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# U.S.-Iran peace talks collapse in Pakistan after 21-hour negotiations

## U.S. to start blockading the Strait of Hormuz immediately, says Trump



U.S. Vice President JD Vance shakes hands with Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, as Vance prepares to board Air Force Two, after peace talks with Iran in Islamabad, Pakistan, on Sunday, April 12, 2026.

Photo Credit: Reuters

**APRIL 12, 2026  
NEW YORK / ISLAMABAD (TIP)**

The U.S. and Iran failed to reach a peace deal at their historic 21-hour talks in Pakistan, leaving the fate of a tenuous two-week ceasefire in doubt, with both sides attempting to hold each other responsible for the collapse of the negotiations.

Vice-President J.D. Vance, who led the U.S. delegation at the negotiations in Islamabad, said the Iranian side did not accept Washington's terms for ending the war even as the U.S. presented its "final and best offer". He indicated that Tehran's reluctance to abandon its nuclear programme was one of the key sticking points.

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the head of the Iranian team, said it is for the U.S. to decide whether it can "earn our trust or not".

**CONTD ON PAGE 80**

# 'A perfect mission': Artemis II astronauts return to Earth

## Trump congratulates returned Artemis astronauts, says 'next step, Mars!'



In this image released on April 11, 2026, Artemis II astronauts Victor Glover and Christina Koch interact with NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman after splashdown and recovery operations in the Pacific Ocean after a historic flight to the moon, the first by humans in more than 50 years, in San Diego, California, USA. Photo: NASA via PTI Photo

**APRIL 11, 2026  
SAN DIEGO, CA (TIP)**

An elated NASA late on Friday, April 10, 2026, was celebrating its successful voyage around the Moon, after four astronauts safely returned to Earth having completed the first lunar flyby in more than 50 years, an AFP report says.

The NASA spacecraft carrying four astronauts - three Americans and one Canadian - splashed down without a hitch off the California coast, capping the US space agency's crewed test mission that returned with spectacular images of the Moon.

**CONTD ON PAGE 80**

# Legendary Bollywood Singer Asha Bhosle passes away

**APRIL 12, 2026  
MUMBAI (TIP)**

Legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle (92) died at Breach Candy Hospital on Sunday, April 12, 2026. Doctors cited extreme exhaustion and chest infection as the reasons for hospitalization on Saturday, April 11, 2026. Hospital sources informed said that she suffered a cardiac arrest later, leading to multi-organ failure. Several political leaders continue to pay their tributes to the singer. Her last rites will be held in Mumbai on Monday, April 13, 2026.

Leaders from across the political spectrum offered their condolences and tributes to Asha Bhosle.



Asha Bhosle has been the voice of Bollywood for 8 decades Photo Credit: V. Sudershan

Uddhav Thackeray, former Chief Minister of Maharashtra, said the news was sad.

**CONTD ON PAGE 80**

# SIKH HATE CRIMES SURGE 3,800% IN A DECADE IN US: FBI DATA REVEALS ALARMING TREND



Reported anti-Sikh hate crime incidents increased from just six cases in 2015 to 228 cases in 2025

**APRIL 11, 2026  
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)**

Hate crimes against Sikhs in the United States have seen a dramatic long-term increase, rising by an estimated 3,800 per cent over the past decade, according to preliminary Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) data cited by Axios.

The figures show that reported anti-Sikh hate crime incidents increased from just six cases in 2015 to 228 cases in 2025, highlighting a sharp rise in targeted bias incidents.

While overall hate crime incidents in the US declined by 11 per cent in 2025 compared to the previous year, the broader decade-long trend remains upward, with total incidents rising by about 88% between 2015 and 2025.

**CONTD ON PAGE 80**



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**COMMENT**

## Vaisakhi: Harvest of the Earth, Awakening of the Spirit

BY INDRAJIT SALUJA



Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the Tenth Master of the Sikhs baptizing the Five Beloveds on Vaisakhi of 1699, at Anandpur Sahib.

Vaisakhi, celebrated on April 14 this year, stands as one of the most profound and multifaceted festivals in the Indian cultural and spiritual calendar. It is at once a joyous harvest festival, a historic turning point in the evolution of Sikh identity, and a timeless reminder of the values that bind humanity together—faith, courage, equality, and service. For millions across the world, particularly the nearly 30 million followers of Sikhism, Vaisakhi is not merely a date—it is a living legacy.

In the fertile plains of Punjab, Vaisakhi heralds the ripening of golden wheat fields. It is a time of gratitude—gratitude to nature, to the Almighty, and to the toil of farmers whose sweat nourishes nations. Long before it became etched in history as a day of religious transformation, Vaisakhi was celebrated as a harvest festival marking abundance and prosperity. Villages come alive with music, bhangra and giddha dances, and community gatherings. It is a celebration of life itself—of food, fellowship, and the simple joy of shared existence.

Yet, Vaisakhi transcends agrarian joy. Its deepest significance lies in the epochal events of 1699, when the Tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, transformed a spiritual community into a collective of saint-soldiers. On that historic day at Anandpur Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh founded the Khalsa—a brotherhood of initiated Sikhs committed to righteousness, equality, and the defense of truth.

The story of that day continues to inspire. The Guru called for volunteers willing to offer their heads in devotion. Five brave souls responded—later known as the Panj Pyare (the Five Beloved Ones). In a ceremony that symbolized rebirth, they were initiated into the Khalsa and, in a remarkable act of humility, the Guru himself was initiated by them. This was not merely a ritual, it was a revolution. It shattered caste

barriers, abolished discrimination, and proclaimed that all human beings are equal in the eyes of God.

The Khalsa was envisioned as a force that combined spiritual depth with temporal courage—a community that would stand against injustice, protect the weak, and uphold dignity. In a world often divided by hierarchy and prejudice, the message of Vaisakhi was—and remains—profoundly democratic and liberating.

Sikhism, one of the youngest religions in the world, carries within it a remarkable clarity of purpose. Founded by Guru Nanak in the 15th century, it rests on three fundamental principles: Naam Japna (meditating on God), Kirat Karni (earning an honest living), and Vand Chakna (sharing with others). These are not abstract ideals, they are practical guides to living a life of integrity and compassion.

The Sikh faith emphasizes belief in one God, the rejection of superstition, and the importance of equality across all human distinctions—be they caste, creed, gender, or social status. The Guru Granth Sahib, the eternal Guru of the Sikhs, enshrines teachings that advocate humility, service, and universal brotherhood.

Perhaps nowhere are these values more visibly expressed than in the institution of Langar—the community kitchen. In every Gurdwara, across continents, free meals are served to all, without distinction. Rich or poor, high or low, believer or non-believer—all sit together in a single row to partake of food. It is a quiet yet powerful assertion of equality and shared humanity.

The Sikh community's commitment to service—Seva—extends far beyond the walls of their places of worship. In times of crisis, whether natural disasters or humanitarian emergencies, Sikh organizations have consistently been among the first to respond. From feeding the hungry during pandemics to providing aid in war-torn regions, their

actions speak louder than any words.

Equally noteworthy is the contribution of Sikhs to nation-building, both in India and across the diaspora. Despite being a small minority, Sikhs have played a disproportionately large role in shaping modern societies. In India, they have been at the forefront of agriculture, transforming the country into a food-secure nation during the Green Revolution. In the armed forces, their bravery is legendary, earning them some of the highest honors for valor.

Across the globe—from North America to Europe, from Africa to Australia—the Sikh diaspora has distinguished itself in business, education, public service, and philanthropy. They carry with them not just their identity, but their values, hard work, honesty, and an unwavering commitment to community welfare.

In the United States, Sikh Americans have enriched the social fabric through enterprise, civic engagement, and acts of charity. Their Gurdwaras have become centers not just of worship, but of outreach—feeding the homeless, supporting the needy, and fostering interfaith harmony. They embody the spirit of Vaisakhi every day—not only in celebration, but in action.

As we reflect on Vaisakhi in this milestone year of global uncertainty and introspection, its message acquires renewed relevance. In a world fractured by conflict, inequality, and mistrust, the principles enshrined in the creation of the Khalsa offer a path forward. Courage tempered by compassion, faith anchored in equality, and strength guided by service—these are not merely Sikh ideals; they are universal necessities.

Vaisakhi reminds us that true strength lies not in domination, but in protection; not in exclusion, but in inclusion. It calls upon us to rise above divisions and recognize the shared destiny of humanity.

At a time when societies grapple with questions of identity, belonging, and justice, the example of the Khalsa stands as a beacon. It teaches us that one can be deeply rooted in faith while remaining open to the world; that one can be strong without being oppressive; and that one can serve without seeking reward.

As the golden fields of Punjab sway in the April breeze and the Nishan Sahib flutters proudly atop Gurdwaras worldwide, Vaisakhi speaks to all of us—irrespective of religion or nationality. It invites us to harvest not just crops, but virtues; not just prosperity, but purpose.

Let this Vaisakhi be more than a celebration. Let it be a renewal of our commitment to justice, to equality, and to the service of humanity.

For in the final analysis, the true harvest of Vaisakhi is not in the fields, but in the human spirit.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

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*"With Homage and Thanks to my Favorite Guru"  
Shri Guru Gobind Singh ji, Creator of Khalsa*

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO KHALSA: HAPPY VAISAKHI

*Gidran to main sher banaun*

*Chirian te main baaz tudain*



*Sava lakh se ek ladain*

*Tabe Gobind Singh Naam kahaun*



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**Ranju Batra**  
CHAIR





**SANT SINGH CHATWAL,  
PADMA BHUSHAN  
NEW YORK**

### Message

It gives me immense pleasure to appreciate The Indian Panorama and its esteemed Editor, Prof. Indrajit Singh Saluja, for the thoughtful initiative of bringing out a special edition to mark the auspicious occasion of Vaisakhi. Such efforts not only celebrate a historic moment but also preserve and promote the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of the Sikh community for readers across the globe.

Vaisakhi is both a harvest festival and a deeply significant socio-cultural occasion, symbolizing joy, renewal, and collective gratitude. Celebrated with great enthusiasm, it marks the ripening of crops and the spirit of sharing, community bonding, and thanksgiving. Beyond its agrarian roots, Vaisakhi holds unparalleled importance in Sikh history.

On this sacred day in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the Tenth Master of the Sikhs, founded the Khalsa-an order of initiated Sikhs committed to the highest ideals of courage, equality, discipline, and devotion to one God. The Khalsa represents purity of thought and action, and a life dedicated to justice, service, and the protection of the oppressed. Rooted in the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhism, the Khalsa embodies the essence of fearlessness and universal brotherhood.

On this joyous occasion, I extend my warmest greetings to the Sikh community-over 30 million strong worldwide-on their spiritual birthday. May the spirit of Vaisakhi inspire peace, unity, and prosperity for all.

Sant Singh Chatwal



**HARRY SINGH BOLLA  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
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COMPANIES**



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### Message

Warm greetings on the joyous and sacred occasion of Vaisakhi, a day of profound significance in the Sikh faith and a moment of pride for millions across the world.

Vaisakhi marks the historic birth of the Khalsa in 1699, when the Tenth Sikh Master, Guru Gobind Singh, created a community of saint-soldiers dedicated to righteousness, courage, and the defense of justice. The Khalsa, meaning "the Pure," embodies the highest ideals of Sikhism-a monotheistic faith founded by Guru Nanak, the First Guru, whose teachings of equality, humility, and devotion continue to inspire humanity.

Today, the spiritual guide of the Sikhs is the Guru Granth Sahib, revered as the eternal and living Guru. Sikhism teaches belief in One God, the importance of honest labor, sharing one's earnings with others, and constant remembrance of the Divine. The Sikh way of life is rooted in service and compassion-principles beautifully reflected in the tradition of langar, where gurdwaras open their doors to all, offering free meals without distinction.

The Khalsa identity is symbolized by the Five K's-Kesh (uncut hair), Kangha (comb), Kachera (undergarment), Kara (iron bracelet), and Kirpan (sword)-each representing discipline, dignity, and readiness to protect the weak.

Sikhs, numbering nearly 30 million worldwide, have distinguished themselves through valor and sacrifice. Their extraordinary contributions as soldiers-earning numerous honors, including Victoria Crosses during British rule and distinguished service in modern India-stand as a testament to their bravery. Equally admirable is their commitment to charity, guided by the principle of contributing a portion of their earnings for the welfare of others.

As Vaisakhi is celebrated with devotion, processions, and festivity-also marking the harvest season in Punjab-let us honor the enduring spirit of the Khalsa.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Sikh community on this holy occasion. May the message of courage, equality, and service continue to illuminate our world.

Happy Vaisakhi!

Harry Singh Bolla



**RAVI BATRA ESQ  
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW**



**THE BATRA  
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### Message

Guru Gobind Singh was driven to protect the weak, and fought for justice.

One can see him through a religious lens, or see him, as I do, as the very embodiment of Sir Edmund Burke's moral mandate to all of us: "all that's necessary for evil to triumph, is for some good men to do nothing."

Spencer Tracy's memorable judgment, as Chief Judge Haywood, in "Judgment at Nuremberg" is a deliberate and wise admission of "Good" and "Evil," and how good and decent persons can become an accessory to Evil. The human Truth is a flexible one, driven by motives that honor Caesar more than God. And, to me, therein lies the problem.

Ultimately, as the late great New York journalist Wayne Barrett said to me years ago: the battle between Good and Evil is perpetual. Winning one battle after another is not enough.

Ranju joins me in sending our best wishes to all, as we enjoy our cherished Bill of Rights, the ultimate inheritance from our exceptional Founders, in exchange for our Oath of citizenship. Soon, we will celebrate America250. And, if Lincoln's forecast at Gettysburg is to be believed, America will last past 1000 years and now, we are finally an adult.

Happy Vaisakhi!

Ravi Batra



**PREM BHANDARI,  
PRESIDENT, RAJASTHAN  
ASSOCIATION OF NORTH  
AMERICA (RANA),  
CHAIRMAN, JAIPUR FOOT,  
USA**

### Message

Warm Greetings on the Auspicious Occasion of Vaisakhi!

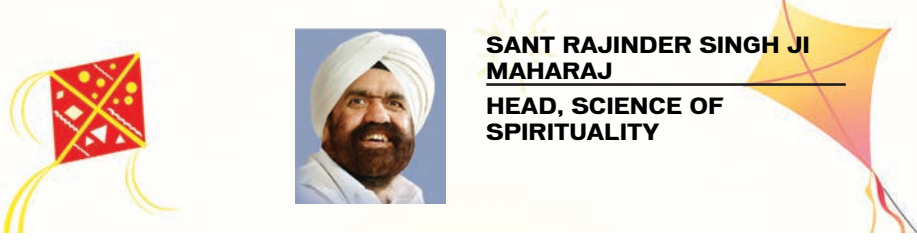
My heartfelt congratulations to our brave and resilient Sikh community as we celebrate Vaisakhi, a festival that marks not only the harvest season but also the birth of the Khalsa Panth bestowed upon humanity by the great Guru Gobind Singh Ji. His unparalleled courage, his leadership rooted in equality, justice, and sacrifice, and his unwavering commitment to protect humanity continue to inspire millions around the world.

One of the most beautiful symbols of Sikh values is the tradition of Langar, the world's largest system of free food that has served people across continents, religions, and backgrounds for centuries. This noble practice of "service before self" stands as a shining example of compassion, humility, and solidarity. At a time when the world faces many challenges, the Sikh community's dedication to feeding the hungry and supporting the vulnerable is truly a blessing to mankind.

On this joyous occasion, I would also like to congratulate and extend my heartfelt appreciation to Professor Indrajit Singh Saluja and his esteemed newspaper The Indian Panorama for their continued efforts in promoting community harmony, informing the diaspora, and highlighting stories of service and sacrifice. Their commitment to truthful journalism and to bringing communities together is commendable.

As we celebrate Vaisakhi, may Waheguru bless everyone with prosperity, strength, unity, and the spirit of selfless service. May this festival inspire us to uphold the values of courage, equality, and compassion that Guru Gobind Singh Ji envisioned for all.

Prem Bhandari



**SANT RAJINDER SINGH JI MAHARAJ**  
**HEAD, SCIENCE OF SPIRITUALITY**

## MESSAGE

Baisakhi And New Beginnings

Baisakhi is a celebration of new life and new beginnings. On this day we should shun all the prejudices and hatred from our hearts. In this month of Baisakhi flowers sprout up, trees get new leaves and the whole atmosphere is renewed. We should also learn new lessons and start a new life in this month. Baisakhi is celebrated differently in various communities in India.

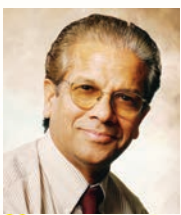
On this day in year 1699, the 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, laid down the foundation of the Panth Khalsa or the Sikh Panth. He also selected the Panch Pyaras or the Beloved Five. For Hindus, it is the start of the New Year, and is celebrated with requisite bathing, feasting, and worshipping. Apart from the Sikhs and Hindus, Baisakhi is a significant day for the Buddhists as well. It commemorates the Birth, the Awakening and the Enlightened Passing Away or Nirvana of Gautama Buddha who was born as prince Siddharta. In the Regions of Punjab, Baisakhi is celebrated by farmers as a thanks to God for bountiful harvest and hoping for a better next year.

Baisakhi is celebrated in various parts of the country, but the principal concept is that of celebrations for the new beginning. However, for those on the spiritual path, Baisakhi truly takes place when they get the life-inspiring glimpses of the spiritual realms within through meditation. Baisakhi officially arrives when our hearts blossom with the flowers of love that are nourished by the intoxicating vistas within. When we come in contact with the love of God within us, that is true beauty and that beautifies the world.

As Baisakhi arrives, let us not only enjoy its outer glories, but let us also find time to sit in meditation. While we delight in the signs of the outer spring with its flowers and fragrances, let us take a portion of our day and enjoy this time of the heavenly realms within. The outer flowers and joyous sounds of this time of the year are but a reflection of the sights and sounds within us. There are regions after regions of extraordinary beauty in realms beyond this world. We can frolic in those meadows and gardens anytime we wish through meditation.

Let us discover eternal Baisakhi for ourselves. Let us make a new beginning by imbibing the virtues in our lives and dedicating sometime of our daily life to meditation. We will then know there is God and we are soul and will enjoy eternally divine love and union with God. Let us enjoy these moments of Baisakhi.

Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj



**V.K. Raju, MD, FRCS, FACS**  
**Ophthalmologist, Regional Eye Associates**  
**President and Founder, Eye Foundation of America**  
**President and Founder, Goutami Eye Institute**  
**Clinical Professor, West Virginia University**  
**Director, International Ocular Surface Society**  
**Adjunct Professor, GSL Medical School**  
**Adjunct Professor, Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins University**  
**Author: Musings on Medicine, Myth, and History-India's Legacy**

## Vaisakhi

A Festival of Faith, Harvest, and Renewal

Vaisakhi, celebrated on April 13 or 14 each year, is one of the most significant festivals in northern India, especially in Punjab. It marks both a harvest festival and a deeply important religious event in Sikh history.

### HARVEST AND CELEBRATION

Vaisakhi celebrates the harvest of the rabi crops, symbolizing prosperity, gratitude, and the rewards of hard work. Fields turn golden, and communities come alive with music, vibrant bhangra and giddha dances, and shared feasts that reflect unity and joy.

### SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

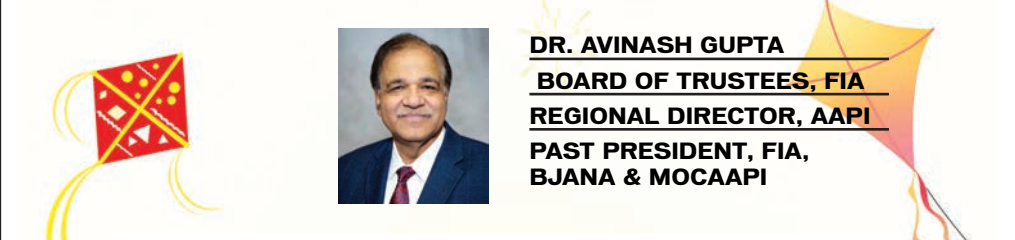
It also commemorates the founding of the Khalsa in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh. Devotees gather in gurdwaras, participate in nagar kirtans, and renew their commitment to courage, equality, and selfless service.

### A MESSAGE FOR TODAY

Vaisakhi reminds us that celebration must be anchored in purpose. It calls us to balance joy with responsibility, gratitude with action, and faith with compassion.

"Celebration without compassion is incomplete. The true spirit of Vaisakhi is paropakaram-serving the less fortunate, especially children."

VK Raju



**DR. AVINASH GUPTA**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES, FIA**  
**REGIONAL DIRECTOR, AAPI**  
**PAST PRESIDENT, FIA, BJANA & MOCAPI**

## Message on the Auspicious Occasion of Vaisakhi

I extend my warmest greetings to Prof. Indrajit Singh Saluja, the entire team of Indian Panorama, and readers across the globe on the joyous and auspicious occasion of Vaisakhi.

Vaisakhi is not only a vibrant harvest festival marking prosperity and gratitude, but also a deeply significant day in history that commemorates the creation of the Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. It symbolizes courage, equality, selfless service, and unwavering faith-values that continue to inspire generations.

As an Indian-American cardiologist practicing in the United States for over three decades, and in my roles as Regional Director of American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, past President of Federation of Indian Associations, Bihar Jharkhand Association of North America, and Monmouth Ocean County Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, I have witnessed firsthand how the values embodied by Vaisakhi-service, resilience, and unity-continue to guide and strengthen our community.

Living in a multicultural society like the United States, occasions like Vaisakhi provide us an opportunity to come together, celebrate our rich heritage, and reinforce the bonds of mutual respect and harmony. It is also a time to reflect on our shared responsibility to uplift the underserved, promote compassion, and contribute meaningfully to society.

May this Vaisakhi bring joy, good health, prosperity, and renewed hope to all. Let us celebrate with gratitude and reaffirm our commitment to the noble ideals this festival represents.

Happy Vaisakhi!

Dr. Avinash Gupta



**RAVISHANKAR BHOOPLAPUR**  
**PRESIDENT, XAVIER UNIVERSITY ARUBA**

## Baisakhi Greetings

Baisakhi, marking the spring harvest and the beginning of a new year for many in North India, is a time of gratitude, renewal, and community spirit. It also holds profound significance for the Sikh community, commemorating the creation of the Khalsa and affirming enduring values of courage, equality, and service.

On this auspicious occasion, I extend my warm wishes to all our friends and their families. May the season's blessings inspire us to rededicate ourselves to hard work, integrity, and shared responsibility for the common good.

I wish everyone a joyful, peaceful, and prosperous Baisakhi.

Ravishankar Bhooplapur



**GOBIND MUNJAL**  
**PAST NATIONAL PRESIDENT,**  
**AIA (2022-2025)**  
**MEMBER, BOARD OF**  
**TRUSTEES (2026-2031)**

### MESSAGE

On the joyous and auspicious occasion of Vaisakhi, I extend my heartfelt greetings and warm wishes to all readers of Indian Panorama and to our entire community. May this vibrant harvest festival bring renewed hope, happiness, prosperity, and good health to you and your loved ones.

Vaisakhi is not only a celebration of harvest and abundance, but also a time to reflect on the timeless values of gratitude, unity, and selfless service. It inspires us to cherish our rich cultural heritage while strengthening the bonds that unite us as a community.

As I reflect on the successful completion of my four-year term (2022-2025) as National President of the Association of Indians in America (AIA), I feel deeply honored and grateful for the opportunity to serve. These years have been both fulfilling and transformative. With the steadfast support of the National Executive Committee and our members, we revitalized the organization, strengthened its foundation, and advanced its mission. Our collective efforts included reviving legacy events such as the Medical Council Awards Gala at the prestigious Cipriani, encouraging and engaging the younger generation of leaders, modernizing governance by amending Bylaws, expanding outreach, launching new initiatives, and supporting impactful charitable causes. Among these was the launch of a senior center in Long Island by India Home Inc., which now operates six senior centers in Queens—an initiative that reflects our shared commitment to community care and service.

While my tenure as President has concluded, my commitment to community service continues in my role as a Member of the Board of Trustees of AIA. I am also honored to serve as a Founding Trustee of the National Alliance of Indian Organizations (NAIO), and I remain dedicated to advancing initiatives that uplift, connect, and empower our community.

On this special occasion, let us celebrate with gratitude in our hearts, compassion in our actions, and optimism for the future. May this Vaisakhi usher in new beginnings, continued success, and lasting peace for all.

Happy Vaisakhi!

Gobind Munjal



**PURNIMA DESAI**  
**FOUNDER PRESIDENT**  
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**FOUNDER PRESIDENT**  
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### MESSAGE

On the joyous and auspicious occasion of Vaisakhi, I extend my warmest greetings and heartfelt good wishes to all readers of The Indian Panorama across the globe.

Vaisakhi, celebrated on April 14, is a festival of profound significance. It marks not only the harvest season—symbolizing abundance, gratitude, and prosperity—but also commemorates the historic creation of the Khalsa in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh. This momentous event gave rise to a community rooted in courage, equality, selfless service, and unwavering faith in one God—values that continue to inspire humanity.

As we celebrate this sacred festival, let us reaffirm our commitment to truth, compassion, and unity—principles that form the very essence of Sikhism and resonate universally in today's world.

On this special occasion, I would also like to place on record my deep appreciation for Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja and his entire editorial team for their steadfast dedication to truthful journalism. In an age where misinformation and irresponsible reporting have become all too common, The Indian Panorama stands as a beacon of credibility, integrity, and responsible media.

May this Vaisakhi bring peace, prosperity, and renewed hope to all.

Purnima Desai



**PAUL SIHOTA**  
**PRESIDENT, SMARTWAY**  
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### Message

On the radiant festival of Vaisakhi, I warmly greet all readers of The Indian Panorama and wish you joy, prosperity, and spiritual fulfillment.

Vaisakhi is a celebration of renewal—of the earth yielding its harvest and of the human spirit rising in faith and courage. While farmers rejoice in nature's bounty, the Sikh community commemorates a defining moment in history: the creation of the Khalsa in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh. This extraordinary event infused a collective identity grounded in equality, fearlessness, discipline, and service to humanity.

Beyond its historical and cultural significance, Vaisakhi carries a universal message. It reminds us to live truthfully, to earn with honesty, to share with compassion, and to stand firmly for justice. In a world often clouded by division and discord, these values offer a path toward harmony and mutual respect.

On this meaningful occasion, I also extend sincere appreciation to Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja and his committed editorial team for their steadfast pursuit of truthful journalism. At a time when misinformation threatens the credibility of public discourse, The Indian Panorama shines as a trusted voice of integrity and responsibility.

May Vaisakhi inspire us all to harvest goodness in our lives and spread light in the lives of others.

Warm Vaisakhi Greetings to All!



**HARI SHUKLA, MD,**  
**PEDIATRICS**  
**42-72 KISSENA BLVD**  
**FLUSHING, NY 11355**

### Message

Festivals are the heartbeat of human civilization. They bring joy to our lives, strengthen bonds within families and communities, and remind us of our shared cultural and spiritual heritage. Across the world, festivals though known by different names and observed in varied forms, celebrate the same universal values of gratitude, renewal, and togetherness.

Vaisakhi is one such special festival, deeply rooted in history and rich in meaning. Celebrated primarily as a harvest festival in many parts of India, it also marks a momentous occasion in 1699 when Guru Gobind Singh founded the Khalsa, giving the Sikh community a distinct identity based on courage, equality, and service. Thus, Vaisakhi is both a celebration of nature's bounty and a reaffirmation of spiritual strength and human values.

Today, Vaisakhi is celebrated not only in India but across the globe, especially among the vibrant Indian diaspora. Whether through prayers, community gatherings, music, or acts of charity, the spirit of Vaisakhi transcends borders and unites people.

On this joyous occasion of Vaisakhi, I extend my warm greetings to all.

May this festival bring prosperity, happiness, and renewed hope to your lives.

Dr. Hari Shukla

# RAJASTHAN ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA



Rajasthan Association of North America

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# WISHES A HAPPY VAISAKHI



## Three ways the Supreme Court could upend the midterm elections

BY RICHARD L. HASEN



Multiple cases before the justices could remake rules on district boundaries, campaign finance and the eligibility of certain mail-in ballots

"Each of these rulings may have cascading effects, all in the middle of the election season. If the Callais ruling hobbles the VRA, legislatures in states that have not yet held primaries may try to draw new districts diminishing minority voting power. That in turn will spark new lawsuits and a race against the clock, given the elections calendar. Because Section 2 applies to all district elections on the federal, state and local level, boundary changes may be attempted across the country, even in the final months of the 2026 elections."

Pending before the Supreme Court are three disparate cases, each with the potential to remake rules on district boundaries, campaign finance and the eligibility of certain mail-in ballots. These rulings, issued in the middle of the election season, could potentially confound voters, scramble overworked and threatened election administrators, and alter campaign strategies in the middle of heated election contests. And depending on how the justices rule, these decisions may have cascading effects including new court challenges, legislative changes and even more uncertainty in the months before the midterms.

The justices can avoid this confusion entirely. In June 1964, the court issued a landmark decision in *Reynolds v. Sims* that helped cement the principle of "one person, one vote." Yet the ruling made clear that it need not be applied to that fall's fast-approaching elections. Whatever this court ultimately decides on the merits in these cases, it should apply the same principle.

Already, the court has weighed in three times in cases on its emergency docket that involve congressional re-districting for 2026.

It is not unusual for the Supreme Court to issue decisions that influence voter preferences. For example, opposition to the 2022 *Dobbs* decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* may have motivated more Democrats to vote in the 2022 elections. Nor is it unusual for the court to issue decisions that affect the conduct of elections. For example, 2013's *Shelby County v. Holder* struck down a key provision of the federal Voting Rights Act requiring states with a history of race discrimination to get federal approval before changing voting rules.

But this election season is different in both the potential immediacy of the court's rulings and the breadth of the potential changes. Already, the court has weighed in three times in cases on its emergency docket that involve congressional re-districting for 2026. The court, reversing a lower federal court ruling, allowed Texas to implement new district lines expected to garner Republicans five more House seats despite claims that it was a racial gerrymander. It affirmed a lower federal

Because Section 2 applies to all district elections on the federal, state and local level, boundary changes may be attempted across the country, even in the final months of the 2026 elections.

If the court sides with the NRSC side of the campaign finance case, parties and candidates have drawn up contingency plans to take advantage of a special discount that federal law mandates television and radio stations offer to candidates. The case's pendency already has created uncertainties about

confusion, the Supreme Court should consider not only what it decides in these election cases but when and how those decisions should be implemented. We know already that the court is sensitive about timing in election cases. It has developed a doctrine, which I have called the "Purcell principle," counseling lower federal courts not to make last-minute changes in voting rules so as to avoid election administrator burden and voter confusion. (Purcell was a 2006 ruling in



court that allowed California to do a parallel Democratic gerrymander. And, in a procedurally suspect ruling, the court reversed a New York state court order drawing a new district giving Black and Latino New Yorkers a better chance to elect their preferred congressional candidate in November.

Now the court is expected to issue three more rulings by the end of its current term in June. In *Louisiana v. Callais*, the Supreme Court may strike down or severely limit the applicability of Section 2 of the VRA on grounds that race-conscious districting is constitutionally impermissible. In *National Republican Senatorial Committee v. Federal Election Commission*, the court may hold that limits on the ability of political parties to spend sums in coordination with the parties' candidates violate the First Amendment. In *Watson v. Republican National Committee*, the court may bar more than a dozen states from counting mail-in ballots in congressional elections that are postmarked by Election Day but arrive afterward.

Each of these rulings may have cascading effects, all in the middle of the election season. If the Callais ruling hobbles the VRA, legislatures in states that have not yet held primaries may try to draw new districts diminishing minority voting power. That in turn will spark new lawsuits and a race against the clock, given the elections calendar.

how these special advertising rates are supposed to work.

In the election cases currently at the court, there is little doubt that political actors will try immediately to take advantage of rulings.

And *Watson* (the mail-in ballot case) threatens perhaps the biggest implementation challenges of all. If the court rules in late June or early July that Mississippi cannot accept timely cast ballots arriving after Election Day, where does that leave other states? Even at the best of times, elections take a great deal of planning, workers and efforts at voter education. Some states might wait to be sued to change their deadline. Others may look to state legislatures to change the deadline. And because the court's ruling would apply only to congressional races, each state would have to decide how to treat ballots cast in state and local races.

Whatever states decide, they will then have to alert voters about the new rules. If some voters don't get the word, they may be disenfranchised by a change in the rules. We just saw similar confusion in recent primaries in Dallas. Some voters who had been voting in prior elections at centralized voting centers were surprised to find those centers not open, and to learn that they had to go vote in their old precincts.

Given the risk of last-minute legislation, litigation, election administration changes and voter

which the court vacated a 9th Circuit injunction that temporarily blocked a voter ID law in Arizona just before that year's elections.)

In *Reynolds*, the court recognized that principles of equity sometimes require a delay in implementation of a judicial decision involving elections:

Where an impending election is imminent and a State's election machinery is already in progress, equitable considerations might justify a court in withholding the granting of immediately effective relief in a legislative apportionment case even though the existing apportionment scheme was found invalid.

In the election cases currently at the court, there is little doubt that political actors will try immediately to take advantage of rulings. The court should follow the principle it has embraced in the past and caution against application of its rules for the 2026 elections. Or, more simply, the court could hold these decisions until November, leaving plenty of time for everyone to adjust to changes for 2028.

With President Donald Trump continuing his efforts to meddle in the 2026 midterms, this fall's elections are already going to be challenging for the United States. The Supreme Court has it in its power not to pile on complications.

(Richard L. Hasen is professor at UCLA School of Law, where he directs its Safeguarding Democracy Project)



**Supervisor John Ferretti,  
the Hempstead Town Board,  
and the Department of Community Affairs**

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# ASIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATION



**Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>  
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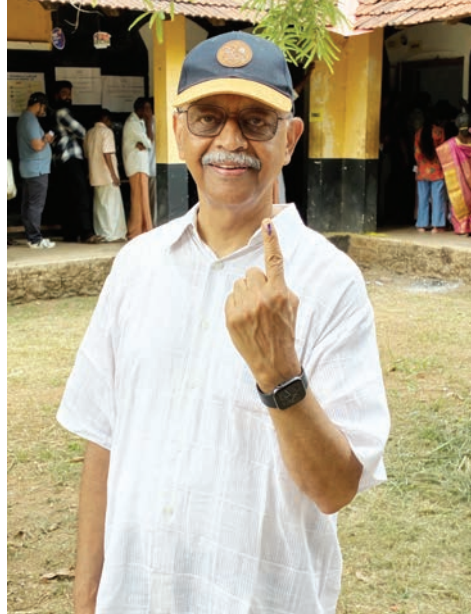
# A Lifelong Commitment: A New Yorker Returns to Vote in Kerala

APRIL 9, 2026  
NEW YORK (TIP)

George Abraham has once again traveled to India to exercise his franchise in the Assembly elections at his home constituency of Changannur in Kerala. For Abraham, this is not merely a routine civic duty, but a deeply personal and emotional journey, one he has undertaken consistently over the years.

When asked what motivates him to return election after election, Abraham reflects with conviction: "It is a sentiment for my motherland and a passion for the very idea of India." He adds, with a note of introspection, "I often wonder why people like me had to leave this incredible land, so rich in natural beauty and heritage, to build lives elsewhere." Having just cast his vote, he remarked, "I have exercised my democratic right, and I hope this small act contributes to keeping the spirit of democracy alive."

Abraham has spent nearly six decades - 58 years - abroad, primarily in the United States, after a distinguished 36-year career with the United Nations, where he retired as Chief Technology Officer of the United Nations Pension Fund. Despite his global professional accomplishments, his connection to India and particularly to its political and democratic processes has remained unwavering.



George Abraham voted in Kerala

Politics, in fact, has been a lifelong passion for him. In 1998, driven by a desire to organize and mobilize the Indian diaspora, Abraham, along with veteran Congress worker John Philipose Thengumcherry, founded the Indian Overseas Congress (IOC) in the United States. At the time, there was no comparable global platform for Congress supporters abroad. The initiative gained momentum when the late Oommen Chandy visited the United States, providing the occasion for its



An election scene



Another election scene

formal launch.

The organization grew steadily, and in 2001 it received official recognition at a landmark event in New York attended by senior national leaders including Sonia Gandhi, Manmohan Singh, Natwar Singh, and Murli Deora. Today, the IOC has evolved into a well-established global network spanning more than 30 countries, currently led by Sam Pitroda as Chairman. George Abraham presently serves as Vice-Chairman of IOC USA and Global Coordinator of its IT and Social Media wing. In recognition of his decades of service, he was conferred a Lifetime Achievement Award by Rahul Gandhi during the latter's visit to New York in 2023.

Abraham's political grounding, however, began much earlier. As a teenager, he was actively involved with

the All Kerala Balajana Sakhyam, a youth organization under the aegis of Malayala Manorama, where he served as State Treasurer in 1967. He credits the late Pala K.M. Mathew whom he regards as his mentor for shaping his early political and social consciousness.

Reflecting on the broader role of the Indian diaspora, Abraham emphasizes the importance of safeguarding India's democratic and secular values. "It is essential that we uphold the democratic and secular fabric of India. Without that, the nearly 35 million Indians living abroad would have little moral standing when advocating for justice, equality, and religious freedom globally," he notes.

For Abraham, returning home to vote is more than participation, it is a reaffirmation of identity, responsibility, and belief in the enduring promise of India's democracy.

## SGML Eye Hospital USA, Inc. to Host Gala Dinner, Musical Extravaganza to Support Rural Eye Care in India



Dr. Tushar Patel

APRIL 10, 2026  
PRINCETON, NJ (TIP)

SGML Eye Hospital USA, Inc., a New Jersey-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is proud to announce a Gala Dinner and Musical Extravaganza to be held on Sunday, April 26, 2026, at the prestigious Royal Albert Palace in the new banquet hall.

This special evening is dedicated to raising funds and awareness for the Shiv Gyan Moti Lal

(SGML) Eye Hospital, located near

Ujjain, in Madhya Pradesh.

Founded with the vision of eliminating disparities in access to eye care, SGML Eye Hospital

USA, Inc. supports the delivery of high-quality, affordable, and accessible eye care services to underserved and underprivileged populations in rural India. In regions where healthcare access remains a daily challenge, the organization is working to create sustainable, equitable systems that restore sight and transform lives.

**Since its inception in January 2023, SGML Eye Hospital has made a remarkable impact:**

- Over 2,000 successful eye surgeries were performed.
- More than 20,000 outpatient consultations are provided.
- Services delivered at affordable, subsidized, or no cost for patients in need with financial challenges.

These milestones underscore the organization's unwavering commitment to becoming a center of excellence in eye care, while extending compassionate and efficient services to vulnerable communities.

The upcoming gala promises an evening of elegance, entertainment, and purpose. Guests will enjoy a curated experience featuring gourmet appetizers and dinner, an inspiring presentation highlighting the hospital's achievements

and future vision, and a vibrant live musical performance. The renowned musical group STR Entertainment will provide entertainment with Sanjay Shah and with music direction by acclaimed composer Jignesh Patel and a full live band.

The talented emcee for the event will be RJ Sanjiv Pandya.

The event is supported by an extensive network of prominent media partners, including ITV

Gold, TV Asia, Parikh Worldwide Media, Indus TV, Radio Zindagi, The Indian Eye, Hi India,

Gujarat Darpan, MANA TV, Akila News, India Abroad, The Indian Panorama, The India

Observer and several other leading South Asian publications and broadcast outlets.

"All proceeds from this gala will directly support the expansion and services to the SGML Eye Hospital, including the procurement of advanced medical technology, adding retinal services and state of the art equipment," said organizers. "Our goal is to significantly scale our impact and ensure that no individual is deprived of the gift of sight due to lack of resources."

SGML Eye Hospital USA, Inc. invites community members, philanthropists, healthcare professionals, and corporate sponsors

to join this meaningful initiative. Contributions, donations, and sponsorships are tax-deductible under IRS 501(c)(3) regulations. For tickets and sponsorships, please contact 848-391-0499 or 732-485-6390 or email at [tbpatel434@gmail.com](mailto:tbpatel434@gmail.com)

**CONTACT:**

Dr. Tushar Patel  
SGML Eye Hospital USA, Inc.  
Phone: 848-391-0499

**ABOUT SGML EYE HOSPITAL USA, INC.**

SGML Eye Hospital USA, Inc. is a nonprofit organization based in New Jersey dedicated to

supporting equitable and accessible eye care services in rural India. Through strategic initiatives, fundraising efforts, and community engagement, the organization strives to build sustainable healthcare infrastructure that addresses critical gaps in vision care for underserved populations.

Executive Committee: Dr. Tushar Patel, Dr. Sparshil Patel, Smita (Miki) Patel,

Jatin Patel, Usha Patel, Chhaya Patel, Arpita Patel, Dharmesh Patel, Dr. Sunil Parikh - Associate Trust - New Jersey

(Based on a Press release issued by Dr. Tushar Patel)

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## Meet Prem Bhandari-the Man Whose Overriding Concern is Community



Prem Bhandari is a man given to community service

Prem Bhandari is a successful entrepreneur and community leader involved in philanthropic work in the United States and India. Mr. Bhandari graduated from Jodhpur and came to New York in 1987. He is a natural-born entrepreneur and ran businesses in the hospitality and luxury industries. His wife, Dr. Rekha Bhandari, is an accomplished triple medical board certified and working as Chief Medical Officer of one of the largest nursing home groups in the USA. Dr. Rekha Bhandari also received the prestigious Ellis Island Medal, recognized by the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate. His son Peter Bhandari is following in his mother's footsteps, completed his medical education, and is currently working as a 2nd-year resident doctor at Lenox Hill Hospital, New York - among America's 50 Best Hospitals. Peter is a representative of the American College of Physicians New York chapter for Medical Students.

Mr. Bhandari is very soft-hearted and always helps anyone and everyone in the community. He is a devoted social activist and works to help differently-abled people under the guidance and leadership of Padam Bhusan D.R. Mehta, Founder &

Chief Patron, Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Saminiti (BMVSS)/Jaipur Foot. Since 1975, Jaipur Foot (BMVSS) has helped rehabilitate more than 2 million differently-abled amputees and polio victims, providing free artificial limbs, calipers, and other requisite aids and appliances in India, 36 countries and 86 international camps through international prosthetics fitment camps. Mr. Bhandari was instrumental in organizing multiple camps in India under Jaipur Foot USA's funding, including MHOW - Madhya Pradesh, inaugurated by Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, and Nagpur, Maharashtra camp, inaugurated by then Chief Minister Shri Devendra Fadnavis. The prosthetics fitment camps in Jamshedpur (in the memory of Pulwama), Kota, Kolhapur, Nakoda, Khichan-Jodhpur, and West Bengal were held. Through Jaipur Foot USA, Mr. Bhandari was instrumental in starting many initiatives like Mobile Prosthetic Fitment Camp in Bhavnagar (prosthetics at the door-step of Divyang), and during COVID 2nd wave in India, sent thousands of Oxygen Concentrators all over India, including states like Rajasthan, Kerala, Bengal, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and Delhi. He also collaborated with the Mount Sinai Hospital group (one of the well-known Cardiologist Dr. Samin Sharma instrumental) based in New York to provide nearly a million dollars' worth of ventilators to various hospitals in Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Gujarat.

