs Are a Nation" proposal was part of S. Ganga Singh Dhillon's speech at 54th All India Sikh Educational Conference that took place on March 13, 14, and 15, 1981. In his presidential address, S. Ganga Singh Dhillon wrote: "SIKHS ARE A NATION We all are born equal, with a human right to preserve our religious and cultural heritage, improve our economic inheritance and freedom to mould our destiny.

### 30th March



1664 Patshahi Eighth, Guru Harkrishan Ji, left this planet for heavenly abode from Delhi. He was eight

years of age, when he took over on himself the sufferings and sins of the people of Delhi. As a result, he left for heavenly abode. Today is the actual date of joti joot, though it is observed differently by Guru Khalsa Panth.

### 31st March

1504: Second Patshah, Guru Angad Dev Ji came to this earth. He was born at matae di saran, Mukatsar, district Ferozepur in the house of Pheru Mal and Matta Sabrai. His given name prior to Guruship was "Lehna." Today is the actual date of birth even though Guru Khalsa Panth observes it on a different date. Guru ANGAD DEV (1504-1552): The mantle of the First Master fell on Angad, the second Sikh Guru, in 1539, and he graced the exalted position till 1552.

1519: Lehna, Guru Angad Dev Ji, got married to Mata Khivi, daughter of Devi Chand of village Sangar.

1785: Sikhs signed a treaty with Maharathas.

1973: The regular Kar Sewa of Amritsar sarowar, sacred pool of water, at Darbar Sahib, was performed.

1979: Elections to the SGPC were held. During these elections, the Badal government used government machinery to defeat Amrik Singh, then President of the Sikhs Students Federation. Numerous bogus votes were polled in favor of Jiwan Singh Umranangal.

### 1st April

1621 Ninth Patshah, Guru Tegh Bahadur came to this planet. He was the youngest son of Guru Hargobind and Mata Nanaki, born in Guru's place at Amritsar. He had four brothers, Baba Gurditta, Baba Suraj Mal, Baba Ani Rai, and Baba Atal and a sister Bibi Viro. Guru Hargobind visted the new born child in the palace and prophesied that he would be very brave, fearless and a champion for the cause of truth. The child was named Tiaag Mal and subsequently, upon his show of bravery during Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji's battles, was renamed Tegh Bahadur (Tegh — for sword, power of justice and Bahadur — brave). Today is the actual date of birth, although it is observed by Guru Khalsa Panth on a different date.

### 2nd April

1757 Timur Shah (son of Ahmad Shah) and Jahan Khan (Governor of Lahore) attacked Sri Harmandir Sahib, destroyed Sri Darbar Sahib and completely filled sarowar with debris. During the 4th invasion of Ahmad Shah in 1756-7, he reached Delhi and systematically plundered the city. But he was forced to returned back due to outbreak of cholera epidemic in his troops> During this invasion, Sirhind was annexed to his empire. Ala Singh of Patiala submitted to Ahmad Shah. But the Sikhs attacked Timur Shah at Sunam and relieved him of half of his treasure. Sikhs also attacked the rear of Afghan troops and relieved them of a lot of their loot.

1809 Treaty of Amritsar signed between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the British. Maharaja Ranjit Singh desired to be the overlord of all Sikh States. The British gave protection to Cis-Sutlej States and confined Maharaja Ranjit Singh to Sutlej and thus came very close to Lahore. After quite a bit of sabre rattling Maharaja Ranjit Singh succumbed to British pressure. This treaty was a major defeat for Maharaja Ranjit Singh at the hands of the British. Maharaja Ranjit Singh withdrew his forces from Faridkot and Malerkotla.

1850 The Sikh forces of Maharaja Ranjit Singh were disbanded, approximately a year after the East Indian Company gained controled of Punjab on Mar. 29, 1849.

# Good Friday: The profound silence of sacrifice and the promise of redemption

**Good Friday is a solemn Christian holiday commemorating the crucifixion, suffering, and death of Jesus Christ, observed on the Friday before Easter. It is a day of prayer, fasting, and reflection on Jesus' sacrifice for humanity's sins. In 2026, Good Friday falls on April 3.**

In the sacred rhythm of the Christian calendar, Good Friday stands as a day of deep solemnity, spiritual introspection, and emotional intensity. It is not marked by festivity, but by silence, reverence, and remembrance-honoring the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his ultimate sacrifice for humanity. Observed during Holy Week, just before Easter, this day captures the essence of suffering transformed into hope.

## Historical and Scriptural Origins

The story of Good Friday is preserved in the Gospels of the Bible-namely Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These texts narrate the final hours of Jesus' life, beginning with his arrest after the Last Supper, followed by trials before Jewish authorities and the Roman governor Pontius Pilate.

In Jerusalem, Jesus was accused of blasphemy and political rebellion. Despite the absence of clear guilt, public pressure led to his sentencing. He was scourged, crowned with thorns, and forced to carry his cross to Golgotha-the "Place of the Skull."

The crucifixion, a brutal Roman method of execution, was meant to be both punishment and public humiliation. Yet, in Christian belief, it became a moment of divine purpose-where suffering was transformed into salvation.

## The Seven Last Words: Echoes of Divine Compassion

One of the most spiritually moving aspects of Good Friday is the meditation on the "Seven Last Words" spoken by Jesus on the cross. These utterances reveal his compassion, forgiveness, and surrender:

- "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."
- "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
- "It is finished."

These words are not merely historical-they are deeply symbolic, reflecting human pain, divine mercy, and the fulfillment of a sacred mission.

## The Theology of Sacrifice

At the heart of Good Friday lies a profound theological concept: atonement. Christians believe that Jesus, as the Son of God, willingly took upon himself the sins of humanity. His death is seen as a bridge between human imperfection and divine grace.

This act is often described as the ultimate expression of love-where suffering is embraced for the redemption of others. It is this belief that transforms the sorrow of the day into something spiritually "good."



## Rituals in Greater Depth

Good Friday observances are rich in symbolism and vary across denominations, yet all share a common thread of reverence.

### The Liturgy of the Passion

Church services on Good Friday are unique. There is no celebration of the Eucharist in many traditions. Instead, the focus is on readings from the Passion narrative, solemn prayers, and veneration of the cross.

### Veneration of the Cross

A central ritual where worshippers approach the cross, often kissing or touching it, as a sign of devotion and gratitude for Christ's sacrifice.

### The Three-Hour Service

Observed from noon to 3 p.m.-the hours believed to encompass Jesus' agony on the cross. This service includes sermons, prayers, and reflections on his final moments.

### Fasting and Penance

Fasting on Good Friday is both a physical and spiritual discipline. It symbolizes self-denial and solidarity with the suffering of Christ.

### Global Traditions and Cultural Expressions

While the essence of Good Friday remains universal, its observance takes on unique cultural expressions across the world.

- In countries like Spain and Italy, grand processions carry statues of the Virgin Mary and Jesus through



the streets.

- In the Philippines, some devotees even reenact crucifixion as an act of extreme penance.
- In Latin America, dramatic performances of the Passion Play bring the story to life.

In India, particularly in Goa, Kerala, and the Northeast, churches are filled with devotees. Processions, silent marches, and long prayer services mark the day, often accompanied by hymns in local languages.

### Symbolism of Darkness and Silence

Good Friday is marked by an atmosphere of stillness. Church altars are stripped bare, bells are silenced, and the tone is somber. This symbolic emptiness reflects the grief of the world at the death of Christ.

Yet, within this darkness lies a quiet anticipation-the hope of resurrection on Easter Sunday. It is a powerful reminder

that despair is never the end of the story.

### Spiritual Lessons for Modern Life

Beyond its religious framework, Good Friday offers universal lessons:

- Endurance in Suffering: Life's trials can lead to transformation
- Forgiveness Over Vengeance: Compassion holds greater power than anger
- Faith in Uncertainty: Even in moments of doubt, hope persists

In today's fast-moving world, this day invites individuals to slow down, reflect, and reconnect with deeper values.

### The Journey Toward Easter

Good Friday is not an isolated event-it is part of a larger spiritual journey that culminates in Easter. The sorrow of the crucifixion finds meaning in the joy of resurrection. Together, they form a narrative of death and rebirth, despair and hope, sacrifice and victory.

# Glossy locks at home: Ways to get shiny, healthy hair naturally

In a world where salon treatments and chemical-laden products promise instant shine, the true secret to lustrous, radiant hair often lies much closer to home—right in your kitchen and daily habits. Shiny hair is not merely a cosmetic feature; it reflects the overall health of your scalp and strands. When the hair cuticle lies flat, it reflects light beautifully, creating that coveted glossy finish. Achieving this doesn't always require expensive treatments—simple, consistent care can transform dull hair into a shining crown. Let's explore some effective, natural, and time-tested ways to bring back your hair's brilliance from the comfort of your home.

## Nourish from Within: The Foundation of Shine

Before applying anything externally, it's essential to understand that healthy hair begins from within. A balanced diet rich in proteins, vitamins, and minerals plays a crucial role. Foods like eggs, nuts, leafy greens, and fruits provide nutrients such as biotin, vitamin E, and omega-3 fatty acids that strengthen hair and enhance its natural shine. Staying hydrated is equally important, as water keeps hair strands moisturized and prevents dryness.

## Oil Massage: The Age-Old Elixir

One of the most trusted remedies for shiny hair is regular oiling. Warm oils penetrate deep into the scalp, nourishing the roots and improving blood circulation. Coconut oil, almond oil, and olive oil are particularly beneficial. Gently massaging your scalp with warm oil not only enhances shine but also reduces frizz and strengthens hair. Leave the oil on for at least an hour or overnight for deeper conditioning—before washing it off with a mild shampoo.

