



INSIDE

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: A NOBLE IDEAL UNDER SIEGE PAGE 02

UAE QUILTS OPEC: A NEW ERA OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE BEGINS. PAGE 08

ON MAY DAY, A WORKFORCE IN INDIA WITHOUT A FLOOR PAGE 09

POPE SHOWS TRUMP THE MIRROR. PAGE 10

LABOUR DAY, MAY 1: A GLOBAL SALUTE TO WORK, WORKERS AND THE LONG STRUGGLE FOR DIGNITY PAGE 24

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY: DEFENDING TRUTH, DEMOCRACY AND THE RIGHT TO KNOW IN A CHANGING WORLD PAGE 28

BUDDHA PURNIMA: THE SACRED FULL MOON OF ENLIGHTENMENT AND COMPASSION PAGE 43

Iran vows to protect its nuclear capabilities, signals 'new rules' for Strait of Hormuz



US President Donald Trump and Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei. It is all about an elusive deal.



MAY 1, 2026 WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei said on Thursday that the country would "safeguard" its "nuclear and missile" capabilities and lay down new rules for managing the Strait of Hormuz, hours after U.S. President Donald Trump said a blockade of Iranian ports would remain until a nuclear deal is reached.

"Two months in, the U.S. war on Iran is still top news on our front page, though it has now become a battle of wills, marked by fiery rhetoric, a double blockade in the Strait driving oil prices to a four-year high, and diplomatic stalemate," says Suresh Nambath, Editor, The Hindu. "The defiant remarks by both U.S. and Iranian leaders come on the eve of the 60-day deadline for Mr. Trump to seek authorization from the U.S. Congress for his military action, although U.S. War

CONTD ON PAGE 42

India behind Pakistan, Bangladesh on World Press Freedom Index

SLIPS TO 157TH RANK AMONG 180 COUNTRIES



MAY 1, 2026 NEW YORK (TIP)

India fell to 157th rank in 180 countries, even as Palestine stood at 156th, one spot ahead, according to Reporters Without Borders' (RSF) World Press Freedom Index 2026, released on Thursday. Last year, India was marginally ahead when it was ranked at

151 and Palestine was at 163.

Incidentally, India is not only behind Palestine, but also behind Tajikistan (155), Laos (154), Pakistan (153), Bangladesh (152) and Cambodia (151). It ranks above only 23 countries, the last being Eritrea.

The decline is visible across all five indicators, which the RSF tracks - economic, legal, security, political and social environment for journalism. It is the legal indicator that has suffered the sharpest collapse this year, deteriorating in more than 60 per cent of the countries - 110 out of 180 - between 2025 and 2026.

India is explicitly named among those where legal conditions for journalism have worsened most severely.

CONTD ON PAGE 42

New H-1B Bill proposes 3-year freeze, \$200,000 minimum salary: impact on Indians

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

A new US bill, the End H-1B Visa Abuse Act of 2026, proposes major restrictions on the H-1B visa program.

Introduced by Congressman Eli Crane, it calls for a three-year freeze on new visas, reducing the annual cap to 25,000 and setting a \$200,000 minimum salary.

The bill also seeks to bar dependents, end pathways to permanent residency, and scrap the OPT programme. Supported by several Republican lawmakers, it aims to priorities American workers. The proposed changes could significantly impact Indian professionals, especially in tech and healthcare, and are expected to spark strong debate in Congress.

The move aligns with earlier indications from President Donald



Introduced by Congressman Eli Crane, it calls for a three-year freeze on new visas, reducing the annual cap to 25,000 and setting a \$200,000 minimum salary. Image for Representation only. credit/iStock

Trump's camp that employment-based immigration policies could face tighter regulations.

COTND ON PAGE 42

Rupee hits all-time intraday low of 95.34 against \$ as crude spirals past 122 per barrel

APRIL 30, 2026 NEW DELHI / NEW YORK (TIP)

The rupee on Thursday gained four paise to settle at 94.84 against the US dollar after touching a record intraday low of 95.34, tracking a correction in global crude prices which hit \$122.11 per barrel amid volatility in West Asia that kept the currency under pressure.



Photo for representation only/ iStock

However, the local currency was negatively impacted by the uncertainty surrounding the US-Iran negotiations, which restricted gains.

The rupee opened the day at 95.01 in comparison to the US dollar on the interbank foreign exchange market, but it lost further ground to hit an all-time intraday low of 95.34 before ending at

CONTD ON PAGE 42



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COMMENT

Freedom of the Press: A Noble Ideal Under Siege

Every year, on May 3, the world observes World Press Freedom Day - a day meant not for ritualistic celebration, but for reflection. It is a day to ask a difficult question: what remains of the freedom of the press in a world that loudly proclaims democracy while quietly eroding its foundations? The answer, unfortunately, is deeply troubling. The idea of a free press-so noble in principle, so essential to democracy-is today one of the most challenged ideas, even in the very democracies that once championed it.

The concept of press freedom is rooted in the evolution of modern democratic thought. From the Enlightenment philosophers to the framers of constitutions, a free press was considered indispensable to informed citizenship and accountable governance. It was the press that challenged monarchies, exposed corruption, and amplified the voice of the ordinary citizen. In the United States, the First Amendment enshrined it as a fundamental right. Across Europe, it became synonymous with the struggle for civil liberties. The press was not merely a chronicler of events, it was the watchdog of democracy.

Yet, alongside this noble tradition runs a darker history-one of censorship, intimidation, and control. Governments have rarely been comfortable with a truly independent press. Even in the early days, laws were enacted to silence dissenting voices. The relationship between the press and those in power has always been uneasy: tolerance when convenient, suppression when threatened. In recent decades, this uneasy balance has tilted decisively toward control.

Today, a glance at the global landscape reveals a steady decline in press freedom. Institutions such as Reporters Without Borders, which publishes the World Press Freedom Index, have consistently documented this downward trend. What is particularly alarming is that the erosion is no longer confined to authoritarian regimes. Democracy, the self-proclaimed guardians of liberty-are increasingly adopting methods that undermine the very freedoms they once upheld.

Consider India, the world's most populous democracy. Despite its constitutional guarantees and a vibrant media tradition, it now finds itself ranked behind countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh in global press freedom indices. This is not a mere statistical anomaly; it is indicative of a deeper malaise. Journalists face mounting pressure, legal intimidation, and financial scrutiny. Critical voices are often targeted, and an atmosphere of fear encourages self-censorship. The

message is subtle but clear: dissent comes at a cost.

India's predicament is not unique. Across continents, governments are developing sophisticated tools to control the narrative. In some countries, repression is blatant: journalists are jailed, assaulted, or worse. In others, the methods are more refined: regulatory overreach, strategic allocation of government advertising, and concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few. The digital revolution,

that once would have been considered unacceptable is now commonplace. Journalists are labeled as biased, anti-national, or enemies. Attacks-both verbal and physical-are increasingly tolerated. When such attitudes gain legitimacy, they erode not just the safety of journalists but the very credibility of the institution.

To be fair, the media itself is not without fault. Sensationalism, partisanship, and lapses in ethical standards have contributed to declining public trust. In some cases, the press has blurred the line between reporting and advocacy, weakening its own moral authority. Yet, these shortcomings cannot justify repression. A flawed press is still preferable to a controlled one. The remedy lies in reform, not restriction.

The consequences of a compromised press are profound. Without independent journalism, democracy becomes performative. Elections may continue, institutions may function, but the citizen is deprived of the information necessary to make informed choices. A silenced press creates an uninformed public, and an uninformed public is easily manipulated.

On this World Press Freedom Day, the need for introspection is urgent. Governments must move beyond rhetoric and demonstrate genuine commitment to press freedom. Laws that stifle dissent must be revisited. Journalists must be protected, not persecuted. Media independence must be safeguarded against both political and corporate pressures.