COVID has been a havoc on society and brought many painful difficulties for non-resident Indians who wanted to travel to India to attend to family emergencies, like death in the family or parents' critical conditions. Governments worldwide put many travel restrictions, and travelers, specifically to India, faced tremendous hardships. Many of the NRIs, frustrated with government restrictions, arbitrary rules, and difficulty getting an emergency

visa to travel from consulates, reached out to Mr. Bhandari in distress. Mr. Bhandari sprang into action and helped so many people in distressed conditions day in and day out. When anyone with no personal connection with Mr. Bhandari reached out to him, he pursued their cases vigorously, whichever consulate it belonged to, and was instrumental in getting them travel visas. He helped them operate Air India flights under a restricted air bubble travel corridor. Also, he was instrumental in pursuing various departments of the Indian government to ease arbitrary travel restrictions for OCI and 'T' visa holders. His contributions to helping NRIs in distress due to COVID restrictions will be remembered for a long time. He received the "Community Leader of the Year" award from the New Jersey Narcotic Enforcement Officers Association in 2021 for his contributions to providing food and other humanitarian help in the New York & New Jersey area during COVID lockdowns.

He was honored by Dr. H.R. Nagendra, Chancellor, S-VYASA, a renowned Yoga Guru, and received the "Yog Ratan award in London, United Kingdom. Mr. Bhandari is a founding director of the first-of-its-kind University outside India on a worldwide stage, dedicated to providing short-term and long-term courses on Yoga and allied subjects.

Mr. Bhandari was the Convenor & Chief Guest for the historic celebration to commemorate Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav by the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA)-NY-NJ-CT- NE at Madison Avenue (Manhattan), New York City on Aug 21st, 2022. FIA is one of the largest organizations in the USA, representing the Indian diaspora, and organized the 40th India Day Parade, which had historic participation of close to 2,00,000 people from all around the New York/New Jersey area and other parts of the US.

This is the largest parade outside India ever organized to celebrate India's Independence Day.

His love for the mother tongue is supreme, and he has been persistently campaigning for many years to include the Rajasthani language in the Eighth Schedule of India's constitution. He doesn't lose a chance to persuade and convince political leaders to take up this matter on a priority basis.

Mr. Bhandari was instrumental in organizing historic Exhibitions & Seminars for Jaipur Foot/BMVSS at the U.N. Headquarters, New York, under participatory blessings of Govt. of India's Ministry of External Affairs, Permanent Mission to the United Nations, and Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Saminiti (BMVSS)/Jaipur Foot, the world's largest non-profit for handicapped. Similar Exhibitions & Seminars for Jaipur Foot/BMVSS were organized at Capitol Hill, Washington, in collaboration with Indian Embassy, Washington DC.

All India Rajasthani Pravasi Federation chose Mr. Bhandari for the "SHER-e-MANHATTAN" award, conferred by the Honorable Chief Minister of Rajasthan Vasundhara Raje in 2006 in New York. He received the "Lifetime Achievement Award" from his alma mater Jai Narain Vyas University (Commerce Dept.), in 2019. Mr. Bhandari was honored by the Rajasthan Association of North America (RANA) in California, Canada, and New York in 2011, 2014, & 2018, respectively; Marwar State's highest civilian award "SIROPAV"; and the prestigious award of Honorary Doctorate Ph.D. by one of India's leading Desh Bhagat University is a real tribute and recognition of his outstanding social contributions, in so many diverse fields, so much, for so long. Mr. Bhandari was honored by the US-based one of the oldest and most prestigious organizations, the Association of Indians - AIA New York Chapter's 35th Deepawali Celebration & annual benefits gala 2022, for his outstanding humanitarian services to the community worldwide.

## Global Charity Gala in New Jersey to Accelerate Mission for a World Without Childhood Blindness

Eye Foundation of America to Host Landmark Fundraiser on April 18, 2026; Every Dollar Raised to Be Matched for Double Impact



Dr. V. K. Raju who founded the Eye Foundation of America four decades ago spends every moment to realize his vision of a world without Childhood Blindness

**APRIL 8, 2026  
EDISON, NJ (TIP)**

The Eye Foundation of America (EFA), a global leader in pediatric eye care and blindness prevention, will host a prestigious Charity Gala on April 18, 2026, in New Jersey, USA, bringing together philanthropists, healthcare leaders, and global changemakers to advance the mission of eliminating childhood blindness.

Serving children since 1977, EFA has been at the forefront of restoring sight and transforming lives across continents. This landmark fundraiser, led by the EFA Board Members, aims to scale high-impact initiatives in India-particularly the expansion of the Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) program and the development of the new Goutami Eye Institute building, a state-of-the-art facility designed to serve thousands of vulnerable children.

A defining highlight of the evening is EFA's powerful commitment:

Every dollar raised will be matched-doubling the impact and accelerating the journey toward a world without childhood blindness.

The initiative is strengthened by strategic partnerships with Rotary International and Lions Clubs International Foundation, two of the world's most respected service organizations, further amplifying reach, credibility, and global impact.

### VOICES OF LEADERSHIP

Dr. Leela Raju MD, President, Eye Foundation of America, said:

"For nearly five decades, EFA has stood for one unwavering belief-that no child should suffer blindness due to preventable or treatable conditions. This gala is not just a fundraiser; it is a movement. With every contribution matched, we are not just

raising funds-we are multiplying hope, impact, and the future of thousands of children."

Sam Maddali RPh, Board Member, Eye Foundation of America, added:

"The expansion of the Goutami Eye Institute and the scaling of the ROP program represent a critical leap forward. Premature babies deserve a fair chance at life-and vision is central to that future. Together with our partners and donors, we are building systems that will save sight for generations."

Dr. Sam Maddula PharmD, Board Member, Eye Foundation of America, emphasized:

"This mission is deeply personal and profoundly global. From one child to millions, the ripple effect of restoring sight is transformational-impacting education, livelihoods, and dignity.

Read full story at  
[www.theindianpanorama.news2](http://www.theindianpanorama.news2)

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*Best Wishes for  
a Happy Vaisakhi*



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# Master Mohinder Singh- an educator and a community leader



Master Mohinder Singh speaking at the Vaisakhi celebrations in New York State Assembly

File photo

Master Mohinder Singh's journey from a Punjab village to New York in the US may appear to be any other person's journey. But even though there may be similarities in the stories, there always are dissimilarities and uniquenesses. So was it in the case of Master Mohinder Singh. His is a story of not only "success" which is measured in terms of material attainments. Here is a man who gained not only material success, but a reputation for what he is- a man with a vision to uplift his community and serve the country of his adoption.

Born in 1948 to Sardar Pritam Singh, a retired police officer, and Sardarni Bir Kaur, who was a homemaker, Master Ji is thankful to his parents for providing him with excellent education and finest values early on in life which are the chief contributors to success in life. Master Ji later instilled the same pristine values that he learned from his parents in his students during his years as a teacher.

Master Ji had his early education at Khalsa Higher secondary school in Miani, from the first grade to the 11th grade. He was not only a brilliant student but was acknowledged as a model for other students for his discipline and respectfulness to his teachers. After

finishing his early education, he attended the Government College at Tanda Urmar, from where he completed his bachelor's in science degree (B. Sc) in 1969, and 2 years later, in 1971, he earned a bachelor's in education degree (B. Ed) from MGN college of Education in Jalandhar.

Armed with a bachelor's in education, he took to teaching profession, beginning with a science teacher in Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa Majha Higher Secondary School in the town of Kairon in district Amritsar. Later, he taught at many different schools in Punjab before finally joining as a science teacher in Punjab Education department. He was posted at a Government High school in the village of his birth, Miani. He served faithfully in that school from 1974 to 1985. During this period, he got married to Gurbachan Kaur in 1974. A resident of Mier, she was a teacher by profession. She was an English and Social studies teacher in Punjab Education Department and served at many different posts throughout Punjab until immigrating to the United States in the 1994.

In December 1985 Master Ji took a drastic step to better his and his family's life and migrated to the United States. He joined his brother Dilbag Singh, who was already living in the United States and was a successful business owner. Master Ji joined his brother in the construction business and had a successful career as a business owner in New York.

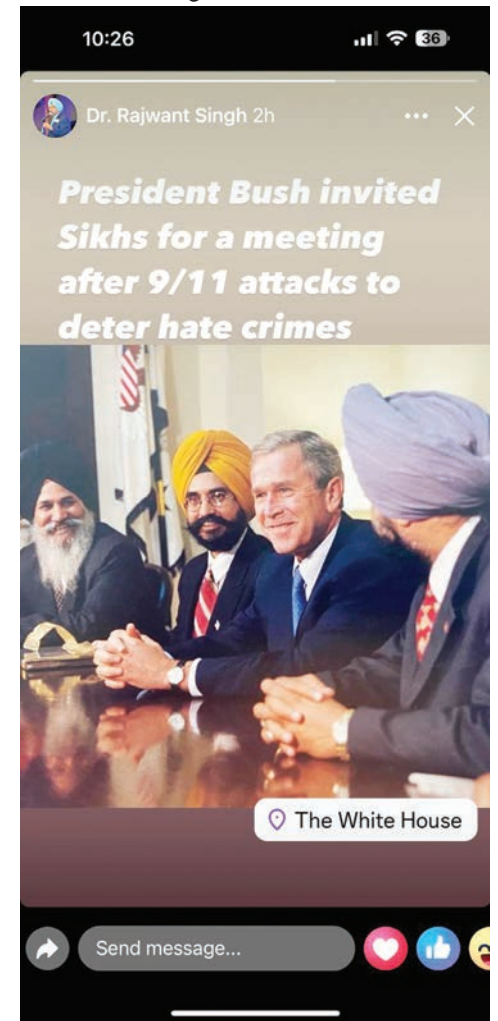
He was later joined by his family in December 1994. His wife Gurbachan Kaur immigrated to the United States with three of their children Rupinder Kaur, Prabhjot Kaur, and Navtej Singh. All his children followed in Master Ji's footsteps and attained higher Education from New York University, which is one of the prestigious universities in the United States. All three graduated as

dentists from NYU and are currently running their own practice in different parts of the United States.

Master Mohinder Singh made his mark in the United States. He was not only a successful businessman but came to be recognized as a prominent person in his community. He became a major player in the Sikh religious affairs in New York, and later in the US. He served as president of Sikh Cultural society, which is one of the oldest institutions of the Sikhs in the United States. He served as president at the Sikh Cultural Society for six years, where he had the honor to lead 6 Sikh Day parades. He was also a member of a Sikh delegation that visited President Bush after the 9/11 attacks on the world trade centre to convey to him the difficult situations the Sikhs faced in the wake of 9/11.

He was the founder president of Sant Prem Singh Sikh Cultural Society and headed that institution for many years: When the Lobana community in New York decided to build a gurdwara of their own, after they had developed differences with the Sikh Cultural Society, Master Mohinder Singh played the role of a community stalwart. He was among the founding members of Baba Makhana Shah Lubana Sikh Center Gurdwara in New York and became the first President. Next few years saw him getting more involved in the Sikh affairs in the US. Because of his commendable community service over the last 3 decades in the United States, today, he is one of the best-known Sikh leaders in the country. He is one of the few Sikh leaders who has maintained steady contacts in India where his voice makes a difference, whether in politics or in religious affairs of the Sikh community at the highest levels.

Master Ji is involved in city governance also. He is a member of Community Board 9 of the Borough of



Master Mohinder (extreme left) was part of a Sikh delegation that called on President George Bush to apprise him of the existential threat to the Sikhs in the wake of the 9/11.

File photo

Queens, NY. He is also associated with the District Attorney's Sports Committee for South Asian and Indo Caribbean Communities. He continues to instill the finest values he had learnt from his parents, in the youth, and provides guidance and service to community.

# N.J. lawmakers blast World Cup plan to close Penn Station to commuters. 'This will be a huge disruption'

State Senators quizzed NJ transit officials about a plan to bar non-world cup ticket holders from accessing Penn Station for a four-hour window



A view of Penn Station

APRIL 9, 2026  
NEW YORK (TIP)

New Jersey Senators on Thursday questioned NJ Transit's plan to restrict access to Penn Station for regular commuters for four hours in favor of World Cup soccer fans.

Legislators reacted to a media report that said NJ Transit will close parts of

Penn Station New York to non-ticket holders on eight match days in June and July for four hours before a scheduled game. "This seems to be an event that keeps getting more complicated," said State Sen. Renee C. Burgess, D-Essex, during a hearing on the state budget. "Is there operational justification for restricting Penn Station?"

NJ Transit CEO Kris Kolluri confirmed there will be what he called a "temporary diversion" of non-World Cup riders at Penn Station.

NJ Transit has to move 28,000 people to and from Penn Station on each of the eight days World Cup games are played, he said.

Of the eight World Cup games to be played at MetLife, four are on weekdays. Only one weekday game, scheduled at 8 p.m. on June 22, will affect the evening commute, he said.

"The concern is how it impacts commuters, it's a very important

question," Kolluri said. "Of the four weekday games, three are at a time when this temporary diversion is at non-peak hours." Penn Station is the first of three World Cup security areas; the others are at Secaucus Junction and MetLife Stadium, he said. President Donald Trump and 14 other world leaders are expected to attend World Cup games, increasing security requirements, said State Sen. Paul Sarlo, Senate budget committee chairman.

"We have an open (transit) system, that will not be the case for this," Kolluri said. "We will detail it in the next week or so."

One security issue is that it's customary for some soccer fans to carry flares to matches. But that's not going to happen, Kolluri said.

"Equally important is safety, there is a limited capacity," Kolluri said. "We have to make sure train sets are set aside at Penn Station...that they are secure and (fans) checked."

Other transit options will be available for affected commuters, Kolluri said.

"The best part about New Jersey and the region is Amtrak is still functioning, PATH is still functioning, all New Jersey Transit buses are still functioning, the ferry system is still functioning outside the security perimeter," he said.

A day before Thursday's hearing, Assemblyman Ravi Bhalla and Assemblywoman Katie Brennan, D-Hudson, were the first lawmakers to demand NJ Transit clarify the World Cup plan for commuters.

"It's not clear how people are supposed to get home from work or if there's any sort of contingency plans in place. Riders deserve answers right now," Brennan said in a statement.

"This will be a huge disruption for more than a hundred thousand NJ Transit riders," said Assemblyman Ravi Bhalla. "The World Cup is only two months away. There's been no public discussion about this or even a formal announcement.

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

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# Indian Ambassador's Engagements in Craiova and Slatina Strengthen India-Romania Regional, Academic, and Economic Cooperation

APRIL 8, 2026  
BUCHAREST (TIP)

Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Ambassador of India to Romania, undertook a series of engagements in Craiova and Slatina aimed at further strengthening India-Romania cooperation across regional governance, academic partnerships, and economic collaboration, while also highlighting the growing contributions of Indian companies and citizens to Romanian society.

During his visit to Craiova, the Ambassador held detailed and constructive discussions with H.E. Ms. Lia Olguța Vasilescu, Mayor of Craiova; H.E. Mr. Emil Mot, President of the Dolj County Council; and H.E. Mr. Daniel Dăianu, Prefect of Dolj. The meeting focused on enhancing local-level partnerships, expanding trade and investment opportunities, and fostering closer institutional cooperation between India and Romania. Both sides emphasized the importance of regional engagement as a key pillar in advancing bilateral relations and explored opportunities for collaboration in sectors such as industry, infrastructure, education, and innovation.

On this occasion, the Ambassador expressed sincere appreciation for the recognition accorded to Mr. Vipan Kumar, an Indian national whose extraordinary courage saved the life of a 5-year-old girl who had fallen into a frozen lake in Craiova. Demonstrating exceptional presence of mind and bravery, Mr. Kumar immediately responded to the emergency and entered the freezing waters to rescue the child, despite the risks to his own life. His selfless act has been widely acknowledged across Romania and stands as a powerful reflection of shared human values, compassion, and solidarity that underpin the India-Romania relationship.

The Ambassador also met with Prof. Dr. Ion Popescu, Rector of the University of Craiova, to discuss avenues for strengthening academic cooperation between India and Romania. The discussions covered a wide range of areas, including student and faculty exchange programmes, joint research initiatives, institutional partnerships, and collaboration in emerging fields of science and technology. Both sides underlined the growing importance of educational linkages in building long-term partnerships and fostering knowledge exchange between the two countries.

The Ambassador joined the Rector for the opening ceremony welcoming students from KIIT and KISS University (India) who have commenced their academic journey at the University of Craiova under the



Ambassador meets with Mr. Mario De Mezzo, Mayor of Slatina



Ambassador meets with Mr. Cattlin Ionut Ivan, Vice President of Olt County Council



Ambassador meets with Ms. Lia Olguța Vasilescu, Mayor of Craiova, Dolj County Council President Mr. Emil Mot, and Prefect Mr. Daniel Dăianu



Ambassador met Prof. Dr. Ion Popescu, Rector of the University of Craiova

Erasmus Programme. The ceremony highlighted the significance of international academic mobility, cross-cultural engagement, and collaboration between Indian and Romanian institutions. The Ambassador expressed appreciation to the University for hosting the Indian students and noted that such initiatives play a vital role in nurturing globally aware, skilled, and innovative future leaders.

In Slatina, the Ambassador met with H.E. Mr. Mario De Mezzo, Mayor of Slatina, to discuss strengthening local cooperation and exploring opportunities to enhance India-Romania economic and investment partnerships. The discussions focused on promoting business linkages, encouraging Indian companies to explore opportunities in the region, and enhancing cooperation at the municipal level. The Ambassador also extended an invitation for a business delegation led by the Mayor to visit India, with a view to further strengthening trade, economic, and commercial ties between the two countries.

The Ambassador also met with H.E. Mr. Cattlin Ionut Ivan, Vice President of the Olt County Council, to discuss strengthening regional cooperation and expanding economic and investment partnerships. The Vice President welcomed the growing presence of Indian companies in the region, including the investment by Vectr Holding in Olt County's agricultural sector. The company has undertaken significant agricultural operations, including large-scale harvesting activities, contributing to increased productivity, job creation, and the introduction of modern farming practices. These developments reflect the positive impact of Indian investments and signal growing confidence in Romania as a destination for Indian businesses.

The visit underscored India's continued commitment to strengthening its partnership with Romania through active engagement with regional authorities, academic institutions, and local communities. It also highlighted the expanding scope for collaboration in education, investment, and people-to-people exchanges, further reinforcing the strong and dynamic relationship between the two countries.

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



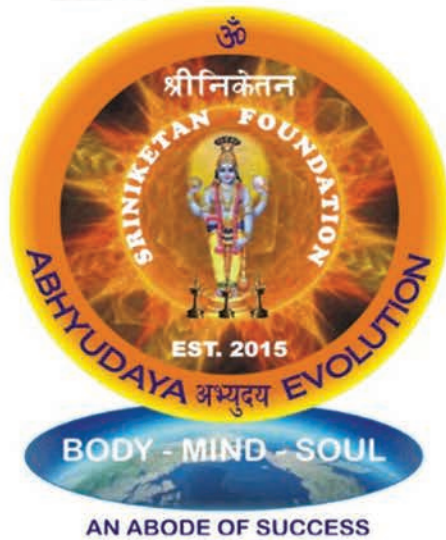
Ambassador attended the opening ceremony of the cultural exchange program between KIITS and the University of Craiova, extending a warm welcome to KIIT and KISS students.

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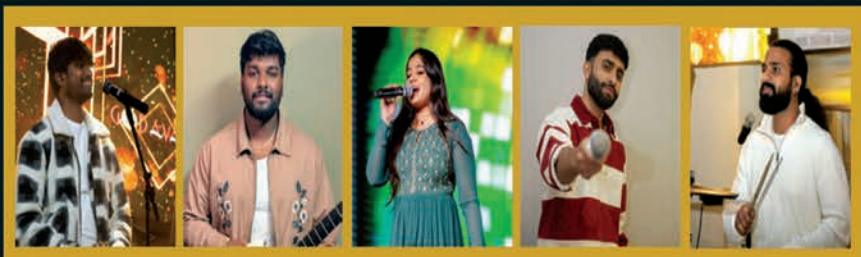
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# Swami Vivekananda Monument adorns heart of downtown Seattle



Mayor of Seattle Katie Wilson and Consul General of India unveiling the Swami Vivekananda Monument in downtown Seattle, 11 April 2026

**APRIL 11, 2026  
SEATTLE (TIP)**

In another historic first, the City of Seattle has become the first city government in the United States to host a life size statue of Swami Vivekananda at the Westlake Square in the center of downtown Seattle. The life-size bronze statue was jointly unveiled today by Hon'ble Mayor of Seattle Ms. Katie Wilson and Consul General of India in



Mayor of Seattle Katie Wilson and Consul General of India at the Swami Vivekananda Monument in downtown Seattle, 11 April 2026



Participants at the unveiling ceremony of Swami Vivekananda Monument in downtown Seattle, 11 April 2026

Seattle.

It is to be noted that this monument is the first installation of Swami Vivekananda, which is hosted by a city government anywhere in the United States. It is located at the prestigious "Westlake Square" in downtown Seattle, which is a unique melting spot in the center of the city that records over 400,000 daily visits and millions of visitors each month and within walking distance of the Spheres (Amazon HQs), Seattle Convention Center and Seattle Center Monorail.

The unveiling ceremony was attended by several dignitaries from the Greater Seattle area including Mayor of Seattle Ms. Katie Wilson; Mayor of Kent Ms. Dana Ralph; Mayor of Auburn Ms. Nancy Backus; Mayor of Tukwila Mr. Tom McLeod; Mayor of Normandy Park Mr. Eric Zimmerman; Mayor of Kirkland Ms. Kelly Curtis. A large number of community leaders from the Indian American diaspora and members of city councils of Bellevue, Bothell, Dupont and Redmond also joined in the ceremony.

Hon'ble Mayor of Seattle Ms. Katie Wilson in her speech underscored that the installation of the Swami Vivekananda Monument (SVM) in Seattle reflects the city's inclusive spirit and further strengthens cultural ties between India and the diverse metropolitan tech hub in the US Pacific Northwest.

The Swami Vivekananda Monument is a gift from the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) to the City of Seattle in recognition of the city's rich



Mayors of cities of Seattle, Kent, Auburn, Tukwila, Normandy Park and Kirkland along with Consul General of India after the unveiling ceremony, 11 April 2026



Mayor of Seattle Katie Wilson addressing the participants at the Consulate after the unveiling of Swami Vivekananda Monument in downtown Seattle, 11 April 2026



Indian Cultural Dance Performance at the unveiling ceremony of Swami Vivekananda Monument in downtown Seattle, 11 April 2026

multicultural character and spirit of inclusivity and as such it was befitting that the event was held on the occasion of celebration of ICCR Day. The installation of SVM is part of India's broader cultural diplomacy initiative, facilitated through ICCR and aims to strengthen people-to-people ties between India and the US Pacific Northwest.

It may be recalled that Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) was a renowned philosopher and spiritual leader who introduced Vedanta and Yoga to the West. The SVM installation in Seattle is sculpted by a prominent Indian sculptor, Naresh Kumar Kumawat. With over 600 installations across more than 80 countries, his works serve as cultural icons of India across continents.

(Based on a press release issued by Soumith Raju, Consul, CGI Seattle)

# American Men Are Set to Be Automatically Registered for the Draft. Here's What to Know

Eligible men in the U.S. will automatically be registered for the military draft beginning in December, according to the federal agency that oversees draft registration

APRIL 9, 2026  
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

The Selective Service System (SSS), which maintains the database of men eligible for a draft, states on its website that under the new, "streamlined" registration process, responsibility for registering will shift "from individual men to SSS through integration with federal data sources."

The SSS submitted a proposed rule to implement automatic registration on March 30 to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, which is currently in the process of reviewing the proposal.

Congress previously approved the change to automatic registration in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2026, which was signed into law by President Donald Trump in December.

The U.S. has not had a draft since 1973, during the Vietnam War. To reinstate one, Congress would need "to amend the Military Selective Service Act to authorize the President to induct personnel into the Armed Forces," according to SSS.

Here's what to know about SSS registration, who is required to register for the draft, and the new process set to be put in place at the end of this year.

**Who is required to register for the draft, and how does the process currently work?**

Almost all male citizens and male immigrants between the ages of 18 and 25 are required by federal law to register with the SSS within 30 days of either marking their 18th birthday or entering the U.S.

Men who fail to register can become



A group of trainees -Only for Representation

ineligible for state financial aid, state and federal employment, and—in the case of male immigrants—U.S. citizenship. Failing to register or aiding and abetting someone "to fail to comply with the registration requirement," is also considered a felony and is punishable by up to a \$250,000 fine and five years' imprisonment, according to the SSS.

Select groups are exempt from the registration requirements, including men who were hospitalized or incarcerated from the age of 18 through 25; men who lived in the U.S. during that period but "maintained lawful nonimmigrant status" the full time; and men who served continuously in the military between those ages. Men born between March 29, 1957, and December 31, 1959, were also exempt.

Disabled men who would not qualify for military service must still register with SSS.

In the event of a draft, a man can file a claim for an exemption as a "conscientious objector" if he has religious or moral objections to war.

"A man's reasons for not wanting to participate in a war must not be based on politics, expediency, or self-interest," the SSS outlines. "In general, the man's lifestyle prior to making his claim must reflect his current claims."

Women are not required to register, though they may voluntarily enlist in the army.

Eligible men can currently register themselves online or through the mail.

In the event of Congress and the President authorizing a draft, the SSS would hold a random lottery drawing of registrants' birthdays and numbers to determine "the order in which individuals receive orders to report for induction," according to the agency. Men whose twentieth birthdays fell during

the year of the lottery would be the first to receive such orders. Additional lotteries, if required, would be conducted for men aged 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 19, and lastly 18.6 years old.

The Department of Defense (DOD) requires the SSS to "deliver the first inductees to the military" within 193 days of a draft being authorized, per the agency.

**How will the proposed rule change the process?**

The 2026 NDAA amends the Military Selective Service Act to include language stating that men between the ages of 18 and 26 "shall be automatically registered under this Act by the Director of the Selective Service System."

Men will be automatically registered within 30 days of their 18th birthday under the new policy, the same period during which eligible men are currently required to self-register.

They will then receive written notice that they have been registered per the NDAA and be notified of the process for contesting their registration, if they fall into the select groups who are exempt from the requirements.

The proposed rule will not change who is required to register.

Democratic Rep. Chrissy Houlahan of Pennsylvania, who sponsored the language of the amendment, said that the automatic registration process would save money and agency resources.

"This will also allow us to rededicate resources—basically that means money—towards [readiness] and towards mobilization ... rather than towards education and advertising campaigns driven to register people," she said.

(Source: Time Magazine)

## Tax Tips for Individuals

Learn about estimated tax and payment options

APRIL 9, 2026  
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

If no tax (or not enough tax) was withheld from your taxable income, you may be required to make estimated income tax payments. Paying estimated tax helps you avoid owing money at the end of the year when you file your tax return and avoid accruing interest and penalty.

**ESTIMATED INCOME TAX DUE DATES FOR TAX YEAR 2026 ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

- 1st payment: April 15, 2026
- 2nd payment: June 15, 2026
- 3rd payment: September 15, 2026
- 4th payment: January 15, 2027

**HOW DO YOU MAKE ESTIMATED TAX PAYMENTS?**

You can pay your estimated income tax

online using your Individual Online Services account or tax preparation software. Both are convenient, secure, and easy.

**NOTE:** If you need to cancel a scheduled estimated tax payment, you must do so through your Individual Online Services account—even if you scheduled the payment using software.

Pay using your Individual Online Services account

Log in to (or create) your Individual Online Services account.

Review your tax account balance before you file to see the total amount you paid, if any, throughout the year toward the tax on your income.

Estimate the tax (or remaining tax) you owe.

From your Account Summary

homepage, select the ? Services menu in the upper-left corner.

Select Payments, bills and notices, then choose Make a payment from the expanded menu.

Choose Pay estimated tax as your payment type. If you don't see the option Pay estimated tax, select Make a Different Payment, then choose Pay estimated tax as your payment type.

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## Justice Yashwant Varma quits amid impeachment process

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 10:** Faced with proceedings for his removal for misconduct over recovery of unaccounted half-burnt wads of cash from his official residence in Delhi on March 14 last year during a fire incident, Justice Yashwant Varma of the Allahabad High Court has submitted his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu. Faced with proceedings for his removal for misconduct over recovery of unaccounted half-burnt wads of cash from his official residence in Delhi on March 14 last year during a fire incident, Justice Yashwant Varma of the Allahabad High Court has submitted his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu.

Simultaneously, Justice Varma has also withdrawn from the ongoing inquiry conducted by a Lok Sabha-appointed panel under the Judges Inquiry Act, 1968, for his removal, saying his continued participation in it would legitimise an earlier inquiry, where he was asked to “answer the unanswerable” question on the source of money allegedly found from his Delhi residence when he was a judge of the Delhi High Court. “I withdraw with the deepest sadness, conscious of the gravity of my decision and with the hope that history will one day record the unfairness with which a sitting High Court Judge was treated and that has marked this entire episode from its inception,” Justice Varma wrote in his 13-page letter. The three-member committee was set up after Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla admitted a notice of motion moved by over 100 Lok Sabha MPs for Justice Varma's removal as a High Court Judge to probe the

# Time has come to implement Women's Reservation Act: PM Modi's letter to LS, RS floor leaders

APRIL 12, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the time has come for the implementation of the Women's Reservation Act in its true spirit and the 2029 Lok Sabha elections and Assembly elections are conducted with the quota for women in place.



In a letter to the floor leaders of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, ahead of the three-day special sittings of Parliament, Modi also asked all members to come together in one voice to pass the amendments to the women's

reservation law, officially known as Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam.

“After extensive deliberations, we have reached the conclusion that the time has now come to implement the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam in its true spirit across the country.

“It is imperative that the 2029 Lok Sabha elections and Assembly elections are conducted with women's reservation in place,” the Prime Minister said in his letter dated April 11.

The Budget Session of Parliament has been extended, and a special three-day sitting of the House has been convened on April 16 to 18. The Women's Reservation Act will ensure an increase in the number of Lok Sabha seats to 816, of which 273 will be reserved for women.

The provision to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies was brought by amending the Constitution in 2023.

However, the women's quota would have come into effect only after the completion of the delimitation exercise on the basis of the 2027 Census. This meant the reservation would not have become enforceable before 2034 if the present law remains as is.

To implement it from the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, changes were needed in the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam; hence, the government is holding a special session to pass the amendments to the law.

## Govt hurrying women's quota law implementation for 'political mileage': Kharge to PM Modi

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has conveyed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that calling Parliament's special sitting amid state polls reinforces belief that the government is hurrying the implementation of women's reservation law for “political mileage”.

In a letter to PM Modi, Kharge reiterated the demand that an all-party meeting be called to discuss the delimitation issue, which is being linked to the amendments to the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023, after April 29.

Kharge's letter came in response to a missive from the prime minister on the special sitting of Parliament for a discussion on the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam from April 16. “I have just received your letter on the special session of Parliament for a discussion on the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam from the 16th of April,” the Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha said in his letter to Modi dated April 11. “As you are aware, the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 was passed by Parliament unanimously in September 2023. At that time, on behalf of the Indian National Congress, I had demanded that this important law should become effective immediately,” Kharge said.

The Congress president pointed out that though in his letter, the PM has mentioned that there was broad consensus for its immediate implementation, he did not implement the same. “It has been 30 months since then, and now this special sitting has been called without taking us into confidence and your government is seeking our cooperation again without revealing any details on the delimitation going to be done. You will appreciate that without details of the delimitation and other aspects, it would be impossible to have any useful discussion on this historic law,” Kharge said.

APRIL 12, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday, April 12, began his visit to the UAE, while Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal held a virtual meeting with his Saudi Arabian counterpart Majid bin Abdullah al-Qasabi.

“We discussed strengthening India-Saudi Arabia trade relations, enhancing energy supply cooperation and advancing negotiations for a trade agreement between India and GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries,” Goyal said.

Jaishankar said he began his visit by interacting with members of the Indian community. “Spoke about the Government of India's efforts towards their well-being and security amidst the West Asia conflict,” he said.

He appreciated the contributions of the Indian community to local society during these difficult times, as well as the support of the UAE government in ensuring their welfare. Meanwhile, Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal posted on X that another Indian-flagged vessel, ‘Jag Vikram’, navigated by

# Jaishankar begins UAE visit; Goyal holds talks with Saudi counterpart



24 Indian crew members, successfully sailed out of the Persian Gulf region on April 11 carrying LPG. A day earlier, Sonowal had chaired a review meeting on port operations with senior ministry officials amid prevailing West Asia tensions. The minister also directed the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) to



ensure transparency in shipping-related charges and reviewed grievance redressal mechanisms at ports, with instructions to strengthen them.

He had said that India's major ports had cleared nearly 90 per cent of their cargo backlog. Indian ports have undertaken measures such as ground rent waivers,

billing concessions, discounts on reefer charges and optimal yard utilisation to ease congestion and support trade, he had said.

Major ports, including Deendayal Port, Jawaharlal Nehru Port, New Mangalore Port and Mumbai Port, have largely cleared their cargo backlog.

A series of operational measures, increased yard capacities and improved logistics planning are said to have played a crucial role in achieving this.

This comes as the Strait of Hormuz remains uncertain amid a fragile two-week ceasefire between Iran and US-Israel forces.

The strait, which accounts for about 20 per cent of the world's energy exports, continues to see reduced traffic, though marginally higher than levels before the ceasefire.

## India, Qatar push for free flow of global trade

APRIL 10, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** India on Friday, April 10, emphasised the need for “unimpeded freedom” of navigation and the smooth flow of global commerce to sustain supply chains, as Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri held high-level talks in Qatar amid ongoing tensions in West Asia. During his two-day visit to Doha, Puri met Qatar’s Minister of State for Energy Affairs and President and CEO of QatarEnergy Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi with discussions focusing on energy security, bilateral cooperation and regional stability.

Qatar reiterated its position as a reliable energy partner, with Al-Kaabi assuring continued cooperation and supply commitments to India, a major energy importer.

The visit assumes significance against the backdrop of heightened geopolitical tensions impacting global oil flows and supply chains, with India closely monitoring developments in key transit routes such as the Strait of Hormuz. Both sides welcomed the recently announced two-week ceasefire and stressed the importance of an early end to disruptions in global energy supplies. They underlined that ensuring free movement of shipping, particularly through critical routes, remained essential for maintaining stability in international markets.

# UCC in six months, Rs 3,000 aid for women: BJP’s key poll planks for West Bengal

APRIL 10, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** To consolidate its core voter base, Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday, April 10, reiterated the BJP’s key promise to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) within six months of coming to power in West Bengal.

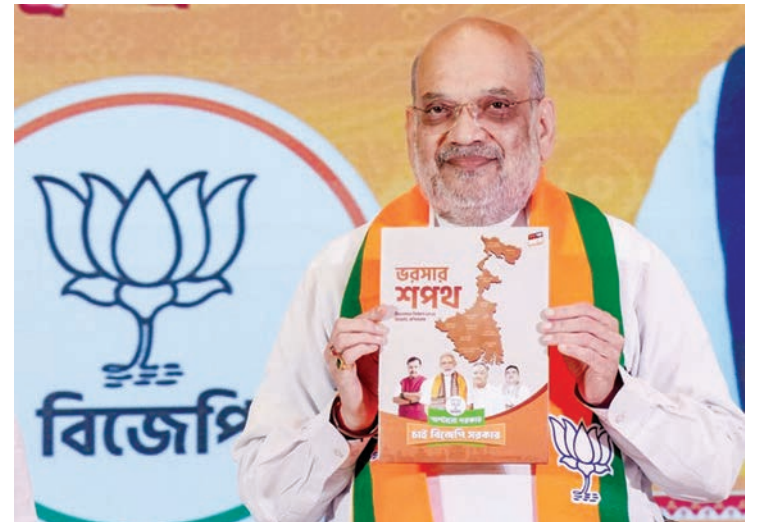
Addressing a press conference in Kolkata after unveiling the BJP’s “Sankalp Patra”, Shah said there would be “one law for every citizen in Bengal, irrespective of religion”. Sharpening the party’s stance on illegal immigration, he underscored a strict “detect, delete and deport” approach, signalling a tough line on border security and infiltration.

The manifesto, he added, also aimed at dismantling alleged syndicate networks and ending the “cut money” culture. He described the manifesto as “a roadmap to pull every section of Bengal out of despair”. He further said people in the state were currently “frightened and disillusioned” and were seeking change.

On the economic front, the BJP pledged to generate one crore jobs and provide Rs 3,000 per month as financial assistance to unemployed youth. Fresh graduates would receive a one-time grant of Rs 15,000 to help them prepare for competitive examinations. The manifesto also promises parity in dearness allowance for government employees and pensioners, along with full implementation of the 7th Pay Commission.

Women empowerment features prominently in the document, with proposals including Rs 3,000 monthly support for women, 33 per cent reservation in government jobs and police force and the creation of 75 lakh “Lakhpatri Didis” to promote financial independence. It also outlines plans to set up at least one all-women police station in every administrative block, along with dedicated help desks in all police stations.

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## Energy, defence and trade on agenda as FS Misri heads to Europe amid West Asia crisis

APRIL 10, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri will undertake a three-day visit to Paris and Berlin beginning Sunday for high-level talks on energy, trade and defence sectors that have become increasingly critical amid a fractured geopolitical landscape.

Misri’s visit to France and Germany comes at the end of his trip to the US, where he met Secretary of State Marco Rubio and a number of other senior officials of the Trump administration.

The West Asia crisis and its impact on energy security are expected to figure prominently in Misri’s talks with the interlocutors in Paris and Berlin.

In Paris, the foreign secretary will co-chair the India-France Foreign Office Consultations along with Martin Briens, the secretary general of the French Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement on Saturday.

Both Misri and Briens will discuss a wide range of issues, including defence, civil nuclear energy, space, cyber and digital, artificial intelligence and initiatives fostering people-to-people exchanges in addition to the latest global and regional developments, it said.

In Berlin, the foreign secretary will co-chair the India-Germany Foreign Office Consultations alongside Géza Andreas von Geyr, the state

secretary of the German Foreign Office, the MEA said.

The discussions would cover diverse domains of bilateral cooperation, including trade and investments, defence and security, technology, green energy, development cooperation, education and people-to-people ties, as well as global and regional matters of mutual interest, it said.

Misri is also expected to meet other dignitaries and senior government officials in both Paris and Berlin.

The foreign secretary’s trip follows the visits of German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and French President Emmanuel Macron to India in January and February, respectively.

Earlier, Misri held a meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio during his ongoing visit to Washington. The meeting took place at the White House and focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation across key sectors. Both sides reviewed the India-US partnership with emphasis on trade, critical minerals, defence cooperation, and the Quad framework.

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor, who was present during the meeting, said on a social media platform that the discussions were constructive and forward-looking. He also said that Secretary Rubio is expected to visit India next month.

## ISRO successfully conducts second integrated air-drop test for Gaganyaan mission

APRIL 10, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Space agency ISRO has successfully conducted the second integrated air drop test (IADT-02) for the upcoming Gaganyaan mission at the space station in Andhra Pradesh’s Sriharikota.

The system is essential to ensure a safe recovery of the crew module—the capsule in which astronauts sit during a human flight—during re-entry and landing.

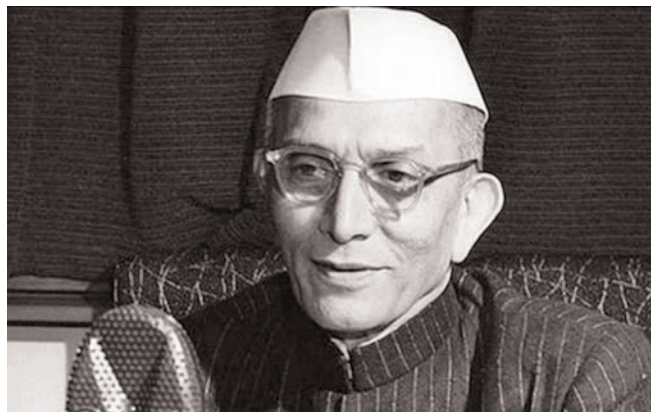
Union minister Jitendra Singh congratulated the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for successfully conducting the test. “Congratulations #ISRO for the successful accomplishment of Second Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-02) for #Gaganyaan, India’s first Human Space flight scheduled next year. The second Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-02) was successfully conducted at Satish Dhawan Space Station Sriharikota,” Singh said in a post on X. The IADT-02 follows the successful completion of the first IADT, which took place on August 24, 2025, at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. Air drop tests recreate the last leg of a spacecraft’s return to Earth. An aircraft or helicopter drops the spacecraft from a height to test various systems under different scenarios. These are the deployment of the parachute system in case the mission is aborted mid-flight, system performance when one parachute fails to open and the spacecraft’s orientation and safety during splashdown etc. In the IADT-02 test, a simulated crew module, weighing about 5.7 tonnes, was lifted by an Indian Air Force Chinook helicopter to an altitude of about three kilometres and released over a designated drop zone in the sea, near the Sriharikota coast.

# India in history this Week

APRIL 10 TO APRIL 16

## 10 APRIL

1894 Birth of Indian industrialist Ghanshyamdas Birla.



1995 Fifth Prime Minister of India Morarji Desai passed away with Bharat Ratna.

1875 Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded the Aryasamaj in 1875.

1889 Ram Chandra Chatterjee became the first Indian to fly in a hot balloon in 1889.

1930 Synthetic Rabak was first produced in 1930.

1982 Successful launch of India's multi-purpose satellite "INSAT-1A" in 1982.

2001 Tehran Declaration signed between India and Iran.

1897 Born in 1897 to Prafulla Chandra Sen, a prominent Congress leader of Bengal, a follower of Mahatma Gandhi and a freedom fighter.

1894 Birth of Indian industrialist Ghanshyamdas Birla in 1894.

## 11 APRIL

1869 Kasturba Gandhi, wife of Mahatma Gandhi, was born in 1869.

1919 The International Labor Organization was established in 1919.

1921 The first live commentary of the Games was broadcast on radio.



1930 A 124-meter swinging bridge made of steel wires was opened to the public in Rishikesh. It was named Laxman Jhula.

1999 The Agni 2 missile was tested in 1999.

2011 Pulitzer Prize for Indian-origin American writer Jhumpa Lahiri for her debut work 'Interpreter of Melladies'.

1964 The Communist Party of India was divided into two parts. The main party is called the Communist Party of India and the second party that was divided was named Communist Party (Marxist).

1910 Anant Laxman Kanhere, one of the young revolutionaries who sacrificed his life for the independence of the country, died in 1910.

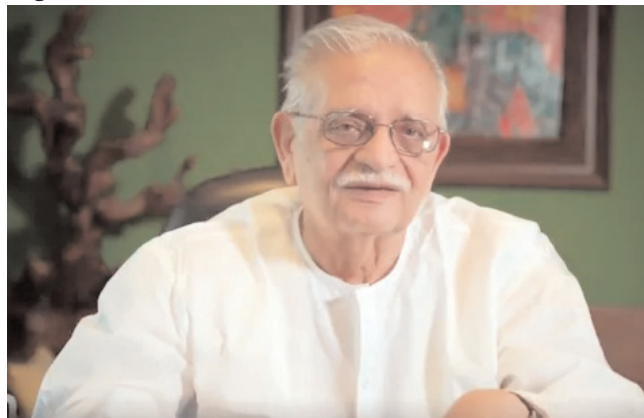
## 12 APRIL

1885 Birth of famous historian Rakhaldas Banerjee who discovered Mohenjodaro.

2007 Pakistan approves India on Iran Gas Pipeline.  
1621 Birth of Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1621.  
1955 The polio vaccine developed by Dr. Jones Sak was declared safe and effective.

1978 The country's first double-decker train Sinhagad Express was run from the Victoria Terminal of Bombay (now Mumbai) to Pune to mark 125 years of Indian Railways.