## The Magic of Natural Hair Masks

Homemade hair masks can work wonders in restoring shine and softness. These masks are free from harmful chemicals and are packed with nutrients.

- Egg and Yogurt Mask: Rich in protein, this combination strengthens hair and adds a silky sheen.
- Banana and Honey Mask: Perfect for dry hair, it deeply hydrates and smoothens strands.
- Aloe Vera Gel: Known for its soothing properties, it conditions hair and adds a natural gloss.

Applying these masks once a week can significantly improve hair texture and shine over time.

- Cold Water Rinse: A Simple Trick with Big Results



Hot water can strip your hair of natural oils, leaving it dry and dull. Rinsing your hair with cold water at the end of your wash helps seal the cuticles, allowing hair to reflect more light and appear shinier. This small step can make a noticeable difference.

## Choose the Right Shampoo and Avoid Overwashing

Using harsh shampoos frequently can damage hair and reduce its natural shine. Opt for mild, sulfate-free shampoos and limit washing to two or three times a week. Overwashing strips away natural oils, making hair look lifeless.

Conditioning is equally important—always follow up with a good conditioner to lock in moisture and smooth the cuticle.

- An apple cider vinegar rinse is a popular home remedy for shiny hair. It helps remove product buildup and balances the scalp's pH level.
- Mix a tablespoon of apple cider vinegar with a cup of water and use it as a final rinse after shampooing. The result is smoother, shinier, and more manageable hair.
- Excessive use of heat styling tools like straighteners and curling irons can damage hair, making it dull and brittle. Whenever possible, let your hair air-dry and embrace its natural texture. If you must use heat tools, always apply a heat protectant.

## FOOD CORNER

### Vegetable upma

#### Ingredients

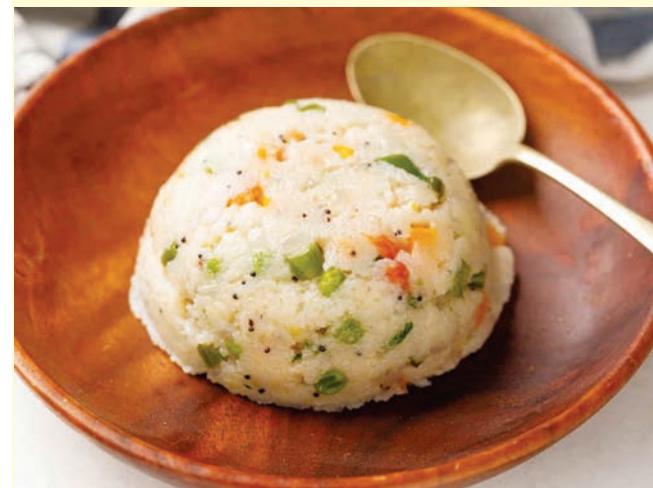
- 1 cup semolina (suji/rava), 2 tbsp oil or ghee, 1 tsp mustard seeds, 1 tsp urad dal (optional), 8-10 curry leaves, 1 onion (finely chopped), 1-2 green chilies (chopped), 1 tsp ginger (grated), 1 carrot (finely chopped), ½ cup peas (fresh or frozen), 1 small capsicum (optional, chopped), 2½ cups water, Salt to taste, Fresh coriander leaves (for garnish), 1 tbsp lemon juice (optional)

#### Method

- Heat a pan and dry roast the semolina on low flame until it turns light golden and aromatic. Stir continuously to avoid burning. Keep aside.
- In the same pan, heat oil or ghee. Add mustard seeds and let them splutter. Add urad dal and sauté until slightly golden. Toss in curry leaves, green chilies, and grated ginger for a burst of aroma.
- Add chopped onions and sauté until translucent. Mix in carrots, peas, and capsicum. Cook for 2-3 minutes until slightly tender.
- Pour in water and add salt. Bring it to a gentle boil.
- Slowly add the roasted semolina while stirring continuously to avoid lumps. Keep stirring as it absorbs water and thickens.
- Cover and cook on low heat for 2-3 minutes. Turn off the heat and add lemon juice for a fresh zing. Garnish with chopped coriander leaves.

#### Serve hot with:

- Coconut chutney
- Pickle
- A cup of hot chai or filter coffee



# Uncork the glow: Red wine secrets for radiant skin

## Keep wrinkles at bay

- The antioxidants present in red wine fight ageing by restoring the collagen balance and elasticity of your skin
- Fine lines and wrinkles will disappear, and your skin will get a second lease of life

## Minimise sun damage

- While it isn't really a sunscreen, red wine, with its antioxidants and amino acids, can help form a natural barrier against the strong UV radiation of the sun. Surely you must know that a glass of red wine can help prevent cancer

## For radiant skin

- A red wine massage is your ticket to

## radiant skin

- Just spritz some red wine on your face and massage very gently
- Rinse it off with a cleansing agent like Olay Total Effects 7 in One Foaming Cleanser after 10-15 minutes
- Also, check out 9 benefits of glycerin for skin whitening here.

## To soothe inflammation

- Once again, the antioxidants in red wine work on inflamed skin
- Gently dab a few drops on red and inflamed skin, and soothe your agitated complexion

## To fight acne

- You can use red wine for skin that is

## affected by acne

- The antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties cleanse skin of oil and impurities, and also reduce further breakouts

## As a toner

- Instead of investing in a cosmetic product, you can use red wine as a toner and get soft, clear and supple skin
- Gently apply the wine to your face and rinse it off with cold water after 30 minutes

## Lighten age spots

- You can slow down the appearance of age spots and even lighten existing ones with red wine treatment

# Morning or evening: When is the best time to eat bananas?

**B**ananas are one of the most popular and convenient fruits, packed with essential nutrients like potassium, vitamin B6, and natural sugars. But does when you eat a banana matter? The answer depends on your body, lifestyle, and health goals.

## MORNING: A QUICK ENERGY BOOST

Eating bananas in the morning can give you an instant energy lift thanks to their natural sugars glucose, fructose, and sucrose. They are especially helpful if you're in a rush and need something quick before heading out.

However, having bananas on an empty stomach may not suit everyone. For some people, it can lead to a temporary spike in blood sugar followed by a crash, leaving you feeling tired.

Tip: Pair bananas with protein or healthy fats like nuts or yogurt to keep energy levels stable.

## PRE-WORKOUT: IDEAL FOR PERFORMANCE

Bananas are often considered a perfect pre-workout snack. Their easily digestible carbohydrates provide quick fuel, while potassium helps prevent muscle cramps. Eating a banana 30–60 minutes before exercise can improve stamina and performance.

## MIDDAY SNACK: BALANCED AND FILLING

Having a banana between meals can help curb hunger and prevent overeating later in the day. It's a smart, healthy alternative to processed snacks and keeps you full due to its fiber content.

## EVENING OR NIGHT: SHOULD YOU AVOID IT?

There's a common belief that eating bananas at night is harmful, but that's not entirely true. Bananas contain magnesium and tryptophan, which may help relax muscles and promote better sleep.

That said, for people prone to digestion issues, eating



bananas late at night may cause slight discomfort or heaviness.

## WHO SHOULD BE CAREFUL?

People with diabetes should monitor portion size due to natural sugars. Those with sensitive digestion may avoid bananas on an empty stomach. Individuals with certain respiratory issues sometimes report increased mucus (though evidence is limited).

There is no one-size-fits-all "perfect" time to eat bananas. Morning and pre-workout are generally considered the best times for maximum benefits, while nighttime consumption depends on individual tolerance. The key is to listen to your body and pair bananas wisely with other nutrients.



## 7 early migraine signs you should never ignore

**M**igraines are more than just headaches they are a complex neurological condition that can disrupt daily life. Often, your body gives subtle warning signs before a migraine attack begins. Recognising these early triggers can help you manage or even prevent the intensity of an episode.

One of the earliest signs of a migraine is increased sensitivity to light (photophobia) and sound (phonophobia). Bright screens, sunlight, or loud environments may suddenly feel unbearable even before the pain starts.

Irritability, anxiety, or even a sudden drop in mood can signal the onset of a migraine. These emotional shifts are linked to changes in brain chemicals and may appear hours before the headache.

Strong cravings especially for chocolate, caffeine, or salty foods can be an early warning. Some people may also experience the opposite: a sudden lack of appetite.

A stiff neck is often overlooked but is a common pre-migraine symptom. It may feel like tension or soreness in the upper back and neck area.

Flashes of light, blind spots, zigzag lines, or blurred vision are classic signs of migraine with aura. These symptoms can last from a few minutes to an hour and often precede the headache phase.

Feeling unusually tired or yawning excessively without a clear reason can be your body's way of signalling an impending migraine.

Identifying these signs early allows you to take preventive steps such as resting in a dark room, staying hydrated, or avoiding known triggers. Over time, tracking your symptoms can help you better understand your personal migraine patterns.

If you experience frequent, severe, or worsening migraines, consult a healthcare professional. Proper diagnosis and treatment can significantly improve your quality of life and reduce the impact of migraines.

# High consumption of ultra-processed foods linked with reduced fertility in men: Study

**A** new study suggests that consuming higher amounts of ultra-processed foods may be linked to reduced fertility in men, slower growth in early embryos, and smaller yolk sacs -- essential for early embryonic development.

"Even though ultra-processed foods (UPFs) are so common in our diets, very little is known about their potential relationship with fertility outcomes, and early human development," said lead researcher Dr Romy Gaillard, a paediatrician and associate professor of developmental epidemiology at Erasmus University Medical Center, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Researchers said until now no study has investigated the combined impact of both parents' ultra-processed foods (UPF) consumption on the length of time it takes to conceive and early embryonic development.