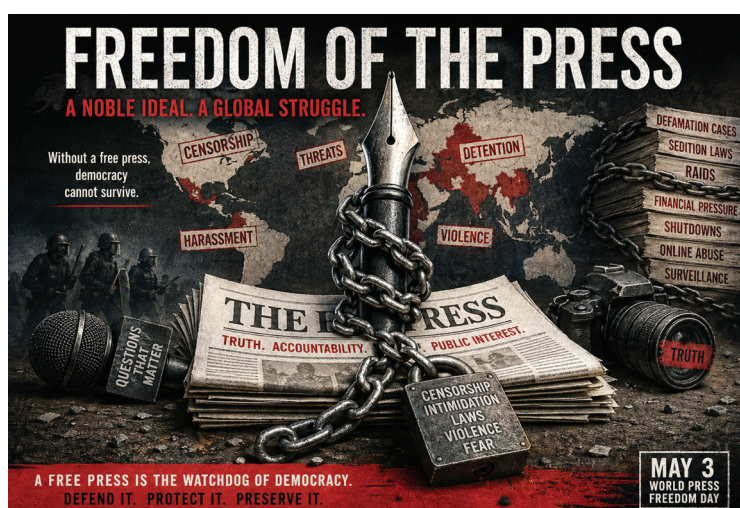
Citizens, too, bear responsibility. A free press survives only when it is valued and defended by the people. Supporting credible journalism, demanding accountability, and resisting misinformation are essential acts of democratic participation.

The global community must also act. Press freedom is not a local issue; it is a universal principle. Institutions such as the United Nations must strengthen their advocacy and ensure that violations are not ignored.

Ultimately, the struggle for press freedom is a struggle for truth itself. It is a continuous battle against forces that seek to obscure, distort, and control information. The resilience of this ideal lies in the courage of journalists, the integrity of institutions, and the vigilance of citizens.

The idea of a free press may be under siege, but it is not defeated. Its survival depends on our collective will to defend it. For without a free press, democracy is not merely weakened-it is hollowed out from within.

And that is a cost no society can afford.

BY INDRAJIT SALUJA

ChatGPT-generated pic

once hailed as a force for democratization, has added new layers of complexity. Surveillance, misinformation, and algorithmic manipulation have become powerful instruments in shaping public perception.

Even the United States, long regarded as a beacon of press freedom, is not immune. While its constitutional protections remain intact, the climate surrounding the media has grown increasingly hostile. Journalists are often vilified, public trust in media institutions has declined, and political polarization has blurred the line between fact and opinion. The press, instead of being a unifying force of truth, is frequently caught in the crossfire of ideological battles.

Europe presents similar concerns. In countries like Hungary and Poland, questions about media independence have been raised repeatedly. Governments have sought to influence public broadcasters and marginalize critical outlets. Even in established democracies, journalists face legal and physical threats that challenge the assumption of an unassailable free press.

What unites these diverse examples is a common intent: control over information. In an age where perception shapes reality, governments understand the power of narrative. A compliant press can legitimize authority; an independent one can question it. It is this very capacity to question that makes the press indispensable-and inconvenient.

Equally troubling is the normalization of hostility toward the press. Language

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World Food Movement's 'No One Hungry' Initiative Successfully Launched

Special event organized by the World Food Movement and Consulate General of India, New York



Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, Consul General of India in New York is lighting the lamp.



Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, Consul General of India in New York is joined by the organizers at the lamp lighting.



A view of the gathering

27 APRIL 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)

The Consulate General of India in New York and World Food Movement jointly organized 'No One Hungry', an event to strengthen global food and nutrition security in the United States of America.

The event was themed around the idea that food is not only nourishment for the body and mind but an absolute fundamental right. Food is more than just about survival; it is also about education, health, and opportunity. Every meal served is an investment in the future of students and the nation, as they are the flagbearers of tomorrow. Investing in food and nutrition security is one of the most effective entry points for human development, which opens up opportunities for their aspirations. This forum resolved that by igniting the collective spirit of compassion and service, along with human-centric technology and progress, we can ensure that no one goes hungry.

World Food Movement (WFM) is a non-profit established in 2025 to alleviate hunger among students and communities in the country. Since then, the organization has been serving fresh, nutritious meals to community college students and food-insecure individuals. It has served over 30,000 meals at prominent locations across the United States, including New Jersey, New York, California, Virginia, Washington, DC, and Massachusetts.

WFM is being led by Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa and Sri Chanchalpathi Dasa, founders of The Akshaya Patra Foundation in India, which has served 5 billion cumulative meals since its inception.

'No One Hungry' was graced by Amb. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, Consul General of India, New York. Sri Chanchalpathi Dasa, Co-Founder and Vice Chairman of WFM, Sri Naveena Neerada Dasa, Executive Director, were also present. The event was attended by eminent business leaders, academic partners and beneficiaries from across the United States. Celebrated Michelin Star Chef, award-winning author and humanitarian Chef Vikas Khanna participated and spoke in support of the feeding mission.

At the outset, Amb. Binaya Pradhan delivered the welcome address, followed by a speech by representatives of the partner colleges. Prominent leaders from the philanthropy and food security sectors shared their thoughts and ideas. A keynote speech by Sri



A presentation in progress

Chanchalpathi Dasa on WFM's global vision sparked the audience's interest in participating in this noble mission. A few beneficiaries shared their positive experiences with the student feeding initiative and explained the need for and importance of such college feeding programs.

Speaking on the occasion, Sri Chanchalpathi Dasa said, "I am grateful to the Consulate General of India in New York for organizing this event in support of our feeding mission. I wholeheartedly thank Amb. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan for his gracious presence this evening. I also thank all the eminent business leaders, partners and students for their active participation in this program. We believe that when students are well-nourished and well-educated, they will grow into responsible individuals contributing towards their holistic development. This is the impact that fresh, nutritious meals can make. We aspire to serve 1 million cumulative meals by 2030, and we look forward to increased community engagement, which will enhance the efficiency of our program."

Amb. Binaya Pradhan said, "I found the concept of World Food Movement very compelling and was happy to attend its launch event in 2025. When I heard the stories of impact by the local leaders from community colleges and other stakeholders, I decided that I would love to do anything to promote such a noble cause.

The Indian tradition of Annadaan (food donation) is several millennia old, rooted in the idea that food is sacred and life-sustaining. And Srila Prabhupada rightly resolved

that nobody within a ten-mile radius of his centres should go hungry.

The Akshaya Patra Foundation was founded in 2000 by Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa and Sri Chanchalpathi Dasa, with a modest number of 1500 students benefiting in 5 schools. And today, more than 2 million children in India are benefiting every day. This is a great example of a public-private partnership, systematic compassion, and sustainable social innovation. I am confident that WFM, inspired by Akshaya Patra, will create a similar impact and contribute to alleviating hunger here in the United States. I invite the Indian diaspora and the leaders here to join and support this great initiative in whichever way you can.

WFM's mission to feed one million meals by 2030 is praiseworthy. We are truly honored that we are becoming a part of this large story which is unfolding before our eyes. My compliments, prayers and best wishes for its success."

Mr Robert Kee, Assistant Director of Student Life program at College of Staten Island, said, "I want to thank the World Food Movement for your partnership and leadership. Your support is helping us close the critical gap in student services and move closer to a campus where no student has to choose between their education and their next meal. Together, we are not only addressing hunger. We are building an opportunity to provide dignity and a stronger future for our leaders and our community."

Representing the voices of beneficiary students, Ms Rhoda Wilson, Student and Vice President of Student Government, College of Staten Island, said, "As a representative for students and as a student myself, I just want to say it has been amazing to have access to free hot meals that have been provided by the World Food Movement. Having food that is both deliciously filling and available at the location where I spend most of my time out of the week, while dealing with food insecurity, is such a great benefit. Rarely now do I have to worry about choosing between two necessities. Words are not enough to express my gratitude for your serious efforts to provide quality and quantity nutrition for our students."

Sri Naveena Neerada Dasa said, "Today's 'No One Hungry' event is an excellent opportunity for us to discuss improving food and nutrition security in America. I thank the Consulate General of India and Amb. Binaya Pradhan for hosting this event. I also thank all the leaders, donors, well-wishers and colleges for their participation. We invite everyone to join us in our feeding mission and contribute to building a hunger-free America."

US returns over 650 antiquities valued at \$14 million.

APRIL 28, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)

The US has returned 657 antiquities collectively valued at nearly \$14 million to India, saying there is "more work to be done" to return stolen artifacts to the country. The return was announced by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg on Tuesday. The pieces were recovered following several investigations into

trafficking networks, including those related to art dealer Subhash Kapoor and convicted trafficker Nancy Wiener.

The pieces were returned at an event attended by Consul Rajlakshmi Kadam from the Consulate General of India in New York. "The scale of the trafficking networks that targeted cultural heritage in India is massive, as demonstrated by the return of more than 600 pieces today,"

Bragg said.