2008 Three people, including two Indian engineers, were killed in a suicide attack on a convoy of Indians in Afghanistan in 2008.



2014 The famous lyricist Gulzar was awarded the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for the year 2013 in 2014.

## 13 APRIL

1699 The tenth Sikh Guru Gobind Singh founded the Khalsa Panth. The festival of Baisakhi is made on this day every year.



1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre, indicative of the culmination of the atrocities of the British, was carried out.

1984 The Indian Army started a campaign of armed forces to occupy the Siachen Glacier in Kashmir.

1947 Diplomatic relations established between India and Pakistan.

1984 Indian cricket team won the Asia Cup for the first time by defeating Pakistan by 58 runs in Sharjah.

1648 Construction of the Red Fort was completed.

1939 The Hindustani Red Army (Indian Red Army) was formed in India in 1939 for an armed struggle with the British.

1978 The first flag carrier of the country "INS" was demoted to Delhi in 1978.



2000 Lara Dutta was elected Miss Universe in 2000.



2005 Vishwanathan Anand became 'World Chess Champion' for the fourth time in 2005.

## 14 APRIL

1891 Birth of father of Indian Constitution BR Ambedkar

2008 Start of passenger rail service between Kolkata in India and Dhaka in Bangladesh for the first time since 1965.

1659 Aurangzeb defeated Dara in 1659 at the Battle of Delhi.

1563 Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Sikh Guru, was born

1944 A ship loaded with weapons exploded in the port of Mumbai, killing more than 1200.

1962 Renowned Indian engineer M. Visvesharaya, who was awarded Bharatharatna, died in 1962.

1995 India became the Asia Cup cricket champion for the fourth time in 1995.

2005 India and the US entered into an agreement to open their own flight areas to each other's airlines.

## 15 APRIL

1469 Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born in 1469.

1976 India announces sending its envoy to Beijing for the first time in 15 years.

1980 Six non-government banks were nationalized. Earlier also some banks were nationalized in the same way.

2010 Launch of the first cryogenic rocket GSLV-D3 built in India failed.

1948 The state of Himachal Pradesh was established on this day in 1948.

1994 Acceptance of 'Get' agreement in 1994 by 109 countries including India.

2004 LTTE militant V. Muralitharan, linked to the Rajiv Gandhi assassination, was killed in 2004 in Colombo.

## 16 APRIL

1853 In India, the first train ran from Mumbai to Thane in 1853.

1919 Gandhiji declared a fast on this day in 1919 to pay tribute to those who died in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

2008 The statue of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi was unveiled in 2008 in London.

2004 India defeated Pakistan 2-1 in the series by winning the Rawalpindi Test.

## IFFLA PRESENTS 24TH EDITION OF FILMS & EVENTS

BY MABEL PAIS

The 2026 Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA) will present its 24th annual edition of film and event lineup. The festival is set to take place April 23-26, 2026. The festival film and other events will be held at Landmark Sunset Hollywood, 8000 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90046 and Harmony Gold, 7655 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90046. For more information, visit [indianfilmfestival.org](http://indianfilmfestival.org).

This year IFFLA will feature 27 films, including 7 narrative features, 2 documentary features, and 18 short films. Countries represented include India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Japan, France, the UK, Netherlands, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and the USA.

IFFLA brings to Los Angeles audiences the most innovative independent films coming out of India and the Indian diaspora, in a vibrant program comprising features and shorts, including narrative, documentary and animated works.

The film festival's highly impactful IFFLA Industry Days returns bigger and better than ever before – including panels, masterclasses, screenings, and pitch finalists, (access website for updates). This is a forum offering South Asian film and TV creatives opportunities to build meaningful connections with industry leaders and the chance to win a \$10,000 Pitch Competition Development Grant. The forum also offers IFFLA Connect, a unique program that links standout projects from South Asia and its diasporas to key industry professionals, offering support across financing, production, casting, and beyond.

### 2026 IFFLA FILM & EVENT LINEUP

#### GALA PRESENTATIONS

Opening Night  
Patriot - US Premiere  
Director: Mahesh Narayanan; India; 172m  
A top-tier researcher uncovers an illegal use of a high-level surveillance asset, triggering a national manhunt that transforms him from a patriot into a fugitive.  
Closing Night  
The Great Shamsuddin Family - North American Premiere  
Director: Anusha Rizvi; India; 97m  
A writer faces her most important deadline while her



The Great Shamsuddin Family.  
Credit: [indianfilmfestival.org](http://indianfilmfestival.org).

house erupts in family chaos, forcing her to juggle a 12-hour writing sprint with an unfolding domestic emergency.

#### ADDITIONAL NARRATIVE FEATURES

Ghost School  
Director: Seemab Gul; Pakistan/Germany/Saudi Arabia; 88m  
Lali - North American Premiere  
Director: Sarmad Sultan Khoosat; Pakistan; 116m  
City  
Director: Mahde Hasan; Bangladesh; 99m  
Shape of Momo - North American Premiere  
Director: Tribeny Rai; India; 115m  
Songs of Forgotten Trees  
Director: Anuparna Roy; India; 77m

#### DOCUMENTARY FEATURES

Breaking The Code - World Premiere/Special Presentation  
Directors: Ben Rekhi, Swetlana; USA/India; 81m  
The Gas Station Attendant  
Director: Karla Murthy; United States; 83m

#### SHORT FILMS

Ali

Director: Adnan Al Rajeev; Bangladesh/Philippines; 15m

Bleat!

Director: Ananth Subramaniam; Malaysia/Philippines/France; 15m

Dekho (Look) - North American Premiere  
Director: Manjinder Virk; UK; 18m

Harvest Party At Camp Two - World Premiere  
Directors: Rajan Gill, Reaa Pur; USA; 16m

Hidden Sun - North American Premiere  
Director: Shuchi Talati; Japan; 24m

Katti

Director: Kanishka Aggarwal; USA/India; 14m

O'Sey Balamma

Director: Raman Nimmala; India; 13m

Pakka

Director: Iniyavan Elumalai; Netherlands; 18m

Peanut - World Premiere

Director: Sheila Sawhny; USA; 10m

Permanent Guest

Director: Sana Zahra Jafri; Pakistan; 14m

Plain Folks - World Premiere

Director: Fatima Liaqat; USA; 13m

Rihanna

Director: Suraj Paudel; Nepal; 17m

Room At The Farm (Khooh Waala Ghar)  
Directors: Jasmine Kaur Roy, Avinash Roy; India; 23m

Ruse

Director: Rhea Shukla; India; 9m

Skin

Director: Urvashi Pathania; USA; 12m

Sulaimani

Director: Vinnie Ann Bose; France; 20m

Sunna - North American Premiere  
Director: Radha Mehta; USA; 13m

Tenfa - World Premiere

Director: Nihaarika Negi; India; 30m

#### TICKETS

For updates and to purchase passes and tickets, visit [indianfilmfestival.org](http://indianfilmfestival.org).

Follow IFFLA on Facebook ([/indianfilmfestival](https://www.facebook.com/indianfilmfestival/)), Instagram ([@indianfilmfestival](https://www.instagram.com/indianfilmfestival)), and X (formerly Twitter) ([@ifflla](https://twitter.com/ifflla)).

## “MIRACLE.....” PLAY - A REMINDER: WHAT BRINGS US TOGETHER, DOES NOT DIVIDE US

BY MABEL PAIS

“MIRACLE ON SOUTH DIVISION STREET,” a play collaboration of The Sheen Center for Thought & Culture ([sheencenter.org](http://sheencenter.org)) and Penguin Rep Theatre ([penguinrep.org](http://penguinrep.org)), written by Tom Dudzick and directed by Joe Brancato will be performed at the Sheen Center (18 Bleecker Street, New York City), April 14-May 10, 2026. Opening performance is on Sunday, April 19, 2026 at 3:00PM.

#### STORY

Meet the Nowaks of Buffalo, NY. They're special – celebrities in their run-down neighborhood for the miracle that occurred in Grandpa's barbershop in 1942. But their faith — and whole identity — is shaken to the very core when a deathbed confession causes the family legend to unravel. Full of twists, heart and humor; this comedy is as warming as a bowl of Matzoh Ball soup and reminds us that no matter our backgrounds, we're all part of the same story.

“Just when the world needs a miracle, Penguin Rep and the Sheen Center (are) thrilled to supply one!,” shares Mr. Brancato. “Miracle On South Division Street by Tom Dudzick is a warm, life affirming family comedy that ultimately reveals a very



Miracle on South Division Street, cast (See google link below).

Credit: Dorice Arden / Penguin Rep

powerful, timely and unforgettable message.” “Tom Dudzick’s ‘Miracle on South Division Street’...is a sprightly comedy, where revelations that might remake a family’s sense of itself are each rolled out in service of laughter” - The New York Times.

#### PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

“Miracle on South Division Street” will

play the following performance schedule: Tuesday at 7pm, Wednesday at 2pm, Thursday at 7pm, Friday at 5pm, Saturday at 2pm & 7pm, and Sunday at 2pm.

#### CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

The cast of “Miracle on South Division Street” is Coryn Carson (Off B’way debut), Grace Experience (Grounded -59E59

Theaters), Liz McCartney (Funny Girl, Taboo - B’way) and Joey Pittorino (Off B’way debut). The creative team is Christian Fleming (set and costume design), Pam Kupper (lighting design), Jeff Knapp (sound design), and Dana R. Weintraub (properties). The production stage manager is April Ann Kline; the assistant stage manager is Isaac Goldman.

#### TICKETS

Tickets may be purchased online @ <https://sheencenter.app.getcuebox.com/o/MVQSLDZL/shows/14WJ8K1Y>

Tickets for the preview performances (April 14-18) are discounted. There will be a limited number of specially priced tickets for the first two preview performances – Thursday, April 14 at 7pm and Friday, April 15 at 5pm. For Groups 10+ contact Carol Ostrow Group Sales at (212) 265-8500.

Tickets may also be purchased in person at The Shiner Theatre box office 9am-5pm daily or by phone at (212) 219-3132. Further information about The Sheen Center for Thought and Culture can be found @ <https://sheencenter.org>.

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

# REELABILITIES FILM FEST EMPHASIZES TODAY'S URGENCY OF DISABILITY RIGHTS



Ali Stroker, Spotlight awardee.  
Credit : www.reelabilities.org



No One Cares About Crazy People Credit : www.reelabilities.org



Sunna, reel short. Credit : www.reelabilities.org

**BY MABEL PAIS**

The REELABILITIES FILM FESTIVAL: NEW YORK (RFFNY) returns with its 18th edition, at a moment when disability rights are under sustained political pressure globally, presenting more than 30 films that speak to the urgency of this moment while also embracing the unique power of movies to provide escape, relief, and renewal. The festival will take place April 23-30, 2026, opening at the New School on April 23 and closing on April 30 at the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan (334 Amsterdam Ave. at W. 76th St.).

The festival spans twenty venues across NY and NJ, welcoming the widest audience of any dedicated disability film event in the world with something for everyone. Every screening provides groundbreaking accessibility across audiences and types of disabilities with open captions for all films, audio description, sign language, real time captions for talkbacks and conversations, and more.

**“We program films that make the invisible visible — and in 2026, that work has never felt more necessary. Every film in this lineup insists that disabled lives are complex, normal, and worth the world’s attention.”**

— Isaac Zablocki, Co-Founder and Director, ReelAbilities Film Festival

**SPOTLIGHT AWARD**

**The 2026 REELABILITIES SPOTLIGHT AWARD to be presented to ALI STROKER**

ReelAbilities will present the 2026 Spotlight Award to Ali Stroker. A Tony Award-winner for her performance as Ado Annie in the 2019 Broadway revival of “Oklahoma!,” Stroker is a trailblazer for disabled actors, making history as the first wheelchair user to appear on Broadway in the acclaimed revival of “Spring Awakening.” She had roles on “Echoes” and “Only Murders in the Building,” with additional appearances in “Glee,” “Ozark,” “And Just Like That...,” and other major television series.

**2026 REELABILITIES FILM FESTIVAL LINEUP**

**OPENING NIGHT - RED CARPET EVENT**  
**THURSDAY, APRIL 23 — TISHMAN**  
**AUDITORIUM, THE NEW SCHOOL (63 5th Ave at**  
**14th Street)**

**LONE WOLVES - East Coast Premiere**  
**A Comedy About Autism, Fertility, and What Happens When Plans Collapse**

**Dir: Ryan Cunningham; USA; 2025**  
A sharp romantic dramedy at the epicenter of two national conversations: neurodiversity and reproductive autonomy. Fran, a pragmatic forty-something, recruits Ben — an old classmate she once skipped prom with — for a planned DIY insemination weekend. When she discovers Ben is autistic and navigating his own mental health challenges, her carefully engineered weekend goes from adventure to unknown. The film handles both subjects with specificity and dark humor, creatively avoiding stereotyped, sanitized representations that disability advocates and film critics alike increasingly criticize.

Content notes: Brief nudity, discussion of suicide.  
**NO ONE CARES ABOUT CRAZY PEOPLE**  
**Narrated by Bob Odenkirk, Score by Wilco’s Jeff Tweedy - NY Premiere**

**Dir: Gail Freedman; 2024; USA; 96m**  
The festival’s highest-profile documentary has the clearest hook for mainstream media attention. Drawing its title from a 2016 memo attributed to a Reagan-era HUD official, “No One Cares About Crazy People” builds a sustained, deeply reported indictment of the U.S. mental health system — told through families in crisis, advocates demanding reform, and the people the system has abandoned entirely. Odenkirk’s narration brings immediate name recognition; Tweedy’s score signals the cultural register. A gripping, timely film for health, politics, and culture desks alike.

Content notes: police violence, profane language,

discussion of suicide.  
**DISPOSABLE HUMANITY — Centerpiece Presentation - NY Premiere**

**Dir: Cameron S. Mitchell; 2024; USA; 95m**  
Programming this film as its Centerpiece is a deliberate, declarative act by RFFNY. Disposable Humanity investigates the Nazi Aktion T4 program — a state-sponsored campaign that killed an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 disabled people before the Holocaust’s wider machinery was in place. The film goes on to illustrate how this dark chapter of history has been systematically erased from public memory. In the current political climate, this documentary warns how by ignoring the past, we risk repeating it. For history, Holocaust education, disability rights, and news desks.

Content notes: violence, eugenics, nudity.  
**VIKTOR — A Deaf Man in a War He Cannot Hear**  
**Dir: Olivier Sarbil; 2024;**  
**Denmark/Ukraine/France/USA; Ukrainian,**  
**Russian; 89m**

Shot in Kharkiv amid the Russian invasion, Viktor follows a young Deaf man obsessed with samurai films who attempts to join the Ukrainian front line. Director Olivier Sarbil, a veteran conflict cinematographer, turns Viktor’s deafness into a formal device — silence as suspense, isolation as aesthetic. The result is one of the most inventive war documentaries of recent years, and one that reframes the Ukraine conflict through a perspective virtually absent from mainstream news coverage. Strong fit for

# WHARTON ARTS WILL HONOR GRAMMY WINNER, MULTI-FACETED ARTIST MATTHEW WHITAKER AT 2026 GALA

BY MABEL PAIS

MATTHEW WHITAKER, GRAMMY winner acclaimed jazz pianist, composer, and music advocate, will be honored with the Trailblazer Award at the upcoming "Arise to the Occasion Gala" on Friday, April 17, 2026, at the Hyatt Regency Morristown, 3 Speedwell Avenue, Morristown, New Jersey.

## EVENT DETAILS

**What:** "Arise to the Occasion:" Wharton Arts' ([whartonarts.org](http://whartonarts.org)) largest annual fundraising event supporting its four core programs serving 2,000 students; New Jersey Youth Chorus, New Jersey Youth Symphony, Paterson Music Project, and Performing Arts School

**Where:** Hyatt Regency Morristown, 3 Speedwell Avenue, Morristown, NJ 07960

**When:** Friday, April 17, 2026; Cocktail Reception at 6 pm, Dinner & Program at 7:30 pm

**Who:** 300+ guests

**HONOREE:** MATTHEW WHITAKER

Matthew Whitaker has captivated audiences worldwide with his virtuosic

keyboard and organ performances, appearing on major platforms including "Showtime at the Apollo," "The Today Show," "Ellen," and "60 Minutes." A versatile artist, he has scored the Emmy-nominated documentary "About Tomorrow," composed music for films such as "Starkeisha," and created works for the Alvin Ailey Dance Company's 2024-2025 season. Beyond his artistry, Matthew is a passionate advocate for music education and accessibility, embodying the mission of Wharton Performing Arts to make the arts accessible to every child.

A true musical trailblazer, Matthew has collaborated with renowned artists including Jon Batiste, Christian McBride, Derrick Hodge, Regina Carter, and Anderson .Paak. He has performed with symphonies worldwide, including the Aspen Chamber Symphony and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Canada, and has composed for the 82-piece Bulgarian Symphony Orchestra. His fourth album, "On Their Shoulders: An Organ Tribute" (2024), received an NAACP Image Award nomination for Outstanding Jazz Album in 2025, honoring the Hammond B-3 pioneers

who shaped his sound.

"As Wharton Arts embraces our season theme, Arise — Artistry, Representation, Inspiration, Self-Expression, and Empathy — as a call to action for our entire community of learners, I can't think of anyone who embodies these values more fully than Matthew Whitaker," said Artistic Director Helen H. Cha-Pyo.

"Matthew Whitaker's journey as an artist reminds us that talent, hard work, and passion can overcome any challenge," said Executive Director Gina Caruso. "At just 24-years-old, he has already accomplished so much — not only as a brilliant jazz musician, but as a trailblazer who opens doors for others."

The "Arise to the Occasion Gala" is a signature fundraising event for Wharton Arts, supporting programs that empower students through music and performing arts. Attendees can enjoy an elegant evening of fine dining, performances, and the opportunity to support Wharton Arts' mission.

## TICKETS

For tickets and sponsorships, visit <https://e.givesmart.com/events/KOa>.



Matthew Whitaker, honoree.

Credit: [whartonarts.org](http://whartonarts.org).

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

CONTD FROM PAGE 26

## REELABILITIES FILM FEST EMPHASIZES TODAY'S URGENCY OF DISABILITY RIGHTS

international and arts desks.

Content notes: war, violence.

**ESPINA — Closing Night Film**

**Dir:** Daniel Poler; 2024; Panama; Spanish; 90m

The festival closes with a Panamanian road trip unlike anything else in the lineup. Venezuelan expatriate Jonathan, facing spinal surgery, recruits two unlikely companions — a between-gigs actor and a jaded playboy — to finance the journey through public donations. He finds himself plunged into Panama's wild side before going under the knife. Inspired by the director's own experiences, Espina is irreverent, high-energy, and genuinely funny: Latin American cinema that treats disability neither as tragedy nor as inspiration, but as the backdrop for a stranger's wager with fate. A strong angle for Latin American arts, travel, and indie film coverage.

Content notes: medical discussions, nudity.

## FULL FEATURE FILM LINEUP

**96 Lbs. of Dynamite (NY Premiere)** — Chad McDaniel, a witty pool player born with brittle bone disease, refuses low expectations on his way from rural Mississippi to high-stakes amateur tournaments.

**Concerto for Other Hands (NY Premiere)** — A father composes a piano concerto specifically for his son with Miller syndrome, turning music into a shared language of adaptation and trust.

**Dream Touch Believe (NY Premiere)** — Indigenous sculptor Michael Naranjo — blinded and losing a hand in Vietnam — rebuilds his creative life through adaptive technique and refusal to quit.

**Heavy Healing (NY Premiere)** — Metal, hardcore punk, and underground hip-hop as mental health lifelines: community care inside the loud music scenes that mainstream culture wrote off as aggressive.

**Horsegirls** — Autistic 22-year-old Margarita finds

confidence, autonomy, and community through the unlikely world of competitive hobby horse dancing.

**My Everything (U.S. Premiere)** — Mona has arranged her entire existence around her adult son Joël, who has an intellectual disability. When his partner becomes pregnant, the film asks what devotion, control, and letting go actually mean.

**My Brain:** After the Rupture (North American Premiere) — After a catastrophic brain hemorrhage, broadcaster and musician Clemency Burton-Hill fights to reclaim her voice, her music, and her life.

**We Might Regret This (U.S. Premiere. BBC2 Series (3 x 30 min))** — Wheelchair user Freya hires her impulsive best friend to be her personal assistant after moving to London for love — exploring what happens when caregiving, friendship, and romance combust into hilarious chaos.

**Westhampton** — A filmmaker returns home a decade after causing a fatal accident, confronting the revised version of events he adopted to survive. Co-starring Breaking Bad's RJ Mitte, who has cerebral palsy.

## SHORT FILM PROGRAMS

**Close & Personal** (Stories forging personal paths with honesty and humor) — Bad Survivor; Don't Take This the Wrong Way; Misfit; Rearranged (World Premiere); Talk (NY Premiere); Them That's Not

**Expressions** (Artists redefining identity on their own terms) — Beyond Each Frame (U.S. Premiere); The Blind Reggaetone; Once More, Like Rain Man; The How We Look Project (World Premiere)

**Growing Pains** (Youth navigating identity and talent in unexpected ways) — Boys (International Premiere); Gum; Key of Genius (NY Premiere); Late-Diagnosed; Little Monsters; Sunna (North American Premiere)

**Against the Current** (Lives shaped by adversity and circumstance) — Circle Hook (International

Premiere); Rag Dolls (East Coast Premiere); White Nine (East Coast Premiere); Creating The Space To Succeed (World Premiere)

## FILMMAKER Q&AS & COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Every screening is followed by an extended conversation with filmmakers, cast and/or crew, and disability community members. All Q&As are ASL-interpreted and live-captioned.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Every RFFNY event — every screening, panel, and industry session — includes:

- Open captions on all films
- Audio description on all films
- ASL interpretation and CART (real-time captioning) at all Q&As and panels
- Braille and large-print materials
- Sensory-friendly spaces and designated quiet rooms
- Wheelchair-accessible venues and service animal accommodations

Select titles available for home streaming, April 23-May 3: [reelabilities.org/stream](http://reelabilities.org/stream)

## TICKETS

For tickets to the festival, visit [reelabilities.org/newyork](http://reelabilities.org/newyork)

Learn more about the Reelabilities Film Festival @ [reelabilities.org/newyork](http://reelabilities.org/newyork)

Social media: @ReelAbilities for Facebook and twitter, @ReelAbilitiesny for Instagram and TikTok. Festival hashtag: #RFFNY2026

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



## Salman Khan's new look sends fans to 90s Bollywood

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan turned heads at the airport as he stepped out in a striking new look that instantly transported fans back to the 90s. The actor, currently busy shooting for his upcoming film *Maatrubhumi*, was spotted flying to Jamnagar to attend Anant Ambani's birthday celebrations.

Dressed in a simple yet stylish black shirt and jeans, Salman kept it effortlessly suave. However, it was his choice of glasses that became the highlight of his appearance. The subtle change sparked a wave of nostalgia online, with fans drawing comparisons to his iconic romantic roles from the late 90s.

Social media was quick to react as clips of the actor went viral. Admirers flooded comment sections with excitement, with many pointing out how the look echoed his beloved "Prem" era. One fan exclaimed that it felt like "Prem is back," while another noted how the superstar seemed to have turned back the clock by decades.

Among the many reactions, one comment stood out and quickly gained traction: "Hand him a pen & paper, and that's Sameer from *Jhoka Hawa Ka Aaj Bhi...*", a clear nod to his unforgettable character in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*, also starring Aishwarya Rai and Ajay Devgn. The remark perfectly captured the collective sentiment, as fans celebrated what they called a nostalgic comeback vibe.

Joining the star-studded celebrations in Jamnagar were several prominent names from the industry, including Shah Rukh Khan, Ranveer Singh, Ananya Panday, Ram Charan, and Gauri Khan, among others. Salman's sister, Arpita Khan Sharma, was also seen arriving with her husband, actor Aayush Sharma.

On the work front, Salman is gearing up for *Maatrubhumi*, directed by Apoorva Lakhia. The film, previously titled *Battle of Galwan*, is awaiting a new release date after being postponed from its earlier April schedule. The actor has also announced another major project with producer Dil Raju, to be directed by Vamshi Paidipally, where he will star alongside Nayanthara.

# Cocktail 2 gets messy: Bipasha Basu's repost fuels Shahid Kapoor drama

Hold your tea cups tight because the latest buzz from Bollywood's cocktail party is stirring up some spicy drama! Actors Shahid Kapoor, Rashmika Mandanna, and Kriti Sanon are all set to sizzle together in the eagerly awaited *Cocktail 2*. But wait, the real masala is not just on screen, it's off-screen too, thanks to a recent social media stir that has everyone talking.

So here's the scoop: Actor Bipasha Basu, the ever-watchful Raaz queen, reposted a spicy Reddit-based news post claiming that our Shahid is reportedly "upset" about his screen time in *Cocktail 2*. Apparently, Kriti and Rashmika are hogging the limelight more than expected, and this little Insta repost has sent the internet into a frenzy. Oh, the drama!

Now, the original post, which Bipasha shared on her Instagram, quoted a Reddit discussion suggesting Shahid Kapoor might be feeling a tad insecure about the prominence of his co-stars in the sequel. The whispers say Kriti Sanon and Rashmika Mandanna have bigger roles, sparking chatter about Shahid's reaction. The screenshots of Bipasha's repost quickly went viral, lighting up Reddit threads and social media feeds alike.

Of course, the internet had a field day with this. One cheeky user guessed, "I think she was going to the comment section, but Insta page being weird af, had her reposting it." Another one wrote, "Lol Galti se ho gaya (it must be a mistake). But Shahid being insecure of his costars is constant Pehle sirf heroes se hota tha ab heroines se bhi hone lag gaye (Earlier it used to only be with heros and now it's with heroines too)." The internet never disappoints with its sass!

As for the film itself, *Cocktail 2* has already raised the bar with its first look, promising fresh chemistry and a twisty narrative. Shahid's pairing with Rashmika has fans waiting eagerly, while Kriti's role is reportedly substantial. The trio's on-screen dynamics are expected to be the highlight, but off-screen stories are proving equally captivating.



Meanwhile, Bipasha Basu's involvement in this social media swirl, even if accidental, has added an intriguing layer to the unfolding narrative. Her repost has become a talking point, reminding us how one click can send ripples through the Bollywood grapevine. In this digital age, even a slip-up makes headlines!

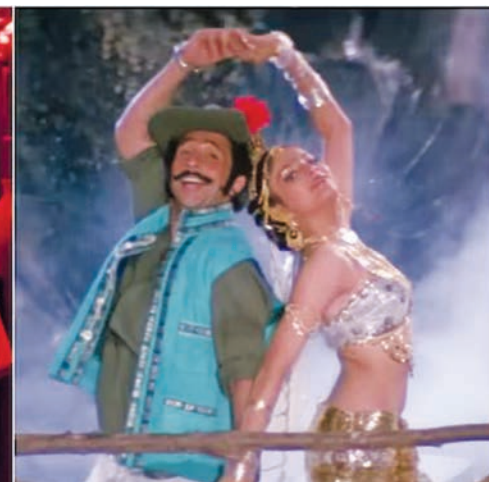
## Dhurandhar 2 in legal trouble as Trimurti Films sues B62 Studios over Oye Oye song

Trimurti Films has filed a lawsuit against Aditya Dhar's production house B62 Studios over the alleged unauthorised use of the song *Oye Oye* in one of its films. The song recently featured in Dhar's latest blockbuster, *Dhurandhar: The Revenge*.

The dispute concerns the rights to the song, which was co-composed by Kalyanji-Anandji and Viju Shah with lyrics by Anand Bakshi. The track originally belongs to Rajiv Rai's 1989 film *Tridev* and features vocals by Amit Kumar and Saapna Mukherjee.

In its plea, Trimurti Films has claimed that the song, or a version substantially similar to it, has been used in the defendant's film without obtaining the necessary licences or permissions, according to a report by Bar and Bench.

According to sources familiar with the matter who spoke to the legal news site, Trimurti Films has asserted ownership and control over the rights to the musical work and sound recording. It has alleged that the usage constitutes copyright infringement, including unauthorised reproduction and communication of the work to the



public. It has also raised concerns about the song's potential commercial exploitation across theatrical releases, streaming platforms and promotional content.

The lawsuit seeks an injunction to prevent further use of the song, along with claims for damages and other related relief.

*Dhurandhar: The Revenge*, or *Dhurandhar 2*, is a 2026 spy action thriller directed by Aditya Dhar and produced by Jio Studios and B62 Studios. The film is a sequel to

*Dhurandhar*, released in 2025. Headlined by Ranveer Singh, the cast includes Sanjay Dutt, R Madhavan, Arjun Rampal, Rakesh Bedi and Sara Arjun.

The 1989 film *Tridev* was produced by Gulshan Rai under the banner of Trimurti Films Pvt Ltd. Directed and written by his son Rajiv Rai, the action-thriller was a major commercial success and featured a multi-starrer cast, including Sunny Deol, Jackie Shroff, Naseeruddin Shah, Madhuri Dixit, Sangeeta Bijlani and Sonam among others.



## Blake Lively's sexual harassment claims against Justin Baldoni get dismissed

Actor Blake Lively's legal battle against her *It Ends With Us* co-star and director Justin Baldoni has hit a crucial setback. A judge has dismissed the bulk of her claims, including allegations of sexual harassment and defamation, marking a significant development in the ongoing dispute.

In a ruling issued Thursday, Judge Lewis Liman threw out 10 of the 13 claims in Blake Lively's lawsuit, including claims of harassment, defamation, and conspiracy.

However, he allowed three claims to proceed to a trial, including claims of breach of contract, retaliation, and aiding and abetting in retaliation. They will now go to a civil trial in New York on May 18.

The legal battle began in 2024 when Blake sued Justin, accusing him of harassment and a smear campaign on the set of their hit movie. He denied it and counter-sued. Blake accused Justin, the director and co-star, of sexually harassing her on the set of the film by making comments about her appearance and weight.

Liman ruled that Blake could not bring a sexual harassment claim under federal law because she was an independent contractor. He also ruled that she could not file a harassment claim under California law because the filming took place in New Jersey. She also alleged that Justin hired an army of publicists to retaliate against her by seeding and amplifying negative stories online. The judge ruled that two retaliation claims deserved to go to a jury.

"We're very pleased the Court dismissed all sexual harassment claims and every claim brought against the individual defendants," said attorneys Alexandria Shapiro and Jonathan Bach, who represent Justin, Wayfarer Studios, and their publicists.

"These were very serious allegations, and we are grateful to the court for its careful review of the facts, law, and voluminous evidence that was provided. What's left is a significantly narrowed case, and we look forward to presenting our defense to the remaining claims in court."

# The Devil Wears Prada 2 final trailer: Anne Hathaway, Meryl Streep in new crisis

The new trailer for *The Devil Wears Prada 2* features the original song, *Runway*, performed by Lady Gaga and Doechii. The upcoming film shows Meryl Streep's Miranda and Anne Hathaway's Andy joining forces against a "new-age crisis."

Two decades after their unforgettable roles as Miranda, Andy, Emily, and Nigel, the original quartet — Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt, and Stanley Tucci — reunite amidst New York's high-fashion backdrop for a follow-up to the 2006 comedy-drama.

*The Devil Wears Prada 2* reunites the original main cast with director David Frankel and writer Aline Brosh McKenna. Along with the returning stars, a fresh group of actors joins the cast, including Kenneth Branagh, Simone Ashley, Justin Theroux, and Lucy Liu. Fans will also see some other familiar faces from the first film, as Tracie Thoms and Tibor Feldman return to play Lily and Irv. Other new additions to the story include Patrick Brammall, Caleb Hearon, Helen J Shen, and BJ Novak.

The new trailer, released by 20th Century Fox, shows Miranda facing a major professional turning point, forcing her to turn to Andy to navigate a new-age crisis. While Andy seems happy to reconnect, Emily is visibly stunned by the unexpected reunion between the former colleagues.

Hathaway, while speaking about reprising her role in *The Devil Wears Prada 2*, at a promotional event in Tokyo said that she was curious about Streep's opinion. The actor later learnt that Streep had already read the script and "loved it", which heightened her own expectations. *The Devil Wears Prada 2* is produced by Wendy Finerman and executive produced by Michael Bederman, Karen Rosenfelt and Aline Brosh McKenna. The film is set for a theatrical release on May 1, 2026.



## Jenna Ortega almost quit acting before landing *You*: Didn't know my future



Actor Jenna Ortega recently revealed that she almost quit acting before landing the role of Ellie Alves in Netflix's popular series, *You*. During an appearance on Kid Cudi's *Big Bro* podcast, Ortega shared how uncertain she felt about her career at that time.

She explained that after finishing a children's show, she was unsure about her future in acting. Ortega said she had to prove herself to new casting directors who were unfamiliar with her work. She considered stepping away from acting, thinking it might be time to move on as she was starting high school.

Ortega discussed the decision with her team for several months and was ready to stop. However, everything changed when she booked the role on *You*. She enjoyed working on the set so much that she decided not to give up on acting.

Jenna Ortega began her career with roles in children's shows such as Netflix's *Richie Rich* and Disney's *Stuck in the Middle*. Her role as Ellie Alves in the second season of *You* marked a significant step in her career, playing the downstairs neighbour of Joe Goldberg, played by Penn Badgley. Since then, Ortega has taken on leading roles in a variety of films, including *X*, *Scream VI*, *Beetlejuice*, *Beetlejuice*, and *Death of a Unicorn*. She has also gained widespread recognition as the lead in Netflix's Emmy-winning adaptation of *The Addams Family*, titled *Wednesday*.

# Iran says talks marked by 'mistrust, suspicion'; breakthrough wasn't expected

APRIL 12, 2026

**TEHRAN (TIP):** Acknowledging the absence of a breakthrough in the latest round of negotiations with the United States, Iran on Sunday, April 12, said the talks were held in an atmosphere of "mistrust and suspicion," with no realistic expectation of reaching a comprehensive agreement in a single session.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said the two sides were able to arrive at an understanding on several issues, but critical differences persisted.

"We reached understanding on a number of points, but key disagreements remained on two to three major issues, and ultimately the talks did not lead to an agreement," he said.

Baghaei described the negotiations as the longest in the past year, stretching over 24 to 25 hours of continuous engagement—an indication of both the complexity of the issues and the intensity of the discussions.

He stressed that the context of the talks made a swift resolution unlikely. "These discussions took place after 40 days of imposed war, in an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion," he said, adding that under such conditions, "no one expected an agreement to be reached in a single session—and no one did."

The remarks underscore Tehran's attempt to frame the outcome not as a failure, but as part of a broader, incremental process shaped by deep-seated distrust and recent conflict.

While no deal emerged, the acknowledgement of limited convergence on certain issues suggests that negotiations may continue, even as fundamental differences remain unresolved.

**Vance spoke to Trump 'dozen times' during high-stakes US-Iran talks**



US Vice-President JD Vance on Sunday, April 12, said he remained in constant touch with President Donald Trump throughout the high-stakes negotiations with Iran, revealing the intensity and real-time coordination behind Washington's diplomatic push.

Responding to a question on the frequency of his communication with Trump, Vance said the engagement was continuous during the nearly day-long talks. "We were talking to the President consistently. I don't know the exact number—perhaps half a dozen times, maybe a dozen over the past 21 hours," he said.

The Vice-President underscored that the negotiations were closely guided by the broader US national security establishment, with multiple senior officials looped in at every stage.

He confirmed consultations with key figures, including Admiral Cooper, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent.

"We were constantly in communication with the entire national security team because we were negotiating in good faith," Vance said, signalling a coordinated and unified US approach during the talks. Despite the intense back-and-forth, the negotiations ended without a final agreement. Vance reiterated that Washington had placed a clear proposal on the table before departing.

"We leave here with a very simple proposal—a method of understanding that is our final and best offer," he said. "We'll see if the Iranians accept it."

The remarks offer a glimpse into the high-level decision-making that shaped the negotiations, even as uncertainty looms over whether Tehran will respond to what Washington has described as its final terms.

**Pakistan urges US, Iran to uphold ceasefire after talks end without breakthrough**

As high-stakes negotiations between

the United States and Iran concluded in Islamabad without a breakthrough, Pakistan on April 12 called on both sides to continue to honour their ceasefire commitments and sustain diplomatic engagement.

In a statement at the close of the talks, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said Islamabad remained hopeful that the negotiations, despite failing to yield an agreement, had created momentum for continued dialogue.

Dar expressed gratitude to both Washington and Tehran for responding to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's call for an immediate ceasefire and for accepting Pakistan's invitation to hold peace talks in the capital.

The delegations—led by US Vice President JD Vance and Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf—arrived in Islamabad a day earlier and engaged in what Dar described as "intense and constructive" negotiations lasting over 24 hours.

Dar said the talks were facilitated by Pakistan's top military leadership, including Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir, underscoring the country's active mediatory role in easing tensions between the two adversaries.

While acknowledging the absence of a formal agreement, the foreign minister stressed the importance of preserving the ceasefire. "It is imperative that the parties continue to uphold their commitment," he said, warning that sustained restraint was critical for regional stability.

He added that Pakistan would continue to engage both sides in pursuit of a durable peace. "We hope the two sides carry forward this positive spirit to achieve peace and prosperity for the entire region and beyond," Dar said.

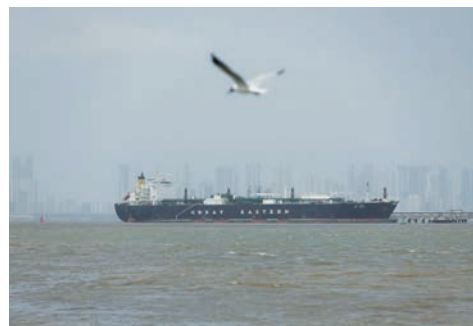
The fragile ceasefire now hinges on continued restraint by Washington and Tehran.

APRIL 12, 2026

**SINGAPORE/KUALA LUMPUR (TIP):** Three supertankers fully laden with oil passed through the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday, April 11, shipping data showed, in what appeared to be the first vessels to exit the Gulf since the US-Iran ceasefire deal.

Tehran's blockade of the strait, a chokepoint for about 20 per cent of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments, has disrupted global energy supplies and sent oil prices soaring since the start of the Iran war at the end of February.

The Liberia-flagged Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) Serifos and China-flagged VLCCs Cosppearl Lake and He Rong Hai, entered and exited the "Hormuz Passage trial anchorage" that bypasses Iran's Larak Island on Saturday, LSEG data showed. Each vessel is capable of carrying 2 million barrels of oil.



Serifos, which LSEG and Kpler data showed is chartered by Thai state-owned energy firm PTT, is among seven vessels that Malaysia sought clearance from Iran to transit the strait, two people familiar with the matter told Reuters.

The tanker, carrying crude loaded from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab

## Tankers exit Gulf via Strait of Hormuz

Emirates in early March, is expected to arrive at Malaysia's Malacca port on April 21, data from LSEG and analytics firm Kpler showed.

Malaysia's foreign ministry, Petronas and PTT did not respond to requests for comment on Sunday outside office hours.

Another tanker Ocean Thunder, loaded with Iraqi crude and chartered by a unit of Malaysian state energy firm Petronas, transited the waterway last week.

Cosppearl Lake, laden with Iraqi oil, is expected to arrive at eastern China's Zhoushan port on May 1, LSEG data showed. It was not clear where He Rong Hai will discharge the Saudi crude on board. Both VLCCs are chartered by Unipac, the trading arm of Chinese energy giant Sinopec, the data showed.

Sinopec did not respond to a request for comment outside office hours.

Hundreds of tankers are still stuck in the Gulf, waiting to exit during the two-week ceasefire period. Three other empty tankers - Mombasa B, Agios Fanourios I and Shalamar - were sailing in the Strait of Hormuz on Sunday to enter the Gulf and load oil, LSEG data showed.

Malta-flagged VLCC Agios Fanourios I signalled that it is heading to Iraq to load Basrah crude for Vietnam, the data showed. Eastern Mediterranean Maritime, which manages Agios Fanourios I and CMB.TECH NV, the manager for Liberia-flagged VLCC Mombasa B, did not immediately respond to requests for comment outside office hours.

## Mob attacks several Hindu households, businesses in Bangladesh

APRIL 12, 2026

**DHAKA (TIP):** A Muslim spiritual leader was hacked to death for allegedly insulting Islam while shops and households owned by Hindus were vandalised in two separate mob attacks in western Kushtia and northwestern Rangpur in Bangladesh on Saturday, April 11.

An irate mob attacked several Hindu households and businesses in pre-dawn hours over the death of a Muslim youth in their neighbourhood in Rangpur, about 300-odd km northwest of Dhaka.

A "third party" carried out the vandalism to divert the case and police's attention from the overnight murder of a person named Rakib Hassan, police claimed. Prothom Alo newspaper said more than a hundred members of the Hindu community live in the Daspara market area where Hassan was murdered allegedly by drug peddler Mohammad Momin over a previous dispute. Reporters found Momin's house vacant as he went into hiding while his family members feared retaliatory attacks, the newspaper said.

## UK puts Chagos Islands handover deal on hold after Trump withdraws support

APRIL 12, 2026

**LONDON (TIP):** Britain's agreement to hand Mauritius the Chagos Islands that are home to a strategic UK-American military base is on indefinite hold because US President Donald Trump's administration has withdrawn its support for the deal.

The British government acknowledged Saturday that legislation to ratify the agreement for the islands in the Indian Ocean has run out of time in Parliament.

It's the latest fallout from souring relations between Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government and the Trump administration.

Trump initially backed the deal, but changed his mind in January, calling a deal to transfer sovereignty of the islands, home to the joint military base on Diego Garcia, "an act of GREAT STUPIDITY" in a social media post.

The UK put the bill's progress on hold, and the government now concedes it will run out of time to become law before the current session of Parliament ends in the next few weeks. It is not expected to be included in the list of bills announced by King Charles III for the next session of Parliament, which begins May 13.

Despite British frustration with the US change of stance, officials still hope the deal can be revived.

# Israel seeks 'a real peace agreement that will last for generations' with Lebanon: Netanyahu

APRIL 12, 2026

**TEL AVIV (TIP):** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that Israel is open to entering into a "real" and enduring peace agreement with Lebanon, even as he intensified his criticism of Iran and its regional proxies, asserting that his government will continue military operations against what he termed a "terrorist regime".

In a post on X, Netanyahu wrote, "Under my leadership, Israel will continue to fight against Iran's terrorist regime and its proxies, in contrast to Erdogan who aids them and even slaughters his Kurdish citizens."

According to reports by Al Jazeera, Israel has agreed to begin formal negotiations with Lebanon next week following weeks of intense cross-border hostilities and a ground incursion into parts of Lebanese territory.

Netanyahu reiterated that Israel seeks an enduring peace arrangement with Lebanon, while maintaining that such an agreement must ensure long-term security guarantees.

In a video address, Netanyahu said Israel is open to a peace deal with Lebanon, but only if it is long-lasting and conditional upon the "dismantling" of



Hezbollah's military capabilities.

"Lebanon has approached us. In the past month, it has reached out several times to begin direct peace talks," said Netanyahu.

"I have given my approval, but on two conditions: We want the dismantling of Hezbollah's weapons, and we want a real peace agreement that will last for generations," he added.

Netanyahu's comments came as the first phase of in-person talks between the United States and Iran concluded in Islamabad late on Saturday night after several hours of negotiations involving multiple stakeholders, marking a significant development in ongoing diplomatic discussions aimed at de-escalating tensions in West Asia.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military claimed that its forces targeted more than "200 Hezbollah sites" across Lebanon over the past 24 hours.