The study, published in the journal Human Reproduction, looked at 831 women and 651 male partners enrolled in a population-based, prospective study that has been following parents from before conception and into their offspring's childhood -- the Generation R Study Next Programme.

The couples were included in the study during pre-conception period or during pregnancy between 2017 and 2021. Information on the parents' diet and time to pregnancy were measured using questionnaires.

Fecundability -- chances of conceiving within a



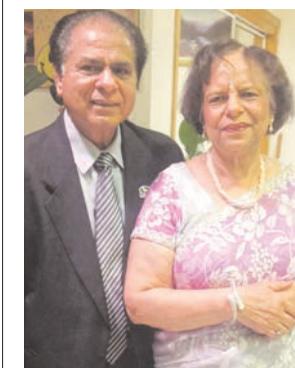
month -- and subfertility, which is time to pregnancy of 12 months or more or the use of assisted reproductive technology, were also measured.

The distance between the embryo's head and its buttocks -- an indication of its size and development -- and the volume of the yolk sac were measured by transvaginal ultrasound at seven, nine and 11 weeks of gestation.

Typically, consumption of UPFs made up 22 per cent and 25 per cent of the women's and men's total food intake, respectively, the study found.

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# Goodbye Sora? OpenAI shuts down viral AI app, stuns Disney

OpenAI has announced that it is shutting down its AI video-generation platform Sora. The AI startup will no longer support video generation across its entire portfolio including developer products. The announcement comes at a time when OpenAI leadership has informed employees to stop “side quests” in a bid to focus on enterprise products. On X, Sora’s official account wrote, “We’re saying goodbye to the Sora app we know this news is disappointing.”

The post stated that the company will soon share details regarding the timelines for the full shutdown of the Sora app and API – the video tool used by developers. ChatGPT will not support video generation any longer either.

## OpenAI shuts down Sora minutes after Disney meeting

As per a report by Reuters, OpenAI made the decision to shut down Sora just half an hour after a meeting with Disney. Disney agreed to invest \$1 billion in OpenAI late last year, which would allow Sora to include over 200 Disney characters in its videos, ranging from Marvel to Star Wars.

While Disney was caught off guard by OpenAI’s decision to shut down Sora, no money is said to have exchanged hands as part of the original deal. A spokesperson told Reuters, “It was a big rug-pull.”

The entertainment giant had planned to integrate Sora-generated content featuring its characters into platforms like Disney Plus along with potential broader use of OpenAI’s technology for internal creative and storytelling tools.

## Sora was melting GPUs

OpenAI introduced Sora in early 2024 as a text-to-video generation tool capable of creating high-quality, feature film-like clips. The app launched publicly in September 2025, allowing users to generate and share AI videos. The app went viral instantly in available markets, with users creating tons of AI videos. Sora head Bill Peebles claimed that the rapid use of Sora was melting the company’s GPUs at the time. OpenAI had then restricted usage limits for the app.

## Why is OpenAI shutting down Sora?

The Sora video generation models are believed to be taking



considerable computational power, which OpenAI reportedly wants to shift to productivity tools. OpenAI recently went into code red mode as it faces increasing competition from Anthropic which has a larger market share with enterprise customers.

OpenAI, which is estimated to lose upwards of \$14 billion this year alone, is reportedly also working to lure more investors. The company is offering up to 17.5 per cent guaranteed return rates to private equity investors, along with early access to new ChatGPT models. For context, Anthropic does not guarantee any returns on its investments from private equity firms. The Sam Altman-led firm is likely planning to go public later this year.

OpenAI has confirmed that it is now working on a “super app” that merges ChatGPT, Codex and its AI browser Atlas into a single platform, in hopes of gaining a stronger footing among enterprise and individual users.

The Sam Altman-led firm is also working on agentic AI systems following the success of OpenClaw – an open-source AI platform that allows you to set up your own agent locally on your device. OpenClaw’s creator Peter Steinberger is now part of OpenAI.

## Claude can now control computer like a human

Anthropic is changing the way you use Claude. You no longer need to sit in front of your computer just to give instructions to the AI. Rather, now, you can simply give Claude complete access to your computer, and it does the rest. The AI is no longer just an agent but your own remote employee. Here is how it works.

On X, Anthropic announced a new feature for Claude that gives the AI assistant complete control of your computer. Claude can now not only use your mouse, keyboard, and screen, but also access any app on your behalf. Anthropic claims that this will allow Claude to do work for you while you are away.

This update enables Claude to open applications, navigate browsers, fill spreadsheets, and manage other activities typically done at a desk.

Anthropic researcher Alex Albert claimed that this could allow you to get work done without opening your laptop. He wrote on X, “The future where I never have to open up my laptop to get work done is becoming real very fast.”

To get started, Claude gets access to your connected apps such as Slack or Calendar. The AI can also ask for permission for other apps it may need to access. Anthropic’s Felix Riesenbergs stated that this will work seamlessly with Claude’s Dispatch feature that allows you to control the AI model remotely.

This turns Claude into more of a personal AI agent that can complete tasks for you – think something like OpenClaw. Anthropic says that you can then remotely give prompts to Claude and head out. By the time you are back, the AI will have completed the work for you.

Currently, this feature is restricted as a research preview to paid Claude Cowork and Claude Code users. Do note that this capability is only available on macOS for now.

It requires both the Claude Desktop and mobile apps to be updated and paired for full functionality.

Anthropic’s move reflects a broader trend in AI development focused on automation and remote task management. This could give the company an edge against its rivals, as its Claude Cowork and Claude Code tools are quite popular.

AI agents like OpenClaw are gaining in popularity, with Nvidia launching its own version of OpenClaw, called NemoClaw. On the other hand, Meta and OpenAI are also working on agentic AI.

# Nasa announces \$20 billion plan to build Moon base, test nuclear tech on Mars

The United States space agency Nasa has unveiled an ambitious roadmap under Administrator Jared Isaacman, outlining plans to build a permanent Moon base, test nuclear-powered spacecraft, and deploy a fleet of helicopters on Mars, marking a major shift from short missions to sustained space exploration.

At the heart of the strategy is the creation of a long-term human presence on the Moon beyond Artemis-II. The US space agency is on the cusp of launching four astronauts on a maiden voyage to the Moon, first since 1972.

Unlike earlier missions that focused on brief missions, Nasa now aims to develop infrastructure that supports continuous operations, including habitats, power systems, and regular crewed and cargo landings with an investment of \$20 billion.

The effort is part of the broader Artemis programme, which seeks to



establish a lasting foothold on the lunar surface before pushing further into deep space.

“We have moved quickly, taken action to cut bureaucracy, and introduced deregulation focused on empowering the workforce. It reflects the reality of a great power competition underway and the consequences if we fail to deliver,” Nasa chief Jared Isaacman said.

Nasa will increase launch cadence to

the Moon with crew and cargo. Nasa chief has put up a bold plan to launch at least one lunar landing every six months.

The astronauts will land on the Moon for the first time during Artemis-IV mission in 2028. The landings will build upon the lessons from Artemis-II and Artemis-III missions.

Artemis-III, which was initially the first lunar landing mission, has been repurposed as a technology demonstrator mission.

Nasa recently rolled the SLS Artemis-II rocket to the launch pad and the agency said that everything is going as per plan for the launch and the final readiness review has been cleared.

A key enabler of this vision is nuclear technology. Nasa, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy, is working to deploy a nuclear reactor on the Moon by 2030 to provide continuous power, even during long lunar nights when solar energy is unavailable.

# Oil climbs as US, Iran spar over talks and New Hormuz curbs loom

MARCH 27, 2026

**VIENNA (TIP):** Global oil prices surged as geopolitical tensions between the United States and Iran deepened, clouding the outlook for diplomatic engagement and heightening concerns over potential disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz—the world's most critical oil transit chokepoint.

Brent crude climbed sharply, briefly crossing the \$100-per-barrel mark, while West Texas Intermediate also posted strong gains. The rally reflects mounting anxiety among traders as conflicting signals from Washington and Tehran dampen hopes of any near-term breakthrough in negotiations.

## Diplomatic Rift Fuels Market Anxiety

The latest escalation comes amid a widening divide between the U.S. and Iran over the possibility of renewed talks. American officials have indicated openness to dialogue aimed at easing tensions and stabilizing energy markets. However, Iranian authorities have pushed back, insisting that any negotiations must meet specific preconditions. This diplomatic impasse has injected fresh uncertainty into global markets, already grappling with tight supply conditions and fragile demand recovery patterns.

## Hormuz at the Center of the Crisis

At the heart of the current turmoil lies the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow passage through which nearly a quarter of the world's seaborne oil flows each day. Any threat to shipping in this corridor carries immediate and far-reaching implications for global energy supply. Iran has signaled the possibility of imposing new restrictions or maintaining heightened control over maritime traffic in the region. While a full closure remains unlikely, even



limited disruptions or increased security risks can significantly reduce tanker movement and raise insurance costs, thereby tightening supply.

Shipping activity in the region has already shown signs of strain, with fewer vessels willing to transit the area amid heightened security concerns.

## Supply Risks Drive Price Surge

Energy markets are acutely sensitive to developments in the Persian Gulf, and the latest tensions have reignited fears of a supply shock. Analysts warn that even partial disruptions could remove millions of barrels per day from global circulation, pushing prices higher in an already volatile environment.

The current rally is not solely driven by actual supply losses but also by the risk premium being priced into oil futures. Traders are factoring in the possibility of prolonged instability, which could further strain supply chains and disrupt global trade flows.