Consul General of India in New York, Binaya Pradhan, appreciated the sustained cooperation of the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, the US Department of Homeland Security, and law enforcement agencies whose "continued vigilance," he said, "made the return of these significant artifacts possible."



A bronze figure of the Buddhist deity Avalokiteshvara. -Photograph / courtesy Manhattan District Attorney

British Sikh London Marathon runners raise thousands for charity

Baldev Singh Bains, 80, and Manny Singh Kang, 52, join the estimated 59,000 runners at the annual marathon sponsored by Tata Consultancy Services

APRIL 28, 2026
LONDON (TIP)

Among the thousands who participated in the 2026 London Marathon were two British Sikh runners who had been training to raise thousands of pounds for charity.

Baldev Singh Bains, 80, and Manny Singh Kang, 52, joined the estimated 59,000 runners on Sunday, April 26, at the annual marathon sponsored by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS).

They were cheered on by over 19,000 people who gathered along the over 42-km route for the long-distance race, which saw Kenyan Sabastian Sawe beat the marathon time barrier to complete the challenge in just under two hours.

"It's been incredible, truly historic. We've got some incredible sports performances, incredible people raising money for charity, and we have the highest number of participants with a disability and the most diversity we've ever had," said Hugh Brasher, London Marathon Event Director.

Bains was inspired to raise funds for a charity in memory of Fauja Singh, the well-known UK-based marathon runner who died aged 114 in a hit-and-run incident in Punjab last July.

The over 7,500 pounds raised through the GoFundMe fundraising online platform will go towards the creation of the Fauja Singh Clubhouse, a multi-use sports club proposed by the Sikhs in the City charity to provide facilities to



Runners in action during the London Marathon.

Photo credit/ Reuters

improve community wellbeing in the London Borough of Redbridge.

"The Creator/Waheguru arranged to meet Bhai Fauja Singh Ji, Marathon Runner, in his 100 plus year age, who encouraged me to start walking around Beal High School, Redbridge, and then joining Parkrun. This is where in his memory the Fauja Singh Clubhouse will be built," shared Bains.

"Due to his encouragement, guidance and love I started getting good health and happier. My doctor, who had been increasing my medicine regularly, started decreasing them," he said.

Bains has been guided by the same

coach who worked with Fauja Singh to help him with his running and preparing for the London Marathon. A second beneficiary of the octogenarian runner's fundraising efforts will be the non-profit social enterprise One Humanity, working on carbon emission reduction.

Kang, meanwhile, is a regular runner who had dubbed his 2026 challenge as 'Manny's Marathon Madness' as it included walking to London from his home in Wolverhampton, an estimated 209km distance.

"I walked to London and ran the marathon without any sleep," Kang announced on social media as he hit the

finish line.

He raised over 325,000 pounds via the Just Giving online fundraising platform for Dementia UK, a specialist nurse charity providing care for families affected by Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

"The energy inside us all is the same and using it means we do justice to the human life we have been given. I thank all those that joined me for helping the causes we support," he said.

Football fan Kang is popular for his 'Samosa Saturdays' campaign, cooking and selling samosas for a small donation every Saturday during a Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club, or Wolves, home game.

"Next Samosa Saturday on May 2nd before we play Sunderland," he announced.

The London Marathon is among the world's largest annual day-long fundraising events, with TCS as its title sponsor since 2022. Among the thousands who took to the UK capital's roads on Sunday were more than 700 fundraising finishers for the Charity of the Year, end-of-life care provider Marie Curie.

The event holds the record as the biggest one-day fundraiser, with nearly 90 million pounds raised last year and the 2026 total to be announced in the coming months.

(Source: PTI)

Families struggle to bring back bodies of Punjab youths who died abroad under mysterious circumstances

APRIL 30, 2026
CHANDIGARH/TORONTO (TIIP)

Family members of three Punjab youths - two girls and one boy - are struggling to bring back the bodies of their children who died under mysterious circumstances in foreign countries over the past week.



From (L-R): Anmoldeep Kaur, Mehak Singh, Pratibha Gupta

The latest case is the sudden death of Mehak Singh from Ghangas village in Ludhiana district. He died under unexplained circumstances in Ingalls, Indiana, US, on April 22.

Mehak, the younger son of marginal farmer Uday Singh, had left India for Indiana on April 1, 2024. He reportedly worked overtime to improve his family's financial status. Before moving to Indiana, he had a private job in Ludhiana after completing an ITI diploma.

Harkiran Singh Ghangas, a cousin of the deceased, said the family had sent Mehak to Indiana hoping they could live a dignified life by investing his income in small, profitable ventures in India.

Harkiran said the family does not know the reason behind his death and cannot afford to repatriate his body.

While friends of the deceased, including Lavi Sharma and Avi Sharma in Canada, have launched a fundraising campaign, residents of Ghangas village have urged the Indian government to help the aggrieved family bring the body to Punjab.

In another case, Pratibha Gupta, 29, from an Ahmedgarh-based family led by Sanjiv Kumar Jindal, was found dead under mysterious circumstances near the staircase of her room in Brampton, Canada, on Saturday.

Though some members of the landlord's family were in the house, the victim received no help for hours as the owner was away in the US. The family has not yet received Pratibha's postmortem report.

A third family, from Manuke village in Ludhiana and currently living in Akalgarh Sudhar, is waiting for the body of their daughter, Anmoldeep Kaur. She was found dead in a park near her residence in Ontario. Her father is retired Subedar Parminder Singh.

The deceased's brother, Dilpreet Singh, has reached Ontario from the US to expedite the repatriation process with the help of an NGO, but the reason behind her sudden death is still unknown.

The aggrieved families are facing multiple hardships: the sudden death of their children, lack of information about the exact reasons and circumstances, and the daunting, costly process of bringing the bodies back to Punjab.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Woman from Haryana's Sirsa joins Royal Australian Air Force, inspires others

SAYS SHE COMES FROM A BACKGROUND WHERE GIRLS ARE EXPECTED TO SETTLE AFTER BASIC EDUCATION

APRIL 30, 2026
CHANDIGARH / NEW YORK (TIP)

Neha Sahu, a 37-year-old woman from Ding Mandi in Sirsa district, has become a logistics officer in the Royal Australian Air Force, marking a milestone for the local community and inspiring girls in the region.

Sahu, who has lived in Australia for nearly 15 years, began her professional journey as a primary school teacher, teaching for almost a decade before pursuing her dream of joining the Air Force. Her husband, Abhinav Sahu, has also been serving in the Australian Air Force for the past 14 years.

Speaking to The Tribune, Neha Sahu said her family, especially her 14-year-old daughter and husband, provided crucial support throughout her journey. "I wanted to challenge myself and step out of the conventional path. The intensive war-zone training, which lasted three months, was the toughest part," she said.

The training, conducted at the Wagga Wagga Centre, involved weapons handling, rigorous physical drills and staying away from family.

Sahu, who completed her early education at DAV School and Satluj School in Sirsa, earned a degree in psychology from Shah Satnam Ji Girls College.

Reflecting on her upbringing, she said, "I come from a background where girls are expected to settle after basic education. I believe if girls dream big, even the sky isn't the limit. It is encouraging to see parents in India now support their daughters' ambitions, which will bring a social change."

Her father, Rajmal Pachar, expressed pride in her accomplishment. "She has made the family and the region proud. Her hard work has paid off," he said. Residents of Ding Mandi echoed his sentiments, calling Sahu's achievement a source of inspiration for local girls. (Source: TNS)



Neha Sahu

NYC Mayor Madani says he would encourage King Charles III to restore to India the Koh-i-Noor diamond

The 105.6-carat Koh-i-Noor diamond was gifted to Queen Victoria in 1849 by Maharajah Duleep Singh

APRIL 30, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani said he would encourage King Charles III to return the Koh-i-Noor diamond to India.

"If I was to speak to the King separately from that, I would probably encourage him to return the Koh-i-Noor diamond," Mamdani said at a press conference on Wednesday, April 29, before he met the British monarch in the city later in the day. The 105.6-carat Koh-i-Noor diamond was given to Queen Victoria in 1849 by Maharajah Duleep Singh. It was worn by the Queen Mother on her crown in 1937.

Mamdani was asked what he would say to the King, who visited New York City on the second day of his State Visit to the US.

King Charles addressed a joint meeting of the US Congress Tuesday, as he and Queen Camilla were honored at a state dinner hosted by President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump in the White House.