Sharing the update in a post on X, the Israeli military further stated that its air force would continue to strike "Hezbollah infrastructure" located in southern Lebanon as part of its ongoing military campaign.

Amidst this continued kinetic activity, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei on Saturday claimed that the ceasefire in Lebanon was part of an agreement in talks with the US, according to the Iranian state media, Press TV.

Press TV also stated that the spokesperson's remarks were confirmed by the Pakistani side. Furthermore, the Iranian delegation is reportedly in touch with Hezbollah to make necessary decisions regarding the situation.

These developments coincide with the commencement of trilateral ceasefire talks between the United States, Iran, and Pakistan in Islamabad. Al Jazeera reported that these represent the highest-level discussions between Washington and Tehran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

## China offers incentives to Taiwan following opposition leader's visit

APRIL 12, 2026

**BEIJING (TIP):** China on Sunday, April 12, unveiled 10 new incentive measures for Taiwan, including easing tourist curbs, allowing in "healthy" television dramas and facilitating food sales, following a visit by the island's opposition leader.

The move comes at the end of a trip to China by Cheng Li-wun, chairwoman of the Kuomintang (KMT), Taiwan's largest opposition party. She met Chinese President Xi Jinping and talked about the need for peace and reconciliation.

The 10 measures, unveiled by the official Xinhua news agency, "explore" the establishment of a regular communication mechanism between the KMT and China's Communist Party, the full resumption of flights between the two sides and permission for individuals from Shanghai and Fujian province to visit Taiwan.

A mechanism will be established to ease inspection standards for food and fishery products, but that has to be on the political foundation of "opposing Taiwan independence", Xinhua said.

Taiwanese TV dramas, documentaries and animation will be allowed to be shown as long as they have "correct orientation, healthy content, and high production quality", it added.

There was no immediate reaction from Taiwan's government.

China refuses to talk to Taiwan President Lai Ching-te, saying he is a "separatist". He rejects Beijing's sovereignty claims over the democratically governed island.

China and Taiwan have blamed each other for the lack of a



Cheng Li-wun, chairperson of the Kuomintang (KMT), Taiwan's largest opposition party, shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China April 10, 2026, in this screengrab from a video provided by CTI. Image credit/ CTI via Reuters

resumption of large-scale Chinese tourism to the island since the end of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Taiwan has also previously complained about Chinese restrictions on imports of certain agricultural and aquatic products, saying China has in some cases used unjustified excuses to stop the spread of pests and diseases.

## India-Bangladesh ties consequential, says Foreign Minister Dr Rahman

APRIL 11, 2026

**DHAKA (TIP):** Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman has described his recent meetings in India as "very productive", signalling a renewed push to strengthen bilateral ties between Dhaka and New Delhi. Dr Rahman, who visited India from April 7 to 9, 2026, held discussions with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and other senior officials on key issues including trade, connectivity, water-sharing, visa services and energy cooperation. The visit comes months after BNP leader Tarique Rahman assumed office as Prime Minister in February 2026 following his party's landslide election victory.

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# Pakistan defence minister aces global outrage, condemnation over Israel remarks

APRIL 10, 2026

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** A fresh diplomatic row erupted after Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif posted sharply critical remarks about Israel, drawing swift condemnation from Israeli authorities, US lawmakers and experts at a sensitive moment in ongoing ceasefire efforts.

Asif wrote on X that "Israel is evil and a curse for humanity," alleging that "genocide is being committed in Lebanon" and that "innocent citizens are being killed by Israel, first Gaza, then Iran and now Lebanon." He added: "I hope and pray people who created this cancerous state on Palestinian land to get rid of European jews burn in hell."

The comments came less than 50 hours before high-stakes diplomatic talks in Islamabad, where Pakistan is hosting discussions between US and Iran linked to broader regional tensions.

Reacting sharply, Israel's Prime Minister's Office said: "Pakistan Defence Minister's call for Israel's annihilation is outrageous. This is not a statement that can be tolerated from any government, especially not from one that claims to be a neutral arbiter for peace."

US Congressman Josh Gottheimer also criticised the remarks, calling them "vile rhetoric targeting Jews and Israel." He said: "Hateful rhetoric like this is beyond unacceptable and unproductive at this fragile moment. This is not diplomacy and must be condemned."

The controversy has cast a shadow over Pakistan's role as a mediator.



Khawaja Muhammad Asif

Islamabad has been positioning itself as a venue for talks involving the United States and Iran, amid escalating tensions in the Middle East.

Criticism also emerged from other commentators. Emily Schrader described the remarks as a "Jew hating diatribe," quoting Asif's statement that "Israel is evil and curse for humanity....I hope and pray people who created this cancerous state on Palestinian land to get rid of European jews burn in hell." She added: "Pakistan is not an impartial actor and they should not be permitted to mediate anything."

Former US official Ellie Cohanim also questioned Islamabad's role, saying: "Many of us were concerned by the idea of the country which harbored & sheltered 9/11 mastermind Osama Bin Laden to serve as any kind of 'mediator' role." She added that "with this statement Pakistan managed to blow any notion of objectivity or distance from the

radical Islamist agenda."

Observers noted that the timing of the post — as delegations were arriving and security arrangements were being finalised — raised questions about the host country's perceived neutrality.

The remarks also follow earlier confusion over a ceasefire announcement attributed to Pakistan's leadership. That announcement had suggested the ceasefire applied "everywhere including Lebanon," a position later contradicted by Israel, which clarified that Lebanon was not included.

The Israeli position, as reiterated by its leadership, is that operations in Lebanon are separate from the broader ceasefire framework. The Israeli military has continued operations against Hezbollah, including what was described as a major bombardment on April 8.

The sequence of events — first the ceasefire scope ambiguity and now the defence minister's comments — has led to criticism that Pakistan's role as mediator is being undermined at a critical juncture.

Despite the controversy, preparations for the talks in Islamabad have continued, with extensive security measures in place and international delegations already on the ground.

The diplomatic stakes are high. The talks are being described as one of the most significant US-Iran engagements in decades, with regional stability hanging in the balance.

## Storms, floods kill more than 220 in Afghanistan and Pakistan in three weeks

APRIL 10, 2026

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** Heavy rain, storms and floods have battered Asian neighbours Afghanistan and Pakistan in the last three weeks, killing at least 222 people, disaster officials in both countries have said.

In Afghanistan, which already faces a severe humanitarian crisis, rain, floods, landslides and lightning strikes killed 148 people since March 26, the spokesman of the National Disaster Management Authority, Mohammad Yousuf Hammad, told AFP.

In Dewalak village of Jaghato district in Wardak province, one child was killed due to the collapse of a wall, according to the provincial Department of Information and Culture.

In the central province of Parwan, six people also died on Wednesday due to roof collapses, Mawlawi Abdul Aleem Afzali, chief

of the provincial disaster management agency, said.

In northern Pakistan, the death toll has risen in recent days, reaching 51 people since March 25, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial disaster management agency told AFP.

Five people also died in Pakistan-administered Kashmir since March 25, local disaster authorities said.

And in southwestern Balochistan, at least 18 people have died since March 20, according to the latest figures from local authorities.

The severe weather has also caused widespread damage, with over 370 kilometres (230 miles) of roads destroyed in Afghanistan as well as nearly 1,230 houses.

Afghanistan frequently experiences deadly floods, landslides and storms, particularly in remote areas with fragile infrastructure.



# Happy Khalsa Sajna Divas and a Happy Vaisakhi



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# Creation of the Khalsa: The defining moment of Vaisakhi and the Vision of Guru Gobind Singh

The sacred festival of Vaisakhi stands as one of the most transformative milestones in Sikh history. While it marks the harvest season in Punjab, for Sikhs it commemorates the historic moment in 1699 when Guru Gobind Singh founded the Khalsa—a disciplined, spiritual, and fearless brotherhood committed to justice, equality, and devotion to the Divine.

At the heart of this story lies a dramatic, deeply symbolic event that forever redefined Sikh identity.

## The Historical Backdrop: A Community Under Trial

The creation of the Khalsa cannot be understood without recognizing the turbulent times in which it emerged. Under the rule of Aurangzeb, religious intolerance had intensified, and forced conversions and persecution had become widespread.

The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1675—who gave his life defending the religious freedom of Kashmiri Pandits—left an indelible mark on the Sikh psyche. His sacrifice called for a transformation of the Sikh community into one that could defend righteousness not only through prayer but also through Shakti (strength).

His son, Guru Gobind Singh, rose to this challenge with extraordinary vision.

## Vaisakhi 1699: The Moment of Revelation at Anandpur Sahib

On the day of Vaisakhi in 1699, at Anandpur Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh summoned thousands of Sikhs from across the land. The atmosphere was charged with devotion and anticipation.

Then, in a moment that would echo through history, the Guru addressed the congregation and made a startling demand:

"I need a head."

The crowd fell silent. The call was not metaphorical—it was a test of ultimate faith and surrender.

After a tense pause, one man stepped forward—Bhai Daya Singh. He offered his head to the Guru. Guru Gobind Singh took him inside a tent. Moments later, the Guru emerged alone, his sword stained with what appeared to be blood, and repeated his call.

Four more men came forward, one by one:

- Bhai Dharam Singh
- Bhai Himmat Singh
- Bhai Mohkam Singh
- Bhai Sahib Singh

Each represented a different caste and region of India—symbolizing the complete rejection of social divisions.

Finally, the Guru reappeared with all five men alive, dressed in saffron and radiant with spiritual energy. They were declared the Panj Pyare—the Five Beloved Ones.

This powerful act demonstrated that true sacrifice was not about death, but



about absolute devotion and courage.

## The Creation of the Khalsa: The Amrit Ceremony

Following this dramatic test, Guru Gobind Singh initiated the Panj Pyare into a new spiritual order—the Khalsa, meaning "the pure".

The Sacred Preparation of Amrit  
Guru Gobind Singh prepared Amrit (holy nectar) in an iron bowl:

- Water was poured into the bowl
- Sugar crystals (patashas) were added by Mata Sahib Kaur, symbolizing compassion
- The mixture was stirred with a double-edged sword (Khanda)

As he prepared the Amrit, the Guru recited sacred verses from the Guru Granth Sahib, infusing the nectar with divine Shakti (power).

## The First Initiation

The Panj Pyare were baptized by drinking the Amrit and having it sprinkled on their hair and eyes. They were instructed to live by the highest spiritual and moral discipline.

In a revolutionary act of humility and equality, Guru Gobind Singh then knelt before the Panj Pyare and asked them to initiate him in the same way. This established a timeless principle:

In the Khalsa, all are equal—Guru and disciple alike.

## The Khalsa Identity: A New Way of Life

Guru Gobind Singh gave the Khalsa a distinct identity and code:

- The Five Ks
- Kesh (uncut hair) - acceptance of divine will
  - Kangha (comb) - cleanliness and discipline
  - Kara (steel bracelet) - eternal bond



- with God
- Kirpan (sword) - duty to protect justice
- Kachera (garment) - moral restraint

## New Names, New Identity

- Men were given the name Singh (lion)
- Women were given the name Kaur (princess)

This abolished caste distinctions and created a unified spiritual identity.

## The Khalsa Ethos: Sant-Sipahi (Saint-Soldier)

The Khalsa was envisioned as a community of Saint-Soldiers—individuals who balance meditation with action.

- A Khalsa Sikh is expected to:
- Live in constant remembrance of God
  - Serve humanity selflessly (Seva)
  - Stand fearlessly against injustice

- Protect the weak and uphold righteousness

This ideal transformed the Sikhs into a force that could resist oppression while remaining spiritually grounded.

## Vaisakhi Celebrations: Commemorating the Khalsa Spirit

Today, Vaisakhi is celebrated with deep devotion at sacred sites like the Golden Temple.

### Key Observances

- Amrit Sanchar ceremonies for new initiates
- Nagar Kirtans led by the Panj Pyare
- Gatka performances showcasing martial heritage
- Langar serving free meals to all
- Devotional singing and recitation of Gurbani

The festival blends spirituality with cultural joy—featuring dances like Bhangra and community fairs.

# Guru Gobind Singh: The saint-soldier, visionary, and eternal architect of the Khalsa

In the spiritual and historical consciousness of India, few personalities command as much reverence and awe as Guru Gobind Singh. Born Gobind Rai on December 22, 1666, and departing from the mortal world on October 7, 1708, he was the tenth and last human Guru of Sikhism—a towering figure who seamlessly united the roles of a spiritual master, warrior, poet, philosopher, and nation-builder.

His life was not simply an era in Sikh history; it was a revolution—one that transformed a persecuted community into a fearless, disciplined, and spiritually awakened order known as the Khalsa.

## Birth and Early Formation: The Making of a Saint-Soldier

Guru Gobind Singh was born in Patna, at the sacred shrine of Takht Sri Patna Sahib, to Guru Tegh Bahadur and Mata Gujri. His early years were marked by both spiritual nurturing and exposure to the harsh realities of the time.

Even as a child, Gobind Rai displayed extraordinary brilliance. He mastered multiple languages—Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Braj, Punjabi, and Gurmukhi—reflecting not only intellectual depth but also a profound engagement with diverse cultures and traditions. Alongside scholarly pursuits, he trained rigorously in martial disciplines, including archery, swordsmanship, and horsemanship.

This dual training-of mind and body was crucial. It prepared him for a future where spirituality alone would not suffice; it would need to be defended with courage and strength.

## The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur: A Turning Point in History

The defining moment of his childhood came in 1675, when his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, was executed in Delhi under the orders of Aurangzeb. The Guru had refused to convert to Islam and instead chose martyrdom to defend the religious freedom of Kashmiri Hindus.

This act of supreme sacrifice left an indelible imprint on young Gobind Rai. At just nine years old, he ascended as the tenth Guru of the Sikhs. But he did not inherit merely a spiritual seat—he inherited a mission: to defend Dharma, uphold justice, and ensure that tyranny would never silence truth.

## Leadership and Expansion: Anandpur Sahib as the Spiritual Nucleus

After becoming Guru, Gobind Rai established his base at Anandpur Sahib, which soon evolved into a vibrant center of spirituality, culture, and military preparation.

He later traveled to Nahan at the invitation of Raja Medini Prakash and subsequently to Paonta Sahib, situated along the banks of the Yamuna River. At Paonta Sahib, he spent nearly three years composing literary works, training warriors, and strengthening the Sikh



community.

It was here that he gathered a devoted following and laid the groundwork for a disciplined and organized force.

## Warrior Leadership: Battles and Resistance

Guru Gobind Singh's life was marked by constant struggle against injustice. His first major military engagement, the Battle of Bhangani (1688), saw him emerge victorious against a coalition of hill chiefs and rival forces.

Subsequent conflicts with Mughal authorities and hill rulers culminated in significant battles, including:

- The prolonged conflicts at Anandpur Sahib
- The heroic stand at Chamkaur
- The decisive Battle of Muktsar (1705)

Despite being outnumbered, his forces demonstrated unmatched courage and discipline—fueled by spiritual conviction rather than mere military ambition.

## The Creation of the Khalsa: A Defining Spiritual Revolution

The most transformative moment of Guru Gobind Singh's life—and indeed Sikh history—came on the sacred day of Vaisakhi in 1699.

At Anandpur Sahib, before a vast gathering, the Guru issued an unprecedented call:

"Who among you is willing to give your head for faith?"

The crowd was stunned. Then, one by one, five men stepped forward: Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh, Bhai Himmat Singh, Bhai Mohkam Singh and Bhai Sahib Singh.

They belonged to different castes and regions—symbolizing unity in diversity and the complete rejection of social hierarchy.

## The Amrit Ceremony

Guru Gobind Singh prepared Amrit in an iron bowl, mixing water with sugar crystals and stirring it with a double-edged sword while reciting sacred hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib.

The five men were initiated into the Khalsa and became the Panj Pyare (Five Beloved Ones). In an act of profound humility, the Guru then asked them to initiate him, establishing equality within the Khalsa order.

This moment marked the birth of a new spiritual identity—fearless, egalitarian, and devoted to justice.

## The Khalsa Ethos: Equality, Identity, and Discipline

Guru Gobind Singh's vision for the Khalsa was revolutionary:

- Abolition of caste distinctions
- Adoption of the surnames Singh and Kaur
- Adherence to the Five Ks
- Commitment to moral discipline and spiritual devotion

His famous declaration: "*Manas ki jaat sab ek hi pehchanbo*" (Recognize all of humanity as one) became the cornerstone of Sikh philosophy.

## Personal Sacrifice: The Price of Freedom

Guru Gobind Singh's life was marked by unparalleled sacrifice. All four of his sons were martyred:

- The elder sons died in battle
- The younger sons were executed for refusing to convert

He also lost his mother and endured immense personal suffering. Yet, he never wavered in his mission.

His resilience embodied Chardi Kala—the spirit of eternal optimism and courage.

## Literary Legacy and Zafarnama

Guru Gobind Singh's literary

contributions remain a cornerstone of Sikh thought. His works in the Dasam Granth reflect themes of divine justice, heroism, and devotion.

His Zafarnama, written to Aurangzeb, is a powerful assertion of moral victory over tyranny—a reminder that righteousness ultimately triumphs over power.

## Final Days and the Eternal Guru

In his final days at Nanded, Guru Gobind Singh was attacked by assassins. Though he killed one attacker, he succumbed to his injuries in 1708.

Before his passing, he made a historic declaration:

There would be no more human Gurus. The Guru Granth Sahib would be the eternal Guru of the Sikhs.

## Legacy: The Eternal Saint-Soldier

Guru Gobind Singh remains the ultimate symbol of the Saint-Soldier—a figure who demonstrated that spirituality must be active, courageous, and just.

His teachings emphasize:

- Courage in the face of adversity
- Equality of all humanity
- Devotion to truth and righteousness
- The coexistence of compassion and strength

Guru Gobind Singh's life is a timeless beacon of hope, resilience, and moral clarity. He redefined spirituality as something dynamic—rooted in action, sacrifice, and service.

Through the creation of the Khalsa and his enduring teachings, he gave humanity a powerful message:

that faith must be fearless, justice must be defended, and all of humankind is one.

In him, the divine light of courage and compassion found its most radiant expression—a legacy that continues to inspire generations across the world.

# Vaisakhi: The festival of harvest, New beginnings

The festival of Vaisakhi—also widely known as Baisakhi—stands as one of the most vibrant and spiritually layered celebrations in India. Observed annually on April 13 (and occasionally April 14), it marks the beginning of the Hindu solar New Year, the harvest of the rabi crops, and, most significantly for Sikhs, the founding of the Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. This confluence of agricultural joy, religious awakening, and cultural diversity makes Vaisakhi not merely a festival, but a powerful symbol of renewal—of land, spirit, and society.

It is celebrated in North India, particularly in Punjab and Haryana, when the rabi crop is ready for harvesting. It usually falls on April 13, falling on April 14 once every thirty-six years. It coincides with 'Rongali Bihu' in Assam, 'Naba Barsha' in Bengal, Puthandu in Tamil Nadu and 'Pooram Vishu' in Kerala.

### Significance of Vaisakhi

Baisakhi has a special meaning for the Sikhs. Baisakhi Festival is celebrated as the Sikh New Year and the founding of the Khalsa Panth. On this day in 1699, their tenth Guru Gobind Singh organized the order of the Khalsa and administered amrit (nectar) to his first batch of five disciples making them Singhs, a martial community. Again, on this day in 1875, Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj—a reformed sect of Hindus who are devoted to the Vedas for spiritual guidance and have discarded idol worship. This day is once again of immense religious import to the Buddhists because Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment and Nirvana on this auspicious day.

### Celebrations

Festival of Baisakhi is celebrated with lot of joy and enthusiasm in the northern state of Punjab and Haryana. The farmers perform their own prayers and rejoice. For on this day, they commence cutting their harvest. Dressed in their typical folk attire, both men and women, celebrate the day with Bhangra and Gidda. Sweets are distributed, old enmities are forgiven and life is full of joy, merriment and everyone seems to belong.

Fairs are organized at various places in Punjab, where besides other recreational activities, wrestling bouts are also held. The occasion is celebrated with great gusto at Talwandi Sabo, where Guru Gobind Singh stayed for nine months and completed the recompilation of the Guru Granth Sahib.

The Sikhs celebrate this day by visiting gurdwaras and distributing kada prasad. Processions led by the Panj Piaras or the five religious men are taken out. Kirtans and recital of passages from the Granth Sahib are also organized in gurdwaras, where people line up to receive the delicious prasad



and perform kar sewa—that is, offering help in the daily chores of the gurdwara.

The real celebrations are in the

villages of Punjab when the crop is harvested. In Anandpur Sahib (the birth place of Khalsa) Baisakhi meals are

organized in large numbers.

### Legends of Vaisakhi

There are various legends associated with the colourful and vibrant festival of Vaisakhi. A study of these interesting legends of Vaisakhi reveal that the day of Vaisakhi is significant not just for Sikhs but also for Hindus and Buddhists alike. Besides, it is joyous to note that as a harvest festival, people of all communities in Punjab celebrate Vaisakhi in a harmonious manner.

### Vaisakhi Fairs

Colourful Vaisakhi Fairs are organized at several places in Punjab to mark the harvest festival of Vaisakhi. Performance of bhangra and gidda dance besides other recreational activities make Vaisakhi melas a major crowd puller. People also indulge in shopping and eating spree in the numerous stalls set up in the fairs.

### Day to receive Guru's blessings

According to a popular legend in Sikhism, it was on the day of Vaisakhi in 1567 that Guru Amar Das had first institutionalized Vaisakhi as one of the special days when all Sikhs would gather to receive the guru's blessings at Goindwal.

### Regional celebrations

The auspicious day of Baisakhi is celebrated all over India though under different names and with different set of rituals. People of Assam celebrate it as Rongali Bihu. The Rongali Bihu marks the agricultural New Year at the advent of seeding time and is celebrated as the Festival of Merriment.

Bihar celebrates a festival in Vaishakha (April) and Kartika (November) in honour of the Sun God, Surya, at a place called Surajpur-Baragaon. This is essentially a village where, according to an ancient practice, people bathe in the temple tank and pay obeisance to the Sun God while offering flowers and water from the sacred river Ganga.

In West Bengal celebrate it as Naba Barsha. Naba Barsha is the celebration of Bengali New Year !! Naba Barsha in Bengal marks the first day of Baisakh. On this day people take a ritual bath in the Ganga and bedeck their houses with rangoli (floral patterns) drawn on the entrance of their homes with a paste made of rice powder.

Kerala celebrates it as Vishu. In Kerala, it's New Year time too. The Kerala New Year is conspicuous for an exchange of gifts and for alms-giving, while Tamil Nadu celebrates it as Puthandu, the tamil new year ceremonial processions are taken out, with richly caparisoned elephants swinging along to the beat of drums.

While in Kashmir, a ceremonial bath and general festivity mark Baisakhi while in Himachal Pradesh devotees flock to the temple of Jwalamukhi and take a holy dip in the hot springs.

# A Happy Khalsa Sajna Divas & Happy Vaisakhi



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# Sacred footprints of the Tenth Master: Gurdwaras associated with Guru Gobind Singh

Across the sacred geography of Sikhism, the life and legacy of Guru Gobind Singh Ji unfold not merely through texts or tradition, but through a constellation of historic Gurdwaras that stand as living embodiments of his vision. These shrines are not just markers of memory—they are powerful spiritual centers where history, faith, and valor converge.

Each Gurdwara associated with the Tenth Guru is a chapter in a grand spiritual narrative—one that chronicles the transformation of a persecuted community into the Khalsa, a fearless order of saint-soldiers committed to righteousness, equality, and justice.

## The Sacred Trail of the Tenth Guru

The life of Guru Gobind Singh Ji (1666-1708) spanned vast regions—from the eastern plains of Bihar to the Deccan plateau of Maharashtra. His journey, especially after the pivotal events of 1704-1705, created a sacred trail across northern India. Today, many of these sites are connected through the historic "Guru Gobind Singh Marg," symbolizing not only physical travel but also a profound spiritual progression—from struggle to wisdom and liberation.

These Gurdwaras collectively represent the multidimensional personality of the Guru—as a warrior, poet, philosopher, and divine guide.

### Anandpur Sahib: The Birthplace of the Khalsa Revolution

At the foothills of the Shivalik range lies Anandpur Sahib, the city that became the epicenter of Sikh strength under Guru Gobind Singh Ji. It was here that the Guru spent nearly a quarter of a century nurturing a spiritual community that would soon redefine history.

### Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib: The Dawn of a New Order

This sacred Takht is not only one of the five temporal seats of Sikh authority but also the birthplace of the Khalsa. On Vaisakhi of 1699, Guru Gobind Singh Ji called upon a gathering of thousands and asked for a head-testing the faith of his followers. One by one, five men stepped forward, later known as the Panj Pyare. Through the initiation ceremony, the Guru created the Khalsa Panth—a collective identity grounded in equality, discipline, and spiritual sovereignty.

The significance of this moment remains profound: caste distinctions were abolished, and every initiate became Singh or Kaur, symbolizing dignity and empowerment.

### The Forts of Anandpur: Defenders of Faith

Gurdwaras like Anandgarh Sahib, Lohgarh Sahib, and Holgarh Sahib mark the locations of fortified structures built by the Guru. These forts were not merely military outposts but symbols of a new



vision—where spirituality and readiness to defend righteousness coexisted. The battles fought here against Mughal and hill forces were not for territorial gain, but for the protection of religious freedom.

### Chamkaur Sahib: The Pinnacle of Sacrifice

The town of Chamkaur Sahib is sanctified by one of the most heroic episodes in Sikh history—the Battle of Chamkaur (1704).

### Gurdwara Katalgarh Sahib: Martyrdom of the Sahibzadas

Within a small fortress-like structure, Guru Gobind Singh Ji and a handful of Sikhs faced an army of thousands. Here, his elder sons—Sahibzada Ajit Singh Ji and Sahibzada Jujhar Singh Ji—embraced martyrdom in their youth. Their courage was rooted in spiritual conviction and unwavering faith.

The Guru's acceptance of their sacrifice demonstrated a profound truth: that the path of righteousness often demands the highest personal cost.

### Gurdwara Garhi Sahib: Defiance Against All Odds

This site marks the fortress where the Guru made his stand. The events at Chamkaur are remembered not as a defeat, but as a moral and spiritual victory—where a small group stood against overwhelming forces, embodying the Khalsa ideal of fearless resistance.

### Machhiwara: The Night of Divine Solitude

After escaping Chamkaur, Guru Gobind Singh Ji entered the dense forests of Machhiwara. These days were marked by physical hardship but deep spiritual reflection.



## Happy Khalsa Sajna Divas and A Happy Vaisakhi



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### **Gurdwara Charan Kanwal Sahib: Where the Divine Walked**

This serene shrine commemorates the place where the Guru rested amidst wilderness and adversity. It is associated with his poetic expressions of longing for the Divine.

Machhiwara represents an introspective phase in the Guru's journey-reminding devotees that even in the most challenging circumstances, faith remains steadfast.

### **Sri Muktsar Sahib: Redemption Through Courage**

The sacred land of Sri Muktsar Sahib holds a story of extraordinary redemption.

### **The Battle of Muktsar and the Chali Mukte**

Forty Sikhs who had once abandoned the Guru returned, driven by remorse and renewed faith. In the Battle of Khidrana, they fought bravely and attained martyrdom. Guru Gobind Singh Ji blessed them as the "Chali Mukte"-the Forty Liberated Ones-granting them spiritual salvation.

### **Gurdwara Tuti Gandhi Sahib: Grace Beyond Judgment**

This Gurdwara commemorates the tearing of the declaration of desertion. The Guru's act of forgiveness stands as one of the most powerful examples of compassion in Sikh history.

Muktsar teaches that redemption is always possible for those who return to the path with sincerity.

### **Talwandi Sabo: The Seat of Learning and Reflection**

In Talwandi Sabo, Guru Gobind Singh Ji found a period of reflection after years of conflict.

### **Takht Sri Damdama Sahib: The Literary Legacy**

Here, the Guru oversaw the final recension of the Guru Granth Sahib. This site became a center of Sikh learning, earning the title "Guru Ki Kashi."

It was in Talwandi Sabo that the Guru emphasized knowledge as a cornerstone of spiritual growth, ensuring that Sikhism remained rooted in both devotion and intellect.

### **Takht Patna Sahib: The Divine Beginning**

The historic city of Patna is home to Takht Sri Patna Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

This shrine preserves memories of his early years, where signs of spiritual wisdom and courage were evident even in childhood. Stories from this period continue to inspire devotees across generations.

### **Takht Hazur Sahib: The Eternal Transition**

The journey culminates in Nanded, at Takht Sri Hazur Sahib.

Here, in 1708, Guru Gobind Singh Ji departed from the physical world after a life of immense sacrifice. Before his passing, he made a historic declaration-bestowing eternal Guruship upon the Guru Granth Sahib.

This moment marked a defining



transition, ensuring that the Sikh community would forever be guided by sacred scripture rather than a human successor.

### **The Deeper Spiritual Symbolism**

These historic Gurdwaras collectively form a spiritual arc:

- Anandpur Sahib - Creation and identity
- Chamkaur Sahib - Sacrifice and courage
- Machhiwara - Faith in adversity
- Muktsar Sahib - Redemption and grace
- Damdama Sahib - Knowledge and reflection
- Patna Sahib - Divine origin
- Hazur Sahib - Eternal continuity

They mirror the journey of the human spirit-from birth and struggle to realization and liberation.

### **A Living Legacy of Faith and Courage**

To walk through these historic Gurdwaras is to walk alongside Guru Gobind Singh Ji-to witness the forging of the Khalsa, the pain of separation, the triumph of faith, and the enduring message of righteousness.

These shrines are not silent monuments; they are vibrant centers of devotion where hymns resonate, community kitchens serve all without distinction, and the spirit of selfless service thrives. They continue to inspire millions to live with courage, compassion, and unwavering faith.

In their sanctity, one does not merely remember history-one experiences the timeless presence of the Guru, guiding humanity toward truth, justice, and spiritual unity.



# Heartiest Congratulations on Khalsa Sajna Divas And a Happy Vaisakhi



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DIVERSE ASPECTS OF THE SIKH FAITH

# The Eternal Guru: The living wisdom of Guru Granth Sahib

In the heart of Sikhism resides not a throne occupied by a human figure, but a sacred scripture-revered, sung, and lived as the eternal guide of millions. The Guru Granth Sahib is not merely a holy book; it is the living Guru of the Sikh faith, a timeless voice of divine wisdom that transcends boundaries of religion, caste, language, and geography.

In a world often divided by identity and belief, the Guru Granth Sahib stands as a profound testament to unity, humility, and the universal quest for truth.

**A Sacred Compilation:  
Born of Divine Vision**

The origins of the Guru Granth Sahib trace back to the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan Dev Ji, who undertook the monumental task of compiling the sacred hymns of the Sikh Gurus along with those of revered saints from diverse backgrounds. Completed in 1604, the original compilation-known as the Adi Granth-was installed at the Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar.

What makes this scripture truly extraordinary is its inclusivity. Alongside the teachings of Sikh Gurus, it contains the spiritual poetry of Hindu bhaktas like Kabir and Ravidas, as well as Muslim saints such as Sheikh Farid. This diverse authorship reflects a revolutionary idea-that divine truth is universal and not confined to any one tradition.

**The Final Revelation: The Eternal Guru**

The transformation of the Guru Granth Sahib from scripture to eternal Guru was completed by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1708 at Nanded. In a defining moment of Sikh history, he declared that there would be no human Guru after him, and that the Guru Granth Sahib would forever serve as the spiritual guide of the Sikhs.

This was not merely a symbolic gesture-it marked a profound shift in religious authority. By investing the Guru Granth Sahib with eternal Guruship, Guru Gobind Singh Ji ensured that the Sikh faith would remain anchored in divine wisdom, free from the limitations and fallibility of human succession.

**The Language of the Divine:  
Poetry, Music, and Meaning**

The Guru Granth Sahib is not written as a conventional religious text. It is a poetic masterpiece composed in a variety of languages and dialects, including Punjabi, Braj, Persian, and Sanskrit. Its verses, known as Gurbani, are arranged according to musical ragas, making the scripture deeply intertwined with melody and rhythm.

This unique structure transforms the act of reading into an act of listening and singing. In Gurdwaras across the world, hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib are performed as kirtan, creating an atmosphere of spiritual immersion. The music is not ornamental-it is essential, guiding the devotee toward a deeper emotional and spiritual connection.



**Core Teachings: A Universal Philosophy**

At its core, the Guru Granth Sahib offers a timeless message rooted in simplicity and depth:

- Oneness of God: There is one formless, eternal Creator, present in all creation.
- Equality of Humanity: All human beings are equal, regardless of caste, creed, or gender.
- Honest Living: One must earn a livelihood through honest means and share with others.
- Remembrance of the Divine: Constant meditation on God's name (Naam Simran) is the path to spiritual liberation.
- Humility and Service: Ego is the greatest barrier to spiritual growth; humility and selfless service are essential virtues.

These teachings are not abstract ideals-they are meant to be lived. Sikhism, as guided by the Guru Granth Sahib, is a way of life grounded in action, compassion, and truth.

**Living Presence: The Guru in Practice**

In every Gurdwara, the Guru Granth Sahib is treated not as an object, but as a living Guru. It is ceremonially installed on a raised platform, adorned with rich cloth coverings, and attended with the utmost reverence. The daily rituals of prakash (opening) and sukhasan (closing) reflect the care one would offer to a revered teacher.

Devotees bow before the Guru Granth Sahib not in worship of the book itself, but in reverence to the divine wisdom it embodies. When a Sikh seeks guidance, a random verse (hukamnama) is taken as



the Guru's command, offering spiritual direction for the day.

**Beyond Boundaries: A  
Message for All Humanity**

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the Guru Granth Sahib is its universality. It does not preach exclusivity or demand conversion. Instead, it speaks to the human soul, addressing the struggles of ego, attachment, and suffering while offering a path toward inner peace and spiritual realization.

Its message resonates far beyond Sikhism, appealing to anyone seeking truth, regardless of their religious or cultural background. In an age marked by division, the Guru Granth Sahib stands as a beacon of unity-reminding humanity of its shared spiritual heritage.

**The Eternal Voice of Truth**

More than three centuries after it was

declared the eternal Guru, the Guru Granth Sahib continues to guide millions with the same clarity and compassion. Its verses echo in Gurdwaras, homes, and hearts-offering solace in times of sorrow, strength in moments of struggle, and wisdom in the pursuit of truth.

To engage with the Guru Granth Sahib is not merely to read a scripture-it is to enter into a dialogue with the divine. It is to listen, reflect, and transform.

**A Living Legacy**

The Guru Granth Sahib is not confined to pages or rituals; it lives in the daily actions of those who follow its teachings. It inspires a way of life rooted in humility, service, and unwavering faith in the oneness of all existence.

As the eternal Guru, it continues to illuminate the path for humanity-guiding not just Sikhs, but all seekers, toward a life of purpose, compassion, and spiritual awakening.

# Heartiest Greetings on Khalsa Sajna Divas and a Happy Vaisakhi

Let us pledge to follow the path of Gursikhi as recommended by Guru Gobind Singh Ji



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# Seva and langar: The radical practice of equality

In a world often defined by divisions of class, caste, religion, and privilege—Sikhism offers a profoundly simple yet revolutionary response: serve all, feed all, and see the Divine in all. At the heart of this vision lie two foundational pillars—seva (selfless service) and langar (the community kitchen). Together, they form one of the most powerful expressions of equality and compassion in human history.

More than rituals, seva and langar are living practices—quietly transformative, deeply spiritual, and radically inclusive.

## The Spirit of Seva: Service Without Self

The concept of seva in Sikhism is rooted in humility, compassion, and the complete absence of ego. It is not charity in the conventional sense; it is an act of devotion—an offering to the Divine present in every human being.

The origins of this philosophy can be traced to Guru Nanak Dev Ji, who emphasized that true spirituality lies not in renunciation, but in active engagement with the world through honest living and service to others. For him, feeding the hungry, helping the needy, and uplifting the downtrodden were not social duties alone—they were sacred acts.

Seva takes many forms within Sikh practice:

- Preparing and serving food in langar
- Cleaning Gurdwaras (kar seva)
- Volunteering in humanitarian efforts
- Supporting those in times of crisis

What distinguishes seva is its intention. It is performed without desire for recognition or reward, dissolving the ego and fostering a deep sense of unity with humanity.

## The Birth of Langar: A Vision of Equality

The institution of langar—one of Sikhism's most enduring contributions to humanity—was established by Guru Nanak Dev Ji and later expanded and institutionalized by Guru Amar Das Ji.

At a time when rigid caste hierarchies governed Indian society, the idea of people from all backgrounds sitting together to share a meal was nothing short of revolutionary. Langar dismantled these barriers with quiet defiance.

Every person, regardless of social status, wealth, gender, or religion, is welcomed to sit in a single row—pangat—and partake in the same simple, vegetarian meal. No one is served differently. No one is considered superior.

In this act of shared food, equality is not preached—it is practiced.

## The Living Tradition: Langar in Every Gurdwara

Today, langar is an inseparable part of every Gurdwara across the world. From small village shrines to grand institutions, the community kitchen remains open to all, every day.

At Harmandir Sahib—the Golden



Temple-langar serves tens of thousands of people daily, making it one of the largest free kitchens in the world. Here, volunteers from all walks of life come together to cook, serve, and clean, embodying the spirit of seva.

The meal itself is intentionally simple—typically consisting of roti, dal, vegetables, and kheer. The simplicity ensures that the focus remains on equality and nourishment rather than indulgence.

But beyond food, langar offers something far deeper: dignity, belonging, and a sense of shared humanity.

## Seva in Action: Beyond the Gurdwara

While langar is the most visible expression of seva, the spirit of service extends far beyond the walls of the Gurdwara.

In times of natural disasters, humanitarian crises, and global emergencies, Sikh communities have consistently risen to serve. Whether it is distributing food during floods, organizing relief during pandemics, or feeding the homeless in cities around the world, seva becomes a powerful force for good in action.

Organizations inspired by Sikh values have taken langar to the streets—serving meals at refugee camps, hospitals, and disaster zones—demonstrating that compassion knows no boundaries.

## The Philosophy Behind the Practice

Seva and langar are not isolated practices; they are deeply rooted in the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib.

The scripture repeatedly emphasizes:

- The futility of ego and pride
- The importance of humility and compassion
- The interconnectedness of all beings
- The presence of the Divine in every individual

To serve others, therefore, is to serve God. To feed the hungry is to honor the



Divine within them.

This philosophy transforms everyday actions into spiritual practice. Washing dishes, kneading dough, or serving water becomes a form of meditation—an expression of love and devotion.

## Breaking Barriers: Equality in Practice

Perhaps the most radical aspect of seva and langar is their challenge to social hierarchies.

Historically, Guru Amar Das Ji required even kings and nobles to sit in the langar before meeting him. This act reinforced a simple yet profound truth: in the eyes of the Divine, all are equal.

Even today, this principle continues to resonate. In a langar hall, distinctions dissolve. Wealth, status, and identity fade away, replaced by a shared human experience.

In a world still grappling with inequality, this model offers a powerful blueprint for social harmony.

## A Global Symbol of Compassion

As Sikh communities have spread across the world, so too has the tradition of langar. From London to Vancouver,

from New York to Nairobi, Gurdwaras serve as centers of nourishment and refuge.

Langar has become a global symbol of compassion—recognized not only as a religious practice but as a humanitarian model. It demonstrates that feeding people is not just about addressing hunger; it is about restoring dignity and building community.

## A Quiet Revolution

Seva and langar may appear simple on the surface—acts of service and shared meals—but their impact is profound. They challenge deeply ingrained social structures, nurture humility, and create spaces where equality is lived rather than merely spoken.

In every roti prepared, every plate served, and every floor cleaned, the spirit of Sikhism comes alive—not in grand declarations, but in quiet, consistent acts of kindness.

In a divided world, seva and langar stand as a gentle yet powerful revolution—reminding us that the path to the Divine begins with serving humanity.

**We Wish the Sikh community  
a Happy Khalsa Sirjana Divas  
and a Happy Vaisakhi**



### **HIMAT SINGH SARPANCH**

Former President, Gurdwara Baba Makhan

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# The Spiritual power of Gurbani Kirtan

In the stillness of a Gurdwara, as the first notes of a hymn begin to rise, something profound unfolds. The air fills with melody, the mind quiets, and the heart turns inward. This is the power of Gurbani Kirtan—the sacred musical rendering of the divine word contained in the Guru Granth Sahib.

More than music, Gurbani Kirtan is a spiritual experience, a form of meditation, and a direct connection with the Divine. It is the heartbeat of Sikh devotion—where sound becomes prayer, and melody becomes a path to transcendence.

## The Divine Word in Melody

At the core of Sikh spirituality lies Gurbani—the revealed word of the Sikh Gurus and saints, preserved in the Guru Granth Sahib. But these sacred verses are not meant to be merely read; they are meant to be sung.

The Guru Granth Sahib is uniquely structured according to ragas—classical musical frameworks that evoke specific moods and emotions. Each hymn is assigned a particular raga, guiding how it should be rendered. This deliberate fusion of poetry and music transforms scripture into a living, resonant experience.

For the Gurus, music was not ornamental—it was essential. Through melody, the message of the Divine could be felt, not just understood.

## Origins of Kirtan: A Spiritual Tradition

The tradition of kirtan was established by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, who traveled far and wide sharing his message through song. Accompanied by his companion Bhai Mardana, who played the rabab, Guru Nanak used music as a universal language—one that transcended barriers of culture, religion, and literacy.

This musical tradition was further enriched by successive Gurus, especially Guru Arjan Dev Ji, who systematized the structure of ragas within the Guru Granth Sahib.

From its very inception, kirtan was not a performance—it was a form of devotion, an act of surrender, and a means of connecting with the Divine presence within.

## The Instruments of Devotion

Traditional Gurbani Kirtan was performed using classical instruments such as the rabab, taus, saranda, and jori. These instruments were carefully chosen for their ability to complement the emotional depth of the hymns.

Over time, harmonium and tabla became more common in Gurdwaras, making kirtan more accessible to larger congregations. Yet, in recent years, there has been a revival of traditional string instruments, as musicians seek to reconnect with the original soundscape envisioned by the Gurus.

Regardless of the instrument, the essence remains unchanged: the focus is always on the sacred word, not the



performer.

## Kirtan as Meditation: The Power of Sound

Gurbani Kirtan is often described as a form of Naam Simran—the remembrance of the Divine through repetition and immersion in sacred sound.

As the hymns are sung and repeated, the mind gradually quiets. Thoughts slow down, distractions fade, and a sense of inner peace begins to emerge. The rhythm of the music synchronizes with the rhythm of the breath, creating a meditative state.

In this state, the listener is no longer merely hearing the music—they are experiencing it, becoming one with it. The boundaries between self and sound begin to dissolve.

This is why kirtan is often experienced as deeply healing. It soothes emotional turbulence, reduces stress, and nurtures a sense of spiritual grounding.

## The Collective Experience: Sangat and Harmony

One of the most beautiful aspects of Gurbani Kirtan is its collective nature. It is rarely a solitary practice; it is shared within the sangat—the congregation.

As voices join together in unison, a powerful sense of unity emerges. Differences of background, status, and identity fade away, replaced by a shared spiritual experience.

In Gurdwaras around the world, daily kirtan sessions create a space where individuals can pause, reflect, and reconnect—not only with the Divine, but with each other.

This collective harmony mirrors the central Sikh teaching of oneness—of humanity, of creation, and of the Divine.

## Beyond Ritual: A Universal Language

While deeply rooted in Sikh tradition, Gurbani Kirtan transcends religious boundaries. Its melodies and messages



speak to the human soul, offering comfort, clarity, and inspiration to anyone who listens with an open heart.