## Broader Economic Implications

The surge in oil prices carries

significant implications for the global economy. Higher energy costs could exacerbate inflationary pressures, complicate monetary policy decisions, and slow economic growth, particularly in oil-importing nations.

For countries heavily dependent on crude imports, including major Asian economies, sustained price increases may translate into higher fuel costs, fiscal strain, and pressure on trade balances.

## Volatility Ahead

Market participants remain on edge as the situation continues to evolve. The absence of clear diplomatic progress, combined with the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz, suggests that oil prices are likely to remain volatile in the near term. Any de-escalation in tensions or concrete steps toward negotiations could ease prices, while further escalation—particularly involving shipping disruptions—may trigger sharper gains.

For now, the oil market remains firmly anchored to geopolitical developments, with traders closely monitoring every signal from Washington and Tehran.

## India's GDP growth to touch 7.1% in FY27: S&P report

MARCH 27, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** S&P Global Ratings has raised India's GDP growth to 7.1 percent in the fiscal year ending in March 2027, compared with 7.6 per cent in fiscal 2026.

The key drivers of GDP growth are resilient private consumption, a modest recovery in private investment and solid exports, the rating agency said in a report.

"But downside risks prevail, primarily due to the renewed geopolitical tensions and persistent trade-related uncertainties. These risks could affect India through fluctuations in commodity prices, trade volumes, and capital flows," the report added.

Inflation in India will rise to 4.3 per cent in fiscal 2027 as it normalises from low levels, the report said.

"Higher crude prices will likely widen the trade deficit, but a healthy surplus in services trade should help contain the current account deficit. Overall, we expect the central bank to hold rates steady and maintain a neutral stance," it said.

The report highlighted that the global growth will mostly hold up even in the face of war. Global activity has derived support from strong AI-related investment spending on tech products, especially in the US, and accommodative fiscal and monetary policy in several major economies.

But as the Middle East turmoil continues, so will the negative impact, the report said. "Our baseline forecast assumes that the Strait of Hormuz will face material disruptions until early April, with flows recovering gradually thereafter. The baseline includes significant but generally manageable economic impact," it stated.

Higher energy prices are raising costs and inflation and eroding purchasing power, thus depressing growth. In some economies, shortages of liquefied gas and government measures to save energy consumption disrupt economic activity.

Longer disruption will heighten the economic damage. "Our energy market downside scenario considers more economic impact as energy supply from the Middle East remains constrained for longer," it explained.



# Gold jumps Rs 5,091 to Rs 1.44 lakh per 10g as soft dollar boost safe-haven demand

MARCH 26, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Gold prices climbed Rs 5,091 to Rs 1.44 lakh per 10 grams in futures trade on March 26 amid strong global trends and a weak US dollar.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, gold for the April contract appreciated by Rs 5,091, or 3.66 per cent, to Rs 1,44,003 per 10 grams.

Analysts said the rally in bullion was driven by improving sentiment in global commodities market.

"Gold prices experienced a notable rally driven by easing geopolitical tensions surrounding the US-Iran conflict and expectations of potential interest rate cuts amid inflation projections," Gaurav Garg, Research Analyst at Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

The precious metals market reacted



positively to the signs of a ceasefire, which has alleviated some of the panic selling witnessed earlier, he added.

Aamir Makda, Commodity & Currency Analyst at Choice Broking said global central banks continued buying gold in 2026 despite record prices, led by China and Kazakhstan.

In the international market, gold futures for April delivery rose USD 157.9, or 3.59 per cent, to USD 4,559.9 per ounce.

Gold rose more than 2 per cent on Wednesday, buoyed by a softer dollar, while a drop in oil prices eased concerns about elevated inflation and higher global interest rates, amid reports of a US plan to end the war in West Asia, Jigar Trivedi, Senior Research Analyst at IndusInd Securities, said.

The weaker dollar made greenback-priced bullion cheaper for holders of other currencies, supporting demand, he added.

With hopes of de-escalation in West Asia and dollar strength, safe-haven demand began to reassert, reinforcing the view that gold didn't lose its safe-haven appeal, Trivedi said.



**BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA**

## ARIES



Ganesha says this week holds the promise of significant opportunities in your career. Successful negotiations and agreements with new associates are likely. However, there may be a nostalgic pull towards an old residence. Spousal relations could face temporary challenges, leading to a brief separation. Students need to intensify their focus for success in educational pursuits. Children might witness an expansion in their business activities and excel in competitions. Spouses could face pressure from superiors at work, despite their hard work. Financial obligations may weigh on the father, leading to criticism for past mistakes. Elder siblings may encounter challenges in their relationships with spouses or children, while younger siblings enjoy financial freedom.

## TAURUS



Ganesha says this week may bring sudden losses through vehicles, lands, or father. An aggressive attitude could lead to problems with higher officials, emphasizing the need for politeness and clarity in communication. Care is essential when forwarding official communications. Students should concentrate more on their studies, and children may finalize marriage alliances. Spouses may face sudden changes in their careers, encountering opposition at work. Fathers may be encouraged to start a business, despite potential challenges. Elder siblings may face health complications, and younger siblings may be transferred to a distant place.

## GEMINI



Ganesha says you may have a new opportunity this week. Work may bring new friendships or relations, and it's an excellent time for booking profits in speculative ventures. Sudden and significant expenditures may occur towards the week's end. Students can expect satisfactory results, and children may succeed in interviews or competitions. Spouses may worry about financial prospects, while fathers maintain a decent financial position. Elder siblings may face financial worries, and younger siblings may incur losses through speculation.

## CANCER



Ganesha says a threatening week with surprising changes in your career. Caution is advised in evaluating those around you, as hidden enemies may attempt to harm your reputation. On the positive side, success may come through independent efforts. Students may get satisfactory results, and children may experience conflicts with spouses or business partners. A lack of confidence or low spirits may affect spouses throughout the week. Fathers may experience financial benefits unexpectedly, aided by old friends or relatives. Elder siblings may face health complications, and younger siblings may enjoy foreign visits.

## LEO



Ganesha says a strenuous week with extreme work pressure, demands efficiency and control of emotions. Situations may not be positive between you and superiors, requiring a reasonable approach. Business engagements may bring good money, and students may achieve grand success in higher education. Children may succeed in fine arts but should take care of their health. Spouses may have an irritable outlook, causing dissatisfaction in conjugal life. Fathers may find new earning options, while elder siblings may withdraw from a partnership business.

## VIRGO



Ganesha says speculative gains and victory over enemies. Your vocation may gain respect, fostering confidence to start your own business. Care is essential during long trips. Students may achieve normal results, spouses may have monetary benefits through their careers, and fathers may experience monetary benefits through an unexpected channel. Elder siblings may be worried due to significant expenditures, and younger siblings may face problems in love matters, possibly leading to a breakup.

## LIBRA



Ganesha says a fruitful week, makes you more logical and innovative. Efforts for settlement will intensify, earning you recognition for your talents. Propitious celebrations at home are likely. Health should be managed through a nutritious diet. Students may achieve extraordinary results, and youngsters may succeed in

gaining opportunities for work abroad. Spouses may be satisfied with their financial status, but risky decisions in lending money may be considered. Fathers may experience pleasant happenings in both personal and professional life, and elder siblings may receive positive communication about a new job. Younger siblings will enjoy a steep increment in earnings.

## SCORPIO



Ganesha says this week is stagnant but helps maintain balance. Spouses may advance well, and children may excel in competitions and presentations. A spouse may face distractions at the workplace but makes good money in business. Fathers may have an opportunity to work abroad, expressing confidence in their prospects. Elderly siblings may face health complications, leading to necessary lifestyle changes. Younger siblings may beget a child.

## SAGITTARIUS



Ganesha says this may be a supporting week for you and will help you to settle down in life. You may find new gaining options during this week. Excess expenditure through different sources is inevitable. Speculation or any other investment is not a rational decision. Students may get outstanding results for their hard work. Children may finalize a marriage alliance during this week. They will have an optimistic outlook about prospects. A spouse may have surprises in a career. He/she may be entrusted with herculean tasks during this week. Father may get separated from a partnership venture. Elder siblings may have distractions at work location. Younger siblings may have to wait for promotion until the end of this week.

## CAPRICORN



Ganesha says a pleasant week ahead, and I bless you with good energy and a positive spirit. Effective presentations will persuade your bosses, and most issues will find resolution. Individuals engaged in foreign lands may thrive. Students may achieve normal results, and children may finalize marriage decisions. Spouses may find satisfaction in their financial status, even lending money to others, which could be a risky decision. Fathers may face pressure from secret enemies, while elder siblings may be promoted. Younger siblings will succeed in new business activities.

## AQUARIUS



Ganesha says this may be a prosperous week for you and help you in your career through old friends or elder siblings. Some indiscreet decisions may bring huge monetary losses. You may bag decent profits for your previous investments. This is a very positive week for a high rating in appraisals. There will be all-round success with minor disturbances. Students may get outstanding results for their performance. Children may celebrate marriage during this week. A spouse may have major changes in a career without clear intimation. He/she may get reversed without any reason. Fathers may have problems with business partners. He may undertake speculative activities which may prove futile at a later date. Elder siblings will be helpful in important aspects of life.

## PISCES



Ganesha says this may be a challenging week for you and may make you argumentative. You may not accept any critique and you might be willing to fight for your appreciation. This is a good week to start new profit-making activities. This week may result in sudden expenditure for auspicious reasons. Students may not be able to concentrate well for various reasons. A spouse may have ultimate pressure in a career. He/she may have to work hard to prove their efficacy. Father may have troubles caused by secret enemies. He may be worried about technical mistakes committed by him. Elder siblings may have a good time with family and friends. Younger siblings may have sudden growth in jobs or business.