New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani greets Britain's King Charles and Queen Camilla during a ceremony at the National September 11 Memorial on day three of the State Visit of King Charles III and Queen Camilla to the United States of America, in New York City, US, April 29, 2026.

Photo credit/ Reuters

King Charles and Queen Camilla visited the 9/11 Memorial in the city and paid their respects to the

victims of the terror attack.

They also visited Harlem Grown, a network of urban farms supporting children and families in Upper Manhattan.

Mamdani met King Charles at the 9/11 Memorial.

India has indicated that it will continue to explore ways to bring back the Koh-i-noor from the United Kingdom.

The country has been raising the matter from time to time with the UK government and said it will continue to explore ways and means for obtaining a "satisfactory resolution of the matter."

The Koh-i-Noor diamond is currently displayed at the Tower of London. The diamond, set within the Crown of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, has "many previous owners, including Mughal Emperors, Shahs of Iran, Emirs of Afghanistan, and Sikh Maharajas," according to the Historic Royal Palaces charity.

(Source: PTI)

Jaiveer Shergill requests Centre to help Iranian Sikhs stranded in Tehran gurdwara

APRIL 30, 2026
NEW DELHI / NEW YORK (TIP)

BJP national spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill on Thursday requested the government to come to the aid of the Iranian Sikhs stranded in Tehran amid the West Asia crisis.



In an X post, Jaiveer, tagging the Ministry of External Affairs, says some Iranian Sikh couples are stranded at Bhai Ganga Singh Sabha, Tehran, and need assistance for evacuation

In an X post, Jaiveer, tagging the Ministry of External Affairs, said some Iranian Sikh couples are stranded at Bhai Ganga Singh Sabha, Tehran, and need assistance for evacuation.

"Request @MEAIndia to assist a few elderly Iranian Sikh couples who are stranded in Gurudwara Saab, Tehran, Iran. An

aircraft operated by Mahaan Airways is scheduled to operate from Tehran to India on 5th May, but the Airline is refusing to take them onboard without the permission of GOI," Jaiveer said on X.

He also requested External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to intervene and assist the Sikh families.

Only recently, Bhai Ganga Singh Sabha, Tehran, one of Iran's oldest gurdwaras, was in the news for marking Baisakhi.

Despite the ongoing war, the Sikhs in Tehran celebrated the festival along with the locals and held rituals, including the recital of Akhand Path, shabad kirtan and customary replacement of the Nishan Sahib.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited the gurdwara during his Iran visit in May 2016.

(Source: TNS)

Indian students being used as foot soldiers by gangs operating in Canada: FINTRAC

APRIL 30, 2026
OTTAWA (TIP)

The Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC) has issued a critical special bulletin detailing a sustained campaign of coercion typically involving "financially vulnerable, young male, Indian nationals in Canada on study permits who are being used as foot soldiers by gangs for targeted violence" against South Asian diaspora communities across Canada.



This report highlights a significant escalation in criminal activity, including extortion, shootings and arson, primarily concentrated in the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario.

FINTRAC identifies the Bishnoi gang and the rival Bambiha gang as primary drivers of this violence, noting that the Government of Canada officially designated the Bishnoi gang as a listed terrorist entity on September 29, 2025.

The bulletin further warns that copycat actors and smaller criminal elements are leveraging the fearsome reputation of these major gangs to maximize the impact of their own extortion demands. New analysis also indicates that criminal networks are increasingly recruiting vulnerable young Indian nationals on study permits to act as money mules or foot soldiers.

The report reads, "Callers demanding money may identify themselves as part of the Lawrence Bishnoi network, a gang designated as a terrorist organization in Canada, with victims describing threats, shootings, and persistent attempts to collect large payments. These groups appear to recruit or rely on individuals already living in Canada to act as financial intermediaries ("money mules"), enforcers, or "foot soldiers", typically financially vulnerable, young male Indian nationals in Canada on study permits."

According to strategic intelligence produced under the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act, extortion attempts have evolved from sporadic incidents into highly coordinated operations targeting small and medium-sized businesses in sectors such as construction, real estate, and hospitality.

The federal government stated in a release that extortion is a rising threat to the safety of Canadians, impacting an increasing number of families and businesses with demands ranging from hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

India advises Indian nationals in Mali to stay indoors amid security concerns

EMBASSY IN BAMAKO URGES VIGILANCE AFTER REPORTED ATTACKS IN KATI AND OTHER AREAS

APRIL 26, 2026
JOHANNESBURG (TIP)

India on Saturday, April 25, advised its nationals in Mali to remain highly vigilant, exercise utmost caution and stay indoors due to recent security developments in the West African nation.



People move on a street after insurgents launched attacks on military bases across the country in Bamako in Mali on Saturday.

The Indian Embassy in Bamako, in an advisory, said, "Due to recent security developments and reported attacks in Kati and other parts of Mali, the Embassy of India in Bamako urges all Indian nationals residing in Mali to remain highly vigilant, exercise utmost caution, stay indoors, and strictly follow the instructions issued by the Malian authorities from time to time." The embassy added that it was closely monitoring the evolving situation in coordination with Malian authorities and will issue further updates as required.

It urged Indian nationals to stay in touch with the embassy through its website and the embassy's official social media accounts.

It also advised Indian nationals to contact the Embassy at +223 78486019/94793705 in case of any emergency assistance.

Commemoration of the International Day of Vesak

MAY 1, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)

Permanent Mission of India, with the participation of the Permanent Missions of Bhutan, Cambodia, Japan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam organized a panel discussion on 30 April 2026 in the UN to commemorate the International Day of Vesak. The discussion focused on the theme "Leveraging Buddhist Heritage for Strengthening Global Peace and Cooperation" - deliberating on how the shared Buddhist heritage in the region can help shape international cooperation in today's era of discord and conflict.

In her welcome remarks, Cd'A Ambassador Yojna Patel recalled the deep civilizational bond among people from the Indian Ocean to the Indo-Pacific through shared traditions of Buddhist art and culture, architecture, flow of ideas and values. She outlined India's efforts to revitalize and strengthen the ties through development of the Buddhist tourism circuit, support and collaboration to preserve and restore Buddhist heritage sites, monasteries, conservation of archaeological sites, and pilgrimage infrastructure in neighboring partner countries leading to an organic evolution of a transnational spiritual corridor.

Vice Chancellor of Nalanda University, Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi delivered the keynote address. By highlighting interdependence and collective welfare as central tenets of Buddhism that are relevant to current global governance, he called for a shift from sectoral and quantitative development models to integrated, human-centric approaches to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. He linked Buddhist philosophy to ethical development, sustainability, and global systems thinking.

Speakers from participating countries highlighted how Buddhist values remain deeply relevant in today's complex global landscape. Member States highlighted themes of compassion, moderation and dialogue drawing on their own traditions - from Bhutan's Gross National Happiness framework to Sri Lanka's emphasis on peaceful conflict



resolution. Japan, Thailand and Viet Nam stressed the importance of human dignity, while the Republic of Korea highlighted Buddhism's resonance among younger generations. Mongolia, Lao PDR and Cambodia reaffirmed the values and principles of Lord Buddha, while Nepal emphasized on "Middle Path" as a framework for moderation and peaceful co-existence. Collectively, the discussions reaffirmed that Buddhist heritage can serve as a unifying force for fostering trust, people-to-people connections, and

cooperative approaches to peace and development. It may be recalled that the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 54/115 in 1999, officially recognizing the International Day of Vesak on the first full moon in May every year. This day is commemorated annually at the UN Headquarters to recall the teachings of Lord Buddha and his message of compassion, peace and goodwill.

(Based on a press release issued by the PMI)



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Suromurchhana's programmes are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

Rohan Narang Fashions Presents a Spring Summer Earth Day Runway in Times Square

A nature-inspired collection celebrating feathers, florals, pastel tones, and a partially sustainable capsule

**APRIL 30, 2026
TIMES SQUARE, NEW YORK (TIP):**

Rohan Narang Fashions presented its Spring Summer collection at Earth Day 2026 in Times Square, unveiling a runway story inspired by the freshest expressions of nature: new buds, daisies, soft petals, green leaves, and feather-light movement. Designed for a modern New York summer, the collection paired romantic detail with clean silhouettes and included a partial sustainable capsule shaped by mindful material choices and responsible design intentions.