Even those unfamiliar with the language often find themselves moved by the music. The emotional resonance of the ragas carries meaning beyond words, making kirtan a truly universal form of spiritual expression.

In an increasingly fragmented world, this universality is both rare and deeply needed.

## Preserving a Sacred Heritage

In recent years, there has been a renewed effort to preserve and promote authentic Gurbani Kirtan traditions. Institutions, musicians, and scholars are working to revive classical ragas and traditional instruments, ensuring that this sacred art form remains true to its origins.

At the same time, digital platforms have made kirtan accessible to a global audience. Live streams from Gurdwaras, recordings by renowned ragis, and online learning resources have brought the experience of sacred sound into homes around the world.

This blending of tradition and

technology ensures that the spiritual power of kirtan continues to reach new generations.

## The Eternal Resonance

At its essence, Gurbani Kirtan is not about music—it is about transformation. It invites the listener to move beyond the noise of the external world and enter a space of inner stillness and awareness.

In the resonance of each note lies a deeper truth: that the Divine is not distant, but present—within the sound, within the silence, and within the self.

## When Sound Becomes Sacred

Gurbani Kirtan is a reminder that spirituality is not confined to rituals or doctrines—it can be experienced through something as simple and profound as sound.

In every hymn sung, every note played, and every heart that listens, the wisdom of the Guru Granth Sahib comes alive. It speaks, it soothes, and it transforms.

In the end, Gurbani Kirtan is not just heard—it is felt. And in that feeling, one finds peace, connection, and the quiet presence of the Divine.

# The Five Takhts: Seats of Sikh authority and tradition

In Sikhism, authority is not vested in a single individual but rests in a carefully balanced system rooted in scripture, collective wisdom, and historical continuity. At the center of this framework stand the Five Takhts—the highest seats of religious and temporal authority in the Sikh world. Each Takht is not merely a physical shrine, but a powerful institution that embodies the sovereignty, discipline, and spiritual vision of the Sikh faith.

The word Takht, meaning "throne," signifies a seat of power. Yet in Sikhism, it carries a deeper meaning: a place where divine guidance meets worldly responsibility, where faith informs action, and where the community gathers to seek direction.

## The Origins of the Takht Tradition

The concept of the Takht is deeply rooted in the Sikh principle of balancing spiritual devotion with temporal responsibility—a vision first articulated by Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji through the doctrine of Miri-Piri.

Following the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the Sikh community entered a new phase—one that required not only spiritual resilience but also organized leadership and the ability to defend justice. Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji responded by establishing a system that combined spiritual authority with temporal governance.

This vision laid the foundation for the Takhts—institutions that would guide the Sikh community in both faith and action.

## The Role and Authority of the Takhts

The Five Takhts function as the highest decision-making bodies in Sikhism. Their authority extends across multiple dimensions:

### Religious Guidance

They interpret and uphold Sikh doctrine, ensuring that practices remain aligned with the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib.

### Issuance of Hukamnamas

Edicts or directives issued from the Takhts—particularly the Akal Takht—carry significant weight and are followed by Sikhs worldwide.

### Conflict Resolution

Historically, the Takhts have served as forums for resolving disputes within the community, maintaining unity and discipline.

### Preservation of Tradition

They safeguard rituals, customs, and historical memory, ensuring continuity across generations.

### Symbol of Collective Authority

Unlike centralized religious systems, the Takhts represent a shared authority, reflecting the Sikh emphasis on collective decision-making.

### Akal Takht Sahib: The Supreme Seat of Authority

Situated within the sacred complex of Amritsar, the Akal Takht is the highest temporal authority in Sikhism.

Established in 1606 by Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, the Akal Takht stands directly opposite the Harmandir Sahib, creating a powerful architectural and symbolic dialogue between spirituality and governance.

Historically, the Guru would sit here to address the community, hear grievances, and make decisions. It was also a place where warriors gathered, reinforcing the idea that faith and responsibility go hand in hand.

Over the centuries, the Akal Takht has witnessed major events in Sikh history, including political struggles, reform movements, and periods of conflict. Despite these challenges, it remains the central authority for guiding the Sikh Panth.



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### **Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib: The Birthplace of the Khalsa**

Located in Anandpur Sahib, Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib holds immense historical and spiritual importance.

It was here, on Vaisakhi in 1699, that Guru Gobind Singh Ji created the Khalsa—a defining moment that transformed Sikh identity.

The initiation of the Panj Pyare and the establishment of a collective identity rooted in equality, discipline, and courage marked a turning point in Sikh history. Keshgarh Sahib stands as a symbol of that transformation.

The Takht also preserves sacred relics associated with Guru Gobind Singh Ji, offering a tangible connection to this historic moment.

### **Takht Sri Damdama Sahib: The Center of Learning**

In the town of Talwandi Sabo lies Takht Sri Damdama Sahib, often referred to as the intellectual seat of Sikhism.

After years of conflict, Guru Gobind Singh Ji spent time here in reflection, teaching, and literary work. It was at this site that the final recension of the Guru Granth Sahib was prepared, ensuring the preservation and authenticity of the Sikh scripture.

Damdama Sahib became a center for learning, attracting scholars and students. Its legacy continues as a symbol of study, and spiritual education.

### **Takht Sri Patna Sahib: The Sacred Birthplace**

In Patna stands Takht Sri Patna Sahib, marking the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1666.

This Takht holds deep emotional and spiritual significance, as it preserves the early life of the Guru. Stories of his childhood—his wisdom, courage, and spiritual insight—continue to inspire devotees.

Patna Sahib serves as a reminder that even the greatest spiritual leaders begin their journey in humble surroundings.

### **Takht Sri Hazur Sahib: The Final Chapter**

The sacred city of Nanded is home to Takht Sri Hazur Sahib, where Guru Gobind Singh Ji spent his final days.

In 1708, at this very site, he made a historic declaration—ending the line of human Gurus and bestowing eternal Guruship upon the Guru Granth Sahib.

Hazur Sahib is unique in its traditions, preserving certain practices that reflect the historical period of the Guru. It stands as a place of completion—a site where the Sikh spiritual journey transitioned into its eternal form.

### **Interconnected Significance of the Five Takhts**

Each Takht represents a distinct dimension of Sikh philosophy and history:

- Akal Takht - Authority and justice
- Keshgarh Sahib - Identity and transformation
- Damdama Sahib - Knowledge and preservation
- Patna Sahib - Origins and beginnings
- Hazur Sahib - Continuity and completion

Together, they form a comprehensive framework that guides the Sikh community—spiritually, socially, and historically.

### **The Takhts in Contemporary Sikh Life**

In the modern era, the Five Takhts continue to play a vital role in guiding the global Sikh community. Their influence extends across continents, addressing issues related to religious practice, identity, and social responsibility.

They also serve as major pilgrimage centers, drawing millions of devotees each year. Festivals, commemorations, and gatherings at these sites



reinforce a sense of unity and shared heritage.

At the same time, the Takhts face contemporary challenges—navigating the complexities of modern society while remaining true to tradition. Their ability to adapt while preserving core values reflects the resilience of Sikh institutions.

### **A Living Legacy of Authority and Faith**

The Five Takhts are not static monuments—they are dynamic institutions that continue to evolve with the times. They represent the enduring vision of the Sikh Gurus: a community guided by wisdom, grounded in equality, and committed to justice.

They embody the balance of Miri-Piri, ensuring that spirituality remains connected to real-world responsibility.

### **Thrones of Timeless Guidance**

The Five Takhts stand as pillars of Sikh identity—anchors of faith, guardians of tradition, and beacons of collective wisdom.

They remind the Sikh community that authority is not about power alone, but about responsibility, integrity, and service. Through their guidance, the



teachings of the Gurus continue to illuminate the path forward.

In their presence, history is preserved. In their decisions, the present is guided. And in their legacy, the future of Sikhism remains rooted, resilient, and alive.

# Happy Khalsa Sajna Divas &

## HAPPY Vaisakhi

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# The Saint-Soldier ideal: The philosophy of Miri-Piri

In the spiritual and historical evolution of Sikhism, few ideas are as powerful, enduring, and transformative as Miri-Piri. More than a doctrine, it is a way of life—one that unites inner devotion with outer responsibility. It calls upon individuals not only to seek spiritual truth, but also to actively uphold justice in the world.

This philosophy gave rise to one of the most distinctive ideals in global religious thought: the saint-soldier—a person who is at once contemplative and courageous, humble yet unyielding in the face of injustice.

## The Historical Turning Point

The formal articulation of Miri-Piri came through Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji in the early 17th century. This was a defining moment in Sikh history, shaped by profound loss and rising political pressures.

The martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji marked a turning point. It was the first time a Sikh Guru had been executed by Mughal authority, signaling a new phase of direct confrontation between spiritual conviction and political power.

In response, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji reshaped the Sikh path. He did not abandon spirituality; rather, he expanded it—declaring that true faith must also defend dignity, justice, and freedom.

## The Symbolism of the Two Swords

At his installation as Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji wore two swords—an act that became the defining symbol of Miri-Piri:

- Miri represented temporal authority, governance, and the responsibility to engage with worldly affairs
- Piri represented spiritual authority, devotion, and connection with the Divine

These were not opposing forces, but complementary ones. Together, they expressed a profound truth: spiritual life cannot be separated from social responsibility.

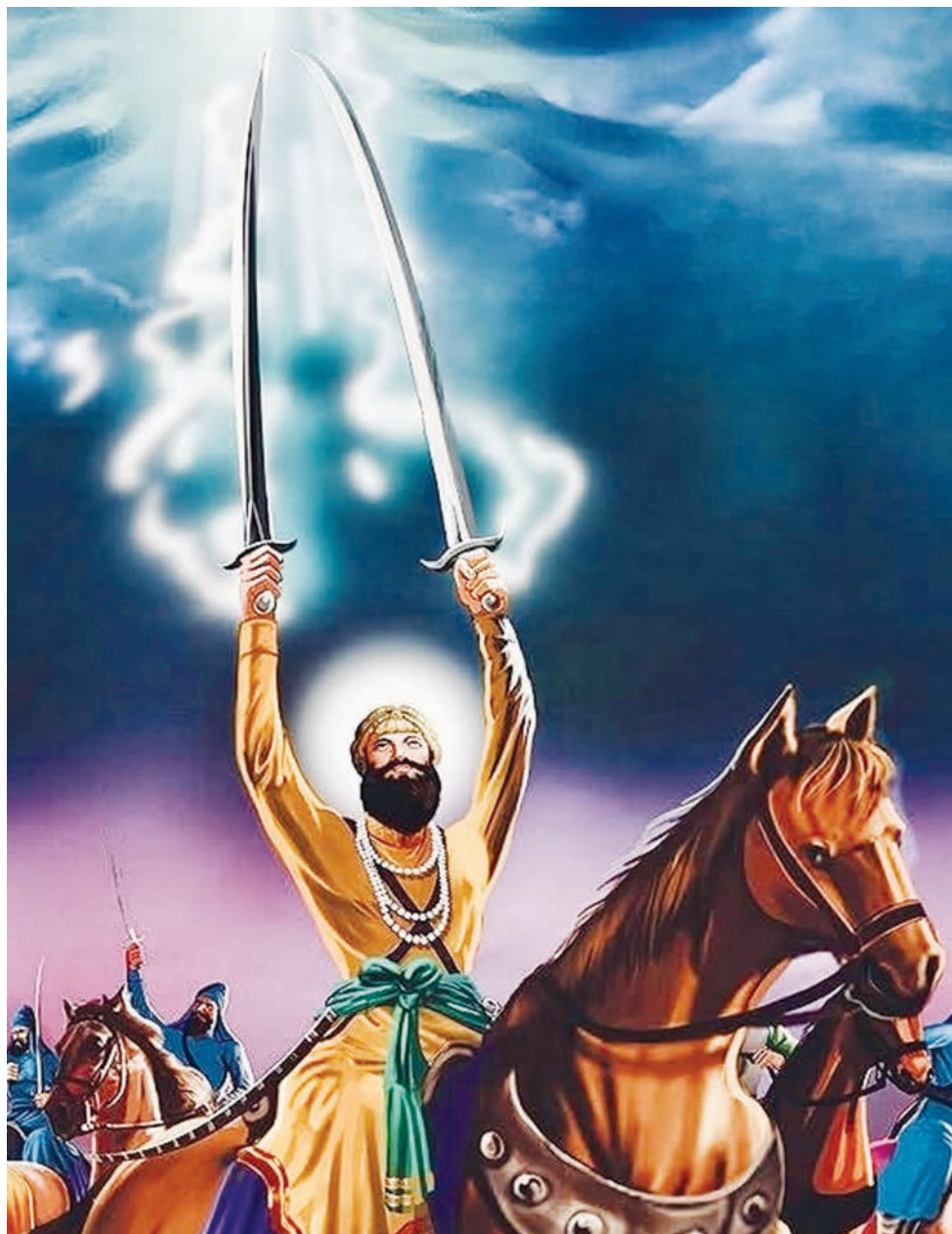
In Sikh thought, a person must not retreat into isolation in pursuit of enlightenment. Instead, spiritual awareness must inspire ethical action in the world.

## The Akal Takht: Institutionalizing Miri-Piri

To give this philosophy a visible and lasting form, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji established the Akal Takht in 1606.

Positioned directly opposite the Harmandir Sahib, the Akal Takht became the seat of temporal authority. While the Harmandir Sahib represented spiritual devotion, the Akal Takht represented justice, governance, and the assertion of dignity.

Here, the Guru held court, addressed community matters, and made decisions that affected the social and political life of the Sikhs. This dual structure created a unique model in religious history—where spiritual and temporal leadership existed side by side, each reinforcing the



other.

## The Saint-Soldier: A Complete Human Ideal

From the foundation of Miri-Piri emerged the Sikh ideal of the saint-soldier, a concept that continues to define Sikh identity.

This ideal is not about contradiction, but integration. A saint-soldier is not divided between two roles; instead, both dimensions are fully present in a single, balanced life.

The spiritual aspect emphasizes:

- Meditation on the Divine
- Humility and self-discipline
- Compassion for all beings
- Freedom from ego and attachment

The saint cultivates inner clarity and moral awareness, ensuring that actions arise from wisdom rather than impulse.

The temporal aspect emphasizes:

- Courage in the face of injustice
- Readiness to defend the oppressed
- Commitment to truth and fairness
- Willingness to act when necessary

The soldier does not seek conflict but does not avoid it when justice is at stake.

Together, these dimensions create a holistic vision of human potential—one that is both deeply reflective and actively engaged.

## Evolution Under Guru Gobind Singh Ji

The philosophy of Miri-Piri reached

its fullest expression under Guru Gobind Singh Ji, particularly with the creation of the Khalsa in 1699 at Anandpur Sahib.

The Khalsa was envisioned as a community of saint-soldiers—individuals who embodied spiritual discipline and moral courage. Initiated Sikhs were expected to live with integrity, uphold justice, and remain prepared to defend righteousness.

Under Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the ideals of Miri-Piri were not only taught—they were institutionalized. The Khalsa became a living expression of this philosophy, transforming it from principle into collective identity.

## Ethical Framework: The Moral Limits of Power

One of the most significant aspects of Miri-Piri is its ethical clarity. While it recognizes the necessity of force in certain situations, it establishes clear boundaries:

- Force must only be used as a last resort
- It must be directed toward justice, not revenge
- It must protect the innocent, not harm them
- It must remain guided by moral restraint

This approach ensures that power does not corrupt purpose. It transforms

the use of force into a disciplined, ethical responsibility rather than an expression of anger or ambition.

## Miri-Piri in Daily Sikh Life

The philosophy of Miri-Piri is not confined to history or theology—it continues to shape everyday Sikh life.

It is reflected in:

- The balance between prayer and work
- The commitment to community service
- The courage to speak out against injustice
- The discipline to live truthfully and ethically

A Sikh is encouraged to engage fully with the world—earning an honest living, supporting others, and contributing to society—while remaining spiritually grounded.

This integration makes Miri-Piri a practical philosophy, not just an abstract ideal.

## Global Relevance in the Contemporary World

In an era marked by polarization, inequality, and moral uncertainty, Miri-Piri offers a powerful and timely framework.

It challenges the idea that spirituality is separate from public life. Instead, it calls for individuals to bring ethical awareness into every sphere—social, political, and personal.

It encourages:

- Leadership rooted in integrity
- Activism guided by compassion
- Strength balanced with humility
- Faith expressed through action

In this way, Miri-Piri speaks not only to Sikhs, but to anyone seeking a balanced and meaningful way of living in a complex world.

## A Timeless Vision of Balance

More than four centuries after it was first articulated, the philosophy of Miri-Piri continues to resonate with remarkable clarity.

It offers a vision of humanity that is neither passive nor aggressive, neither withdrawn nor reactive—but centered, conscious, and courageous.

It reminds us that true spirituality is not an escape from responsibility, but a source of strength to fulfill it.

## The Union of Spirit and Responsibility

The philosophy of Miri-Piri stands as one of Sikhism's most profound contributions to human thought. It bridges the gap between contemplation and action, inner peace and outer courage.

Through this ideal, Sikhism presents a vision of life where the individual is both rooted in the Divine and committed to the world—where faith inspires action, and action reflects faith.

In the harmony of Miri and Piri, we find not only a guiding principle for Sikhs, but a universal path toward a life of purpose, justice, and spiritual integrity.

### HAPPY Vaisakhi

On this beautiful festival of harvest, may your life be filled with abundance and success.

**Kuldeep Singh Khalsa**  
Former President  
Gurdwara Baba Makhan  
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### HAPPY Vaisakhi

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.



**GURMEET SINGH MAHMATPUR, FORMER PRESIDENT**  
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# Martyrdom in Sikhism: The legacy of sacrifice

In the spiritual and historical fabric of Sikhism, martyrdom is not seen as tragedy alone—it is revered as the highest expression of faith, courage, and moral conviction. It is a legacy written in sacrifice, where individuals chose truth over fear, justice over submission, and faith over life itself.

From the earliest Gurus to the valiant warriors of the Khalsa, the Sikh tradition of martyrdom stands as a powerful testament to the unwavering commitment to righteousness. It is not a glorification of death, but a celebration of principles so deeply held that they transcend the fear of mortality.

## The Foundation of Sacrifice in Sikh Thought

At the heart of Sikh philosophy lies the teaching of the Guru Granth Sahib, which emphasizes truth, humility, and devotion to the Divine. The Gurus taught that life must be lived with integrity, even in the face of adversity.

Martyrdom, in this context, is not sought—it is accepted when all other paths to uphold justice and dignity have been exhausted. It reflects a fearless spirit rooted in faith and guided by moral clarity.

This ethos is closely connected to the Sikh ideal of standing against injustice while remaining spiritually grounded—a principle that would define Sikh history in the centuries to come.

## Guru Arjan Dev Ji: The First Martyr

The tradition of martyrdom in Sikhism begins with Guru Arjan Dev Ji, whose execution in 1606 marked a turning point in Sikh history.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji was subjected to severe torture under Mughal authority for refusing to alter the teachings of Sikhism or compromise his principles. Despite immense suffering, he remained composed and immersed in divine remembrance.

His martyrdom was not only an act of personal sacrifice but a powerful declaration of religious freedom—the right to practice one's faith without coercion. It set a precedent for future generations, establishing that truth must be upheld at any cost.

## Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji: Defender of Religious Freedom

The legacy of sacrifice reached a profound height with Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, who is remembered as the "Protector of Faith."

In 1675, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji gave his life in Delhi to defend the religious rights of Kashmiri Pandits who were facing forced conversion. Remarkably, his sacrifice was not for his own community, but for the freedom of others to practice their beliefs.

His martyrdom stands as one of the most powerful examples of interfaith solidarity in history. It reflects a universal principle: that true spirituality transcends boundaries and stands for justice for all.



## The Sahibzadas: Innocence and Courage

Few stories in Sikh history are as deeply moving as the martyrdom of the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, known as the Sahibzadas.

### The Elder Sahibzadas: Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh

During the Battle of Chamkaur, the Guru's elder sons embraced martyrdom while fighting bravely against overwhelming forces. Their courage at such a young age exemplified the Khalsa spirit of fearlessness and honor.

### The Younger Sahibzadas: Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh

The younger sons were captured and subjected to immense pressure to

convert. When they refused, they were executed in Sirhind at a tender age.

Their sacrifice is remembered not only for its bravery but for its purity—an unwavering commitment to faith even in the face of death.

## The Khalsa and the Spirit of Resistance

The creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1699 transformed the Sikh community into a collective force grounded in courage and discipline.

The Khalsa embodied the spirit of martyrdom—not as a goal, but as a readiness to sacrifice everything for justice and righteousness. This spirit continued through the turbulent 18th century, as Sikhs faced persecution under various regimes.

Countless unnamed men and women gave their lives during this period, choosing death over the abandonment of their faith. Their sacrifices ensured the survival and resilience of the Sikh community.

## Bhai Mani Singh and Baba Deep Singh: Icons of Devotion

The legacy of martyrdom extends beyond the Gurus and their families to devoted Sikhs who upheld the same principles.

- Bhai Mani Singh was executed for refusing to convert and for organizing religious gatherings during a time of oppression.
- Baba Deep Singh is remembered for his unwavering determination to defend the Harmandir Sahib, fighting even after sustaining fatal injuries.

Their stories have become symbols of devotion, courage, and unwavering faith.

## Martyrdom as Moral Strength, Not Violence

A defining feature of Sikh martyrdom is its ethical foundation. It is not rooted in aggression or fanaticism, but in restraint, dignity, and moral strength.

The Sikh tradition emphasizes:

- Standing for justice without hatred
- Accepting sacrifice without seeking revenge
- Upholding truth without compromising compassion

Martyrdom is therefore seen as a last resort—a response to injustice when all peaceful avenues have been exhausted.

## Living Memory: Remembrance and Inspiration

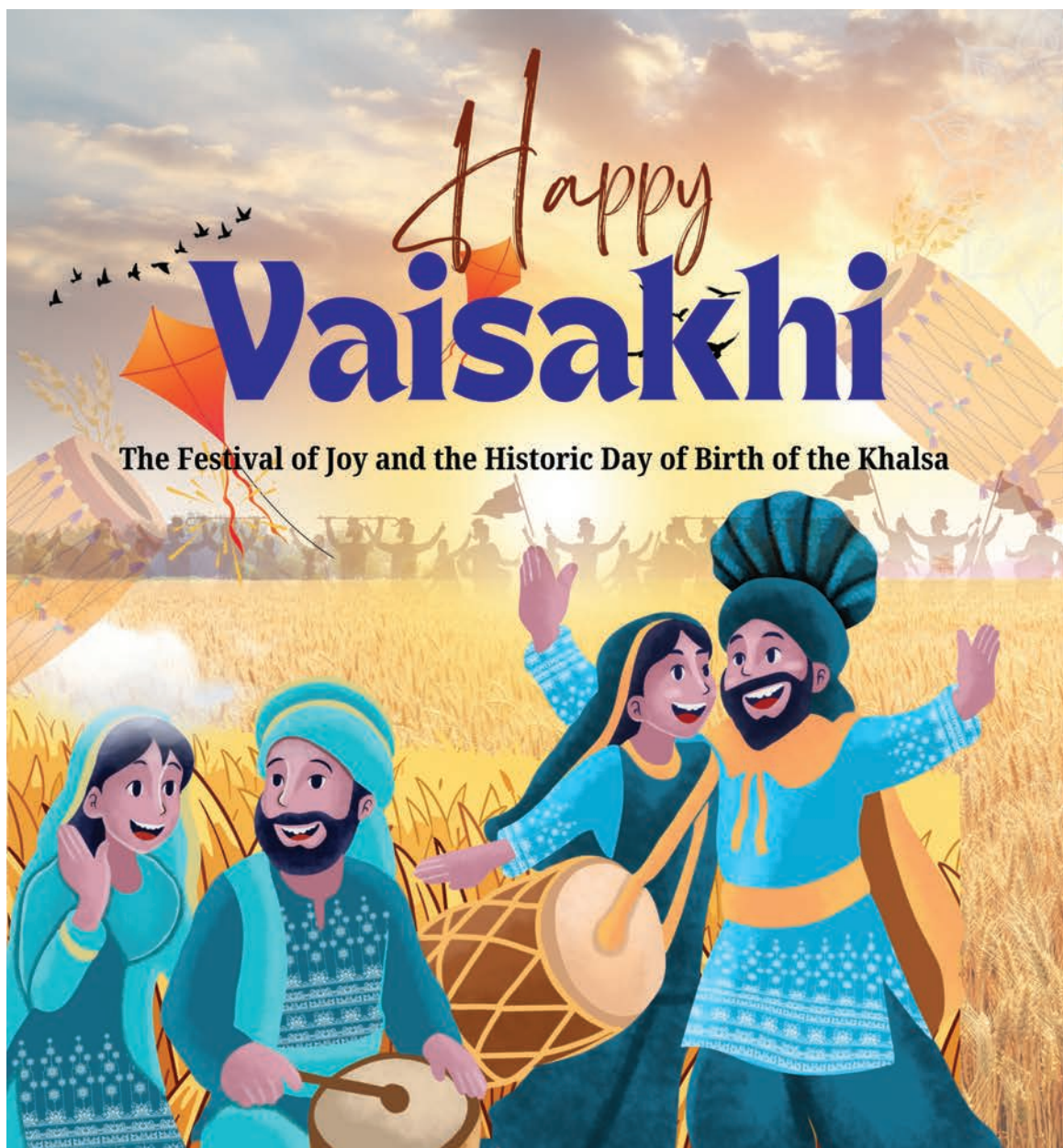
The legacy of Sikh martyrs is preserved through daily prayers, historical narratives, and commemorative events. Their stories are not confined to the past—they continue to inspire present and future generations. Gurdwaras associated with these events serve as sacred reminders of sacrifice, where devotees reflect on the values of courage, faith, and resilience. The remembrance of martyrdom is not about mourning—it is about inspiration. It encourages individuals to live with integrity, stand for truth, and remain steadfast in their beliefs.

## Relevance in the Modern World

In today's world, where issues of justice, human rights, and freedom remain pressing, the Sikh tradition of martyrdom offers a powerful example. It teaches that:

- Faith must be accompanied by courage
- Freedom must be defended for all, not just oneself
- Moral conviction must not yield to fear

These lessons remain as relevant today as they were centuries ago, offering guidance in times of uncertainty and conflict.



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# Sikh Festivals: Celebrating faith, history and community

In Sikhism, festivals are not simply occasions of joy—they are profound moments of remembrance, spiritual renewal, and collective identity. Rooted in history and guided by devotion, Sikh festivals bring communities together in a shared experience of prayer, music, service, and reflection.

Each festival commemorates a defining moment in Sikh history—whether it is the birth of a Guru, the creation of the Khalsa, or an act of sacrifice that shaped the Sikh community. Through these observances, history is not just remembered—it is relived, internalized, and passed on to future generations.

## The Spiritual Essence of Sikh Celebrations

At the core of every Sikh festival lies the guidance of the Guru Granth Sahib. Celebrations are deeply spiritual in nature, beginning with prayer and the recitation of Gurbani.

Unlike festivals centered primarily on ritual or spectacle, Sikh observances emphasize:

- Spiritual reflection and devotion
- Congregation (Sangat)
- Selfless service (Seva)
- Equality through the institution of Langar

These elements transform festivals into meaningful experiences that strengthen both personal faith and communal bonds.

## Vaisakhi: The Birth of the Khalsa

One of the most important festivals in Sikhism is Vaisakhi, celebrated every year in April.

It commemorates the historic day in 1699 at Anandpur Sahib, when Guru Gobind Singh Ji founded the Khalsa.

This moment marked a transformation in Sikh identity, establishing a disciplined community committed to equality, courage, and justice.

### Celebrations and Rituals

- Amrit Sanchar ceremonies: Initiation into the Khalsa
- Nagar Kirtans: Processions led by the Panj Pyare, accompanied by devotional singing
- Special prayers and kirtan in Gurdwaras
- Community meals (langar) served to thousands

Vaisakhi is both a spiritual milestone and a celebration of unity and identity.

## Gurpurabs: Honoring the Lives of the Gurus

Gurpurabs mark the birth and martyrdom anniversaries of the Sikh Gurus and are among the most widely observed Sikh festivals.

### Guru Nanak Gurpurab

The birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji is one of the most significant celebrations in Sikhism.

#### Key Observances

- Akhand Path: A continuous 48-hour reading of the Guru Granth Sahib
- Prabhat Pheris: Early morning



devotional processions through neighborhoods

- Kirtan and discourses highlighting the Guru's teachings
- Langar open to all, reinforcing equality

The festival reflects Guru Nanak's timeless message of unity, humility, and devotion.

### Other Gurpurabs

Celebrations of Gurus such as Guru Gobind Singh Ji and Guru Arjan Dev Ji highlight different dimensions of Sikh teachings—courage, sacrifice, resilience, and faith.

## Hola Mohalla: The Spirit of Strength and Discipline

Introduced by Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Hola Mohalla is a unique festival that combines spiritual devotion with martial tradition.

Held annually in Anandpur Sahib, it reflects the Sikh ideal of the saint-soldier.

#### Key Features

- Gatka demonstrations showcasing traditional Sikh martial arts
- Mock battles and displays of physical skill
- Kirtan and poetry recitations
- Large-scale langar and community participation

Hola Mohalla is not merely a display of strength—it is a reminder of discipline, readiness, and the responsibility to defend justice.

## Maghi: A Tribute to Sacrifice

The festival of Maghi commemorates the martyrdom of the Forty Liberated Ones (Chali Mukte), who sacrificed their lives in the Battle of Muktsar.

Observed in Sri Muktsar Sahib, Maghi is both solemn and inspiring.

#### Observances

- Pilgrimages and ritual bathing in sacred water bodies
  - Kirtan and historical narratives recounting the sacrifice
  - Community gatherings and langar
- Maghi emphasizes themes of courage, redemption, and unwavering faith.

## Bandi Chhor Divas: A Celebration of Freedom

Celebrated alongside Diwali, Bandi Chhor Divas marks the release of Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji from imprisonment.

The Guru refused to leave captivity unless 52 other prisoners were also freed, making this event a powerful symbol of justice and compassion.

#### Celebrations

- Illumination of Gurdwaras with lights and candles
- Fireworks and community gatherings
- Special kirtan and prayers

At the Harmandir Sahib, the Golden Temple is illuminated beautifully, attracting thousands of devotees.

#### Common Rituals Across Sikh

## Festivals

Despite their diversity, Sikh festivals share several key practices that define their spiritual character:

### Akhand Path

A continuous, uninterrupted reading of the Guru Granth Sahib, symbolizing devotion and reverence.

### Nagar Kirtan

Public processions led by the Panj Pyare, accompanied by devotional singing and community participation.

### Langar

The community kitchen remains central to every celebration, serving free meals to all and reinforcing equality.

### Seva

Voluntary service—cooking, cleaning, organizing—becomes an integral part of every festival, embodying humility and compassion.

## Festivals as Living History and Cultural Continuity

Sikh festivals serve as bridges between past and present. They preserve historical memory while making it relevant to contemporary life.

Through storytelling, hymns, and participation, each generation learns about:

- The lives and teachings of the Gurus
- The sacrifices that shaped Sikh identity
- The values of equality, courage, and service

These festivals ensure that Sikh history remains a living, evolving tradition.

## A Global Expression of Sikh Identity

With Sikh communities spread across the world, festivals have taken on a global dimension. From Punjab to cities in Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, and beyond, Gurdwaras become centers of vibrant celebration. Public processions, cultural events, and interfaith participation highlight the inclusive nature of Sikh festivals. They serve not only as religious observances but also as platforms for cultural exchange and community engagement.

## Faith in Celebration, Community in Action

Sikh festivals are powerful expressions of a living faith—where devotion, history, and community come together in harmony. They remind us that spirituality is not confined to individual practice; it is shared through collective experience. Through prayer, music, service, and fellowship, these festivals continue to inspire values of equality, courage, and compassion.

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# The Dasam Granth: Literature, debate and legacy

Within the vast and layered tradition of Sikh literature, the Dasam Granth stands as one of the most compelling and complex works. Closely associated with Guru Gobind Singh Ji, it is a text that defies simple classification—part devotional scripture, part heroic poetry, part philosophical reflection, and part courtly literature.

Distinct in tone and structure from the Guru Granth Sahib, the Dasam Granth has inspired devotion, debate, and deep scholarly engagement for centuries. Its legacy lies not only in what it contains, but also in how it continues to be interpreted, discussed, and lived.

## The Court of Anandpur Sahib

The compositions of the Dasam Granth emerged during one of the most dynamic periods in Sikh history—the late 17th century, when Guru Gobind Singh Ji resided at Anandpur Sahib.

This was a time marked by:

- Political conflict with Mughal authority
- The consolidation of Sikh identity
- The formation of the Khalsa in 1699
- A flourishing of literary and artistic activity

Guru Gobind Singh Ji's court became a vibrant intellectual center, often described as a "literary darbar," where poets, scholars, and warriors from diverse backgrounds gathered. Many were well-versed in Sanskrit, Persian, and Indic traditions, contributing to a rich cultural synthesis.

The Dasam Granth reflects this environment—its compositions echo not only spiritual devotion but also the urgency of a community preparing for moral and physical resistance.

## Compilation and Manuscript Tradition

Unlike the Guru Granth Sahib, which was compiled and canonized during the time of the Gurus, the Dasam Granth took shape after the passing of Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1708.

## Early Compilation Efforts

One of the earliest known compilations is associated with Bhai Mani Singh, a devoted Sikh scholar and martyr. He is believed to have collected and organized the Guru's writings into a coherent volume, though historical evidence remains a subject of scholarly discussion.

Manuscript Variations

Several early manuscripts exist, including:

- The Anandpuri Bir
- The Patna Bir
- The Mani Singh recension

These manuscripts differ in arrangement, inclusion, and sequence of compositions, contributing to ongoing debates about the text's final form.

## Standardization

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, efforts were made to standardize the Dasam Granth, particularly during the Singh Sabha reform movement. Printed editions



helped establish a more widely accepted structure, though variations still exist.

The Dasam Granth is remarkable for its thematic and stylistic diversity. A closer look at its key compositions reveals its depth:

### Jaap Sahib: The Infinite Divine

Jaap Sahib is one of the most revered compositions, forming part of daily Sikh prayers.

- It presents a vision of the Divine that is beyond form, gender, and limitation
- The language is rhythmic, expansive, and deeply poetic
- It emphasizes attributes such as timelessness, fearlessness, and universality

Rather than defining God, it dissolves all attempts at definition—inviting the reader into awe and contemplation.

### Akal Ustat: Praise of the Timeless One

This composition celebrates the unity of humanity under one Divine source.

- It rejects distinctions based on religion, caste, or nationality
- It affirms that all people are equal in the eyes of the Divine
- It reflects Guru Gobind Singh Ji's universal vision

Akal Ustat stands as a powerful statement of inclusivity and spiritual equality.

### Bachittar Natak: Narrative and Mission

Often interpreted as semi-autobiographical, Bachittar Natak provides insight into the Guru's life and purpose.

- It recounts his lineage and spiritual mission
- It describes divine guidance in shaping his role
- It frames his life within a broader cosmic narrative

Rather than a conventional autobiography, it is a theological narrative that situates human action within divine will.

### Chandi Charitar and Chandi di Var

These compositions draw on mythological imagery, particularly the figure of Chandi (a form of divine

power), to convey deeper spiritual truths.

- They depict the triumph of righteousness over evil
- They inspire courage and moral strength

These works are often understood symbolically rather than literally, emphasizing inner and outer battles against ignorance and oppression.

### Zafarnama: The Epistle of Victory

Written in Persian and addressed to Emperor Aurangzeb, the Zafarnama is one of the most historically significant compositions.

- It asserts moral victory despite material loss
- It criticizes betrayal and injustice
- It reaffirms commitment to truth and righteousness

The Zafarnama is not merely a political document—it is a spiritual declaration of integrity.

### Charitropakhyan: Complexity of Human Nature

One of the most debated sections, Charitropakhyan consists of numerous narrative tales.

- It explores themes of morality, deception, and human behavior
- It presents cautionary stories about ethical pitfalls
- It reflects the complexity of worldly life

Interpretations vary widely—some view it as moral instruction, others as courtly literature, and still others as allegorical teaching.

### Linguistic and Poetic Excellence

The Dasam Granth is a masterpiece of multilingual expression.

Languages and Influences

- Braj Bhasha (dominant literary medium)
- Punjabi
- Persian
- Sanskrit vocabulary and idioms

Literary Forms

- Devotional hymns
- Heroic ballads
- Narrative poetry
- Epistolary writing

The text employs intricate meters,

alliteration, and rhetorical devices, reflecting a high level of literary sophistication.

## Theological Position and Distinction

A key point of understanding is the distinction between the Dasam Granth and the Guru Granth Sahib.

- The Guru Granth Sahib is the eternal Guru and central scripture of Sikhism
- The Dasam Granth is a revered but non-canonical text in most Sikh traditions

While the Guru Granth Sahib focuses on spiritual liberation through devotion and remembrance of the Divine, the Dasam Granth often emphasizes:

- Moral courage
- The struggle against injustice
- The responsibilities of leadership

Together, they reflect complementary dimensions of Sikh thought—spiritual depth and active engagement.

## Debates and Interpretive Traditions

The Dasam Granth has generated diverse perspectives within the Sikh community:

### Authorship Debates

Scholars and traditions differ on whether all compositions were authored by Guru Gobind Singh Ji or whether some were contributed by court poets.

### Theological Concerns

Certain mythological and narrative elements have raised questions about interpretation and alignment with Sikh doctrine.

### Institutional Positions

Different Sikh institutions and traditions vary in how they approach the text—some emphasizing its devotional portions, others engaging critically with its entirety.

These debates are part of a living intellectual tradition, reflecting the depth and dynamism of Sikh scholarship.

### Role in Sikh Practice and Identity

Despite debates, the Dasam Granth continues to influence Sikh life:

- Daily prayers: Compositions like Jaap Sahib are widely recited
- Khalsa initiation: Portions are included in ceremonial practices
- Martial inspiration: Its themes of courage and righteousness resonate strongly

It contributes to the Sikh ideal of the saint-soldier, reinforcing the balance between spirituality and action.

### Cultural and Artistic Legacy

The Dasam Granth has left a lasting imprint on Sikh culture:

- Music and recitation traditions
- Martial poetry and ballads
- Visual art and symbolism
- Storytelling and oral traditions

Its narratives and imagery continue to inspire creative expression across generations.







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# Women in Sikhism: Equality, strength and leadership

Sikhism stands as one of the most progressive spiritual traditions in the world when it comes to gender equality. From its very inception in the 15th century, the faith has upheld the dignity, agency, and spiritual sovereignty of women. Rooted in the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and carried forward by successive Gurus, Sikhism rejects all forms of gender discrimination and affirms that women are equal participants in both spiritual and temporal life. The Sikh vision of womanhood is not one of subordination, but of strength, wisdom, leadership, and divine grace.

## The Foundational Vision: Guru Nanak's Radical Equality

The foundation of gender equality in Sikhism lies in the revolutionary teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji (1469-1539). At a time when women in South Asia were subjected to practices such as purdah (veiling), sati (widow immolation), and denial of education, Guru Nanak openly challenged these norms.

One of his most powerful proclamations remains central to Sikh philosophy:

*"So kyo manda aakhiye jit jamme rajaan"*

Why call her inferior, from whom kings are born?

This statement is not merely poetic-it is a theological assertion that women are the source of life and deserve reverence, not marginalization. Guru Nanak emphasized that both men and women are equal before the Divine and equally capable of achieving spiritual liberation (mukti).

## Scriptural Affirmation: Equality in the Guru Granth Sahib

The Sikh holy scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, reinforces the principle of equality. It contains no injunctions that restrict women's participation in religious or social life. On the contrary, it speaks of the soul (atma) beyond gender, emphasizing devotion, humility, and remembrance of God (Naam) as the true markers of spiritual progress.

The Guru Granth Sahib rejects caste, ritual hierarchy, and gender bias, establishing a universal spiritual framework where all human beings are equal manifestations of the Divine.

## Women in Early Sikh History: Leadership and Courage

Sikh history offers numerous examples of women who embodied courage, resilience, and leadership.

### Mata Khivi: Seva and Institution Building

Mata Khivi played a pivotal role in the development of the langar (community kitchen). Under her supervision, the langar became a powerful institution promoting equality, where people of all backgrounds sat together and shared food. Her contributions are so significant that she is the only woman mentioned by name in the Guru Granth Sahib.



### Bibi Bhani: Devotion and Legacy

Bibi Bhani, the daughter of Guru Amar Das and wife of Guru Ram Das, is remembered for her deep devotion and service. Her lineage continued the Guru tradition, as she was the mother of Guru Arjan Dev Ji.

### Mai Bhago: Warrior Saint

Mai Bhago stands as a symbol of martial valor and spiritual strength. During a critical moment in Sikh history, she rallied deserters and led them into battle alongside Guru Gobind Singh. Her bravery in combat and unwavering faith embody the Sikh ideal of the saint-soldier.

## Institutional Equality: Reforms of the Sikh Gurus

Subsequent Gurus institutionalized gender equality through concrete reforms:

- Guru Amar Das strongly opposed practices like sati and purdah, advocating widow remarriage and women's participation in religious life. He appointed women as preachers and leaders of congregations (manjis), a radical move for the time.
- Guru Gobind Singh further

- Conduct ceremonies, including marriages (Anand Karaj)
- Serve in gurdwara management committees

This inclusivity reflects the core Sikh belief that spiritual authority is not determined by gender but by devotion and understanding.

## Contemporary Realities: Progress and Challenges

While Sikh teachings advocate equality, the lived realities of Sikh women sometimes reflect broader societal challenges. In regions like Punjab, cultural practices influenced by patriarchy may still affect women's roles in family and society.

Issues such as gender bias, female foeticide, and unequal access to opportunities persist, not because of Sikh doctrine, but due to social conditioning. However, Sikh women across the world continue to challenge these barriers.

Prominent Sikh women today are making their mark in diverse fields-politics, academia, military service, and activism-carrying forward the legacy of equality envisioned by the Gurus.

## Symbolism of "Kaur": Identity and Sovereignty

The surname "Kaur" is more than a title-it is a declaration of independence and self-respect. Introduced by Guru Gobind Singh, it signifies that every Sikh woman is a sovereign individual, not defined by marital status or lineage.

This naming convention dismantled patriarchal structures that tied a woman's identity to her father or husband, giving her an autonomous spiritual and social identity.

## Feminine Spirituality in Sikh Thought

Sikhism often uses the metaphor of the soul-bride longing for union with the Divine Husband (Waheguru). This symbolism elevates feminine qualities such as love, devotion, and surrender as universal spiritual ideals applicable to all, regardless of gender.

Thus, femininity in Sikhism is not limited to women-it becomes a spiritual paradigm for all seekers.

## A Living Legacy of Empowerment

Women in Sikhism are not peripheral figures; they are central to its spiritual and historical narrative. From the egalitarian teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji to the martial courage of Mai Bhago, Sikh tradition celebrates women as equal partners in the journey of faith and justice.

The Sikh vision of society is one where women are leaders, warriors, nurturers, and spiritual guides. While challenges remain in practice, the doctrinal foundation is unequivocal: women are equal, powerful, and indispensable.

In a world still grappling with gender inequality, Sikhism offers a timeless and transformative model-one where equality is not an aspiration, but a sacred truth.

reinforced equality through the creation of the Khalsa in 1699. Women were given the surname "Kaur" (meaning princess or sovereign), symbolizing dignity and independence, while men took "Singh" (lion). This eliminated caste markers and affirmed equal identity.