## AUTHOR BIO

**CHIRAG DARUWALLA IS THE BEST ASTROLOGER AND ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS NAMES IN THE ASTROLOGY WORLD. HE HAS MORE THAN 18 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE. READERS MAY SEEK HIS ADVICE RELATED TO CAREER, HEALTH, FINANCE, BUSINESS, MONEY, LOVE AND MARRIAGE. HE HAS COMPLETE KNOWLEDGE, SOLUTIONS, AND GUIDANCE TO ALL THE PROBLEMS RELATED TO LIFE. VISIT HIS WEBSITE CHIRAGDARUWALLA.COM. HE IS AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATIONS ON WHATSAPP NUMBER +91 8141566266 OR BY EMAIL: info@chiragdaruwalla.com**

**BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : MARCH 30 TO APRIL 5  
BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA****MARCH 30**

Ganesha says today, open yourself up to the revitalizing power of rejuvenation. When the stars and planets come into proper alignment, it paves the path for novel insights and unexplored possibilities. Be willing to adapt to unanticipated changes and have faith that doing so will lead to personal development and progression. Your intuition is heightened, and as a result, you can handle challenging circumstances with poise and sage advice. Spend some time thinking about the things you want to do and the good things you want to happen in the days to come. Your endeavors are supported by the stars, which in turn inspires confidence and hope in you. As you embark on this new path, don't forget to show kindness to both yourself and the people around you.

**MARCH 31**

Ganesha says the universe inspires you to indulge in your creative side today by encouraging you to do so. You should let your imagination go wild and investigate the hidden parts of your universe. The conditions now are ideal for creative expression, introspection, and the development of new ideas. Your creative endeavors are supported by the forces of the universe, which in turn provide you with knowledge and inspiration. Have faith in your one-of-a-

kind perspective, and communicate it to the rest of the world. The associations you establish today have the potential to develop into more substantial relationships and productive partnerships in the future.

**APRIL 1**

Ganesha says clarity and concentration will come to your mind today as the stars are in perfect alignment. Today is a good day for introspective contemplation and methodical preparation. Spend some time getting your thoughts organized and coming up with some goals for the future that are attainable. Your goals are supported by the cosmos, and it provides you with the willpower and tenacity you need to make them a reality. Don't forget to keep a healthy balance in all elements of your life, making sure that you're taking care of yourself and making progress in other areas of your life in addition to your professional accomplishments.

**APRIL 2**

Ganesha says the forces of the heavens today highlight the significance of maintaining open lines of communication. The ability to have a conversation that is both clear and empathetic is essential to successfully resolving issues and building stronger relationships. Maintain an open mind to

the viewpoints of others and work on your ability to actively listen. You are blessed with empathy and understanding, which enables you to negotiate talks with elegance and respect. The cosmos smiles down upon you. You have the power to heal others and inspire others, so choose your words carefully.

**APRIL 3**

Ganesha says the universe advises people to take care of themselves and rest today. Get away from the commotion for a while so that you can refresh not only your thoughts but also your body and your spirit. Participate in pursuits that will provide you with both pleasure and a sense of calm. You are bathed in the soft light of the stars, which brings forth feelings of calm and composure within you. Embrace the calm vibe that surrounds you and take it with you into the days that lie ahead.

**APRIL 4**

Ganesha says the cosmic forces of today underscore the significance of adaptation and flexibility in one's life. Because of the unpredictability of life, it is possible that unexpected changes will occur, and the universe will prepare you to confront these changes with bravery and optimism. Have faith in the divine design of the universe, and be aware that every event serves a purpose in your personal development and progression.

**VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR  
BEJAN DARUWALLA**

Always try to keep a cheerful attitude and be open to new experiences; life is full of exciting opportunities.

**APRIL 5**

Ganesha says at the end of the week, the heavenly bodies will align in a way that will bring harmony and balance into your life. It is a day for making amends, getting well, and coming together as one. Make amends with loved ones and reconnect with old friends. The success of your attempts to cultivate healthy, loving relationships is supported by the cosmos. Think back on the events of the past week and acknowledge the things you've picked up and how much you've grown as a result. Proceed with a spirit that is filled to the brim with love, appreciation, and excitement for the benefits that are still to come.

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Hanuman Jayanti is one of the most revered and spiritually uplifting festivals in Hindu tradition, commemorating the birth of Lord Hanuman—the supreme devotee of Lord Rama and a symbol of unwavering faith, immense strength, humility, and selfless service. Celebrated with great devotion across India and in Hindu communities worldwide, this auspicious day honors the divine presence of Hanuman, who continues to inspire millions through his devotion (bhakti) and courage. This year, Hanuman Jayanti falls on April 2.

The birth of Lord Hanuman is rooted in ancient scriptures such as the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Puranas. According to these texts, Hanuman was born to Anjana, an apsara who was cursed to be born on earth, and Kesari, a powerful vanara (monkey chief). He is also considered the spiritual son of Vayu, the god of wind, who played a pivotal role in his birth.

The most widely accepted belief is that Hanuman was born on the full moon day (Purnima) of the Chaitra month, which usually falls in March or April. However, different regions of India observe Hanuman Jayanti on varying dates according to their local traditions and calendars.

#### The Divine Legend

The legend of Lord Hanuman is deeply interwoven with the story of the Ramayana. As a child, Hanuman possessed extraordinary powers. One famous tale narrates how he mistook the rising sun for a fruit and leapt into the sky to grasp it. Impressed yet concerned by his immense strength, the gods blessed him but also placed a curse that he would forget his powers until reminded.

Hanuman's true glory unfolded when he met Lord Rama. His unwavering devotion (bhakti) toward Rama became the cornerstone of his identity. He played a crucial role in the search for Sita, locating her in Lanka, delivering Rama's message, and later assisting in the battle against Ravana.

One of the most celebrated episodes is his journey to bring the Sanjeevani herb to save Lakshmana. Unable to identify the herb, Hanuman lifted the entire mountain—demonstrating not just strength but devotion and determination.

Hanuman is considered immortal (Chiranjivi), believed to reside on earth wherever the name of Lord Rama is chanted.

#### Spiritual Significance

Hanuman Jayanti is not merely a celebration of birth; it is a profound spiritual reminder of the ideals that Hanuman represents:

##### Supreme Devotion (Bhakti)

Hanuman symbolizes complete surrender to God. His life teaches that true devotion transcends ego and personal desires.

##### Strength with Humility

Despite possessing unmatched power, Hanuman remains humble. His character highlights the balance between strength

# Hanuman Jayanti: The power of devotion and strength



#### Key Details for Hanuman Jayanti 2026:

**Date:** Thursday, April 2, 2026.

**Purnima Tithi Begins:** April 1, 2026, at 07:41 AM.

**Purnima Tithi Ends:** April 2, 2026, at 08:35 AM.

**Auspicious Muhurat (Puja Time):** Approximately 11:50 AM – 12:40 PM on April 2, 2026.

and humility.

#### Protection from Evil

Devotees believe that worshipping Hanuman protects them from negative energies, evil spirits, and obstacles. Recitation of the Hanuman Chalisa is especially popular for spiritual protection.

#### Symbol of Courage and Determination

Hanuman inspires courage, especially in times of adversity. His fearless actions in the Ramayana serve as guiding principles for overcoming life's challenges.

#### Rituals and Observances

Hanuman Jayanti is marked by devotion, discipline, and spiritual fervor. The rituals vary regionally but share common elements:

##### Early Morning Worship

Devotees wake before sunrise, bathe, and visit Hanuman temples. Idols of Hanuman are adorned with sindoor (vermilion), oil, flowers, and garlands.

#### Recitation of Sacred Texts

Devotional hymns such as the Hanuman Chalisa, Bajrang Baan, and Sundara Kanda (a chapter from the Ramayana) are recited throughout the day.

#### Fasting (Vrat)

Many devotees observe a strict fast, consuming only fruits or simple sattvic food. The fast is believed to purify the body and mind.

#### Offering Prasad

Offerings such as jaggery, roasted gram (chana), bananas, and laddoos are made to Hanuman. These are later distributed among devotees.

#### Processions and Bhajans

In many regions, grand processions (shobha yatras) are organized with chanting, singing of bhajans, and enactments of scenes from the Ramayana.

#### Regional Variations in Celebration

Hanuman Jayanti is observed differently across India:

- In North India, it is celebrated on Chaitra Purnima with large temple gatherings.
- In Tamil Nadu and Kerala, it is observed during Margazhi or Dhanu month.
- In Maharashtra, the celebrations are particularly vibrant, with community events and continuous chanting.

In Hindu philosophy, Hanuman is more than a deity—he is a bridge between the human and the divine. He represents the ideal disciple and the perfect servant of God. His presence in yogic and spiritual traditions is also significant; he is often associated with control over the mind and senses.

Hanuman's devotion to Lord Rama is often interpreted as the soul's devotion to the Supreme Consciousness. His strength symbolizes inner power, while his humility represents spiritual wisdom.

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## G7 foreign ministers stress "absolute necessity" of a "toll-free" Strait of Hormuz

minimizing the impact of the conflict on regional partners and civilian populations, critical infrastructure - and the need to coordinate humanitarian aid efforts," the statement said.

"We focused on the value of diverse partnerships, coordination, and supporting initiatives, including to mitigate global economic shocks such as disruptions to economic, energy, fertilizer and commercial supply chains, which have direct impacts on our citizens," it said. (Source: CNN)

## A New UN Task Force Aims to Ease Trade Flow Through Strait of Hormuz

Secretary-General António Guterres announced on March 27 the creation of a task force to develop a diplomatic path for restoring the flow of fertilizer and humanitarian goods through the Strait of Hormuz, the only passage from the Persian Gulf to the open ocean. Amid relentless assaults and retaliations, Iran's military barricade of the strait is preventing passage of fuel, agricultural products and humanitarian goods to the rest of the world.