Earth Day 2026 in Times Square gathered voices across sustainability, cinema, fashion, medicine, and mental health in a public program centered on awareness and collective action. The Earth Day Times Square program, produced for more than 24 years by Rev. Paul Sladkus, founder of the nonprofit Good News Corporation and long-time Earth Day advocate, was presented alongside partners including EarthDay.org, Ommm Presents, and the Office of the New York City Comptroller. The free clean energy event featured over 50 performers and speakers across the stage and exhibition area, with virtual appearances from UN Peace



Rohan Narang: Designer

polish.

Produced as part of the Earth Day Times Square special segment, the fashion show was supported by associate producers Iveth Carolina and Gail Reynolds, with producer Neha Lohia. The runway was modelled by Elena Sapov, Ishika Muchhal, Lilly Stix, Artie, and Christine Mendes.

The presentation formed part of a wider Earth Day program that included contributors such as Yale University's Dr. Christopher Pittenger, psychiatrist Dr. Anna Yusim, resilience expert Dr. Eva Selhub, and Peter Sullivan, reinforcing that sustainability is not only environmental but also cultural, psychological, and human.

"Earth Day does not have to be



Models Elena Sapov, Ishika Muchhal, Lilly Stix, Artie, and Christine Mendes with Designer Rohan Narang

Rohan Narang Fashions is a New York-based fashion label known for refined craftsmanship, elegant silhouettes, and expressive detailing. The brand designs statement pieces

that balance sophistication with individuality, while progressively integrating more responsible approaches to materials and production.



Models in another look

Messengers including Stevie Wonder, Oprah Winfrey, Leonardo DiCaprio, and UNICEF's Shakira, and was presented in tribute to the Jane Goodall Foundation.

Against this broader backdrop, Narang's runway offered an intentionally gentle perspective on Earth Day. The palette moved through lavender, blush, pale greens, soft ivory, and sun-warmed metallic notes, while textures and silhouettes evoked lightness, renewal, and a quiet sense of wonder. The result was a collection that felt delicate without being fragile, romantic without being costume, and expressive without losing modern

expressed through heaviness," said Rohan Narang, Founder and Designer of Rohan Narang Fashions. "This collection is about nature's softer language: the bloom, the feather, the leaf. Beauty can be gentle and still carry responsibility."

Event: Earth Day 2026 (Times Square, NYC)

Designer: Rohan Narang Fashions | Spring Summer Collection

Website: www.rohannarangfashions.com

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UAE quits OPEC: A new era of energy independence begins.

BY PRABHU DAYAL



The UAE's departure from OPEC reflects a strategic bet that its national interests are better served by acting as an independent, high-capacity producer rather than as a disciplined member of a constrained cartel.

"THE UAE'S DEPARTURE FROM OPEC IS NOT MERELY A TECHNICAL ADJUSTMENT, BUT A DELIBERATE DECLARATION OF AN INDEPENDENT ENERGY POLICY. IT REFLECTS A STRATEGIC BET THAT ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS ARE BETTER SERVED BY ACTING AS AN INDEPENDENT, HIGH-CAPACITY PRODUCER RATHER THAN AS A DISCIPLINED MEMBER OF A CONSTRAINED CARTEL. THIS MOVE DEFINITELY WEAKENS OPEC, REDUCING ITS MARKET POWER AND CHALLENGING THE FUTURE COHESION OF THE OIL PRODUCERS' GROUP. THE LONG-TERM SIGNIFICANCE LIES IN A POTENTIAL DECREASE IN OPEC'S RELEVANCE, WITH THE UAE ESTABLISHING A MODEL WHERE KEY PRODUCERS MIGHT PRIORITIES NATIONAL ECONOMIC VISIONS OVER COLLECTIVE MARKET MANAGEMENT."

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has announced its withdrawal from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the wider OPEC+ alliance, effective 1 May 2026, marking a significant and historic shift in global energy dynamics. The UAE's departure is driven by a desire for greater autonomy, frustration with production constraints, and evolving regional geopolitics. The decision follows a comprehensive review of its national energy strategies and is aimed at maximizing its economic

interests in a rapidly changing market.

A STRATEGIC SHIFT TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

The UAE's decision is fundamentally driven by a long-term strategic and economic vision, aiming to maximize its domestic energy production and accelerate investment unconstrained by cartel quotas. For decades, the UAE was a pillar of the organization, but disagreements have long existed over production limits, where the UAE sought higher, more aggressive output targets. This move allows the UAE to unlock its vast oil resources to serve its own financial objectives rather than the

frustrated with its fellow OPEC members, believing they did not do enough to protect it from Iranian missile and drone attacks during this conflict. Furthermore, the disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, which affected oil shipping, led to a "frostier" relationship with regional neighbors, making membership in a group that included Iran untenable, especially as Iran threatened the UAE's oil infrastructure.

WEAKENING OF OPEC AND MARKET DYNAMICS

The departure is a major blow to OPEC and the wider OPEC+ alliance, which manages roughly 90 per cent of the

aligned with Riyadh's strategic direction within the cartel.

A SHIFT TOWARDS A NEW ENERGY REALITY

The UAE's exit also signals its strategy for a post-oil economy. While expanding its oil capacity, the UAE is using these revenues to fund its "Net Zero 2050 Strategy" and diversify into sectors such as technology and renewable energy. Leaving OPEC allows it to manage this transition on its own terms, free from the constraints of a cartel that generally seeks to keep prices high and supply restricted.

The UAE's departure from OPEC is not



UAE breaks from OPEC to pursue production autonomy and independent energy strategy.

collective interests of the OPEC group.

PURSUIT OF STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

The primary driver for the UAE's exit is the pursuit of long-term economic autonomy, specifically the ambition to maximize revenues from its massive investments in oil production capacity. The UAE has invested heavily to boost its capacity to 5 million barrels per day by 2027. Under the OPEC+ framework, such capacity has often been constrained by quota limits, which the UAE deemed harmful to its national interest. By exiting, the UAE gains the flexibility to increase production without collective constraints, allowing it to capitalize on high oil prices and market demand.

GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS AND THE IRAN CONFLICT

The timing of the decision, announced on 28 April 2026, is closely tied to the regional turmoil caused by the ongoing war in Iran. The UAE grew increasingly

world's oil supplies. As a top-10 global producer, the UAE's move threatens the bloc's ability to control global oil prices. By operating outside the cartel, the UAE can increase its exports, injecting more supply into a market that has been reeling from volatility. This could weaken the leverage of leading members, particularly Saudi Arabia, which has relied on strict quotas to sustain prices.

COLD RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND REGIONAL COMPETITION

The departure reflects a widening rift with Saudi Arabia, the de facto leader of OPEC. Once close allies, the relationship between Abu Dhabi and Riyadh has turned cold, characterized by public disagreements on economic issues and regional influence. As Saudi Arabia, under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has aggressively pursued economic diversification to compete with the UAE, frictions have grown. The UAE feels that its interests are no longer

merely a technical adjustment, but a deliberate declaration of an independent energy policy. It reflects a strategic bet that its national interests are better served by acting as an independent, high-capacity producer rather than as a disciplined member of a constrained cartel. This move definitely weakens OPEC, reducing its market power and challenging the future cohesion of the oil producers' group. The long-term significance lies in a potential decrease in OPEC's relevance, with the UAE establishing a model where key producers might priorities national economic visions over collective market management.

(The writer is a retired Indian diplomat and had previously served as ambassador in Kuwait and Morocco and as Consul General in New York. Views expressed in the above piece are personal and solely those of the author. They do not necessarily reflect Firstpost's views.)

(First published in First Post)

On May Day, a workforce in India without a floor

From Noida's streets to furnace rooms in Chhattisgarh, India's new labor regime delivers for employers - and for workers, what it long warned of

BY REJIMON
KUTTAPPAN



This year, May Day arrives not as a commemoration, but as a diagnosis. Within a single fortnight last month, two events clarified the state of Indian labor more sharply than any official review.

On April 10, thousands of garment workers in Noida's Phase 2 Hosiery Complex stepped out of nearly 300 factories and onto the streets, demanding a minimum monthly wage of ₹20,000. On April 14, a high-pressure steam tube ruptured at Vedanta's 1,200 MW Singhitari thermal plant in Chhattisgarh, killing 20 workers and injuring 15. One protest was about the price of labor; the other, about the price of being alive while performing it. Both answer the same question: what has India's labor reform actually produced?