## The Khalsa and the Saint-Soldier Ideal

The Khalsa tradition emphasizes the concept of the Sant-Sipahi (saint-soldier), which applies equally to women. Sikh women are encouraged to cultivate spiritual discipline alongside courage and readiness to defend justice.

Initiated Sikh women (Amritdhari Kaur) are expected to uphold the same code of conduct as men, including wearing the Five Ks (articles of faith). This reinforces the idea that women are not passive participants but active defenders of righteousness (dharma).

## Women in Sikh Religious Practice

In Sikhism, there are no restrictions on women's participation in religious activities. Women can:

- Lead prayers (Ardas)
- Perform kirtan (devotional singing)
- Read from the Guru Granth Sahib



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# Naam Simran: The path of divine remembrance

In the vast spiritual landscape of Sikhism, Naam Simran occupies a place of unparalleled importance. It is not merely a meditative exercise or devotional act, but the very essence of a God-centered life. Rooted deeply in the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and illuminated through the divine hymns of the Guru Granth Sahib, Naam Simran represents the continuous remembrance of the Divine Name-Waheguru-as the ultimate path to spiritual awakening. It is a discipline that transforms the mind, refines the soul, and aligns human consciousness with the eternal truth.

## The Meaning of Naam: Beyond a Word

In Sikh philosophy, "Naam" does not refer to a mere linguistic label or sound. It signifies the very essence of the Divine-formless, timeless, and all-pervading. Naam is the presence of God vibrating through every atom of existence. It is the creative force that sustains the universe and the spiritual energy that connects the individual soul (atma) to the Supreme Reality (Paramatma).

The Gurus emphasize that understanding Naam intellectually is not enough; it must be experienced. Through Naam Simran, the seeker moves from conceptual knowledge to direct realization, where the Divine is no longer distant but intimately present within and around.

## Simran: The Practice of Remembrance

"Simran" means remembrance, but in the Sikh context, it is far more profound than occasional recollection. It is a disciplined, continuous awareness of the Divine that permeates every thought and action. Whether through vocal chanting, silent repetition, or inner contemplation, Simran gradually purifies the mind and dissolves ego (haumai), which is considered the greatest barrier to spiritual progress.

The repetition of "Waheguru" serves as a focal point, anchoring the wandering mind. Over time, this repetition evolves into a natural, effortless state where the Divine Name resonates within the consciousness without deliberate effort-a stage known as Ajapa Jaap.

## Scriptural Foundations: The Glory of Naam

The Guru Granth Sahib repeatedly extols the supremacy of Naam. The Gurus describe it as the highest treasure, greater than all worldly riches and rituals. According to Sikh teachings, no amount of austerity, pilgrimage, or ritualistic worship can equal the transformative power of Naam Simran.

The scripture teaches that Naam is the remedy for all spiritual ailments-it cleanses the mind of impurities, eradicates fear, and brings the seeker closer to divine grace. Without Naam, life is described as spiritually barren, no matter how materially successful one may be.

## The Stages of Naam Simran: From Effort to Effortlessness

Naam Simran is a journey that unfolds in stages. In the beginning, it requires conscious effort-setting aside time for meditation, repeating the Divine Name, and cultivating focus. This stage often involves struggle, as the mind resists discipline and is easily distracted by worldly concerns.

With consistent practice, however, the seeker enters a deeper phase where Simran becomes more natural. The mind begins to settle, and the repetition of Naam becomes rhythmic and soothing. Eventually, the practitioner may reach the state of Ajapa Jaap, where the remembrance continues spontaneously, even during daily activities.

At the highest level lies Sahaj Avastha, a state of



complete spiritual balance and harmony. Here, the individual lives in constant awareness of the Divine, free from ego, fear, and attachment.

## Naam Simran and the Concept of Hukam

A central concept in Sikhism is Hukam-the Divine Will that governs the universe. Naam Simran enables the seeker to understand and accept Hukam with humility and grace. Instead of resisting life's challenges, the individual learns to align with the Divine order, cultivating inner peace and resilience.

Through Naam, one realizes that everything unfolds according to a higher wisdom. This realization dissolves anxiety and fosters a deep sense of trust in the Divine.

## Integration with Daily Life: Living in Naam

One of the unique aspects of Sikh spirituality is its emphasis on integrating devotion with daily living. Naam Simran is not confined to secluded meditation; it is meant to flow through every moment of life.

Whether working, interacting with others, or performing routine tasks, the individual is encouraged to maintain an inner connection with Waheguru. This transforms ordinary actions into sacred acts of devotion. The principles of Kirat Karni (honest work) and Vand Chakna (sharing with others), also taught by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, ensure that spirituality is expressed through ethical living and social responsibility.

## Psychological and Emotional Transformation

Naam Simran has profound effects on the human psyche. In a world filled with stress, distraction, and emotional turbulence, the practice offers a sanctuary of calm and clarity.

Regular engagement in Naam Simran can:

- Quiet the restless mind and reduce anxiety
- Foster emotional resilience and balance
- Cultivate virtues such as compassion, humility, and patience
- Replace negative thought patterns with positive, God-centered awareness

From a spiritual perspective, it gradually dissolves the illusion of separateness, allowing the individual to experience unity with all creation.

## The Role of the Guru and Divine Grace

In Sikhism, the journey of Naam Simran is guided by the Guru. The teachings of the Gurus, preserved in the Guru Granth Sahib, act as a spiritual compass, illuminating the path toward divine realization.

However, the Gurus emphasize that effort alone is not sufficient. The ultimate experience of Naam comes through divine grace. This grace cannot be forced; it is received through humility, devotion, and sincere longing.

## Challenges on the Path: The Struggle with the Mind

Despite its simplicity, Naam Simran is not without challenges. The human mind, conditioned by desires and distractions, often resists stillness. Common obstacles include lack of concentration, mechanical repetition without feeling, and attachment to worldly pleasures. The Sikh Gurus advise perseverance and patience. Even a few moments of sincere Simran, performed with love and dedication, are considered more valuable than prolonged but distracted meditation.

## Naam Simran and Liberation: The State of Jeevan Mukti

The ultimate goal of Naam Simran is mukti-liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Yet Sikhism presents a unique perspective: liberation is not reserved for the afterlife but can be experienced in this very life. A person immersed in Naam becomes a Jeevan Mukta-one who is spiritually free while still living. Such an individual remains unaffected by worldly ups and downs, anchored in divine awareness and guided by compassion and wisdom.

## The Eternal Flow of Divine Remembrance

Naam Simran is more than a spiritual practice-it is a transformative journey from ego to enlightenment, from restlessness to peace, from separation to unity. It is the thread that connects the individual soul to the infinite Divine.

From the timeless teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji to the sacred wisdom of the Guru Granth Sahib, the message resonates clearly: the remembrance of the Divine Name is the highest path to truth and fulfillment. In an age dominated by noise and distraction, Naam Simran offers a return to stillness-a sacred rhythm that echoes within the soul, guiding it toward its eternal home.

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# Architecture and symbolism of gurdwaras

**G**urdwaras --- literally meaning "the doorway to the Guru" --- are far more than places of worship in Sikhism. They are living embodiments of spiritual philosophy, social equality, and divine presence. Rooted in the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and shaped by successive Gurus, the gurdwara represents an open, inclusive, and sacred space where the Divine is experienced through prayer, service, and community.

Every architectural feature, spatial arrangement, and ritual practice within a gurdwara carries deep symbolic meaning. Together, they express the core Sikh principles of equality, humility, devotion, and unity.

## The Concept of the Gurdwara:

### A Doorway to Divine Wisdom

The term "Gurdwara" combines Guru (spiritual teacher) and Dwara (door or gateway), signifying a place where one can connect with the wisdom of the Guru. In Sikhism, the eternal Guru is the Guru Granth Sahib, and thus the gurdwara is centered not around idols or images, but around the living Word (Shabad).

This emphasis on scripture over iconography distinguishes Sikh sacred spaces from many other religious traditions. The focus remains on listening, understanding, and internalizing divine teachings rather than visual representation.

### Architectural Layout: Simplicity and Accessibility

Unlike grand temples designed to inspire awe through exclusivity, gurdwaras are intentionally built to be accessible and welcoming. While architectural styles may vary across regions—from the marble domes of Harmandir Sahib to smaller village gurdwaras—the fundamental layout follows a consistent spiritual logic.

A typical gurdwara includes:

- **Darbar Sahib (Prayer Hall):** The central hall where the Guru Granth Sahib is placed on a raised platform (Takht) under a canopy. Devotees gather here for prayer and kirtan.
- **Langar Hall:** A community kitchen and dining space where free meals are served to all visitors, regardless of background.
- **Sarovar (Sacred Pool):** Found in major gurdwaras like Harmandir Sahib, symbolizing spiritual purification and reflection.
- **Nishan Sahib:** A tall saffron flag that marks the presence of a gurdwara and serves as a beacon of hope and refuge.

The absence of barriers—both physical and symbolic—reflects the Sikh rejection of hierarchy and discrimination.

### The Four Entrances: A Symbol of Universal Equality

One of the most profound architectural features of many historic gurdwaras, especially Harmandir Sahib, is the presence of four entrances, one on each side. These doors symbolize openness to all people, regardless of caste, creed, gender, or social status.

This design reflects the teachings of Guru Amar Das, who strongly advocated for equality and inclusivity. The four doors serve as a powerful reminder that the path to the Divine is open to everyone.

### The Centrality of the Guru Granth Sahib

At the heart of every gurdwara lies the Guru Granth Sahib, treated with the utmost reverence as the eternal Guru. It is placed on a raised platform, often beneath a beautifully adorned canopy, signifying respect and devotion.

Devotees enter the gurdwara with covered heads and bare feet, bowing before the Guru Granth Sahib as a gesture of humility and surrender. The practice emphasizes that spiritual authority lies not in human intermediaries but in divine wisdom.

The continuous recitation and singing of Gurbani



(kirtan) create a sacred atmosphere, transforming the space into a living center of spiritual energy and reflection.

### Langar: Architecture of Equality in Action

The langar hall is one of the most distinctive and revolutionary aspects of gurdwara architecture. Instituted by Guru Nanak Dev Ji and formalized by Guru Amar Das, the langar embodies the principle of equality through shared meals.

In the langar, all individuals sit together on the floor in rows (pangat), regardless of social or economic status. This spatial arrangement eliminates hierarchy and reinforces the idea that all are equal before the Divine.

The kitchen itself is a place of seva (selfless service), where volunteers prepare and serve food with humility and devotion. The architecture of the langar thus becomes a living expression of Sikh ethics.

### The Nishan Sahib: A Beacon of Faith

The Nishan Sahib, the tall saffron flag bearing the Khanda symbol, stands prominently outside every gurdwara. It serves both a practical and symbolic purpose—guiding travelers to a place of refuge and representing the presence of Sikh values.

Its height and visibility signify that the gurdwara is open to all, offering shelter, food, and spiritual solace. It is a declaration of the Sikh commitment to service, justice, and community.

### The Sarovar: Reflection and Inner Cleansing

In major gurdwaras like Harmandir Sahib, the presence of a sarovar (sacred pool) adds another layer of symbolism. While not all gurdwaras have one, the sarovar represents purity, introspection, and the cleansing of the mind.

Bathing in the sarovar is seen not merely as a physical act but as a spiritual experience—an opportunity to reflect, meditate, and renew one's connection with the Divine.

### Sound and Space: The Role of Kirtan

The architecture of a gurdwara is designed to enhance the auditory experience of Gurbani. The

central hall often features acoustics that amplify the sound of kirtan, allowing the sacred hymns to resonate throughout the space.

This emphasis on sound reflects the Sikh belief in the power of the Shabad (Divine Word). The vibrations of kirtan create an atmosphere of peace and devotion, drawing the mind inward and fostering spiritual awareness.

### Global Expressions: Gurdwaras Around the World

As Sikh communities have spread across the globe, gurdwaras have been established in diverse cultural contexts—from London to Vancouver and beyond. While architectural styles may adapt to local environments, the core principles remain unchanged.

Whether a modest structure or a grand complex, every gurdwara upholds the same values of equality, service, and devotion, serving as a spiritual and cultural anchor for Sikh communities worldwide.

### Symbolism of Humility and Service

A defining characteristic of gurdwara architecture is its emphasis on humility. Unlike towering monuments designed to assert dominance, gurdwaras invite participation and service. The act of cleaning floors, washing dishes, or serving food becomes a form of worship.

This integration of physical space and spiritual practice reinforces the Sikh ideal that true devotion lies in selfless service and ethical living.

### Living Symbols of Sikh Philosophy

Gurdwaras are not static structures; they are dynamic, living spaces that embody the essence of Sikh philosophy. Every element—from the open doors and shared meals to the central placement of the Guru Granth Sahib—communicates a powerful message of unity, equality, and devotion.

Inspired by the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and shaped by the vision of the Sikh Gurus, gurdwaras continue to serve as sanctuaries of peace, learning, and service.

In a fragmented world, they stand as enduring symbols of inclusivity and spiritual harmony—true gateways to the Divine.

# The spirit of Chardi Kala: Optimism in adversity

Among the many profound concepts in Sikh philosophy, Chardi Kala stands out as a powerful expression of resilience, hope, and spiritual strength. Often translated as "ever-rising spirit" or "eternal optimism," Chardi Kala is not merely a positive attitude—it is a deeply rooted state of consciousness that enables individuals to remain fearless, balanced, and hopeful even in the face of adversity. Anchored in the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and nurtured through the legacy of the Sikh Gurus, this principle has shaped the Sikh response to suffering, struggle, and injustice across centuries.

## Understanding Chardi Kala: Beyond Optimism

Chardi Kala is often understood as optimism, but its meaning goes far beyond ordinary positivity. It reflects a spiritual state in which the mind remains uplifted regardless of external circumstances. It is the ability to maintain inner joy, courage, and faith even during hardship, loss, or persecution.

This spirit is grounded in unwavering trust in the Divine Will (Hukam). A person living in Chardi Kala does not deny suffering but transcends it through acceptance, resilience, and a deep connection with Waheguru. It is not passive endurance but active strength—an inner strength that refuses to succumb to despair.

## Scriptural Roots: Faith in Divine Will

The foundation of Chardi Kala lies in the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib, which repeatedly emphasizes acceptance of Hukam and remembrance of the Divine Name (Naam). The Gurus teach that joy and sorrow are both part of the Divine play, and true wisdom lies in remaining steady amidst both.

Through practices such as Naam Simran and kirtan, the Sikh cultivates an inner stability that is not shaken by external events. This spiritual grounding is what allows Chardi Kala to flourish—not as forced positivity, but as a natural outcome of faith and devotion.

## Historical Embodiments: Courage in Crisis

Sikh history offers numerous examples of Chardi Kala in action—moments where individuals and communities faced immense challenges yet remained spiritually elevated.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji, during his martyrdom, exemplified this spirit by maintaining composure and acceptance even under extreme suffering. His calm recitation of divine hymns in the face of torture reflects the essence of Chardi Kala—peace amidst pain.

Similarly, Guru Gobind Singh demonstrated extraordinary resilience after the loss of his family and the hardships faced by the Khalsa. Rather than succumbing to grief, he inspired his followers to remain steadfast, courageous, and optimistic.

The life of Mai Bhago also reflects this



spirit. Her determination to lead soldiers into battle and restore their courage during a time of despair highlights the active, empowering dimension of Chardi Kala.

## Chardi Kala and the Sikh Ardas

The concept of Chardi Kala is explicitly invoked in the Sikh daily prayer (Ardas), which concludes with the phrase:

*"Nanak Naam Chardi Kala, Tere Bhane Sarbat da Bhala"*

This line encapsulates the essence of Sikh spirituality: through remembrance of the Divine Name, one attains Chardi Kala, and in alignment with Divine Will, seeks the welfare of all humanity (Sarbat da Bhala).

This connection between personal resilience and universal goodwill is central to the Sikh worldview. Chardi Kala is not self-centered optimism; it extends outward, inspiring service, compassion, and collective upliftment.

## The Role of Hukam: Acceptance and Strength

At the heart of Chardi Kala lies the acceptance of Hukam, the Divine Order. This acceptance does not imply resignation but rather a profound understanding that all experiences—joyful or painful—are part of a larger divine plan.

By embracing Hukam, the individual is freed from anxiety, fear, and resistance. This inner surrender creates space for courage and clarity, enabling one to face life's challenges with dignity and grace.

## Psychological and Spiritual Dimensions

From a psychological perspective, Chardi Kala represents emotional resilience at its highest form. It encourages:

- **Mental Strength:** The ability to remain calm under pressure
- **Emotional Balance:** Freedom from extreme highs and lows
- **Positive Outlook:** A hopeful perspective rooted in faith
- **Purposeful Living:** A commitment to serve others despite personal struggles

Spiritually, it reflects a state of alignment with the Divine, where the individual experiences inner joy that is independent of external conditions.

## Chardi Kala in Daily Life

Chardi Kala is not limited to extraordinary circumstances; it is meant to be practiced in everyday life. Whether dealing with personal challenges, professional setbacks, or social issues, the Sikh is encouraged to maintain a positive and resilient mindset.

This is expressed through:

- Regular remembrance of the Divine (Naam Simran)
- Participation in seva (selfless service)
- Maintaining gratitude and humility
- Supporting others in times of need

In this way, Chardi Kala becomes a lived experience—a guiding principle that shapes thoughts, actions, and relationships.

## Collective Spirit: Community Resilience

Chardi Kala is not only an individual

trait but also a collective ethos. Throughout history, the Sikh community has demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of adversity—whether during periods of persecution or in times of crisis.

This collective optimism is visible in the way gurdwaras continue to serve humanity through langar, disaster relief, and community support. Even in challenging circumstances, the spirit of service and positivity remains unshaken.

## Relevance in the Modern World

In today's fast-paced and often stressful world, the concept of Chardi Kala holds immense relevance. It offers a spiritual framework for coping with uncertainty, anxiety, and change.

Rather than being overwhelmed by challenges, individuals can draw upon this principle to cultivate inner strength and maintain a sense of purpose. It encourages a shift from fear to faith, from despair to hope.

## The Ever-Rising Spirit

Chardi Kala is a timeless and transformative ideal—an invitation to rise above circumstances and live with courage, faith, and optimism. Rooted in the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and exemplified by the lives of the Sikh Gurus, it continues to inspire generations. It teaches that true strength lies not in avoiding adversity, but in facing it with grace and unwavering faith. In embracing Chardi Kala, one discovers an inner reservoir of resilience—a spirit that remains ever-rising, ever-hopeful, and ever-aligned with the Divine.

# Khalsa Srijana Divas and celebrations worldwide



BY  
PRABHJOT SINGH

For Punjabis worldwide, Vaisakhi is not only a religious or seasonal festivity but also much more. Though many other South Asian communities, including Tamils, Malayalees, Biharis, and Bengalis, celebrate this mid-April festival with traditional fervor and gaiety, it continues to be acknowledged as a true Punjabi festival in general and a Sikh religious festival in particular.

If there is any Indian festival other than Diwali that has universal appeal, it is Vaisakhi. Punjabis or Sikhs, like potatoes, are a universal commodity. Wherever they go, they carry with them not only the sacred Sikh scriptures, including Sri Guru Granth Sahib, but also their favorite pastime endeavors—playing Kabaddi to remain physically and mentally fit and field hockey, a sport that essentially is of British origin but dominated by the Punjabis worldwide.

As a universal community, overseas Punjabis have carved for themselves a distinct socio-economic-cultural identity. Vaisakhi, or the first day of the month of Vaisakh in the Vikram Samvat calendar, has affable religious overtones as it marks the birth anniversary of the Khalsa, the pure. Otherwise, it has traditionally been correlated to the start of the harvesting season (of the wheat crop) in North India, reflecting in the process great socio-economic strides the farming community of the north has made. Besides, for many Indian communities, it marks the start of summer.

Global conflicts and rapidly changing geopolitical scenes notwithstanding, the Sikh community is upbeat about the ensuing Vaisakhi celebrations.

Vaisakhi celebrations and holding of kabaddi tournaments worldwide are traditionally and conventionally linked. This Vaisakhi, however, is going to be different. The Kabaddi community worldwide, except for India and a few more places, decided early this year not to hold any event throughout the year till the "house" is set in order. The community wants to introduce discipline, frame rules and regulations, and monitor the holding of tournaments, besides introducing registration of players.

Other than Kabaddi, certain developments, including the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjer in Surrey a couple of years ago, led to a huge spat in bilateral relations between India, the original home of the Sikhs, and Canada, the new or second home of the youngest and most affluent minority community. Animosities grew and touched a new high that started impacting the normal life of the Indian community in Canada. Protests at Indian diplomatic missions in Canada grew louder besides turning violent at times.

The holding of "Vaisakhi" celebrations,



too, could not evade the impact of the strained India-Canada relations. Interestingly, the Indian mission in Toronto, in collaboration with Virasat-e-Khalsa, is holding a major event to mark Diwali celebrations. There will be a live music program by Jagjit Jeet Bhinder on April 12 at a Brampton banquet house. Otherwise, in the recent past, the only time when "Vaisakhi" celebrations got subdued was because of the covid pandemic.

After the Covid pandemic subsided, major public events, including commemorating Vaisakhi through city parades or Nagar Kirtan processions, resumed in 2023. They could not be organized in 2021 and 2022. Instead, special gatherings were held at Sikh temples-gurdwaras-by following the safety protocols of wearing face masks and maintaining a physical distance. Punjabis.

In 2024, Nagar Kirtan was replaced by a special congregation in Toronto. Other cities in North America also held special "Vaisakhi" celebrations by following the official guidelines.

The religious significance of Vaisakhi for Sikhs dates to 1699 when the 10th Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh, chose the historic town of Sri Anandpur Sahib in Punjab for the launch of the Khalsa. Though main religious celebrations are held at Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib (Sri Anandpur Sahib), Golden Temple (Amritsar), and Takht Sri Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo), the Sikhs mark the festivities by holding special congregations in gurdwaras in a global show of their progress in social, political,

art, culture, sports, and economic fields as followers of one of the most recent and modern religions.

Since Sikhism had its origin in Pakistan-Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of the first Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Nanak Dev-groups of the devout also visit Sikh shrines there as part of Vaisakhi celebrations that are held in the second week of April every year. After almost 230 years of the birth of Guru Nanak Dev, Sri Guru Gobind Singh had given the Sikhs new identity of the Khalsa by introducing the concept of Saint Soldier.

Vaisakhi celebrations' global significance is marked by ever-expanding numbers of cosmopolitans and metropolises that reverberate to the beats of bhangra and display the traditional martial art of Gatka as part of Nagar Kirtan processions or Sikh parades. Sikhs pride in claiming themselves to be one of the most affluent minorities in the world.

The major focus remains on Sikhs in Europe (UK, Germany, Italy, France, Greece, the Netherlands, and Sweden), the Americas (USA and Canada), Australia and New Zealand, Africa (Kenya), and Asia (Malaysia, Thailand, and Fiji). Some Commonwealth nations—England, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—and others have accorded recognition to major Sikh festivals, including Vaisakhi.

In 1999, when the world celebrated the tercentenary of the Khalsa, Canada became the first country other than India to take out a commemorative stamp to mark the event. Vaisakhi celebrations are now held at Parliament Hill in Ottawa, besides those of several provincial

parliaments in other Commonwealth nations.

Historically, the Sikhs had to struggle hard not only to shrug off the blot of "second-rate citizens" in many parts of the erstwhile Commonwealth but also had to fight hard democratically for their rights and absorption in the mainstream of their new countries of abode.

The concept of the Nagar Kirtan processions—the Sikh parade—has been an effective tool for the overseas Sikh community to introduce itself as a peaceful and hard-working group that has no qualms about making countries of their present abode their homes.

This commitment has helped the community to script an unprecedented success story the world over. Though the Sikhs—initially described as Hindus—started reaching Canada in early 1900s, they had no voting rights in British Columbia from 1907 onwards. They had to wait for 40 long years to win the right to vote. In 1947, the requirement to be a voter was changed to Canadian citizenship in addition to being a British subject. In 1950, the first Sikh—Naranjan Garewal—was elected to the City Council of Mission in British Columbia.

The first-ever Sikh Parade was organized on January 19, 1908, along Second Avenue in Vancouver. On August 28, 1912, Hardial Singh Atwal became the first Canadian-born Sikh.

Each Nagar Kirtan procession comprises, among other things, a tastefully decorated truck trailer that carries the sacred Guru Granth Sahib in a golden or silver palanquin, five baptized Sikhs (Panj Piaras) who carry Kesari flags (Nishan Sahibs), and Gurbani reciting groups or "Prabhat Pheris" besides Bhangra and Gatka players.

The scale at which the Nagar Kirtan processions are now organized in North America started in 1978 when the Sikhs organized a massive procession to mark the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Amar Dass, the fourth Sikh Guru. Since then, the holding of the Sikh Parade has become an annual feature.

Many historians and social scientists believe that the Nagar Kirtan, or Sikh parades, paved the way for the consolidation of the Sikh community as a strong political force that ultimately saw a turbaned Sikh—Gurbax Singh Malhi—in the Canadian House of Commons in 1993. It was he who, six years later, persuaded the then Liberals to hold a big celebration on Parliament Hill to mark the tercentenary celebrations of the Khalsa on Vaisakhi Day. In May 1999, Canada issued a 49-cent special commemorative stamp to mark the tercentenary of the Khalsa.

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# Sikh Diaspora today: Global presence, contributions and influential personalities

The Sikh diaspora in the 21st century stands as a powerful testament to resilience, adaptability, and the enduring relevance of Sikh philosophy in a globalized world. From its early migrations under colonial rule to its present-day prominence across continents, the Sikh community has evolved into a transnational network that exerts influence far beyond its numerical size. Deeply anchored in the teachings of Guru Nanak and shaped by the Khalsa tradition established by Guru Gobind Singh, the diaspora today embodies a synthesis of faith, identity, and modern aspiration.

## Influential Sikh Diaspora Personalities: Leadership Across Continents

One of the most compelling dimensions of the Sikh diaspora is the extraordinary range of individuals who have achieved global prominence. Their journeys reflect not only personal excellence but also the values of discipline, service, and resilience deeply embedded in Sikh tradition.

### Politics and Governance: Shaping Democratic Landscapes

#### Jagmeet Singh



As leader of Canada's New Democratic Party, Jagmeet Singh represents a historic milestone—not only as the first Sikh to lead a major federal political party in Canada but

also as one of the most recognizable turbaned politicians in the Western world. Born to immigrant parents, Singh's rise symbolizes the success of multicultural democracy. His political agenda often emphasizes social justice, healthcare reform, and economic equity, reflecting Sikh ethical principles of fairness and welfare. Singh's unapologetic embrace of his identity—turban, beard, and all—has helped normalize Sikh visibility in global politics.

#### Harjit Sajjan



A former Canadian Minister of National Defence, Harjit Sajjan's journey from a Sikh immigrant family to one of the most powerful security

positions in Canada is remarkable. A decorated military officer, Sajjan served in Afghanistan and later transitioned into politics. His career reflects a blend of service (seva) and leadership, demonstrating how Sikh values can align with national service in diverse contexts.

#### Preet Bharara



As the former U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Preet Bharara became one of the most influential legal figures in the United States.

Known for prosecuting high-profile corruption and financial crime cases, Bharara built a reputation for integrity and independence. His work reinforced the role of diaspora Sikhs in upholding justice and rule of law at the highest levels.

#### Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi



A Member of Parliament in the United Kingdom, Dhesi has been a vocal advocate for diversity, workers' rights, and anti-racism. His speeches in

Parliament, often addressing discrimination faced by minorities, highlight the ongoing challenges and responsibilities of diaspora representation.

### Business and Global Economic Leadership

#### Ajay Banga



Ajay Banga stands among the most influential figures in global finance today. As President of the World Bank and former CEO of Mastercard, he has played a crucial

role in shaping global financial inclusion, digital payments, and development policy. His leadership reflects the diaspora's transition from small-scale entrepreneurship to commanding positions in international economic governance.

#### Narinder Singh Kapany



Often referred to as the "Father of Fiber Optics," Kapany revolutionized telecommunications technology. His pioneering work laid the foundation for modern internet and communication

systems. A proud Sikh, he also contributed significantly to promoting Sikh art and heritage globally, demonstrating how scientific innovation and cultural preservation can go hand in hand.

#### Gurinder Singh Mann

Though not a business leader in the traditional sense, Mann's contributions to Sikh studies have had global intellectual impact. As a scholar, he has shaped academic discourse on Sikh history, diaspora identity, and religious interpretation.

### Arts, Culture, and Global Media Presence

#### Lilly Singh



Lilly Singh's rise from YouTube content creator to global media personality represents a new era of diaspora influence. Through humor, storytelling, and advocacy, she has addressed issues

such as identity, race, gender, and mental health. Importantly, she has normalized Sikh representation—appearing on international platforms while proudly embracing her heritage.

#### Jazzy B



Often called the "Crown Prince of Bhangra," Jazzy B played a pivotal role in globalizing Punjabi music. Based in Canada and the UK, his music fused traditional Punjabi beats with Western styles,

creating a transnational cultural identity that resonates with diaspora youth.

#### Waris Ahluwalia

A unique figure straddling Hollywood and high fashion, Waris Ahluwalia has redefined Sikh masculinity in global aesthetics. Frequently seen wearing a turban on international red carpets, he has challenged stereotypes and expanded representation in industries often lacking diversity.

#### Diljit Dosanjh



Though rooted in India, Diljit's global tours and crossover appeal have made him a diaspora icon. Performing at international festivals and appearing on global platforms, he represents the cultural bridge

between Punjab and its overseas communities.

### Activism, Humanitarianism, and Civil Society Leadership

#### Ravi Singh

As the founder of Khalsa Aid, Ravi Singh has become synonymous with Sikh humanitarian service. From Syria to Ukraine, from natural disasters to refugee crises, his organization has delivered aid without discrimination. His work exemplifies the Sikh principle of Sarbat da Bhalla in action on a global scale.

#### Valarie Kaur

An American civil rights activist, filmmaker, and lawyer, Valarie Kaur has been a powerful voice for interfaith understanding and social justice. Her advocacy work, particularly in the aftermath of hate crimes against Sikhs, has brought attention to issues of identity, belonging, and collective healing.

#### Simran Jeet Singh

A prominent educator and writer, Simran Jeet Singh has played a crucial role in raising awareness about Sikh identity in the United States. Through public scholarship and media engagement, he addresses issues of racism, representation, and religious literacy.

### Sports and Public Life

#### Pardeep Singh Nagra

A trailblazer in Canadian boxing, Nagra fought legal battles to compete while maintaining his Sikh articles of faith. His perseverance helped change regulations, allowing Sikh athletes to compete without compromising their identity.

#### Monty Panesar

A celebrated cricketer for England, Panesar became one of the most recognizable Sikh athletes globally. His success in international cricket challenged stereotypes and expanded representation in sports.

### A Collective Portrait of Excellence

What emerges from this expanded gallery of personalities is not merely a list of successful individuals but a collective portrait of diaspora excellence. These figures represent:

- Integration without assimilation - maintaining identity while excelling globally
- Leadership with ethics - guided by Sikh principles of justice and service
- Cultural confidence - proudly expressing Sikh identity in global spaces
- Transnational influence - shaping conversations across borders

Their achievements are not isolated; they are deeply connected to the institutional strength of the diaspora—gurdwaras, community networks, and shared values.



DAVE MAKKAR, RASHMI MAKKAR,  
SURYA MAKKAR, PRACHI MAKKAR



Satnam Singh Parhar,  
Dalgit Kaur Parhar,  
Manpreet Kaur Parhar,  
Noor Parhar

# Sikh Ethics: Living truthfully in a complex world

In Sikhism, ethics are not a separate branch of thought but an inseparable part of spiritual living. The Sikh path calls not only for devotion to the Divine but for a life grounded in truth, integrity, and responsibility. Rooted in the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and preserved in the sacred verses of the Guru Granth Sahib, Sikh ethics emphasize that true spirituality is reflected in how one lives, works, and interacts with the world. Guru Nanak's powerful declaration that truth must be lived, not merely spoken, captures the essence of Sikh moral philosophy—ethical conduct is the highest expression of faith.

## The Foundation of Sikh Ethics: Living in Harmony with Divine Order

At the heart of Sikh ethics lies the concept of Divine Order, often understood as the natural law that governs the universe. Recognizing this order means understanding that life unfolds according to a higher wisdom. Ethical living, therefore, is not about rigid rules but about aligning one's thoughts and actions with this universal truth. When individuals accept this reality, they cultivate humility and clarity, freeing themselves from ego-driven desires and impulses. This alignment fosters a life of balance, where decisions are guided by conscience and awareness rather than selfish ambition.

## The Three Pillars: A Moral Framework for Daily Life

Sikh ethics are beautifully expressed through three foundational principles taught by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The first is remembrance of the Divine, which encourages constant awareness and mindfulness in all actions. The second is honest living, which emphasizes earning one's livelihood through ethical means, rejecting dishonesty and exploitation. The third is sharing with others, which promotes generosity and social responsibility. Together, these principles create a complete ethical framework where spirituality is not separate from daily life but deeply integrated into it.

### Truth as the Core Ethical Principle

Truth stands at the center of Sikh ethics. It is not limited to factual correctness but extends to authenticity, sincerity, and moral courage. To live truthfully means to remain honest in speech and action, to uphold integrity even in difficult circumstances, and to stay consistent in one's values. The Guru Granth Sahib teaches that truth is eternal and unchanging, while falsehood is temporary. A life rooted in truth brings inner peace, clarity, and spiritual fulfillment.

### Seva: Selfless Service as a Way of Life

A defining feature of Sikh ethics is the practice of selfless service. Service is not seen as charity but as an essential expression of humility and devotion. By serving others without expectation of



reward, individuals rise above ego and recognize the unity of humanity. Whether it is helping the needy, contributing to community welfare, or participating in the shared kitchen of a gurdwara, service transforms ethical values into lived experience. It reinforces the idea that true spirituality lies in action, not just belief.

## Equality and Justice: Moral Courage in Action

Sikh ethics strongly uphold the principles of equality and justice. The teachings of Guru Gobind Singh and the earlier Gurus reject all forms of discrimination and affirm the dignity of every individual. A Sikh is encouraged not only to seek personal spiritual growth but also to stand against injustice and oppression. This moral courage is central to Sikh identity, reflecting a commitment to fairness, human rights, and the protection of the vulnerable.

## Overcoming Moral Challenges: Discipline and Awareness

Human life is often influenced by negative tendencies such as desire, anger, greed, attachment, and ego. Sikh teachings recognize these as obstacles to ethical and spiritual progress. Overcoming them requires discipline, self-awareness, and a strong connection with the Divine. Through regular remembrance, reflection, and righteous action, individuals gradually free themselves from these influences and cultivate virtues such as compassion, patience, and humility.

## Honest Living in a Complex World

In today's fast-changing and competitive world, the principle of honest living remains deeply relevant.



Sikh ethics encourage full participation in society—working, earning, and contributing—while maintaining integrity and fairness. This approach rejects both material excess and withdrawal from the world. Instead, it promotes a balanced life where success is measured not just by wealth, but by honesty, dignity, and ethical conduct.

## Collective Responsibility and the Welfare of All

Sikh ethics extend beyond individual behavior to include responsibility toward society. The idea of working for the welfare of all highlights the importance of compassion and collective well-being. This principle is reflected in community initiatives, humanitarian efforts, and the functioning of gurdwaras, where equality and service

are practiced daily. Ethical living, therefore, becomes a shared commitment that strengthens social harmony and unity.

## Conclusion: Truthful Living as the Highest Path

Sikh ethics present a powerful vision of life where spirituality and morality are inseparable. Inspired by the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and guided by the wisdom of the Guru Granth Sahib, they call for a life rooted in truth, service, and justice. To live truthfully in a complex world is a challenge, but it is also a path to deep fulfillment and inner peace. Sikhism reminds us that true devotion is not found in words alone, but in the courage to live with honesty, compassion, and unwavering integrity every single day.

# Sikhism today: Voices, strength and a renewed sense of purpose

Sikhism, founded in the 15th century by Guru Nanak, continues to stand as a dynamic and evolving spiritual tradition rooted in equality, service (seva), and the ideal of universal welfare (sarbat da bhalla). In the contemporary world, the Sikh community—spread across Punjab and a vibrant global diaspora—is not merely responding to change but actively shaping its future. Religious leaders, scholars, and community voices increasingly emphasize that Sikhism today represents not a crisis, but a moment of renewal, resilience, and expanding global relevance.

## Timeless Principles, Contemporary Relevance

At the heart of Sikhism lies a set of universal principles that resonate deeply with modern concerns. The belief in the oneness of humanity, the rejection of discrimination, and the emphasis on honest living provide a strong ethical framework in an increasingly fragmented world. Sikh teachings encourage compassion, environmental awareness, and social responsibility, offering meaningful responses to issues such as inequality and injustice.

The institution of langar, where all individuals sit together and share a meal regardless of background, continues to symbolize radical equality in action. This enduring practice highlights how Sikhism is not just a set of beliefs but a lived philosophy, one that continues to inspire millions globally through acts of service and humanity.

## Strength in Unity and Institutional Guidance

While discussions about unity and internal dynamics continue, Sikh religious institutions remain central to guiding the community. Bodies such as the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and the Akal Takht play a vital role in maintaining religious traditions and addressing contemporary issues.

Many Sikh leaders view ongoing dialogue within the community as a sign of strength rather than division. Efforts to build consensus and reinforce shared values reflect a growing commitment to collective progress. These developments suggest that the Panth is actively engaged in self-reflection and constructive evolution, ensuring that Sikhism remains grounded while adapting to modern realities.

## Resilience Rooted in History

The Sikh community's history is marked by courage, sacrifice, and unwavering faith. From the spiritual teachings of the Gurus to the legacy of Guru Gobind Singh, Sikhs have consistently demonstrated resilience in the face of adversity.

Today, this historical strength



continues to inspire a confident and forward-looking identity. Rather than being weighed down by past challenges, many Sikh voices emphasize transformation—drawing lessons from history to build a stronger and more unified future. This enduring resilience remains one of the defining characteristics of Sikhism in the modern era.

## Evolving Identity in a Global Context

As Sikh communities expand across the world, the question of identity has taken on new dimensions. Younger generations, particularly in the diaspora, are engaging with their faith in innovative ways—through education, digital platforms, and community initiatives.

This engagement reflects not a departure from tradition but a renewed connection with Sikh values. By exploring the teachings of the Gurus and the wisdom of Guru Granth Sahib, many young Sikhs are redefining their identity with clarity and pride. This evolution ensures that Sikhism remains accessible, relevant, and meaningful across cultures and generations.

## Addressing Social Challenges with Spiritual Insight

Sikh leaders acknowledge that certain social challenges—such as caste-based practices, gender disparities, and youth disengagement—persist within the community. However, these are widely recognized as cultural deviations rather than reflections of Sikh doctrine.

Encouragingly, there is a growing

movement toward reform, guided by the teachings of the Gurus. Initiatives aimed at promoting equality, empowering women, and strengthening youth engagement demonstrate the community's commitment to aligning practice with principle. This process reflects a self-aware and progressive spirit, rooted in the core values of Sikhism.

## Reviving the Saint-Soldier Ideal

The concept of the saint-soldier, central to Sikh philosophy, continues to hold profound relevance. It represents the balance between spiritual devotion and social responsibility—a call to live ethically while standing against injustice.

In recent years, Sikh communities around the world have demonstrated this ideal through humanitarian work, advocacy, and peaceful activism. Rather than declining, Sikh engagement in social issues is evolving, finding new expressions in a globalized world. This renewed emphasis reflects a continuation of the Gurus' vision in contemporary form.

## A Global Community with Shared Purpose

Sikhism today is a truly global faith, with strong and active communities across continents. Gurdwaras serve not only as places of worship but also as centers of service, education, and cultural preservation.

The global Sikh community has played a significant role in promoting the values of equality, inclusivity, and compassion. Through humanitarian

efforts and interfaith dialogue, Sikhism has gained recognition as a universal and inclusive tradition. This worldwide presence underscores the faith's growing influence and enduring appeal.

## Looking Ahead with Confidence

Across diverse perspectives, a clear and hopeful consensus emerges: Sikhism today is in a phase of renewal, growth, and reaffirmation of its core values. Religious leaders and community voices emphasize that the teachings of the Gurus remain timeless, offering guidance for both personal and collective life.

The path forward lies in unity, education, and a continued commitment to living the principles of truth, service, and equality. With a strong foundation and an engaged global community, Sikhism is well-positioned to navigate the challenges of the modern world while staying true to its spiritual essence.

## A Future Rooted in Faith and Action

Sikhism today stands as a powerful example of a faith that is both deeply rooted and forward-looking. Guided by the eternal wisdom of the Gurus and inspired by a spirit of service and resilience, the Sikh community continues to move forward with confidence and purpose.

It is a tradition that not only endures but evolves—offering a message of hope, unity, and compassion that remains as relevant today as it was centuries ago.

# Sikh History This Week

APRIL 10 TO APRIL 16

## 10th April

1754 Jassa Singh Ahluwalia given Jathaedari of Sikh Nation.



1762 Kalandar Khan attacked Sri Harmandir Sahib under Abdali's influence. Sri Harmandir Sahib was destroyed with dynamites and the sarovar filled with debris. One of Sri Harmandir Sahib's bricks hit Abdali's nose. This injury proved to be deadly for him.



1763 Panth Khalsa resolved to liberate a Kasur Brahmin's wife who was abducted by the Nawab (Chief) of Kasur, Punjab.

1973 The Articles of Incorporation of the Sikh Dharma Brotherhood were endorsed by the Secretary of the State of California. This act established Sikh Dharma as an official religious organization.



## 11th April

1748a Jassa Singh Ahluwalia killed Salabat Khan, then Governor of Amritsar. Diwan Kodha murdered Lakhpat Rai on April 13, 1748 and an intense battle erupted among the Manawala and Deburji.

Sardar Kapur Singh moved with his forces towards Lahore. Meanwhile whatever Jagir that fell into the hands of the Sikhs was used for Guru Ka Langar.

1748b Meer Manu became Punjab's Governor.

1762 Ahmed Shah Abdali blew off Sri Harmandir Sahib, desecrated and filled the sarovar (sacred tank) with garbage.

In 1755, Ahmad Shah Abdali attacked India for the fourth time. After looting Mathura, Bindraban, Agra, and Delhi, he brought back jewelry, gold and thousands of young Hindu men and women. In order to liberate the enslaved Hindus, Baba Deep Singh and his associates attacked Durani near Peepli and Markanda (now in Haryana). The infuriated Abdali, made his son, Tamur Shah, as the subadar of Punjab and Jahan Khan as his General. He ordered them to kill all Sikhs and demolish Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. Following orders, Jahan Khan went to Amritsar with heavy artillery. Baba Gurbaksh Singh along with 30 other Sikhs fought back, but unfortunately, Jahan Khan demolished Darbar Sahib, its surrounding buildings and filled the sarovar with garbage.

1883 Khalsa Diwan founded at Amritsar.

Khalsa Diwan was founded at Amritsar. This body too like the previous ones, from its very inception, was torn by internal dissensions, and the tussle for supremacy between the Amritsar and the Lahore parties wrecked it. This led to the formation of an independent Khalsa Diwan at Lahore in 1886. The leaders of the Lahore Diwan were progressive whereas the Amritsar Diwan was the stronghold of the conservative elements mainly the aristocrats and Mahants. The latter failed to appreciate the wind that was blowing to restore Sikhism to its pristine glory. Nonetheless during this period, the Sikhs were able to co-operate despite mutual acrimony and dissensions.