The task force aims to find ways to meet global humanitarian needs from the nearly blocked strait, Guterres's spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, told journalists at UN headquarters in New York City on Friday. In Geneva, the Iranian envoy to the UN tweeted just hours after the announcement by Dujarric that Iran "has decided to facilitate and further expedite the safe passage of humanitarian shipments through the Strait of Hormuz."

The new task force will be led by Undersecretary-General Jorge Moreira da Silva, the executive director of the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and will include representatives from the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Chamber of Commerce (not a UN entity).

"If successful," Dujarric said in an earlier note to UN correspondents, sent on Friday, about the task force, "it would also create confidence among Member States on the diplomatic approach to the conflict and constitute a valuable step towards a wider political settlement."

Additionally, on March 25 Guterres appointed a French national and longtime diplomat, Jean Arnault, as his personal envoy to lead the UN's political engagement on the multifront wars in the Mideast with support from the task force. Arnault was expected to meet Guterres on March 27, before beginning his regional travels, but Dujarric confirmed to PassBlue that Arnault would arrive at the headquarters on Monday, March 30.

The appointment of Arnault has also prompted questions from UN observers over how his role interacts with existing UN diplomatic positions in the Mideast. The UN has a special coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, based in Jerusalem, as well as a special coordinator for Lebanon.

The Jerusalem post sits vacant, but Ramiz Alakbarov runs the office as deputy. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert is the special coordinator for Lebanon. Both Mideast positions represent established diplomatic frameworks with defined mandates. But Arnault's appointment does not delineate his geographic scope, and the announcement did not refer to the other Mideast roles.

Dujarric told PassBlue in an email that the existing diplomatic endeavors in the Mideast do not overlap with Arnault's new role, but he did not answer specific questions as to whether Arnault's mandate includes diplomatic efforts in Lebanon and Gaza.

The new initiative draws on previous models, Dujarric told reporters, like the Black Sea Grain deal, which, brokered with Türkiye and Russia, enabled wartime grain and fertilizer exports from Ukraine in 2022 to be shipped out amid Russia's war on the country. The other model is the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen, which helps ease commercial shipping through the Houthi-controlled Red Sea while ensuring compliance with the arms embargo under Security Council Resolution 2216. The Black Sea Grain

deal fell apart in 2023, after Russia ended its participation.

"One immediate marker of success will be the Task Force's ability to get all of the relevant parties to participate in the mechanism," Daniel Forti, the head of UN affairs at the International Crisis Group think tank, said. "But this is not completely within the UN's control, as the pace and intensity of hostilities will determine countries' calculations around the Strait."

Forti added that the new mechanism "can offer helpful inputs into eventual negotiations to de-escalate the crisis [and] reaffirm that the UN can help mitigate the global repercussions of major wars even if the organization is not at the forefront of political discussions to end them."

The near closure of the Strait of Hormuz chokepoint has heightened global economic and food security concerns, according to numerous UN agencies. Shipping traffic through the corridor has dropped by over 90 percent since US and Israeli attacks on Iran began on Feb. 28, pushing oil prices sky-high and sharply increasing shipping costs, insurance premiums and prices across global supply chains.

The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that increases of 15 to 20 percent will occur in the price of fertilizers as costs of fuel and natural gas continue to rise. The dual shock is expected to reduce fertilizer use, lower crop yields and shift planting decisions, particularly for staple crops such as wheat, rice and maize, the UN agency said.

The World Food Program warned that prolonged instability in the strait could push up to 45 million more people into acute food insecurity, potentially returning global hunger to levels reached in the early phase of the full-scale war in Ukraine in 2022.

(Source: PassBlue.com)

## "Iran will exact HEAVY price for Israeli crimes": Araghchi slams Israeli strikes on nuclear sites, steel plants

"Israel has hit 2 of Iran's largest steel factories, a power plant and civilian nuclear sites among other infrastructure. Israel claims it acted in coordination with the U.S. Attack contradicts POTUS extended deadline for diplomacy. Iran will exact HEAVY price for Israeli crimes," Araghchi said.

Earlier, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) confirmed the strikes on Iranian nuclear sites.

In a series of posts on X, the IDF confirmed that it carried out airstrikes on Iran's Arak heavy water plant and a uranium extraction facility in Yazd as part of Operation "Rising Lion."

The IDF stated that these strikes targeted key infrastructure used by Iran to produce materials for nuclear weapons, including weapons-grade plutonium and precursor materials for uranium enrichment.

"The Air Force struck the heavy water plant in Arak... Despite explicit international commitments, foremost among them the nuclear deal, the Iranian terrorist regime has systematically refrained from converting the reactor in a manner that would prevent the production of weapons-grade plutonium... Therefore, the IDF has now struck the facility once again," the IDF stated in a post.

Separately, the IDF said the strike on the uranium extraction facility in Yazd was aimed at disrupting Iran's nuclear weapons program by targeting central infrastructure for the production of precursor materials.

"Enriched uranium constitutes a central and critical component in nuclear weapons development... The strike on the site detracts from the Iranian terror regime's ability to obtain the raw material required for these processes," the IDF stated in a separate post.

Meanwhile, Iranian State Media, Press TV, reported that the US and Israel jointly carried out separate attacks on two major steel companies in Iran's Isfahan and Khuzestan.

According to Deputy Governor General of Isfahan, Akbar Salehi, the electricity facility of Mobarakeh Steel Company in Mobarakeh was targeted while employees were present, resulting in one death and two injuries, Press TV reported.

In Khuzestan, the Khuzestan Steel Company suffered damage from an aerial strike, leaving 16 individuals with minor injuries, according to Deputy Governor General of Khuzestan, Valiollah Hayati, as reported by Press TV.

On Thursday, Trump stated that he is extending the pause on strikes targeting Iran's energy infrastructure for an additional 10 days, until April 6, 2026, as part of the ongoing diplomatic talks between the two sides.

In a post on Truth Social, the US President claimed that the announcement comes as per a "request" from the Iranian Government and further stated that the negotiations with Tehran were "going very well".

"As per Iranian Government request, please let this statement serve to represent that I am pausing the period of Energy Plant destruction by 10 Days to Monday, April 6, 2026, at 8 P.M., Eastern Time. Talks are ongoing and, despite erroneous statements to the contrary by the Fake News Media and others, they are going very well," the post read. (Source: ANI)

## House Republicans revolt over bill to reopen D.H.S., deepening shutdown rift

They derided the Senate plan for hewing too closely to Democrats' position by omitting money for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol, the two agencies responsible for carrying out Mr. Trump's deportation crackdown, which are operating under previously approved funds.

"House Republicans are not going to be any part of any effort to reopen our borders or to stop immigration enforcement," Speaker Mike Johnson said at a news conference on Friday afternoon. "This gambit that was done last night is a joke."

Mr. Johnson called the Senate-passed deal engineered by Senator John Thune, Republican of South Dakota and the majority leader, "ridiculousness," and instead teed up a stopgap measure to fund the entire department until May 22.

The House passed that measure on a 213 to 203 vote late Friday night, before leaving Washington for a scheduled two-week break.

The vote left funding for the Department of Homeland Security up in the air, with competing bills pending in each chamber - both controlled by Republicans - and neither apparently willing to approve the other's proposal.

House Democrats had been ready to join with Republicans and back the Senate-passed measure, clearing it for Mr. Trump to sign it into law and end the shutdown. But the House bill is dead on arrival in the Senate, where Democrats have been rejecting similar proposals for more than a month. It was unclear late on Friday whether senators, who have now scattered to their states for the two-week recess, would return to Washington and vote again.

Mr. Thune did not weigh in on the backlash to the agreement he negotiated, and Mr. Johnson tried to shift the blame to Senate Democrats. But Representative Jim McGovern of Massachusetts, the senior Democrat on the Rules Committee, said the House Republican opposition left no question which party was responsible for the lapse in agency funding.

"If you woke up this morning not knowing who to blame for this shutdown, you will go to bed tonight with no doubt on who to blame," Mr. McGovern said. "It's House Republicans and Speaker Johnson."

Mr. Trump, who had waffled all week about whether he would support a deal to end the shutdown, also removed any doubt about where he stood, telling Fox News in an interview that the Senate-passed bill "wasn't appropriate." He urged Senate Republicans to eliminate the filibuster, a move he has long demanded, and force through a funding measure over Democratic opposition.

Senate Democrats have insisted for weeks that they would not support new funding for the Department of Homeland Security unless the Trump administration agreed to significant restrictions on ICE tactics and officer conduct after federal immigration agents fatally shot two U.S. citizens in Minneapolis in January.

(Source: New York Times)

Tucked away in the shimmering waters of the Bay of Bengal, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are a breathtaking escape where turquoise seas meet lush rainforests and history whispers through colonial ruins. Far from the chaos of mainland cities, this archipelago offers an experience that is equal parts adventure, tranquility, and cultural intrigue—a destination where time slows down and nature takes center stage.

#### A Glimpse into Paradise

Comprising over 500 islands, islets, and rocks, only a handful of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands are open to tourists. Each island boasts its own unique character—some are known for powdery white beaches, others for dense mangrove forests, vibrant coral reefs, or historical landmarks. The capital, Port Blair, serves as the gateway to this tropical haven. With its relaxed pace and scenic coastline, it sets the tone for the journey ahead.