The Noida strike began with a specific arithmetic grievance. On April 9, the Haryana government notified a 35% hike in minimum wages, raising unskilled monthly wages from ₹11,274 to ₹15,220, with effect from April 1, 2026. Across the border in Noida, unskilled workers were earning roughly ₹435 a day, compared to ₹585 in Haryana for identical work. Protesters at the Hosiery Complex - employees of different companies - assembled in B Block, blocked traffic, and refused to disperse without written assurances.

By April 13, the administration had deployed over 1,200 personnel, including the Provincial Armed Constabulary and Rapid Action Force; lathi charges and stone-pelting followed, and nearly 400 people were detained. Under pressure, the Uttar Pradesh government announced an interim 21% hike, setting wages at ₹13,690 for unskilled workers in Gautam Buddha Nagar and ₹16,868 for skilled workers. The workers rejected it; their demand remained ₹20,000.

BETWEEN PAY AND SURVIVAL

The gap between ₹16,868 and ₹20,000 is not a bargaining position. It is the difference between what a family pays for rent, gas, and school fees in the NCR and what the state is willing to concede as a dignified minimum.

Four days later, the furnace at Singhitari did its own counting. A preliminary report from the Chief Boiler Inspector, backed by the Forensic Science Laboratory in Sakti, Chhattisgarh, attributed the explosion to 'excessive fuel buildup inside the furnace', which produced pressure surges that displaced critical piping. The probe flagged "repeated negligence in equipment upkeep" by Vedanta and its contractor NGSL (NTPC GE Power Services Pvt. Ltd.). A first information report has been registered against Vedanta's Chairman Anil Agarwal, the plant manager, and others under Sections 106(1), 289 and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The dead were not Vedanta's own employees; they worked for a subcontractor. This, too, is a pattern.

Chhattisgarh alone has recorded 296 industrial deaths over three years. Across India, the Directorate General of Factory Advice Service and Labor Institutes recorded 3,331 factory deaths between 2018 and 2020 - three a day - yet only 14 people were imprisoned under the Factories Act during the same period. The global union IndustriALL counted over 400 workplace fatalities in India in 2024, with the chemical sector alone accounting for 220. In July 2025, an explosion at Sigachi Industries in Telangana had killed 44 people, mostly migrant workers, at a plant that the State fire department found lacked basic fire alarms and heat sensors.

A STRUCTURAL SHIFT

These are not disconnected episodes. They are the operating conditions of an economy that, on November 21, 2025, formally adopted the four labor codes. In a single stroke, and without any transition period, the four codes - the Code on Wages, the Industrial Relations Code, the Social Security Code and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHC) Code

- replaced 29 central labor laws. The Indian Labor Conference, the country's apex tripartite forum, had not been convened since 2015.

The new regime raises the threshold for prior government permission for layoffs, retrenchment, and closure from 100 workers to 300 under the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, enabling firms below that size - an estimated majority of India's factory units - to retrench workers without administrative scrutiny. A peer-reviewed analysis in the National Library of Medicine archive notes that this merely restores the pre-1982 threshold, reversing an Emergency-era protection

regime.

Ten central trade unions, excluding the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), observed a "Black Day" on November 26, 2025, calling the codes a "deceptive fraud on the working class". Their objection was not sentimental. When the legal definition of a factory excludes the smallest and most dangerous workplaces; when inspectors announce their visits through a portal; when retrenchment requires no permission below 300 workers; and when strikes are bound by procedural tightropes, the predictable result is the Noida street and the Singhitari shop floor.



Factory workers protest in Noida.

-File Photo Credit / PTI

enacted after a wave of mass layoffs affected over half a million workers.

The OSHWC Code, 2020, simultaneously raises the statutory definition of a 'factory' from 10 workers in a factory with power to 20, and from 20 workers in a factory without power to 40, lifting an entire tier of smaller workplaces - where India's textile, garment, metal, hosiery, and food-processing clusters are concentrated - out of mandatory safety oversight. Labor economists warn that this technical reclassification has a profound impact on worker coverage, since a majority of India's small manufacturing units employ fewer than 20 workers.

The inspection architecture has been similarly diluted. The OSHWC Code replaces unannounced inspections with an 'Inspector-cum-Facilitator' model, combined with randomized, web-based allocation through the Shram Suvidha portal and employer self-certification - a shift that, as the International Labor Organization's India Labor Inspection Profile notes, may contravene the requirement for independent, unannounced inspections under ILO Convention No. 81.

Procedural hurdles for collective action have also stiffened. Under the IR Code, no worker may strike without 60 days' prior notice, flash strikes are prohibited outright, and strikes are barred during and for weeks after any conciliation or tribunal proceeding. "Mass casual leave" by more than 50% of a workforce is now deemed a strike. Trade unions argue that, in combination, these provisions make lawful industrial action virtually impossible to organize, completing the regime's pro-employer tilt.

A reform that raises statutory thresholds in almost every operative clause is not rationalizing protection. It is removing it. The enforcement chapters read more like a facilitation framework than a compliance

The wage stagnation that drove workers from Mother'son Sumi and Richa Global into a baton charge, and the deferred maintenance that caused a boiler tube to rupture, are not separate problems. They are two ends of the same system.

OLD LAWS, NEW REALITIES

There is an honest public case for labor reform. The Factories Act of 1948 is older than most Indian States; the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923 predates the Constitution. A regulatory architecture built for the industrial economy of late-colonial India - of jute mills, textile mills, and railway workshops - cannot plausibly govern a workforce that today includes gig workers, platform workers, and digital-media workers. No serious observer, and no Indian trade union, disputes that consolidation was overdue. The question is not whether the law should have changed; it is what it changed into.

Consolidation is not dilution, and simplification is not exemption.

On May Day, the test for any labor framework is modest: does it allow a worker to earn enough to live, and to live through the shift? In April 2026, the answer from Noida and Singhitari is the same. In Noida, police fired tear gas at factory workers protesting for a living wage as fuel-driven inflation outpaced wages. In Singhitari, a boiler tube burst at a Vedanta power plant on April 14, releasing 600°C steam onto workers eating lunch; 20 were killed, all contract workers employed through a business partner rather than as direct employees. Neither a wage that sustains life, nor a workplace that preserves it. A regime that cannot deliver the second while pricing out the first has not been rationalized. It has been rewritten against the very people it was meant to protect.

(Rejimon Kuttappan is a workers' rights expert.)

POPE SHOWS TRUMP THE MIRROR.

LEO XIV HAS BOLDLY EXPOSED THE US PRESIDENT'S "DELUSION OF OMNIPOTENCE"

BY JULIO
RIBEIRO



"VANCE'S INCORRECT ADVICE WOULD NOT HAVE SWAYED THE POPE, BUT THE EMAILED BOMB THREAT TO HIS OWN BROTHER, JOHN PREVOST, AND OTHER RELATIVES LIVING IN SUBURBAN CHICAGO APPARENTLY DID. IF THIS THREAT WAS THE HANDIWORK OF MAGA SUPPORTERS, THAT ALONE SAYS A LOT ABOUT THE PATH THAT POLITICS IS TAKING IN A COUNTRY THAT PREACHES DEMOCRACY TO OTHER NATIONS. THE FACT REMAINS THAT THE POPE, WHO HAD BOLDLY MOCKED TRUMP'S "DELUSION", DID TRY TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF THOSE REMARKS WITH HIS STATEMENTS IN SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES THAT HE VISITED RECENTLY."

An overwhelming majority of Roman Catholics worldwide follow the teachings of the Pope. Since Catholicism has the largest following among those who profess Christianity, US President Donald Trump - the most powerful person in the world - cannot afford to ignore what the Pope says about his decisions and actions on the global stage.

When Trump disregarded the rules-based international order and sent his troops to kidnap Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in January this year,



War in West Asia: The Pope has urged the US and Iran to resume talks.

-Photo credit / Reuters

Pope Leo XIV was stunned. He disapproved of Trump's action but said nothing till the US President attacked Iran at the prodding of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Leo XIV, born Robert Francis Prevost, was a native of Chicago till he chose to become a missionary and joined the Order of St Augustine in Peru, where he lived for over 20 years before moving to the Vatican to head the Dicastery of Bishops. In that role, he helped the Pope identify and appoint Bishops all over the world. He became the first American to occupy the throne of St Peter in May last year.