1801 Ranjit Singh himself declared Maharaja of Punjab.

## 12th April

1759 Sikhs gathered in huge numbers for Baisakhi in Amritsar. Hukamnana was issued in the name of the Sikhs from Sri Akal Takht for the collection of Daswand and to engage in religious deeds.

1759b Maratha Sabaji and the Sikhs together attacked Jahan Khan.

1801 Coronation of Ranjit Singh as Sarkar-i-Wala.

Ranjit Singh's was proclaimed ruler by Baba Sahib Bedi, a descendant of Guru Nanak. At the coronation ceremony Sardar Ranjit Singh assumed the title Sarkar-i-Wala. Although the ceremony was conducted in accordance with the ancient ceremony of Hindu monarchy, "abhisekha," he never sat on a throne in respect to the concept of Sikh sovereignty, for sovereignty belonged only to Guru Khalsa Panth and not any individual. He asked all non-Sikhs to address him as Maharaja and all Sikhs as Singh Sahib. He struck "NanakShahi" Silver Rupee coins, symbolising sovereignty the same year. The legend "Deg Tegh Fateh" of 1765 on Lahore mint Rupees was changed to the legend that existed on Amritsar coins of 1775 and coins of Banda Bahadur of 1710. Ranjit Singh adopted the same couplet and exactly in the same form as it appeared on 1784 Amritsar coins, without any modifications.

1876 Maharaja Mohinder Singh of Patiala passed away.

## 13th April

1559 Guru Amar Das Patshah established the Vaisakhi Maela traditions.

1746 Panth Khalsa passed a resolution on the Vaisakhi day, not to be part of the Afghan kingdom and actively work against any such designs.

1814 Nirankari Chief, Baba Darbara Singh, son of Baba Dyal Ji was born.

1861 Baba Ram Singh started the Namdhari movement.

1919 Jallianwala massacre took place, 379 unarmed killed and 2,000 wounded.

## 14th April

1634 Battle of Amritsar took place between Mughals and Sikhs, led by Guru Hargobind Ji. The immediate cause of this battle was the seizure of royal hawk by Sikhs hunting near village Gumtala in the vicinity of Amritsar. The royal hawk had actually strayed away while on a hunt. Sikh tradition holds that the royal hawk was trying hard to capture its target and was flying up and down in the sky time and again. The target was almost caught when it came to the notice of the Sikhs hunting nearby who moved by compassion set off their own hawk which pounced upon the royal hawk. The royal hawk fell and was captured by the Sikhs. The royal soldiers approached the Sikhs and demanded the return of the royal hawk but on account of their insolent manners, they were refused. The matter was reported to the concerned local authorities with the result that a clash took place between the Mughal troops and the Sikhs.

1772 Sikh forces had crossed Indus and plundered Peshawar city. On this day Ahmad Shah died.

1892 Khalsa College Council established at Amritsar.

1923 Babbar's appeal to the people to swell their ranks. This appeal was distributed through "Babbar Akali Doaba" newspaper.

1930 Civil disobedience movement initiated in the Punjab.

1949 Sirdar Kapur Singh I.C.S was suspended by government of Gopi Chand Bhargava on frivolous charges. His real crime was being a committed Sikh.

1984 Surinder Singh Sodhi, a right-hand man of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, was killed.

## 15th April



PRAKASH UTSAV, Patshahi First, Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Guru Nanak Dev Ji Patshah came to this planet in Talwandi, also known as Nankana Sahib, situated about 48 miles westward from Lahore, Pakistan. He was born in the house of Kalu Chand Bedi and Mata Tripta. Today is the actual date of birth, though Guru Khalsa Panth observes it in Nov.

1634 Bhai Ballu Ji accepted Shahadat while fighting the Turks in Amritsar.

1940 Master Tara Singh declares his opposition to the establishment of Sikh rule.

1980 Sikh Bank, the Punjab and Sind Bank, Nationalised.

## 16th April

1764 Sikhs captured Lahore and issued their own coins.

1781 Sikhs attack Shahdara Patpat, Delhi.

1961 The passing away of Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh Ji.



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**Vaisakhi**  
On this beautiful festival of harvest, may your life be filled with abundance and success.



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# Best wishes for a Happy Vaisakhi



Vikas, Indu,  
Harsahab & Raunak Dhall

# Hair oiling: Nourish your scalp without weighing it down

**H**air oiling has long been a cherished part of Indian beauty rituals. Passed down through generations, it is often considered a cure-all for every kind of hair woe. But modern-day lifestyles, urban pollutants, and product overloads have changed the game, making it essential to revisit this age-old tradition with a little more strategy.

One of the most common mistakes people make is leaving hair oil on for too long. Always wash your hair after oiling, advise many hair experts. Leaving it on too long will definitely attract dirt and cause buildup. Use a light hand, massage gently, and rinse thoroughly within a few hours. Remember that more oil doesn't mean more nourishment. Oiling will work only when you use the right oil, in the right amount, and in the right way.

## Know your scalp before you oil:

Respect your scalp's needs, listen to what your hair is telling you, and oil with intent. Ketki Garud, Founder of The Volume Company, emphasises that one size does not fit all when it comes to oiling. She says, "Oiling works best when tailored to your scalp type. If your scalp is dry, go generous; if oily, be light-handed. And the same applies for the length of your hair. For maximum absorption, simply warm the oil for 20-30 seconds and gently massage it in with a cotton ball. Let it sit overnight if your scalp can handle it, or at least 30 minutes before washing off with a mild shampoo. It's best if you can oil 2-3 times a week. Oiling overnight can cause scalp issues if the oil is too heavy and doesn't suit your scalp. Some oils are richer and greasier by nature. If your scalp can't absorb that much, the excess can lead to buildup, clogged pores, itching, or flakes." Essentially, the golden rule is to pay attention to how your scalp and hair react. A little customisation goes a long way in getting the best results.



## Right ingredients for the right problem:

From seasonal dryness to increased hair fall during the monsoon, Indian hair bears the brunt of weather, water, and pollution. Ketki explains, "Indian hair goes through a lot, from heat and humidity to hard water, pollution, and seasonal scalp imbalances. That's why you should look for ingredients that not only nourish the length but also balance and protect the scalp.

If you're struggling with hair fall, you can blindly trust Brahmi or Bhringraj. To get rid of dandruff, go for Neem and Curry Leaves. For better hair growth, especially if you live in highly polluted areas, keep an eye out for Onion Seeds. Sesame oil helps with dry, under-nourished hair, and Hibiscus helps make hair shiny and reduce frizz. In my experience, what works best is a smart blend of these ingredients, after understanding your lifestyle and current hair needs."

# Types of milk ranked best to worst for blood sugar



**F**or those trying to avoid blood sugar spikes, your choice of milk matters a lot, especially if you love dairy products. From plant-based options to traditional dairy, each type affects your glucose levels differently. So, what is the key? Experts recommend looking for low-carbohydrate, no-added-sugar, and a good amount of protein.

## Soy milk

It is the best choice if you are a diabetic. Soy milk tops the list as the most blood sugar-friendly option. It strikes the perfect balance between low carbs and high protein, helping stabilise glucose levels. It works especially because it is high in protein, with almost 8 to 9 grams in every cup, which slows sugar absorption.

Also, low carbs help prevent spikes, and they contain

fibre that supports blood sugar control. However, make sure to always choose unsweetened soy milk to avoid hidden sugars.

## Almond milk

Almond milk is a great second choice, especially if you want very low carbs. If unsweetened, almond milk has almost zero or very low sugar and has minimal impact on blood glucose.

But here's the catch: since almond milk is low in protein, it may not keep you full for long. Pair it with protein-rich foods like nuts or eggs to balance blood sugar.

## Goat milk

Goat milk is loaded with beneficial nutrients but is higher in carbohydrates and natural sugars. It has a moderate amount of protein, around 8 to 9 grams, higher carbs, and natural sugars that can raise your blood glucose levels.

While goat milk is not the worst option, portion control is key if you are managing blood sugar.

## Cow's milk

Cow's milk ranks last for blood sugar control due to its higher carbohydrate and sugar content. It has a very high amount of carbs - almost 12 grams per cup and contains lactose or natural sugar. It can also lead to quicker glucose spikes. Even though it has decent protein, the carb-to-protein ratio makes it less suitable for those trying to stabilise blood sugar.

## FOOD CORNER

# Chhola bhatura

## Ingredients

- 1 cup Chola
- Salt to taste
- 1 packet Tea leaves
- 1/2 tsp Zeera
- 2 piece Kadi Patta
- 1 Onion (1/2 thinly sliced and 1/2 to make paste)
- 1/8 piece of Ginger, 3 cloves of Garlic (add more or less to your taste, mince them)
- 1 tsp Garam Masala
- 1/2 big size Tomato and
- 2 tbsp Tomato Puree (or, 3/4 tomato)
- 1/4 tsp each Haldi, Mirchi, Dhaniya powder
- 1 tsp Chola Masala (if not doesn't matter)

## For Onion Paste

- 1/2 Onion
- 2 Red Chillies
- Small piece of Cinnamon
- 3/4 piece Cloves
- 2 piece Elaichi

## Method

- Let chola soak in water overnight.
- Next day pressure cook with salt to taste and 1 packet of tea or put little tea leaves, we get in India and wrap it in a cloth.
- This will change the color of chola to black. In a pan, in little oil, add Zeera, Kadi Patta.
- Then add 1/2 thinly sliced onion.
- Fry till golden brown.
- Then add minced garlic and ginger paste. Then add onion paste.
- Fry till oil comes out. Then add tomato and tomato puree.
- Add haldi, mirchi, dhaniya and chola masala.
- When masala is done, add chola and little water. Check salt.
- Let cook for few minutes.
- Garnish with chopped onion.

## For Batura

- 1 cup Maida, 1/4 cup Atta, Salt to taste (1/4 tsp), 2 tsp Oil, 3 tbs Curd

## Method

- Add maida and atta. Add salt and the add oil.
- Mix with hand, till you can make balls from atta. Mix dahi. Mix very well.
- Add enough water to make atta dough.
- Put the dough in a plastic bag.
- Roll the bag to remove any air and tie it.
- Let stand atleast for 6 hours.(You can do it when you put chola in water, previous night).
- Heat the oil and make big size poories (batura).
- Eat with chola. Enjoy with Imli Chutney.



# Your eyes are warning you, silent signs you should never ignore



**E**ye health is often overlooked until vision problems begin to disrupt daily life. Many people dismiss early symptoms as fatigue, ageing, or excessive screen time. However, your eyes can quietly signal serious underlying conditions long before noticeable vision loss occurs. With millions worldwide affected by preventable vision impairment, recognising these early warning signs is critical. Here are silent eye symptoms you should never ignore, and what they could mean for your overall health.

## Persistent blurred or fluctuating Vision

Occasional blurry vision after long hours on screens is common. But if your vision frequently shifts between clear and blurry, it may indicate refractive errors. These symptoms may indicate early cataracts or changes in blood sugar levels associated with diabetes. Sudden blurring - especially in one eye- can signal issues with the retina or optic nerve and requires immediate attention.

## Eye strain and headaches

If you regularly experience headaches or eye discomfort during routine activities like reading or working on a laptop, it could point to uncorrected vision problems or poor eye alignment. However, with time, if these conditions do not go away, they indicate the presence of dry eye diseases, infections, or inflammation, and if poorly managed, such conditions may interfere with eye comfort and raise the risk of injury.

## Redness and irritation

Many people ignore red or watery eyes, assuming it's due to dust or allergies. However, persistent irritation may be a sign of dry eye syndrome, infections, or inflammation. Left untreated, these conditions can damage the eye surface and increase the risk of complications.

## Difficulty with night vision and light sensitivity

Struggling to see clearly at night or experiencing glare from lights could indicate early cataracts or retinal changes. These symptoms often develop gradually, making them easy to ignore until they begin interfering with daily activities like driving.

## Floater and flashes

While occasional floaters are usually harmless, a sudden increase in floaters, flashes of light, or shadowy areas in your vision can signal retinal detachment, a serious condition that requires urgent medical care. Ignoring these symptoms can lead to permanent vision loss.

Eye exams are not just about updating your glasses. They can help detect glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, hypertensive eye disease, and other conditions that often develop silently. Early diagnosis significantly improves treatment outcomes and can prevent irreversible damage.



## Why do you feel unwell even when medical reports are normal

**H**ave you ever felt constantly tired, low on energy, or simply "off," only to be told by your doctor that all your reports are normal? You are not alone.

This is becoming increasingly common in today's fast-paced world, where people struggle with health issues that do not always show up in standard medical tests.

According to Dr Sushil Kalra, Director - Internal Medicine at CK Birla Hospitals, Jaipur, medical reports cannot measure health completely. While tests are designed to detect diseases or abnormalities, they often miss subtle imbalances caused by lifestyle, stress, and mental health.

This gap between how a person feels and what reports show can be confusing and frustrating. But experts say the symptoms are real, not imagined. Understanding the reasons behind this can help people take better control of their overall well-being.

Medical reports mainly focus on measurable factors like blood sugar levels, cholesterol, or organ function. While these are important, they do not capture how well your body is functioning overall.

A person can have "normal" reports but still feel exhausted, mentally drained, or physically uncomfortable. This happens because health is not just the absence of disease, it also includes energy levels, mental clarity, sleep quality, and emotional balance.

One of the biggest reasons people feel unwell despite normal reports is chronic stress. Long-term stress affects the body in many ways, even if it does not show up in tests.

Modern lifestyles are often not in sync with what the body needs. Irregular routines, poor diet, lack of exercise, and excessive screen time can slowly affect health.

Sleep is one of the most underrated aspects of health. Even if all your tests are fine, poor sleep can make you feel physically and mentally unwell.

Source: India Today

# High-fat diet speeds up breast cancer growth: Study

**T**his new study provides insights and evidence linking a high-fat diet to breast cancer tumour growth and is particularly focused on triple-negative breast cancer, a subtype that is difficult to treat with standard methods.

In India, triple-negative breast cancer is highly prevalent and accounts for about 30% of the annual 2 lakh breast cancer cases.

Earlier research has examined the relationship between diet and cancer; it has not taken into consideration the ways in which interrelated systems, including the immune system and metabolism, can influence the behaviour of cancer cells.

"Across the five dietary conditions, the strongest direct effect was seen in the high-fat condition," said study author Maryam Kohram.

A 3D model that closely resembles



the metabolic environment of the body was used in this study. We asked the authors of the study about the findings and how this model is more reliable.

In order to replicate a realistic environment that surrounds tumours, scientists at Princeton University created a three-dimensional tumour model using a liquid similar to human plasma, ensuring that it behaved more like a

real tumor.

This helped them mimic the metabolic effects (chemical processes that manage energy production) of dietary nutrients and further isolated particular nutrients and their effects. They examined the structure, growth, and spread of cancer cells and how different dietary conditions impacted growth.

The researchers tested four specific metabolic conditions that may occur in a human body. They are high insulin, high glucose, high ketones, and high fat that could mimic the circulating nutrients just like in humans.

"In the 3D-engineered tumours, the high-fat condition resulted in faster invasion, larger tumours, and hollow regions. By contrast, the high-insulin, high-glucose, and high-ketone conditions showed much weaker direct effects in our simplified model."

## PAGE SPONSORED BY

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# OpenAI launches new ChatGPT Pro tier for Codex, changes Plus plan limits

OpenAI is pushing its coding agent Codex. The company has announced that it is bringing a new ChatGPT Pro tier, aimed at Codex users. This tier costs almost half of the pre-existing Pro plan, but is said to provide 5 times higher usage limits than the cheaper ChatGPT Plus plan.

On X, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman announced the new tier, citing high demand for Codex. He wrote, "It is very nice to see Codex getting so much love. We are launching a \$100 ChatGPT Pro tier by very popular demand."

This announcement comes at a time when Codex has reached 3 million active users. OpenAI, which is doubling down on its coding agent to take on Anthropic's Claude Code, has also reset the usage limits for Codex a number of times in the past couple of weeks.

The new ChatGPT Pro tier is priced at \$100 per month in the US, but it costs Rs 10,699 in India. This is almost half the price of the pre-existing Pro plan that would set you back by Rs 19,900 in India, or \$200 in the US. Do note that the new tier sits below the older Pro tier, which can still be purchased.

According to OpenAI, the new Pro tier is aimed at users who may be on the ChatGPT Plus plan, but want higher Codex limits. The company wrote on X, "This new tier offers 5x more Codex usage than Plus and is best for longer, high-effort Codex sessions."

For context, the ChatGPT Plus plan is priced at \$20 per month in the US, and Rs 1,999 in India.

As per the company's website, the cheaper Pro tier brings you all the



benefits of the more expensive Pro plan, including, "unlimited access to Instant and Thinking models." But there is one key difference. While the older Pro plan came with 20 times higher Codex limits than ChatGPT Plus, the new plan is 5 times higher.

Codex head Thibault 'Tibo' Sottiaux believes that this would be the right fit for most users. He wrote on X, "It should be the sweet spot for a ton of you."

While the new tier brings more usage limits for Codex, OpenAI has tweaked the limits for the Plus plan in the process. The company hinted that the ChatGPT Plus limits were likely being reduced. OpenAI posted on X, "The

Codex promotion for existing Plus subscribers ends today and as a part of this, we're rebalancing Codex usage in Plus."

Though the company stated that this change will allow for more sessions over a week, rather than long daily sessions.

OpenAI's focus on Codex comes amid competition from Anthropic. Anthropic recently surpassed the Sam Altman-led firm in terms of revenue with a run-rate revenue of \$30 billion. OpenAI has been shifting focus on enterprise tools and Codex in efforts to increase profitability. The company recently shut down its video-generation platform Sora, as it tries to avoid "sidequests."

## Earth is getting brighter at night, artificial lighting rise seen from space

Daily satellite observations have revealed that Earth's nights are growing brighter overall, but not in a simple or uniform way.

A new global study shows that artificial lighting increased by 16% between 2014 and 2022, with dramatic regional differences shaped by economic growth, energy access, conflict, and environmental policy.

The findings, published in *Nature*, challenge the long-held belief that nighttime brightness steadily rises in line with population and economic expansion. Instead, researchers describe a "highly volatile" nightscape that is constantly shifting.

Using more than a million daily images captured by a US government Earth-observation satellite and processed by NASA, scientists tracked fine-scale changes in lighting across the globe.

Unlike earlier studies that relied on monthly or yearly composites, this approach revealed short-term fluctuations and regional patterns in unprecedented detail.

The most striking increases were seen in emerging economies, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

Countries such as Somalia, Burundi, and Cambodia recorded the fastest growth, driven largely by urbanisation, infrastructure development, and expanding electricity access.

"This isn't just urbanisation, it's a massive expansion of energy access," said lead author Zhe Zhu of the University of Connecticut. "Entire regions are transitioning from near-total darkness to being part of the global electric network."

In contrast, sharp declines in lighting were observed in conflict-affected nations including Ukraine, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Lebanon.

In Ukraine, a sustained drop in brightness coincided with the escalation of war in February 2022. Economic crises also contributed to dimming in countries like Haiti and Venezuela.

Europe stood out as a region where dimming was largely intentional. The continent recorded a 4% decrease in nighttime light, driven by energy-efficient LED adoption, strict environmental regulations, and efforts to reduce light pollution.



## NASA's Artemis II astronauts splash down on Earth

NASA's Artemis II astronauts have returned safely to Earth, completing the first crewed mission to travel around the Moon in more than 50 years.

The Orion spacecraft splashed down in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of California at 5:07pm local time (00:07 GMT) on Friday, April 11 following a high-speed re-entry through Earth's atmosphere.

Recovery teams were already in position, moving quickly to secure the capsule and bring the crew aboard.

On board were NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch, along with Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen.

Minutes before re-entry, Wiseman, the mission commander, radioed mission control: "We got a great view of the Moon out window 2 - looks a little smaller than yesterday."

"Guess we'll have to go back," came the reply from Houston.

The return marked a crucial test for the Orion spacecraft, built by Lockheed Martin, demonstrating it can safely withstand the intense conditions of a lunar re-entry.

The capsule endured a dramatic 13-minute descent, slamming into the atmosphere at extreme speed. Temperatures on its exterior climbed to about 2,760 degrees Celsius (5,000 degrees Fahrenheit), hot enough to generate a plasma layer that briefly cut off communications with the crew.

Contact was restored as parachutes deployed, slowing Orion's descent before it gently hit the ocean.

Recovery crews later opened the hatch and began extracting



the astronauts, who reported minor communication issues but were otherwise in good condition.

"We are back in the business of sending astronauts to the moon, bringing them back safely and [are] set up for a series more," said NASA chief Jared Isaacman from a US Navy recovery ship.

# Middle East war to cut global growth, spike inflation despite truce: World Bank

APRIL 11, 2026

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** The war in the Middle East will have a cascading impact on the global economy, even if a ceasefire announced by U.S. President Donald Trump takes hold, World Bank President Ajay Banga told news agency Reuters in an interview on Friday, April 10.

And the damage will be far deeper if the ceasefire fails and the conflict escalates, he said.

Banga had said global growth could be lowered by 0.3 to 0.4 percentage point in a baseline scenario, with an early end to the war, and by as much as 1 percentage point if it endures. Inflation could increase by 200 to 300 basis points, with a much higher impact - of up to 0.9 percentage point - if the war continues, he said.

The World Bank's baseline estimate now projects growth in emerging markets and developing economies of 3.65 per cent in 2026, compared to 4 per cent in October, dropping as low as 2.6 per cent in an adverse scenario with a longer-lasting war. Inflation in those countries was now forecast to hit 4.9 per cent in 2026, up from the previous estimate of 3 per cent. The extreme scenario could see inflation rising as high as 6.7 per cent, according to estimates viewed by Reuters.

The war, which has killed thousands of people across the Middle East, has sent the price of oil up by 50 per cent while disrupting supplies of oil, gas, fertiliser, helium and other goods, as well as tourism and air travel.

The two-week ceasefire announced by Trump appears tenuous, with Israel and Iran continuing strikes. Iran said on Friday that blocked Iranian assets must be released and a ceasefire must take hold in Lebanon before US-Iran talks, scheduled for Saturday in Pakistan, can proceed.



Trump said that US warships were being reloaded with ammunition in case the talks failed.

"The question really is, does this current peace and the negotiations that are going to be happening this weekend - will this lead to a lasting peace and then a reopening of the Strait (of Hormuz)?" said Banga. "If it doesn't lead to that, and if conflict were to break out again, would that have an even larger impact, or longer-term impact on energy infrastructure?"

Banga said the world's largest development bank was already in discussions with some developing countries, including small island states with no natural energy resources, about tapping funds from existing programs under "crisis response windows."

The World Bank's crisis toolkit allows countries to tap previously approved but not yet disbursed funds without additional board approvals, increasing flexibility.

But Banga said the bank was cautioning countries to avoid setting up energy subsidies that they could not afford, which would trigger even bigger problems in the future. "I worry about making sure that they can come through this crisis, targeting what they need to do, but not doing anything that further deteriorates

that fiscal space," he said.

Many developing countries also have high debt levels and interest rates remain high, which constrains their ability to borrow money to fund measures to respond to the jump in energy costs and other goods caused by the war.

The crisis has put a fresh spotlight on the need for countries to diversify energy supplies and boost self-sufficiency, Banga said. The World Bank last June ended a longstanding ban on funding nuclear energy projects as part of a push to meet rising electricity needs.

Nigeria, which had long faced problems, stood to benefit from a USD 20 billion investment made by the Dangote Group in refineries, which had actually increased output during the war, and was now supplying aviation fuel to neighboring countries.

"Nigeria should be breathing a sigh of relief. They've built up the ability to have energy security for themselves through that huge investment," he said. "It's actually a really good example of the right thing being done in terms of energy self-sufficiency for them, but also for their neighbors."

The World Bank is also working closely with Mozambique, another African country, to expand its energy production capabilities in both natural gas and hydropower.

The World Bank had many energy products in the pipeline, Banga said, noting that talks were under way with some countries looking to extend the life of their fleets of nuclear reactors, and others keen to move into nuclear power.

"If you don't get nuclear and hydro and geothermal going at scale, along with wind and solar, they will end up doing more with traditional fuels, and nobody really wants that," he said.

## Crude oil prices drop, but is the damage already done?

APRIL 10, 2026

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Crude oil prices may have eased from recent highs following a temporary US-Iran ceasefire, but the relief is deceptive. The recent spike was not just a reaction to geopolitical headlines. It reflected a disruption to how oil moves through the global system, and those effects are already feeding through the world economy. At the peak of tensions, tanker movement through the Strait of Hormuz slowed sharply, with several vessels halting or reversing course amid security risks.

The waterway carries roughly a fifth of global oil supply, making even short-lived disruption significant.

But the shock was not limited to transit delays. It extended to the broader operating environment around Gulf energy exports, where shipping schedules were disrupted, insurance costs surged and export operations at key terminals were constrained.

In several cases, operators slowed or temporarily halted loadings due to security concerns, effectively tightening supply even where production capacity remained intact.

### DISRUPTION ACROSS SUPPLY CHAIN

What has been affected is not just production, but the entire chain that connects oilfields to global markets.

Export terminals in the Gulf have faced operational delays due to heightened security protocols and vessel congestion, while storage and blending facilities have been impacted by slower offtake, creating upstream bottlenecks.

Pipeline flows feeding crude to ports have also seen interruptions or reduced throughput as operators prioritise safety during heightened risk conditions.

This does not necessarily mean permanent destruction of capacity. But oil supply depends on coordination. When terminals slow, pipelines back up. When shipping halts, storage fills. When insurance costs spike, cargoes are delayed. The result is an effective tightening of supply reaching the market.

Justin Khoo, Senior Market Analyst for APAC at VT Markets, said the scale of disruption is far from typical.

"Even with signs of a ceasefire, the oil market is unlikely to normalise in the near term, as the scale of disruption to global supply remains unprecedented," he said, adding that estimates suggest 12 to 15 million barrels per day have effectively been removed from the market, with nearly one billion barrels at risk in the near term.

The key question now is not whether the Strait of Hormuz reopens, but how quickly normal supply conditions can be restored.

# Tesla is working on a compact SUV, signalling revival of 'affordable EV' plans

APRIL 10, 2026

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Tesla Inc. is said to be working on an all-new smaller and cheaper electric car—a compact SUV—as the company led by the world's richest person looks to regain the bragging rights of being the world's No.1 EV maker.

The Austin, Texas-based company has contacted suppliers in recent weeks to discuss details of the plan for the Compact SUV, which would be a new vehicle and not a variant of Tesla's current Model 3 or Y, four people aware of the development told Reuters. The conversations involved the manufacturing process and specifications for various components, they said.

Three of the people said the Compact SUV would be produced in China, and one said Tesla also aims to expand production



to the United States and Europe. The car would be 4.28 metres in length, at least two people said. That's significantly shorter than Tesla's top-selling Model Y SUV, which is about 4.8 metres long.

The effort follows a decision by Chief Executive Officer Elon Musk to scrap a highly anticipated low-cost EV project in 2024 and pivot the company to focus on robotaxis and humanoid robots. A key question is whether this latest effort to

develop a smaller SUV signals a strategy shift back to mass-market, human-driven EVs or whether the new model would align more with Tesla's vision for fully autonomous vehicles. Such a model could potentially serve both purposes, according to one of the people familiar with the new project and a Tesla employee with knowledge of its current product philosophy. The Tesla employee declined to confirm or deny details of any specific vehicle but said, in general, the automaker now aims to build models that would be driverless but offer a human-driven option. While aiming for full autonomy across its lineup, the person said, Tesla realises many global markets won't see meaningful adoption—nor regulatory acceptance—of driverless vehicles for years.



**BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA**

### WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - APRIL 13 TO APRIL 19, 2026

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla

relationship may be affected by the entry of a third person. Try to resolve any misunderstanding with your love partner through dialogue instead of dispute. To make married life happy, avoid ignoring the feelings of your spouse.

#### GEMINI



Ganesha says that this week will bring auspiciousness and good fortune for the people of the Gemini zodiac sign.

At the beginning of the week, you may get a big opportunity to move ahead in life. With the help of well-wishers in your workplace, you will be successful in achieving big targets, but while moving forward on the path of success, you will have to be careful of your secret enemies. In such a situation, avoid disclosing or praising any of your plans in front of others. If you were thinking of establishing your career or business abroad, then by the end of this week you may hear some good news related to it. You will get desired profits in business in the latter part of the week. Your wish of expanding your business will be fulfilled and in this, you will get full support from your family members as well as close friends. This week will prove to be very lucky for you in terms of a love relationship. If you were thinking of expressing your love to someone, your wish will be fulfilled. For those who are already in a love relationship, their family members can seal their love with marriage. In the latter half of the week, you will get opportunities to spend time happily with family. Married life will remain happy.

#### CANCER



Ganesha says that people of the Cancer zodiac sign will need to avoid both debt and marriage this week. At

the beginning of the week, you may have to face physical pain due to the re-emergence of some old disease or due to seasonal illness. During this time, you will need to pay special attention to your daily routine and eating habits, otherwise, you may have to make trips to the hospital. Employed people will have to avoid postponing their work till tomorrow or leaving it to someone else, otherwise, you may have to become a victim of the boss's anger due to some major mistake in work. During this time, you will also have to be cautious of your opponents because they may try to spoil your work. In the middle of the week, you may have to travel long or short distances in connection with business. The journey will prove to be pleasant and profitable as expected, but during this time, invest money in anything with the utmost caution, and do not forget to take advice from your well-wishers before doing so. Love relationships will be normal. Your love partner will prove to be a great help to you in overcoming any problem. Married life will remain happy. Your mind may remain worried about your mother's health.



#### LEO

Ganesha says that this week can be very hectic for the people of Leo zodiac sign. At the beginning of the week,

you may have to undertake long-distance journeys related to a job or business. During this time, for the health of a family member, one may have to visit the hospital or the court due to matters related to land and property. While solving all the problems related to life and discharging the responsibilities, you will need to pay special attention to your health, otherwise, due to poor health, the golden opportunity that came into your hands may go away. In the middle of the week, you may get some big responsibility in the workplace. The special thing is that you will get full support from both juniors and seniors in completing the project. In the latter part of the week, you may spend a large amount of money on purchasing anything related to luxuries. During this time, dreams related to land, buildings, or vehicles can be fulfilled. This time will prove to be very auspicious for those doing property or commission work. The decision may come in your favor in a court-related matter. People associated with the business will get the desired profits in business. Love relationships will deepen and you will spend pleasant time with your love partner. Married life will remain happy.

#### VIRGO



Ganesha says that this week is going to be very auspicious for the people of the Virgo zodiac sign. At the

beginning of the week, good luck will be seen knocking at your door. You may achieve some major achievements related to your career and business. People who are searching for employment will get the desired opportunity, while people who are already working may get a promotion or a bigger offer from a new place. Those doing business abroad will get unexpected profits. This time is going to be very auspicious for working women. Marriage of unmarried people can be fixed. The great success or achievement of any member of the family will be the reason for the happiness of your entire family. People associated with politics may get some big responsibility or position in the middle of the week. During this period, pending work related to power and government will be completed. Students preparing for exams and competitions may get some good news by the end of the week. This week will prove to be auspicious from the point of view of a love relationship. You may also get a surprise gift from your love partner. Your spouse will be seen standing with you while making any major decision related to home. Take special care of your eating habits and daily routine this week, otherwise, you may become a victim of stomach-related disease.



#### LIBRA

Ganesha says that the people of the Libra zodiac sign should avoid doing distant losses in exchange for nearby

gains this week. Avoid adopting shortcuts for any work in the workplace, otherwise, even the work done may get spoiled, due to which you may have to become a victim of your boss's anger. This week you will have to do your work carefully and will need to be especially cautious of secret enemies. Do not get misled by someone and do something for which you will have to face trouble later. Especially do not make the mistake of giving false testimony in any case. In the middle of the week, you may have to travel long or short distances in connection with career business. Meeting an influential person during the journey will lead to joining a profitable scheme in the future. During this time, you can spend a huge amount of money on things related to your comfort. Youth will spend most of their time having fun. This week your love partner will be seen showering his love on you. Love relationships will deepen and mutual trust will increase. Married life will remain happy. Will have pleasant moments with your spouse.

#### SCORPIO



Ganesha says that this week will bring some challenges for the people of the Scorpio zodiac, to overcome which they

will need to make extra hard work and efforts. At the beginning of the week, you may have to visit the hospital regarding the health of an elderly member of your family. During this time, disputes related to land and buildings may arise, due to which you may have to rush unnecessarily. It would be better to resolve such disputes through mutual consent instead of taking them to court. Employed people may face additional workload, due to which your busyness will increase, and the plan made earlier may get spoiled. In the middle of the week, any concern related to children will cause your mental stress. If you are thinking of expanding your business, then definitely take advice from your well-wishers before taking any step in this direction. In the second half of the week, you will heave a sigh of relief when the pending tasks related to the ruling government are completed with the help of some influential person. Increase your love thoughtfully and avoid ignoring your love partner's feelings. Relationships with spouses will remain normal.

#### SAGITTARIUS



Ganesha says that people of Sagittarius zodiac sign may have to run around more this

week to complete their planned work on time. At the beginning of the week, you may have to travel long or short distances for work. The journey will



#### ARIES

Ganesha says that people of the Aries zodiac sign will have to take care of both their money and minds this week. Be it at

home or outside, avoid following your whims and ignoring the advice of others. At the beginning of the week, you may have to travel long distances for work. There will be a need to pay great attention to both your health and your belongings during the journey. During this time, you may suffer from seasonal diseases. In the middle of the week, people involved in business will need to be very careful in money transactions. Do not make the mistake of leaving your work in the hands of others, otherwise, you may have to suffer financial loss. Students may get distracted from their studies. The mind will remain worried due to excess expenditure. Working women may face some difficulties in balancing between home and office. In the second half of the week, people looking for employment may get new opportunities. This week is going to be mixed for you in terms of love relationships. This week the game of coaxing and coaxing will continue with your love partner. In such a situation, do not take any steps due to emotions that will affect your love relationship or become the cause of your social disgrace. Married life will remain happy. Your spouse will stand by you all the time in difficult times.

#### TAURUS



Ganesha says that the people of the Taurus zodiac will get better opportunities to move ahead in life this week,

but keep in mind that both your behavior and your health can become a big reason for losing it. This week, irritability will be seen in your nature. Your rude behavior can make others and even your people angry. People associated with business may have to face tough competition from their competitors this week. Income will be less and expenses will be more in the middle of the week. Wasteful running around and wasteful expenditure will increase. Suddenly more money may be spent on repairs to houses, vehicles, etc. During this period, drive the vehicle very carefully, there will be a possibility of injury. Think carefully before lending money to someone or investing money in any scheme, otherwise, you may have to regret it later. Auspicious work can be completed at home in the latter part of the week. Long or short distance pilgrimage is also possible. During this time, some good news may be received from the children's side. Your love

## BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : APRIL 13 TO APRIL 19 BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

### APRIL 13

Ganesha says you are an extremely intelligent individual who is knowledgeable in every field. You will see yourself rise like a brilliant star. Because of your exceptional mental acuity, you can solve puzzles quickly. However, high-paying endeavors could be inconsistent for you despite your organized risk-taking skills. Because you have unmatched communication skills, which are crucial today, you are familiar with the pace of the competition.

### APRIL 14

Ganesha says, although you may not have as many friends due to your shyness, you will be able to manage the direction of your life methodically because of your unstoppable thoughts and strong ability to conclude. Doing consistently excellent work would also improve your standards. Your close ones should be warned when you exhibit your introverted side, since it needs to be changed to prevent misunderstandings. In terms of love, don't hold back from expressing your sentiments.

### APRIL 15

Ganesha says you will have many opportunities to demonstrate your abilities at work, and everyone will be impressed. You'll have to spend time with your family due to circumstances, and you'll steal the show with your electrifying gestures. Your life's stability may improve if you strike it rich. You are a sensible individual. The early games you played with obstacles shaped your tough nature and made it difficult to dominate. The public will like you for who you naturally are. They frequently adhere to you.

### APRIL 16

Ganesha says your creative spirit will produce win-win circumstances for you everywhere. Today is expected to be good for your devout soul, yet a small slip-up can chafe you. Your job will always be your first passion, and since you spend most of your time there, it will provide you with incredible glory, honor, and surprises. You detest bigots and constantly work to cast a ray of optimism into the gloomy corners. As a result, you

are a seasoned warrior.

### APRIL 17

Ganesha says, despite their best efforts, your coworkers and associates are unable to adopt your working style. However, you must adhere to all policies and procedures at work so that no one can ever call your attention to any flaws. Thanks to your unshakable focus and ferocious resolve, you will surely become the center of attention professionally. It would also be simpler for you to advance and earn more money.

### APRIL 18

Ganesha says you are a fountain of intelligence, talent, and potential. No one will ever be able to defeat you at work since you are above all others and unbeatable. You only need a reliable source of money if you have sharp, refined acumen skills. You will simply overcome all of your obstacles. Your communication style will propel you to the top position in your field. Your genre includes serving humanity highly.



VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

### APRIL 19

Ganesha says you come up with your inventory. Having undiscovered artistic or musical talent might serve as a physical representation of your distinction in life. In this well-known sector, you're likely to start your own business. Not just the home market, but also the global one, will be populated with your ideas. Your life will be easy and peaceful as a result, both in terms of your financial situation and your physical well-being.

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desired success. This week, you will have to manage not only time and energy but also money to complete the planned work, otherwise, you may have to ask for a loan. Business may be a bit slow, and you will face difficulties in withdrawing money stuck in the market. In the middle of the week, students who study may lose interest in their studies. During this period, any health-related problem can also become a major cause of your worry. The latter part of the week may bring some relief. During this time, you will be successful in capitalizing on your contacts, and you will get success in matters related to power and government. At the end of the week, you may hear some good news related to your spouse. Love relationships will remain normal.

### CAPRICORN

Ganesha says that this week is going to have some ups and downs for the people of Capricorn sign. This week, sometimes your work will seem to be completed very easily and sometimes you may have to run around even for a task that seems very easy. However, amidst all these circumstances, your close friends and family will be seen helping you at every step. People associated with a business will need to keep their paper-related things organized this week, otherwise, they may have to face unnecessary problems. All the obstacles that were coming in the way of fulfilling your wish will be removed with the help of your close friends. If you are thinking of buying or selling any land or building, then definitely take the opinion of your well-wishers before doing so, otherwise a wrong decision taken by you can become a big reason for your regret later. This week is going to be very auspicious for you from the point of view of a love relationship. Married life will remain happy.

### AQUARIUS

Ganesha says that people of the Aquarius zodiac sign will be successful in finding solutions to long-standing problems this week with their intelligence and wisdom. This week, your planned tasks will be completed on time, due to which you will see a different kind of enthusiasm and energy. At the beginning of the week, you may be appreciated for some special work in the workplace. During this time, you will be successful in presenting your plans to your seniors in a better way. With the help of an influential person, pending tasks related to

prove to be tiring but will bring the

power and government will be completed. People associated with business will have to be careful while investing money in any scheme or business in the middle of the week, otherwise, you may have to suffer financial loss later. During this period, any achievement related to children will increase your respect. This week will prove to be auspicious from the point of view of a love relationship. Love relationships can turn into marriage. Married life will remain happy. Health will be normal.



### PISCES

Ganesha says that the people of Pisces will get full support of good fortune this week. At the beginning of the week, you may get to hear some good news related to your career and business. The wish of expanding business will be fulfilled. Unemployed people who have been wandering for a long time will get the desired employment. Obstacles to acquiring an ancestral property will be removed. The decision may come in your favor in a court-

related matter. There will be chances of promotion and financial gain in the workplace. The special thing is that both seniors and juniors will provide their full cooperation in achieving the target. If you have been thinking of buying a house or vehicle etc. for a long time, then your wish may be fulfilled this week. There will be additional sources of income for employed people, although expenditure will remain more than income. At the end of the week, you may spend a large amount of money on luxuries. During this time, you will get an opportunity to work on a big project with the help of an influential person. There will be intensity in a love relationship and mutual trust will increase. Married life will remain happy.

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](http://chiragdaruwalla.com). He is available for consultations on WhatsApp number +91 8141566266 or by email: [info@chiragdaruwalla.com](mailto:info@chiragdaruwalla.com)

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World Famous Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla



Nastur Bejan Daruwalla

## History This Week APR 10 - 16

### APRIL 10

April 10, 1942 - During World War II in the Pacific, the Bataan Death March began as American and Filipino prisoners were forced on a six-day march from an airfield on Bataan to a camp near Cabanatuan. Some 76,000 Allied POWs including 12,000 Americans were forced to walk 60 miles under a blazing sun without food or water to the POW camp, resulting in over 5,000 American deaths.

April 10, 1945 - The Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald was liberated by U.S. troops. Located near Weimar in Germany, Buchenwald was established in July 1937 to hold criminals and was one of the first major concentration camps. It later included Jews and homosexuals and was used as a slave labor center for nearby German companies. Of a total of 238,980 Buchenwald inmates, 56,545 perished. Following its liberation, Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, and other top U.S. commanders visited the sub-camp at Ohrdruf. U.S. Troops also forced German civilians from nearby towns into the camp to view the carnage.

April 10, 1998 - Politicians in Northern Ireland reached an agreement aimed at ending 30 years of violence which had claimed over 3,400 lives. Under the agreement, Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland would govern together in a new 108-member Belfast assembly, thus ending 26 years of "direct rule" from London.



Birthdays - Publisher Joseph Pulitzer (1847-1911) was born in Budapest, Hungary. He came to America in 1864 and fought briefly in the Civil War for the Union. He then began a remarkable career in journalism and publishing. His newspapers included the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and the New York World. He also endowed the journalism school at Columbia University and established a fund for the Pulitzer Prizes, awarded annually for excellence in journalism.

### APRIL 11

April 11, 1968 - A week after the assassination of Martin Luther King, the Civil Rights Act of 1968 was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The law prohibited discrimination in housing, protected civil rights workers and expanded the rights of Native Americans.

April 11, 1970 - Apollo 13 was launched from Cape Kennedy at 2:13 p.m. Fifty-six hours into the flight an oxygen tank exploded in the service module.

Astronaut John L. Swigert saw a warning light that accompanied the bang and said, "Houston, we've had a problem here." Swigert, James A. Lovell and Fred W. Haise then transferred into the lunar module, using it as a "lifeboat" and began a perilous return trip to Earth, splashing down safely on April 17th.



April 11, 1983 - Harold Washington became the first African American mayor of Chicago, receiving 51 percent of the vote. Re-elected in 1987, he suffered a fatal heart attack at his office seven months later.

Birthdays - American orator Edward Everett (1794-1865) was born in Dorchester, Massachusetts. In 1863, at the dedication of the Gettysburg Battlefield, he delivered the main address, lasting two hours. He was then followed by President Abraham Lincoln who spoke for about two minutes delivering the Gettysburg Address.

### APRIL 12

April 12, 1861 - The American Civil War began as Confederate troops under the command of General Pierre Beauregard opened fire at 4:30 a.m. on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina.

April 12, 1945 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt died suddenly at Warm Springs, Georgia, after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage. He had been President since March 4, 1933, elected to four consecutive terms and had guided America out of the Great Depression and through World War II.



April 12, 1961 - Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human in space. He traveled aboard the Soviet spacecraft Vostok I to an altitude of 187 miles (301 kilometers) above the earth and completed a single orbit in a flight lasting 108 minutes. The spectacular Russian success intensified the already ongoing Space Race between the

Russians and Americans. Twenty-three days later, Alan Shepard became the first American in space. This was followed in 1962 by President Kennedy's open call to land an American on the moon before the decade's end.