The geography at Andaman and Nicobar Islands states that the archipelago comprises of North Andaman, South Andaman, Middle Andaman, and Little Andaman in the Andaman group of islands, as well as Great Nicobar, Nancowry, Car Nicobar, Chowra and Katchal in the Nicobar group of islands. Amongst all the islands, Great Andaman and Ritchie Archipelago are the top tourist destinations with some surreal beaches for the holiday. Andaman features thrilling watersports like snorkeling, sea walks and scuba diving amongst several others in many of islands' beaches, hence calling adventure junkies from far and wide. Visitors would also enjoy their time basking in the sun on the white sandy beaches overlooking the azure blue waters while sipping on a refreshing drink. Witnessing the sunrise and sunset is certainly an unbeatable experience, which indeed adds to a memorable beach holiday here. The tourism of Andaman is not only confined to a memorable beach holiday as the archipelago is also blessed with lush flora including evergreen tropical rainforest canopy making a holiday for nature lovers quite a memorable one too. These forests engross an assorted a jumble of Indian, Malaysian and indigenous floral stretches that attract a lot of wildlife lovers. There are more than 2000 varieties of plants found here. These islands are extremely profuse with fauna and around 50 species of forest mammals are found here among which 26 rat species and 14 bat species are primarily notable.

#### Tourist Attractions

The beautiful and pristine islands are home to number of gorgeous beaches, rich flora and fauna and underwater life. Amongst the top attractions of the islands are Barren Island, which is the only confirmed active volcano in South Asia; Neil Island, Havelock Island, Long Island, Cellular Jail, Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park, Anthropological Museum, Indira Point, Car Nicobar, Katchal. The islands are perfect for a holiday and have stunning beaches like

# Andaman & Nicobar Islands: India's tropical paradise



Radhanagar, which is amongst the top beach destination in Asia.

#### Cellular Jail

Cellular village has seen a lot of bloodsheds - it was made by the freedom fighters so that they can be tortured here. Even before the construction of the Jail, the island was a prison of India's First War of Independence of 1857. This jail reflects one of the murkiest chapters of in the colonial rule's history. It is a mute witness of many heinous acts that British soldiers put on the villagers. In 1906, the jail was completely constructed and was named as 'Cellular' because there cells made for

each prison rather than accommodating them in one documentary. Originally, there were seven prolonged, puce-coloured building with a central tower. Later, the building was subsequently damaged, leaving behind three wings intact. In the daily life of prisoners, executions were frequent, and many were made to undergo hard labor. Each cell of the prison is 13.5 feet high 7 feet wide and housed one convict in solitary confinement. Without a doubt, this structure is one of the most historically prominent buildings in India. For this reason and intent, Cellular Jail is a must-visit spot while on the trip to Andaman.

#### Forest Museum

Located on the outskirts of Port Blair, Forest Museum is a famous attraction for its wide collection related to forest and the assortment of trees. This prominent museum is a must visit place in Port Blair and it is managed by the forest department of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The major attractions that are set on display in this museum include the artefacts that are made from timber, gurjan, oak, satin wood and paduak. These displayed artefacts reflect the rich and dense flora found in the islands. The forest department also carries out researches and the outcomes of these research activities can be clearly seen in this museum. To add flavour for the tourists, the museum also incorporates a mini zoo and a small zoological garden inside the building.

#### Havelock Island

Among the islands of Andaman, the one that is most visited is the Havelock. Spread in an area of 113 sq. km. and located 39 km of north-east of Port Blair, Havelock Island offers a perfect beach vacation in Andaman. The white sand beaches of this congenial and imposing island are fringed with rain-fed forests making them quite a beautiful destinations to see in India. Famous Radhanagar Beach and Elephant Beach are also part of Havelock Island along with Kalapather and Vijaynagar Beach.

In addition to the extraordinary ambiance and hypnotizing tranquility, Havelock Island also proffers enthralling adventure activities such as scuba diving, snorkelling and trekking. Equipped with several recreational and other pleasant services for tourists, Havelock Island is a supreme destination for a vacation in nature's lap.

#### Neil Island

On the Northeast side of Port Blair, Neil Island is the Vegetable bowl of Andaman, owing to the farming practices that take place here. A long and the immaculate island of Andaman, Neil Island is endowed with exquisite settings, which makes it just right the holiday. For tourists in quest of chilling out after the humdrum schedule, this island is no less than an empyrean. The azure sea and verdant foliage make it treat to the eyes. There are six beautiful beaches in Andaman like Sitapur, Lakshmanpur-I & II, SIR HUGH ROSE ISLAND and Bharatpur - each with the best view of the sun gliding below, and above the horizon. Also, the beaches of Andaman are quite famous for adventure activities like snorkeling and scuba diving. If the idea of adventure activity doesn't sound exciting then do visit the beachside to soak in the cool breezy air, read a book and sip the natural coconut water. Do visit the spectacular corals and reefs in Neil Island.

# History This Week

MAR 27 - APR 02

## MARCH 27



March 27, 1977 - The worst accident in the history of civil aviation occurred as two Boeing 747 jets collided on the ground in the Canary Islands, resulting in 570 deaths.

## MARCH 28



March 28, 1979 - Near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant accident occurred in which uranium in the reactor core overheated due to the failure of a cooling valve. A pressure relief valve then stuck causing the water level to plummet, threatening a catastrophic nuclear meltdown. The accident resulted in the release of radioactive steam into the atmosphere, and created a storm of controversy over the necessity and safety of nuclear power plants.

## MARCH 29

March 29, 1979 - In the U.S. Congress, the House Select Committee on Assassinations released its final report regarding the killings of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Robert Kennedy.



Birthday - John Tyler (1790-1862) the 10th U.S. President was born in Charles

City County, Virginia. He became president upon the death of William H. Harrison and served from 1841 to 1845. In 1861, Tyler was elected to the Confederate Congress, but died before being seated.

## MARCH 30



March 30, 1981 - Newly elected President Ronald Reagan was shot in the chest while walking toward his limousine in Washington, D.C., following a speech inside a hotel. The president was then rushed into surgery to remove a 22-caliber bullet from his left lung. "I should have ducked," Reagan joked. Three others were also hit including Reagan's Press Secretary, James Brady, who was shot in the forehead but survived. The president soon recovered from the surgery and returned to his duties.



Birthday - Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890) was born in Groot Zundert, Holland. He was a Postimpressionist painter, generally considered the greatest Dutch painter after Rembrandt. During his short (10-year) painting career he produced over 800 oil paintings and 700 drawings, but sold only one during his lifetime. In 1987, the sale of his painting *Irises* brought \$53.9 million, the highest price ever paid for a work of art up to that time. During his life, Van Gogh suffered from despair and bouts of mental illness, at one point cutting off part of his own left ear. He committed suicide in 1890 by gunshot.

## MARCH 31

March 31, 1933 - The Civilian Conservation Corps, the CCC, was founded. Unemployed men and youths were organized into quasi-military formations and worked outdoors in national parks and forests.



March 31, 1968 - President Lyndon Johnson made a surprise announcement that he would not seek re-election as a result of the Vietnam conflict.

March 31, 1991 - The Soviet Republic of Georgia, birthplace of Josef Stalin, voted to declare its independence from Soviet Russia, after similar votes by Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. Following the vote in Georgia, Russian troops were dispatched from Moscow under a state of emergency.

Birthday - Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) was born in Rohrau, Austria. Considered the father of the symphony and the string quartet, his works include 107 symphonies, 50 divertimenti, 84 string quartets, 58 piano sonatas, and 13 masses. Based in Vienna, Mozart was his friend and Beethoven was a pupil.

Birthday - Boxing champion Jack Johnson (1878-1946) was born in Galveston, Texas. He was the first African American to win the heavyweight boxing title.

## APRIL 1

April 1, 1865 - During the American Civil War, Confederate troops of General George Pickett were defeated and cut off at Five Forks, Virginia. This sealed the fate of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's armies at Petersburg and Richmond and hastened the end of the war



April 1, 1998 - A federal judge in Little Rock, Arkansas, dismissed a sexual harassment case against President Bill Clinton, stating the case had no "genuine issues" worthy of trial. Although President Clinton had denied any wrongdoing, a unanimous ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in May 1997 allowed the case to proceed, thereby establishing a precedent allowing sitting presidents to be sued for personal conduct that allegedly occurred before taking office.

## APRIL 2

April 2, 1513 - Spanish explorer Ponce De Leon sighted Florida and claimed it for the Spanish Crown after landing at the site of present day St. Augustine, now the oldest city in the continental U.S.

April 2, 1792 - Congress established the first U.S. Mint at Philadelphia.

April 2, 1863 - A bread riot occurred in the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, as angry people demanded bread from a bakery wagon then wrecked nearby shops. The mob dispersed only after Confederate President Jefferson Davis made a personal plea and threatened to use force.



April 2, 1865 - General Robert E. Lee informed Confederate President Jefferson Davis that he must evacuate the Confederate capital at Richmond, Virginia. Davis and his cabinet then fled by train.

April 2, 1982 - The beginning of the Falkland Islands War as troops from Argentina invaded and occupied the British colony located near the tip of South America. The British retaliated and defeated the Argentineans on June 15, 1982, after ten weeks of combat, with about 1,000 lives lost.



Birthday - Fairy tale author Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) was born in Odense, Denmark. He created 168 fairy tales for children including the classics *The Princess and the Pea*, *The Snow Queen* and *The Nightingale*.

Birthday - French writer Emile Zola (1840-1902) was born in Paris. His works included a series of 20 books known as the *Rougon-Macquart Novels* in which he defined men and women as products of heredity and environment, portraying them as victims of their own passions and circumstances of birth. In his later years, he became involved in resolving the Dreyfus affair, a political-military scandal in which Captain Alfred Dreyfus had been wrongly accused of selling military secrets to the Germans was sent to Devil's Island.