During the first nine months of his tenure, the Pope largely remained silent. He spoke up when the US-Iran war started wreaking havoc on innocent civilians, including children. Alluding to Trump, the Pope said he was a tyrant who had "delusion of omnipotence".

The Pope's emergence as a spiritual leader who spoke his mind triggered his spat with Trump. His apt assessment must have shaken the US President to the core.

In retaliation, Trump described Pope Leo XIV as an individual who "knew nothing of foreign policy" and was "weak on crime". There is no doubt in the minds of people even in the US - except Trump's core MAGA supporters, who are mostly white blue-collar workers belonging to the Evangelical Christian faith - that the President was morally wrong. Trump would have surely liked to have the Roman Catholics on his side, but the Pope's timely tirade upset his calculations.

Vice President JD Vance, himself a

Catholic, advised the Pope "to stick to matters of morality", implying that Trump's decisions and actions had not contravened the rules of morality!

Vance's incorrect advice would not have swayed the Pope, but the emailed bomb threat to his own brother, John Prevost, and other relatives living in suburban Chicago apparently did. If this threat was the handiwork of MAGA supporters, that alone says a lot about the path that politics is taking in a country that preaches democracy to other nations. The fact remains that the Pope, who had boldly mocked Trump's "delusion", did try to mitigate the impact of those remarks with his statements in some African countries that he visited recently.

Many US citizens disapprove of the war started by Trump against the Iranian regime. It is well known that Netanyahu brought Trump on board in a bid to solve Israel's perpetual problem with Iran, which is guided by religious prejudice against Judaism.

It is apparent that Trump has not studied Persian history. If he had, he would have learnt that the Parthian Emperors, followed by the Sassanian rulers, of ancient Persia resisted the Eastern Roman Empire that ruled from Constantinople (later renamed Istanbul by the Ottoman Turks). Even the Roman Empire could not subdue Persia. It was forced to exist as an equal power with the Sassanians, who followed the Zoroastrian religion till the Arabs invaded Persia and converted Persians to Islam.

My friend, Dr Farokh Udawadia, who was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1987, recently wrote a treatise on the

Parthian and Sassanian empires. Persian Zoroastrians refused to convert and instead migrated to the west coast of India to form the now tiny but very influential Parsi community. I met Farokh for the first time at the Padma awards ceremony in 1987. He is not only a very distinguished doctor but also a dedicated researcher of Persian history. I am eternally indebted to Farokh for saving my wife Melba's life when she was fighting for survival at Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital in 2002 (she passed away in 2022).

Reverting to the spat between the US President and the Pope, I can sense that my friends in Mumbai, both Catholic and non-Catholic, are squarely in agreement with Leo XIV. Along with the majority of Catholics in Mumbai, I certainly am one with the Pope.

Last week, he described those who waged wars and appropriated the earth's resources as thieves who robbed the world of a peaceful future. He also urged the US and Iran to resume talks to end the war.

I felt sad when the Pope attempted to tone down his criticism. But on reflection, I realized that he cannot put his US-based relatives in mortal danger. Trump's supporters intend to "Make America Great Again" by any means, fair or foul. It is something we in India also experience at the time of elections when winning is all-important, the means totally irrelevant. The definition of "morality" changes when politics and the quest for power take precedence.

(The author is a highly decorated retired Indian Police Service officer, and a former governor)

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Gurleen Kaur

Trump Signs DHS Funding Bill, Ending Shutdown

The department had been partially shuttered for 76 days, resulting in long Transportation Security Administration lines at airports nationwide.

MAY 1, 2026

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

President Donald Trump on April 30 signed legislation ending the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) shutdown after 11 weeks.

The department had been partially shuttered for 76 days since Feb. 14, resulting in long Transportation Security Administration (TSA) lines at airports nationwide.

"After 76 days, the longest government shutdown in history is over," DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin posted on X.

[DHS] is back open, [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] and [Customs and Border Protection] will be funded through reconciliation (with NO Democrat votes) so liberals can't play games with federal law enforcement funding. To be clear, this Democrat shutdown NEVER should have happened."

Calls to pass the bill-and secure funding for presidential protection, which the Senate had already unanimously approved twice-intensified after the April 25 shooting at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner in Washington, where prosecutors say a man attempted to assassinate Trump.

The legislation provides funding for all of DHS except Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection. This includes funding for agencies including the TSA, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Secret Service.

Federal employees in these agencies who had been furloughed and who have mostly gone without pay for the duration of the shutdown will return to work and receive back pay.

Funding for immigration enforcement has been separated from the main DHS funding bill, and Republicans instead plan to pass immigration funding via the reconciliation process.

House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) had dismissed the legislation as a "joke" in March.

Johnson on April 30 defended the decision to delay consideration of the broader DHS bill, saying that House Republicans first wanted to see progress on funding for ICE and Border Patrol.

"We held the [DHS] bill, the underlying funding bill, because we had to ensure that they could not isolate and eliminate those two critical agencies," he said. "We are getting those done now."

In a late vote on April 29, House Republicans approved the budget resolution for ICE and Border Patrol in a near



President Donald Trump signs an executive order in the Oval Office of the White House on April 30, 2026.

party-line 215-211 vote. The measure would provide \$70 billion for immigration enforcement and deportations through the remainder of Trump's term, which ends in January 2029, while shielding the funding from Democratic obstruction.

Afterward, Johnson acknowledged his earlier criticism of the bill and said separating immigration enforcement money into its own budget track made the proposal acceptable, allowing it to pass "with no controversial Democratic provisions."

DEMOCRAT DEMANDS FOR ICE

Funding for most of the DHS expired on Feb. 14, as Democrats pushed Republicans and the White House to agree to new limits on ICE and Border Patrol. They argued that immigration enforcement agencies should follow the same standards as police departments nationwide, including obtaining judicial warrants before entering private residences. However, after weeks of talks, negotiations reached a deadlock.

Democrats had a core list of demands before they would back additional funding for DHS, centering around the rules governing on-the-ground immigration enforcement.

Their demands have included requiring ICE and other immigration enforcement agents to show identification, disallowing face coverings while carrying out official duties in public, and instituting legislative prohibitions against administrative warrants, or warrants the administration grants itself.

Republicans have opposed these proposals, particularly a prohibition on masking. They say that the measure

would be anti-police.

As such, funding for ICE and Border Patrol will be considered separately under a reconciliation bill that can be passed without any Democratic support.

Specifically, Republicans are using the reconciliation process to pursue up to \$70 billion in funding for immigration enforcement through the end of Trump's term. Both chambers have approved legislation to begin drafting the bill.

Under the reconciliation process, which is governed by strict rules, lawmakers can bypass the normal filibuster requirements and pass party-line legislation in the upper chamber.

Because reconciliation is excepted from filibuster rules, it has been an appealing tool for both parties when failing to secure a supermajority in the Senate. It was used by Democrats to pass the Inflation Reduction Act of 2021 and by Republicans to pass the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025, but it is subject to significant restrictions.

Namely, it must include only federal budget items, with no items that have a "merely incidental" effect on revenue or spending.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-S.D.) indicated that Republicans had been forced to use the process to end the shutdown affecting DHS.

"It's not my preference, but it is reality," Thune said.

DHS FUNDING NEARLY EXHAUSTED

The White House had pressed Congress to act, warning that stopgap funding Trump used to temporarily pay TSA and other DHS workers through executive actions was nearing exhaustion.

In a memo released on April 28, the Office of Management and Budget warned that DHS could soon deplete critical operating funds, jeopardizing essential staff and operations. Even so, most department employees have remained on the job because they are classified as essential.

Immigration enforcement personnel have largely been paid through roughly \$170 billion approved by Congress last year as part of Trump's tax cuts package. Other workers, including TSA agents, have relied on executive measures to continue receiving paychecks.

With payroll costs topping \$1.6 billion every two weeks, Mullin recently warned that available funds were quickly running out.

According to The Associated Press, Airlines for America said more than 1,000 TSA officers resigned since the shutdown began. (Agencies)

US introduces SACRED Act, proposes 100-foot safety zone around temples and gurdwaras.

APRIL 28, 2026

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

A bipartisan bill has been introduced in the US Congress to create a 100-foot buffer zone around places of worship, including temples and gurdwaras, and treat any harassment or intimidation within such areas a federal crime.

Congressman Tom Suozzi, a Democrat from New York, and Congressman Max Miller, a Republican from Ohio, have introduced the Safeguarding Access to Congregations and Religious Establishments from Disruption (SACRED) Act.