April 12, 1981 - The first space shuttle flight occurred with the launching of Columbia with astronauts John Young and Robert Crippen aboard. Columbia spent 54 hours in space, making 36 orbits, then landed at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

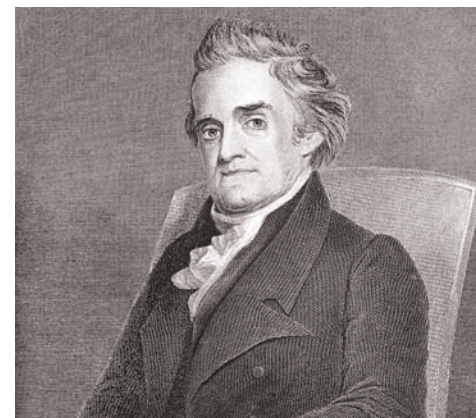
### APRIL 13



Birthdays - Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) was born in Albermarle County, Virginia. He was an author, inventor, lawyer, politician, architect, and one of the finest minds of the 1700's. He authored the American Declaration of Independence and later served as the 3rd U.S. President from 1801 to 1809. He died on July 4, 1826, the same day as his old friend and one-time political rival John Adams.

### APRIL 14

April 14, 1775 - In Philadelphia, the first abolitionist society in America was founded as the "Society for the relief of free Negroes unlawfully held in bondage."

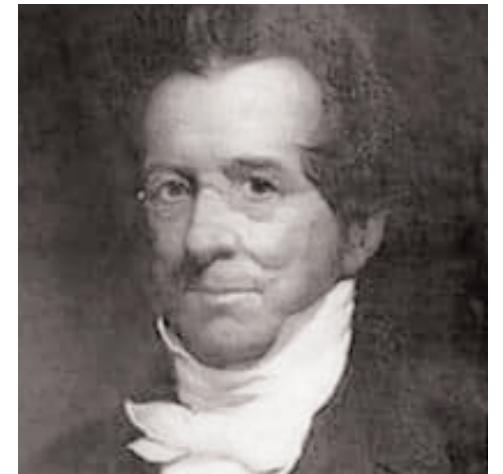


April 14, 1828 - The first dictionary of American-style English was published by Noah Webster as the American Dictionary of the English Language.

April 14, 1865 - President Abraham Lincoln was shot and mortally wounded while watching a performance of Our American Cousin at Ford's Theater in Washington. He was taken to a nearby house and died the following morning at 7:22 a.m.

April 14, 1986 - U.S. warplanes, on orders from President Ronald Reagan, bombed the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi in retaliation for the April 5th terrorist bombing of a discotheque in West Berlin in which two American soldiers were killed. Among the 37 person killed in the air raid was the infant daughter of Muammar Qaddafi, Libya's head of state.

### APRIL 15



April 15, 1817 - The first American school for the deaf was founded by Thomas H. Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc in Hartford, Connecticut.

April 15, 1912 - In the icy waters off Newfoundland, the luxury liner Titanic with 2,224 persons on board sank at 2:27 a.m. after striking an iceberg just before midnight. Over 1,500 persons drowned while 700 were rescued by the liner Carpathia which arrived about two hours after Titanic went down.

### APRIL 16

April 16, 1862 - Congress abolished slavery in the District of Columbia and appropriated \$1 million to compensate owners of freed slaves.



April 16, 1995 - Iqbal Masih, a young boy from Pakistan who spoke out against child labor, was shot to death. At age four, he had been sold into servitude as a carpet weaver and spent the next six years shackled to a loom. At age ten, he escaped and began speaking out, attracting worldwide attention as a featured speaker during an international labor conference in Sweden.

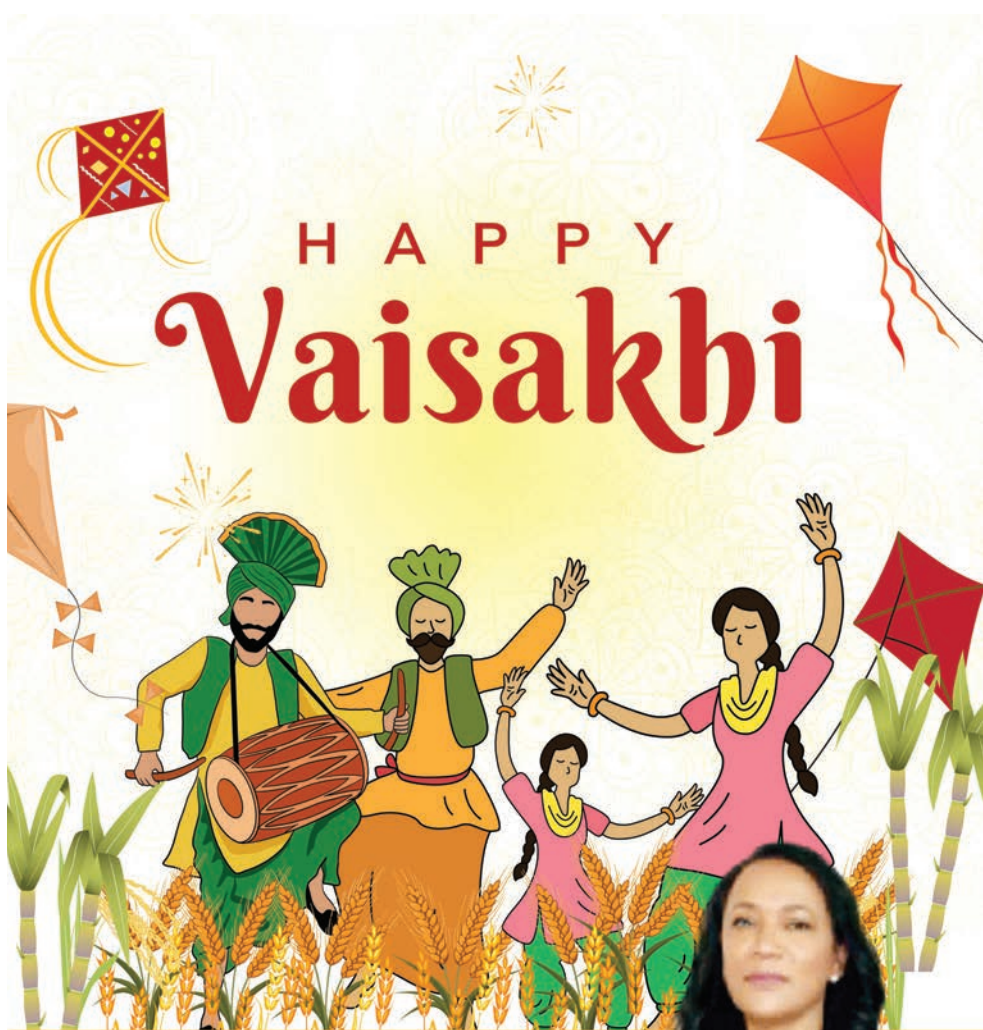
Birthdays - American aviation pioneer Wilbur Wright (1867-1912) was born in Millville, Indiana. On December 17, 1903, along with his brother Orville, the Wright brothers made the first successful flight of a motor driven aircraft. It flew for 12 seconds and traveled 120 feet. By 1905, they had built a plane that could stay airborne for half an hour, performing figure eights and other aerial maneuvers. Wilbur died of Typhoid fever in May 1912.

Birthdays - Film comedian Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977) was born in London. He began in vaudeville and was discovered by American film producer Mack Sennett. He then went to Hollywood to make silent movies, developing the funny 'Little Tramp' film character. Chaplin's classics include The Kid, The Gold Rush, City Lights and Modern Times. In 1940, he made The Great Dictator poking fun at Adolf Hitler, who bore a resemblance to Chaplin. In his later years, Chaplin had a falling out with Americans, but returned in 1972 to receive a special Academy Award. In 1975, he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II.



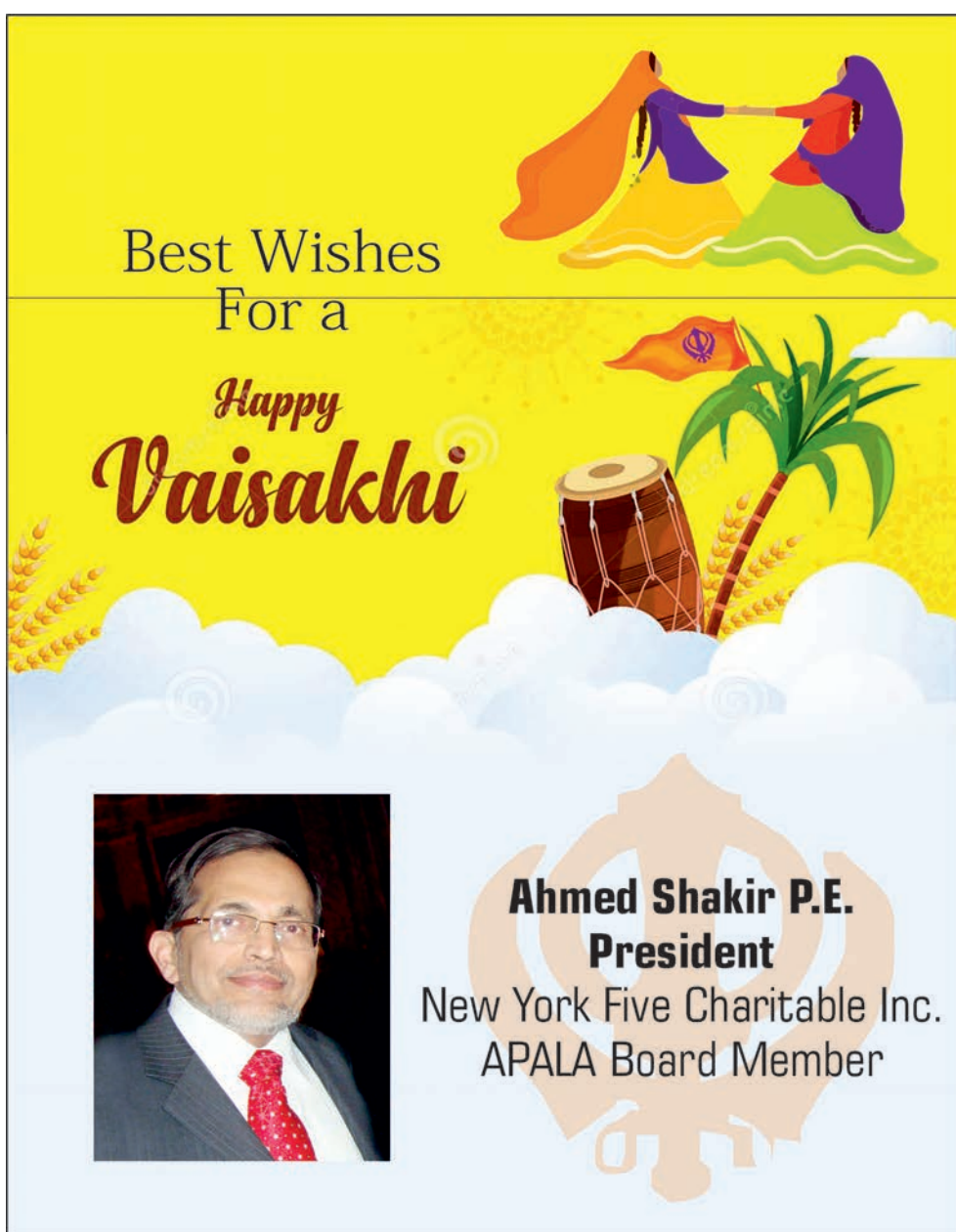
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A Happy Khalsa Sajna Divas  
and A Joyful Vaisakhi**

**Hervender Singh, Harjeet Kaur and Family , New Jersey, USA**



**HAPPY  
Vaisakhi**

**MALINI SHAH**  
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Best Wishes  
For a  
*Happy*  
**Vaisakhi**



**Ahmed Shakir P.E.**  
President  
New York Five Charitable Inc.  
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CONTD FROM PAGE 1

## U.S.-Iran peace talks collapse in Pakistan after 21-hour negotiations

The Iranian Foreign Ministry, without elaborating, said the U.S. side resorted to "excessive" and "illegal demands" The failure to reach an agreement has dimmed the prospect of reopening the Strait of Hormuz to stabilize the global energy market. It is unclear whether the U.S. will resume military operations against Iran. (Source: PTI)

## 'A perfect mission': Artemis II astronauts return to Earth

Artemis II breaks Apollo 13's distance record with daring moon flyby that included a solar eclipse

"What a journey," said mission commander Reid Wiseman, who reported that the crewmembers -- himself along with Christina Koch, Victor Glover and Jeremy Hansen -- were "stable" and "green."

"They're in great condition, that's what that means," said Rob Navias, the NASA public affairs official who narrated their return on the agency's livestream.

Following an expected but nerve-wracking communications blackout during their high-stakes re-entry, Mr. Wiseman's voice triggered relief that the astronauts were well on their way back home.

"We have you loud and clear," he said following a voice check from mission control in Houston.

NASA personnel and the U.S. military helped extract the astronauts from the bobbing capsule - to the applause of those watching from mission control.

By late Friday, helicopters had lifted the astronauts to a recovery ship off the Pacific coast near San Diego, where they all proved capable of walking unassisted.

NASA administrator Jared Isaacman called the voyage "a perfect mission."

"We're back in the business of sending astronauts to the Moon," he said, and "this is just the beginning."

Trump congratulates returned Artemis astronauts, says 'next step, Mars!'

As the astronauts returned to Earth their spacecraft reached maximum speeds more than 30 times the speed of sound, and faced searing temperatures around half as hot as the surface of the Sun.

It was a key test of their heat shield, which in an earlier trial uncrewed mission had faced complications that they attempted to mitigate this time around by shifting the return trajectory.

"If you didn't have anxiety bringing this spacecraft home, you probably didn't have a pulse," said flight director Rick Henfling.

But the Artemis II re-entry went off without a hitch.

The Orion capsule will now be painstakingly examined to assess how it fared.

U.S. President Donald Trump praised the astronauts for their "spectacular" trip and said he "could not be more proud" -- while wasting no time in looking ahead to the eventual goal of sending missions even further into space.

"Next step, Mars!" he wrote on social media.

Artemis II was the inaugural crewed mission of NASA's program aiming to install a sustained presence on the Moon, including the eventual construction of a base that could be used for further exploration including to Mars.

Artemis II makes closest approach to the moon; astronauts break space distance record

From liftoff to splashdown, the trip clocked in at nine days, one hour, 31 minutes and 35 seconds - though NASA rounds up and calls it a 10-day mission.

It began with a dramatic launch from Florida on April 1, and was studded with firsts, records and extraordinary moments.

The four astronauts become the humans to travel furthest away from the Earth, at 252,756 miles (406,771 kilometers).

While hurtling through deep space and zipping around the Moon they took thousands of photographs, amassing a stunning portfolio of images that captivated people on Earth.

They also witnessed a solar eclipse along with extraordinary meteorite strikes on the lunar surface.

Several achievements added to the voyage's historic

nature: Mr. Glover was the first person of color to fly around the Moon, Ms. Koch was the first woman, and Canadian Hansen the first non-American.

Astronomer Derek Buzasi of the University of Chicago called the mission "an almost flawless success."

"I admit to having had my doubts about the Artemis program, but now I have fresh confidence in our next steps as we go back to the Moon to stay," he told AFP.

NASA is hoping it can put boots on the lunar surface as soon as 2028 -- the final full year of Trump's second White House term.

Experts, however, have voiced skepticism that the lunar landers being developed by SpaceX and Blue Origin, companies owned by billionaires Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos respectively, will be ready in time.

China, meanwhile, is forging ahead with its own effort targeting 2030 to put astronauts on the Moon.

In the meantime, NASA is hoping to capitalize on the Artemis II mission's success to drum up excitement about space exploration.

Clayton Swope, a space policy expert at of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, told AFP that the mission stands as "proof that when America keeps its eye on the prize, it can still do very great things." (Source: AFP)

## Legendary Bollywood Singer Asha Bhosle passes away

He stated that Bhosle's voice brought happiness to many generations and that her songs touched people's emotions. He described her as a person with a kind nature. "After Lata Didi, she stood as a support for a major era in music. That support has now fallen," he said. He added that her songs will remain her legacy.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, in a statement, called the news unfortunate. He mentioned that he had familial relations with Bhosle and stated that her passing is a significant loss to the music field in India. He noted that Bhosle made many songs immortal with her voice, including those from "Naya Daur," "Teesri Manzil", "Hare Rama Hare Krishna", "Umrao Jaan", "Ijaza", and "Rangeela". He emphasized that her voice and contributions will be remembered for generations.

Maharashtra Governor Jishnu Dev Varma said that Bhosle was one of the most accomplished and versatile playback singers India has seen. He stated that her voice, her ability to sing in different genres of music, and her contributions to Indian music have left a mark on music lovers. He noted that her song "Jo Bhi Hai Bas Yehi Ek Pal Hai" had become the philosophy of her life. The Governor said her passing is an irreparable loss to the world of music and to the state of Maharashtra. He added that Bhosle had a close association with his family, having been married to R. D. Burman.

Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Ajit Pawar said that the passing of Bhosle marks the end of a golden era in music and that the "empress" of melodies has passed into eternity. She stated that Bhosle's voice had sweetness, versatility, and the ability to convey emotion. She noted that songs such as "Piya Tu Ab To Ajja", "Dum Maro Dum", "In Aankhen Ki Masti", and "Chura Liya Hai Tumne" remain on the lips of fans. She said that Bhosle's musical journey stands as a symbol of hard work and devotion to her art.

Eknath Shinde said that the divine voice that touched the hearts of the past four generations has fallen silent. He stated that not a single day has passed in recent decades without Bhosle's voice being heard. He expressed his fortune in having met Bhosle many times and noted that those moments will remain in his heart. He offered a prayer for her soul.

Devendra Fadnavis said the news was heartbreaking. He stated that with Bhosle's demise, another star has fallen from the Mangeshkar lineage after Lata Didi. He mentioned that Bhosle sang over 12,000 songs in Marathi, Hindi, Bengali, and 20 other Indian and foreign languages. He noted that she received the 'Bangla Vibhushan' award. He recalled a recent World Radio Day event where Bhosle had asked him to sing "Abhi Na Jao Chhodkar..." for her and had said, "Look, I got the Chief Minister to sing for me."

Sachin Sawant, a leader of the Congress party, said that the passing of Bhosle is extremely heartbreaking. He stated that, growing under the shade of Lata Mangeshkar, Bhosle carved out her own place. He said



she exemplified the meaning of "versatility" throughout her career. He noted that she upheld high standards and honesty in her art. He remarked that filling the shoes of Lata Didi and Asha Tai is not possible. He offered a heartfelt tribute.

## Sikh hate crimes surge 3,800% in a decade in US: FBI data reveals alarming trend

This indicates that although year-to-year fluctuations may occur, long-term patterns of hate-based violence continue to grow in several categories.

Experts say hate crimes often do not increase evenly across all communities. Instead, specific groups may experience concentrated spikes based on social narratives, political developments, or misinformation.

Hate crime researcher Brian Levin noted that when fear-driven stereotypes intensify around a particular community, incidents targeting that group often rise sharply.

Sikhs are increasingly identified among the most targeted religious minorities in the United States. A 2025 report by the Sikh Coalition ranked Sikhs as the third most targeted religious group in 2024, behind Jewish and Muslim communities.

The report highlights ongoing concerns about bias-motivated incidents, especially as Sikh identity has only recently been tracked separately in federal hate crime data.

The data also shows increases across several other groups over the past decade. Anti-transgender hate crimes recorded the largest rise at 395 per cent, followed by anti-Latino incidents at 239 per cent, which reached a record 1,014 cases in 2025. Anti-Asian hate crimes rose by 195 per cent, while anti-Jewish hate crimes increased by 123 per cent, though they declined in the most recent year after earlier spikes. Anti-Black hate crimes rose by 66 per cent, anti-white by 51 per cent, and anti-gay male incidents by 27 per cent, the smallest increase among reported categories.

Overall, the findings suggest that hate crime trends in the United States are uneven, with certain communities experiencing more pronounced and sustained targeting than others. Analysts caution that while annual totals may fluctuate, the persistence of identity-based violence highlights ongoing gaps in prevention, reporting, and community protection.

The data is expected to renew discussions around improving hate crime tracking systems, strengthening law enforcement responses, and addressing the underlying social factors that contribute to bias-driven violence.

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**PHUMAN SINGH**



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# Parashurama Jayanti: The eternal warrior-sage and the restoration of dharma

Parashurama Jayanti is a sacred Hindu observance that commemorates the birth of Parashurama, the sixth incarnation of Vishnu. Celebrated on the third day (Tritiya) of the Shukla Paksha in the month of Vaishakha, this auspicious day typically falls in April or May. It holds immense religious, philosophical, and cultural importance, especially among Brahmin communities, who revere Parashurama as a symbol of righteousness, discipline, and divine justice. Unlike other avatars of Vishnu, Parashurama is considered a Chiranjivi—an immortal being who continues to live through the ages. His life bridges the worlds of ascetic wisdom and martial valor, embodying the paradox of a sage who took up arms to restore cosmic order.

## The Divine Birth and Lineage

Parashurama was born as Rama, the son of the sage Jamadagni and his devoted wife Renuka. His lineage traces back to the illustrious Bhrigu Rishi clan, known for its deep spiritual insight and austerity. From an early age, Rama displayed exceptional intelligence, discipline, and spiritual inclination. He underwent intense training in warfare and scriptures under the guidance of sages and later became a devoted disciple of Shiva, from whom he received the divine axe (Parashu), earning him the name Parashurama—"Rama with the axe."

## The Legend: A Warrior for Dharma

The central narrative of Parashurama revolves around his mission to eradicate the tyranny of corrupt Kshatriya rulers who had strayed from their duties. According to the Puranas, the world had fallen into chaos due to the arrogance and oppression of certain warrior kings.

The most significant turning point in Parashurama's life came with the story of Kartavirya Arjuna, a powerful Kshatriya king who once visited Jamadagni's hermitage. Though welcomed with great hospitality, the king later seized the divine cow Kamadhenu, a sacred source of abundance.

When Parashurama returned and learned of this injustice, he confronted and slew Kartavirya Arjuna. In retaliation, the king's sons killed Jamadagni, an act that filled Parashurama with righteous fury. To avenge his father and restore balance, Parashurama is said to have waged war against the Kshatriyas twenty-one times, purging the earth of corrupt rulers.

This act, though fierce, is interpreted not as vengeance alone, but as a divine intervention to uphold Dharma—the moral and cosmic law.

## Philosophical and Spiritual Significance

Parashurama Jayanti is not merely a celebration of a mythological hero but a



## Important information

Parashurama Jayanti 2026

Sunday, 19 April 2026

**Did you know: According to Kalki Purana, Parshuram will be the Guru of Vishnu, the tenth Avatar of Kalki and will teach him the Martial art.**

profound reflection on deeper spiritual truths:

## The Balance Between Power and Wisdom

Parashurama represents the rare union of Brahma-tejas (spiritual brilliance) and Kshatra-veerya (warrior strength). His life teaches that true strength lies not in domination but in the righteous use of power guided by wisdom.

## The Restoration of Dharma

His mission underscores a recurring theme in Hindu philosophy: whenever adharma (unrighteousness) prevails, the Divine manifests to restore balance.

## Renunciation and Detachment

After fulfilling his duties, Parashurama renounced worldly life and

devoted himself to penance, illustrating the transient nature of power and the ultimate goal of spiritual liberation.

## Immortality and Eternal Guidance

As a Chiranjivi, Parashurama is believed to guide humanity even today. He is also associated with mentoring future heroes, including Karna, Bhishma, and Drona in the epic Mahabharata.

## Rituals and Observances

Parashurama Jayanti is observed with devotion and simplicity, particularly in regions like Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and parts of North India.

## Early Morning Rituals

Devotees wake up early, take a holy bath, and wear clean or traditional attire.

The day begins with prayers to Vishnu and Parashurama.

## Temple Worship and Offerings

Temples dedicated to Vishnu and Parashurama witness special pujas and abhishekas. Offerings include fruits, flowers, incense, and sacred water.

## Fasting (Vrat)

Many devotees observe a fast, consuming only fruits and milk, as a means of purification and spiritual discipline.

## Recitation of Scriptures

Sacred texts such as the Vishnu Purana, Bhagavata Purana, and sections of the Mahabharata are read or recited, narrating the life and deeds of Parashurama.

## Charity and Seva

Acts of charity—donating food, clothes, and essentials—are considered highly meritorious, reflecting the spirit of compassion and duty.

## The Story of Parashurama and the Creation of Kerala

One of the most fascinating legends associated with Parashurama is the creation of the land of Kerala. According to tradition, after completing his mission, Parashurama threw his axe into the sea from the Western Ghats. The sea receded to the point where the axe landed, revealing a new stretch of fertile land—modern-day Kerala.

This myth symbolizes renewal, redemption, and the transformation of destruction into creation, reinforcing the idea that divine acts ultimately lead to harmony and prosperity.

## Parashurama in the Cycle of Time

Parashurama occupies a unique position in Hindu cosmology. He appears across multiple yugas and is expected to play a role in the future as well. According to some traditions, he will mentor the final avatar of Vishnu, Kalki, in the art of warfare. This continuity makes Parashurama not just a figure of the past, but a timeless guardian of Dharma.

## Eternal Relevance of Parashurama Jayanti

Parashurama Jayanti is a powerful reminder that righteousness must be defended, even in the face of overwhelming adversity. It teaches that spiritual strength and moral clarity are as essential as physical power. In a world often torn between extremes, the life of Parashurama offers a guiding light—urging humanity to uphold truth, practice discipline, and act with courage and compassion. His story is not merely a tale of divine wrath, but a profound narrative of justice, transformation, and the eternal triumph of Dharma.

# Ziro Valley: Arunachal Pradesh's Hidden Symphony of Nature

Tucked away in the lush hills of Arunachal Pradesh, far from the clamour of mainstream tourist trails, lies a destination that feels like a living painting-serene, soulful, and deeply rooted in tradition. Ziro Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage tentative site, is not merely a destination; it is an experience where nature and culture exist in quiet harmony. With its rolling green landscapes, pine-clad hills, and the unique heritage of the Apatani tribe, Ziro offers a rare glimpse into a world where time slows down and authenticity thrives.

## A Landscape Painted in Green

At an altitude of around 1,500 meters, Ziro Valley unfolds as a vast expanse of emerald rice fields, interwoven with shimmering streams and framed by misty hills. Unlike the terraced farming seen in other parts of the Northeast, the valley is known for its innovative wet rice cultivation combined with fish farming—a sustainable practice perfected over generations by the Apatani people.

During the monsoon months, the valley transforms into a vibrant green paradise, while winter casts a golden hue across harvested fields, creating a different yet equally captivating charm. The cool, temperate climate makes Ziro an ideal retreat throughout much of the year, especially for those seeking respite from the heat of the plains.

## The Apatani Way of Life

At the heart of Ziro's identity lies the indigenous Apatani community, known for their sustainable lifestyle, deep ecological wisdom, and rich cultural traditions. Their villages—such as Hong, Hari, and Hija—offer visitors a chance to witness a way of life that has remained largely unchanged for centuries.

The Apatani are also known for distinctive customs, including the now-fading tradition of facial tattoos and nose plugs once worn by women. Their social structure, agricultural expertise, and reverence for nature have drawn anthropologists and travelers alike, making Ziro not just scenic but culturally profound.

## Places to Visit: Exploring the Valley's Soul

Ziro Valley is dotted with scenic, spiritual, and ecological gems that offer a deeper connection to its landscape and heritage.

The pristine Talley Valley Wildlife Sanctuary stands out as a biodiversity hotspot, where dense forests, rare orchids, and exotic wildlife create an untouched wilderness perfect for trekking and exploration.

For sweeping views of the valley, Kile Pakho ridge offers a dramatic panorama—lush greenery on one side and distant Himalayan peaks on the other. Equally captivating are the hilltops of Dolo Mando and Ziro Putu, where sunrise and sunset paint the skies in hues of gold and crimson.

Spiritual seekers can find solace at the serene Meghna Cave Temple, nestled within forested hills and dedicated to Lord Shiva, offering a tranquil retreat for reflection.

Meanwhile, the Tarin Fish Farm showcases the ingenuity of Apatani



agriculture, where fish and rice coexist in a sustainable ecosystem—a living example of harmony between humans and nature. For quieter moments, a stroll through the Pine Grove, with its towering trees and filtered sunlight, offers a peaceful escape into nature.

## Festivals that Celebrate Life

Ziro comes alive with vibrant festivals that reflect the Apatani community's spiritual and agricultural rhythms. Among the most significant is the Dree Festival, celebrated in July. It is a prayer for a bountiful harvest, marked by rituals, folk dances, and communal feasting.

In recent years, Ziro has also gained international attention for the Ziro Music

Festival, held annually amidst pine forests. This unique event blends indie music with the valley's tranquil environment, drawing artists and travelers from across the globe.

## Things to Do

Travel in Ziro is less about sightseeing and more about experiencing a way of life. Walking through Apatani villages such as Hong, Hari, and Hija offers an intimate glimpse into traditional living-bamboo homes, community bonding, and time-honoured practices. It is an experience that connects visitors deeply with the region's culture.

Nature lovers can explore scenic trails that wind through pine forests, rice fields,

and gentle hills. Treks to viewpoints like Kile Pakho or deeper into forested areas offer both adventure and serenity.

Cycling through the valley is another delightful way to soak in its beauty. Quiet roads, fresh mountain air, and picturesque surroundings make it a refreshing and immersive activity.

The iconic paddy fields themselves invite exploration. Walking through them during planting or harvest season reveals the rhythm of rural life and the ingenuity of sustainable farming.

For wildlife enthusiasts and photographers, Ziro's rich biodiversity provides endless opportunities—from birdwatching in wetlands to capturing mist-covered landscapes at dawn.

No visit is complete without indulging in local cuisine. Simple yet flavorful dishes made from fresh, organic ingredients reflect the Apatani philosophy of living in harmony with nature. Traditional rice beer, Apong, adds a cultural touch to the culinary experience.

## Nature Trails and Quiet Escapes

Beyond its known spots, Ziro Valley is filled with quiet corners that invite introspection. Whether it's watching the sunrise over misty hills, listening to birdsong, or simply sitting by a stream, the valley offers countless moments of peace. The nearby forests and open landscapes make it ideal for slow travel—where every step reveals something new, and every pause feels meaningful.

## Getting There and Travel Tips

Reaching Ziro requires a sense of adventure. The nearest airport is in Itanagar, while the closest railway station is at Naharlagun. From there, a scenic drive through winding mountain roads leads to the valley.

Visitors need an Inner Line Permit (ILP) to enter Arunachal Pradesh, which can be obtained online or at designated offices. The best time to visit is from March to October, with the monsoon and post-monsoon months offering the most lush landscapes.

## The Soul of Sustainable Tourism

What sets Ziro Valley apart is its quiet resistance to over-commercialization. There are no towering hotels or crowded marketplaces—only homestays, warm hospitality, and an invitation to live simply. Tourism here is rooted in respect for nature, for culture, and for community.

In an age where travel often becomes hurried and superficial, Ziro Valley offers something rare: depth. It is a place where stories are told not through monuments, but through landscapes and lives. Whether you arrive as a traveler, a photographer, or a seeker of peace, you leave with something intangible yet lasting—a sense of calm, a respect for nature, and a deeper understanding of harmony.

# Arvinder Singh Khosa is the new President of Cricket Canada



Arvinder Singh Khosa



Paramjit Shahi

Mired in controversies over lack of transparency, accountability, and fairness in the selection of national teams, Cricket Canada has finally bade farewell to the team that has been

managing its affairs. Instead, the special general house of Cricket Canada has started a new chapter of transparent, accountable, and fair administrative control of the sport in the country.

Arvinder Khosa of Surrey has been elected as its new president with an overwhelming majority. The election of the new team marks a transition for the organization as it works to strengthen and support sport across the country. Khosa is a highly respected cricket administrator and community leader from Surrey, British Columbia, with a long-standing involvement in the game, said Cricket Canada in a notification on its web page.

Khosa assumes the role effective immediately following his election at Cricket Canada's Special General Meeting. Under this new leadership, Cricket Canada will focus on strengthening governance, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and continuing to build strong foundations for the organization, the notification said.

Khosa brings experience from across the Canadian cricket landscape, including his role with Cricket BC, where he has supported the development

and promotion of the sport at both the grassroots and organizational levels.

"This is an important moment for cricket in Canada," said Khosa. "We are focused on strengthening the organization and working with our members and partners to support the game across the country, with an emphasis on integrity, accountability, and continued growth."

Joining Khosa is newly elected Secretary Paramjit Shahi, a community leader from Winnipeg, Manitoba, who has been actively involved in cricket development, including supporting infrastructure and youth programming initiatives.

Cricket in Canada continues to evolve, with steady participation growth, ongoing investment in the national program, and increasing interest in the development of Canadian talent. The organization remains focused on supporting that progress and advancing the game across the country.

PRABHJOT SINGH



## Glamour touch to boost instant cricket in North America



Sonu Sood



Mika Singh

The onset of a new cricket season in North America is all set to get a glamorous touch. Bollywood star Sonu Sood and celebrated singer Mika Singh will be joining the National Cricket League GT20.

Announcing this, the GT20 Team Ownership that has been powering the NCL GT20's North America Expansion, says that the joining of Sonu Sood and Mika Singh will mark a major step in the league's continued growth across North America.

Their involvement brings significant global visibility and cultural influence to a league that is rapidly connecting established cricket markets with emerging audiences in the United States and Canada.

This is part of the National Cricket League's broader vision to build a truly global cricket platform-one that brings together players, fans, and partners across regions. By linking the passion of South Asia and the Caribbean with the momentum building in North America, NCL is helping shape the next phase of the sport's growth.

Cricket is gaining traction across

North America, driven by a diverse and growing fan base, increased international participation, and rising commercial interest. With the sport set to return to the Olympics, the timing presents a significant opportunity to expand its reach and relevance in new markets.

Sonu Sood said, "Cricket has always had the power to unite people across cultures. What the National Cricket League is building in North America is an important step toward reaching new audiences. With the Olympics ahead and growing interest in the region, this is the right time to be part of that journey."

Mika Singh added: "Cricket and entertainment naturally come together, and North America offers a unique platform for both. The diversity and energy here make it an exciting market, and I'm proud to be part of the National Cricket League and NCL GT20."

Peter Jagpal, the co-owner of Vancouver Guardians, added, "Cricket in Canada is entering a significant phase of growth, and NCL GT20 is helping create a strong platform for the sport across North America. We are proud to

## Will Doly Begum bring luck to Mark Carney and the Liberals?

Will Doly Begum, who ended her long association with the New Democratic Party (NDP) early this year, bring luck to Mark Carney and his Liberal Party in the House of Commons?

Doly Begum is one of eight candidates running for Scarborough Southwest, one of three ridings where byelections are being held on April 13. Liberals led by Mark Carney are one seat short of a razor-thin majority in the House of Commons. If they win one or more of the three byelections, the party's political future for the rest of the term will be secured.

Doly Begum, of South Asian descent, was the deputy leader of the NDP in the Ontario Provincial Assembly. Her decision to change parties stirred a political debate. She had won her provincial assembly seat more than once. Other than her, there is another candidate of South Asian descent running in the run for the Monday byelection. She is Pooja Malhotra, representing the Green Party. Other candidates include Diana Filippova (Conservatives), April Francisco (Independent), Peter Kovbakis (People's Party), Lyall Sanders (Centrist Party), Fatima Shaban (NDP), and David Vedova (Christian Heritage Party).

For the University Rosedale riding from where Chrystia Freeland quit to take up an important assignment in Ukraine, there are 10 candidates in the running. They include Dan Hodgson (Conservative), Danielle Martin (Liberal), Serena Pardy (NDP), and Andrew Massey (Green). This riding has been producing good results for the Liberals.

The third riding in Quebec will have a record number of 49 candidates in the run, including candidates from the ruling Liberals (Tatiana Auguste-whose election was set aside by the Supreme



Doly Begum

Court), Maxime Beaudoin (NDP), Adrienne Charles (Conservatives), and Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Bloc Québécois, who had challenged the result of the April federal election).

In the federal elections held in April last year, though Liberals improved their standing by winning 166 seats against 153 they had in the previous House, they still fell short of a clean majority in the House of Commons. Since the April 2025 elections, dramatic changes have taken place in federal politics. While a couple of MPs belonging to the official opposition party, the Conservatives, have crossed the floor to join the Liberals, it still cannot cross the clear majority barrier.

The reason: some members of the Liberal caucus quit politics to join the diplomatic corps, paving the way for the byelections.

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

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## India Women's Team Set Sights On FIFA Series With One Eye On Future

NEW DELHI (TIP), APRIL 10, 2026

Thirty-two days after their AFC Women's Asian Cup campaign drew to a painful end, the Indian women's national football team will begin a new chapter with renewed vigour at the FIFA Series 2026 Kenya. The Blue Tigresses will face the hosts in their opening game on Saturday at the Nyayo National Stadium in Nairobi, Kenya. The disappointment of missing out on the knockout stage hasn't fully buried yet for the players, but they are well aware that the end of one chapter is the beginning of the next, and that's the main motivation ahead of the four-team friendly tournament, according to a press release from the AIFF Media.

Crispin Chettri, who is once again at the helm of affairs as the head coach of the Blue Tigresses, stressed, "The idea is to start building for the future already. For the next AFC Women's Asian Cup 2029 qualifiers and the 2031 World Cup qualifiers. We have to begin now."

Chettri led India to qualification for the Asian Cup last year and was an assistant to Amelia Valverde during the final tournament.

"I think the expectation from everyone was that we should at least reach the quarter-finals from the group stage. Even the players had that expectation, so I think they are a little low at the moment," said Chettri.

India arrived in Nairobi on April 7 and has had two training sessions so far, with another to go on Friday before the game against the hosts.

# IPL 2026: Punjab Kings beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by 6 wickets

MOHALI (TIP), APRIL 11, 2026

Sunrisers Hyderabad's interim captain Ishan Kishan lamented his side's poor finishing with the bat in their six-wicket loss to Punjab Kings at the New Chandigarh Stadium on Saturday, after the hosts chased down the target with seven balls to spare under Shreyas Iyer's leadership.

Kishan felt his side had enough momentum early on to push for a much bigger total. Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma finally delivered on their promise at the top, powering SRH to 105 in the powerplay. However, the innings lost steam through the middle and back end, as PBKS pulled things back to restrict SRH to 219 in their 20 overs.

"In the middle, we could have ended up with a total of 250, at least the way we got started. But things happen. We did not end up getting those runs," Kishan said after the match.

The dip was most evident in the death overs, where SRH managed just 37 runs while losing three wickets, allowing PBKS to regain control. "I feel we were not so good with the execution. Like I said earlier, in T20 cricket, the most important thing is execution of your good balls. So we were not that great today," he added.

Punjab Kings also made a strong start to their chase, racing to 93 without loss in the powerplay. However, Sunrisers Hyderabad clawed their way back into the contest as Shivam Sharma removed the top three in quick succession.

Reflecting on his side's inability to defend a 200-plus total, Ishan Kishan admitted that poor execution with the ball proved costly. "We had six or seven bowlers. It showed in their (PBKS) batting that it was easier scoring runs for them. I think in today's age, you don't have to plan much — you just stay ahead of the game. You know which batter hits where. When you don't execute your balls, you have nothing — you just end up conceding 10-20 extra runs," he said.

PBKS captain Shreyas Iyer once again led from the front, registering consecutive fifties in the tournament. His composure and control through the middle overs proved decisive in steering the chase.

**Samson, Overton shine as CSK secure first win of season**

TAMIL NADU: A sensational century from Sanju Samson



and a four-wicket haul from Jamie Overton were the highlights as Chennai Super Kings (CSK) beat Delhi Capitals (DC) by 23 runs at Chepauk Stadium on Saturday, April 11.

Finally, CSK have got their first win of the season, breaking their six-match losing streak at home. Put to bat first by DC, Samson (115\* in 56 balls, with 15 fours and four sixes) and Ayush Mhatre (59 in 36 balls, with three fours and four sixes) took CSK to 212/2 in 20 overs. In chase, Pathum Nissanka (41 in 24 balls, with five fours and two sixes) put on a 62-run stand with KL Rahul, and Tristan Stubbs scored a valiant 30-ball 60, but that was pretty much it from DC as a batting team, as Overton (4/18) and Kamboj (3/35) took wickets regularly.

CSK is at the ninth spot, with a win and three losses. DC is in fourth spot, with two wins and two losses.

In the run-chase of 213 runs, Pathum Nissanka started on a promising note, smoking Khaleel Ahmed for 16 runs in the second over, with two fours and a six.

KL Rahul collected a four and a six against spinner Akael Hosein in the third over, while Anshul Kamboj leaked 16 runs in his first over, courtesy a four each from Nissanka-KL and a six over deep mid-wicket by Nissanka. DC reached the 50-run mark in 3.5 overs.



GUWAHATI (TIP), APRIL 10

Rajasthan Royals' 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has been making batting look deceptively simple, according to teammate Dhruv Jurel, following the youngster's commanding performance against Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB). Jurel highlighted how Vaibhav's batting brilliance does not add pressure on

## How 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is pushing RR batters to flirt with danger

other batters but instead boosts their confidence.

Sooryavanshi turned the IPL match on April 10 into a spectacle with a fearless 78 off 26 balls, helping Rajasthan Royals chase down a challenging target of 202 with six wickets to spare. His 15-ball half-century, featuring eight fours and seven sixes, was instrumental in sealing the victory as the Royals finished the chase in 18 overs.

Speaking at the post-match press conference, Jurel revealed how the rest of the RR batting unit feel a rise in confidence after watching Vaibhav bat the way he does.

"When I bat at number three, he makes it look really easy. You walk in and Vaibhav is smashing every ball, so you start to feel like nothing is happening on the wicket. But inside, you know cricket isn't as easy as he's making it look. We were around 65-70 after five overs, and in the sixth over, when Abhinandan was bowling to me. At that point, I was just telling myself I had to cash in, make it count. But yeah, from the other end, the way he bats is phenomenal," Jurel said.

"When you walk in, he's making it look so easy that there's this pressure as well—you feel like, 'He's doing

it, I need to do the same.' At the same time, it also feels easier because you think the wicket is good if he's batting like that. So it works both ways," he added.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's innings was marked by both power and control. Having previously faced top bowlers like Jasprit Bumrah, he demonstrated similar authority against Josh Hazlewood. His strike rate of 229.44 this season, with 200 runs from four matches including two half-centuries, underlines his aggressive approach.

Alongside Sooryavanshi, Dhruv Jurel's fluent stroke play complemented the onslaught. The pair combined for a 97-run powerplay stand, the highest of the IPL season so far, effectively dismantling RCB's bowling attack early on. Jurel's quick hands and ability to manipulate the field through wrist work were key features of his innings, which ended unbeaten on 76 off 36 balls.

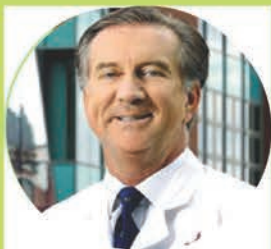
Following the loss of a few wickets, Jurel partnered with Ravindra Jadeja for a 68-run fifth-wicket stand that ensured a comfortable finish for Rajasthan Royals. The duo's composure under pressure consolidated the team's position and confirmed the win.



## An Eye Institute in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh combating avoidable blindness in children.

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Best Wishes, Peter



Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



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