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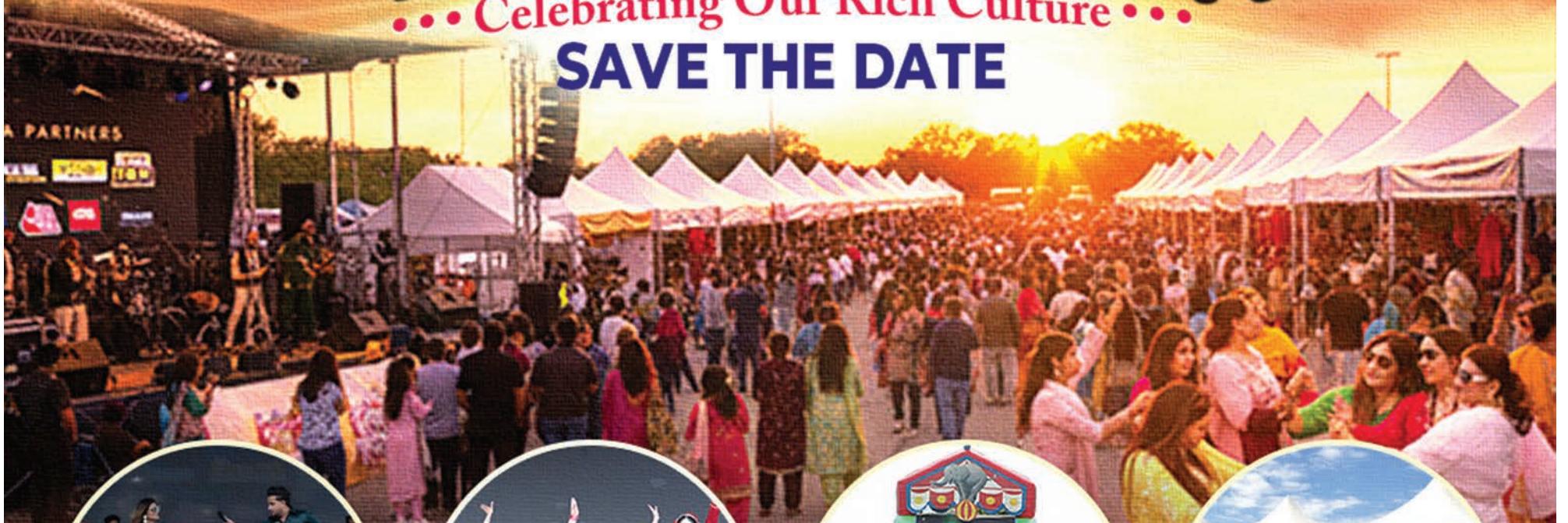
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## In a first, all IPL franchises to be led by Indian players this season

For the first time in the history of the Indian Premier League (IPL), all 10 franchises will be led by Indian players.

In the previous edition, every team except Sunrisers Hyderabad had an Indian captain. Their skipper, Pat Cummins, is likely to miss the first few matches this season due to injury. In his absence, Ishan Kishan is expected to lead the side.

In the early years of the IPL, franchises generally entrusted leadership roles to prominent overseas players such as Shane Warne, Adam Gilchrist, Steven Smith, and Mahela Jayawardene. Over time, however, teams shifted toward appointing Indian captains, prioritising long-term planning, continuity, and a stronger team identity.

Across the 18 editions of the IPL, teams led by overseas captains have won only three titles, while Indian-led sides have claimed the trophy 15 times.

Shane Warne guided the underdog Rajasthan Royals to victory in the inaugural 2008 season. The following year, Adam Gilchrist led the Deccan Chargers to the title. In 2016, David Warner captained Sunrisers Hyderabad to their maiden championship. On all other occasions, Indian captains have lifted the trophy.

Notably, Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians are the most successful franchises in IPL history, with five titles each. *Source: TNS*

# Impact Player to ball change: What was discussed at IPL captains' meet?

MUMBAI (TIP), MARCH 26, 2026

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) conducted its official pre-season briefing for the captains of all 10 Indian Premier League (IPL) franchises. The meeting, a customary curtain-raiser held at the BCCI headquarters, focused on the clarification of playing conditions, new training protocols, and specific match-day regulations ahead of the tournament's 19th edition.

The session was led by Javagal Srinath, head of the BCCI match referees' panel, and Nitin Menon, the Indian representative on the ICC Elite Panel of Umpires. In a historic first for the league, the assembly featured an entirely Indian captaincy contingent. This included Ishan Kishan, who represented Sunrisers Hyderabad as interim captain in the absence of Pat Cummins, alongside other captains such as Hardik Pandya (Mumbai Indians), Shubman Gill (Gujarat Titans), and Ruturaj Gaikwad (Chennai Super Kings).

During the meeting, the BCCI confirmed that the much-debated Impact Player rule will remain in place until at least 2027, despite a majority of franchise captains expressing reservations during a pre-season briefing on March 25.

### WHAT IS THE IMPACT PLAYER RULE

Introduced in 2023, the Impact Player rule allows teams to substitute a member of the starting XI at any point in the match. While the BCCI had previously extended the rule's tenure to 2024, it remains a point of contention among players and coaching staff who argue it affects the balance between bat and ball.

According to league sources, a majority of the captains raised concerns regarding the tactical implications of the rule during the session. However, officials clarified that no further review of the regulation will take place before the conclusion of the 2027 season.

### BALL CHANGE PROPOSAL

The briefing also addressed playing conditions concerning the dew factor. Currently, playing conditions allow for a ball change after the 10th over of the second



innings if the ball becomes difficult to grip due to moisture.

One captain proposed that a similar ball change be permitted after the 10th over of the first innings to ensure parity. The proposal did not receive significant support from the match officials or the broader group. The BCCI maintained that the current rule is specifically designed to counter heavy dew, which is statistically more prevalent during the second innings of night matches. Consequently, the existing protocol stands.

### NEW TRAINING PROTOCOLS

The BCCI provided further clarity on the revised training guidelines for the 2026 edition. Under the new directives:

**Match Day Restrictions:** No formal practice sessions are permitted on the day of a match.

**Pitch Usage:** If a team concludes its scheduled practice session earlier than the allotted time, the opposing team is prohibited from utilizing the remaining time on those specific wickets.

Captains sought clarification on the logistical impact of these rules. Officials stated the measures are intended to manage pitch wear and ensure uniform conditions across the tournament's various venues. The session concluded with a briefing on player conduct and over-rate penalties. The organisers emphasised that

captains will be held strictly accountable for maintaining the pace of play. IPL 2026 will get underway with defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru hosting SunRisers Hyderabad at M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday, March 28.

### Pat Cummins targets mid-season return for SRH after back injury

Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Pat Cummins has begun his road to recovery, with the Australian pace spearhead joining the team's training session at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on March 25.

Cummins, who is nursing a back injury, kept his workload light during the session. The 32-year-old focused on warm-up routines, participated in fielding and catching drills, and bowled a few deliveries with a shortened run-up in an empty net, signaling a gradual return to bowling rhythm.

The Australia Test and ODI captain has been sidelined for much of the past year due to a lumbar stress injury sustained after the Caribbean tour last July. Since then, he has featured in just one international match – the Adelaide Test against England in December – and also missed Australia's underwhelming campaign at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

# Esterhuizen powers South Africa to series win over New Zealand

CHRISTCHURCH (TIP), MARCH 26

Connor Esterhuizen blasted a career-best 75 from 33 balls to propel South Africa to a 33-run win over New Zealand in the fifth Twenty20 on March 25 and a 3-2 win in the five-match series.

Esterhuizen's second consecutive half-century, after his previous best of 57 in the fourth match on Sunday, helped South Africa post 187-4 after being sent in.

New Zealand managed only 154-8 in reply.

Esterhuizen paced the second half of the South Africa innings after coming to the

crease in the 11th over with the total at 76-2. He was dropped a place in the order on Wednesday and batted behind Ruben Hermann, who hit 39 from 31 balls to lift the run rate after a slow start.

South Africa was only 43-1 after the powerplay and 76 at the midpoint of its innings. The last 10 overs produced 111 runs, thanks to Esterhuizen and Dian Forrester, with whom he added 61 in just over four overs for the fourth wicket.

"I think the nice thing was that I got to come in and play with some freedom because of the nice platform from the guys up top with wickets in hand," Esterhuizen

said. "Early on, the openers assessed it and said 160 was competitive. The more myself and (Forrester) were out there, we said 170 was a good score and we got 187."

Esterhuizen's innings included five fours and six sixes. He was dropped on 49 by Bevon Jacobs off the bowling of Zak Foulkes and made New Zealand pay, stretching his innings into the last over. In total, the South Africa innings contained 15 fours and 10 sixes, along with 47 dot balls.

With wickets in hand, South Africa added 52 runs from the last five overs, including five sixes. New Zealand's problems were compounded by poor

catching, though Nick Kelly held a brilliant one-handed catch, the best of the series, to dismiss Hermann.

The New Zealand run chase was also poorly executed, and the home side found itself bogged down by accurate bowling, well supported in the field.

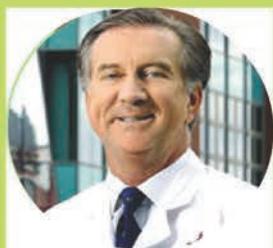
Gerald Coetzee bowled quick spells at both ends of the innings and took 2-21 from four overs, while Otneil Baartman used variation and took 2-33. The spinner Prenal Subrayen conceded only 22 runs from his four overs and captain Keshav Maharaj also tested the New Zealand batters.



## 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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