The bill seeks to make it a federal crime to intentionally intimidate, obstruct, or harass people exercising their right to religious worship within 100 feet of a place of worship, whether by threatening them, blocking their path, or approaching them within eight feet for the purpose of harassment or intimidation.

The SACRED Act is endorsed by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the American Jewish Committee (AJC), the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (OU), Hadassah, Islamic Society of North America (ISNA).

Hindu American Foundation (HAF), Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), UJA-Federation of New York, Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Centre of Nassau County (HMTC), Agudath Israel of America and United



Congressman Tom Suozzi, a Democrat from New York, and Congressman Max Miller, a Republican from Ohio, have introduced the Safeguarding Access to Congregations and Religious Establishments from Disruption (SACRED) Act

Sikhs.

"No one deserves to be harassed or intimidated, especially on their way to their place of worship," said Congressman Suozzi.

"We're living in increasingly volatile times, fueled in part by social media fanning the flames of division and our foreign adversaries trying to divide us from within. I've heard real fear from my constituents over the last few years about the hate they see and feel, especially while going to pray or being visibly religious," Suozzi said in a statement.

"We have a responsibility to address that fear in a thoughtful, targeted way that protects our constituents while balancing the First Amendment right to peacefully protest," Suozzi said. "Every American deserves to practice

their faith free from fear, intimidation, or harassment," said Congressman Miller.

"The SACRED Act ensures that people can access their place of worship safely and without obstruction, while still preserving First Amendment protections for peaceful expression. This commonsense legislation draws a clear line: intimidation and threats have no place in our communities," Miller said.

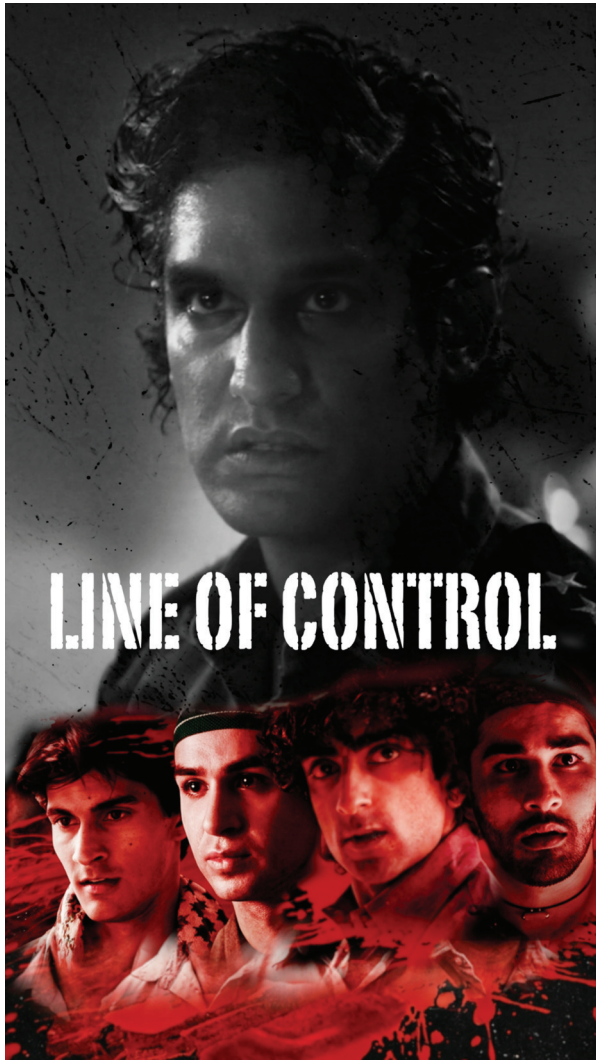
"The Hindu American community welcomes the introduction of the SACRED Act as a critical step in safeguarding our places of worship. In recent years, we have seen a disturbing rise in the targeting and desecration of Hindu mandirs across America, which has deeply shaken the sense of safety for our families and devotees," said Samir Kalra, Managing Director of Policy and Programs at the Hindu American Foundation.

Kalra said that by establishing federal penalties for those who intentionally disrupt or harass individuals within 100 feet of a religious establishment, this legislation ensures that our mandirs remain the sacred spaces of peace and community they are meant to be.

"At a time when incidents of religiously motivated hostility continue to affect diverse groups, this measure reinforces a shared commitment to religious freedom, mutual respect, and public safety," said Bhupinder Kaur of United Sikhs.

"Line of Control" - Travis Hodgkins' Acclaimed Adaptation of "The Collaborator" Released in India, Southeast Asia, and Middle East.

The haunting drama exploring the human cost of the Kashmir conflict, directed by Travis Hodgkins and based on Mirza Waheed's award-winning novel, now available on Apple TV and YouTube Movies in India, Southeast Asia, and Middle East.



APRIL 30, 2026
LOS ANGELES, CA (TIP)

Mulberry Films is proud to announce the digital release of the critically acclaimed movie Line of Control (2026). Written and directed by Travis Hodgkins in his feature directorial debut, the film is an adaptation of Mirza Waheed's international bestselling novel The Collaborator. Following a successful global festival run, including premieres at the San Diego International Film Festival and the UK Asian Film Festival, the film will launch on major digital platforms across India, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East.

MASSIVE ONLINE MOMENTUM

As the film moves to digital platforms, its promotional campaign has already garnered significant attention on social media. The official trailers and digital shorts hosted by Mulberry Films on YouTube have collectively reached more than 4 million views, reflecting a massive global appetite for this powerful narrative:

- Official Hindi Trailer: 1.2 million views
- Official Hindi Trailer (Shorts): 1.3 million views

- Official English Trailer: 773,000 views
- Asma and Boy (Shorts): 775,000 views

CRITICAL ACCLAIM

Critics have praised the film for its unflinching gaze and emotional depth:

"The film, much like the novel, pushes back against the simplified narratives often presented in mainstream discourse... it reframes the story through human experience." - Outlook India

"Several films about Kashmir lean heavily on geopolitics. Line of Control stays intimate. Families searching for sons matter more here than diplomatic history. Villages hollowed out by disappearances matter more than speeches about sovereignty. That focus gives the story unusual force." - Kashmir Observer

A HUMAN STORY OF CONFLICT

Set against the backdrop of the 1993 Kashmir insurgency, Line of Control follows the story of a teenage boy whose life is shattered when his

friends disappear amid escalating violence. Forced into a grim role by a local army officer-collecting identification cards from the dead in the valley-he must navigate the brutal reality of war while clinging to the hope of finding his missing friends.

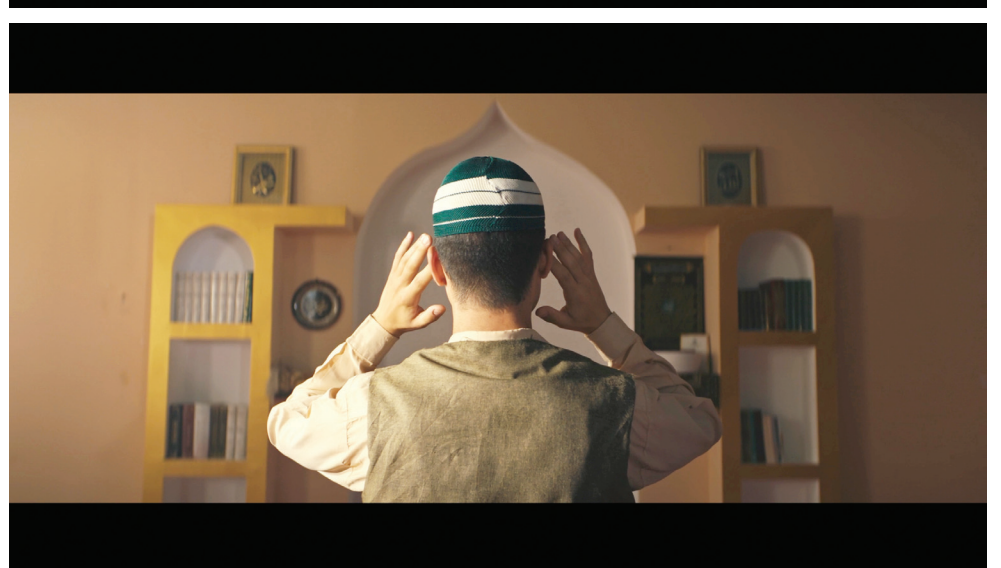
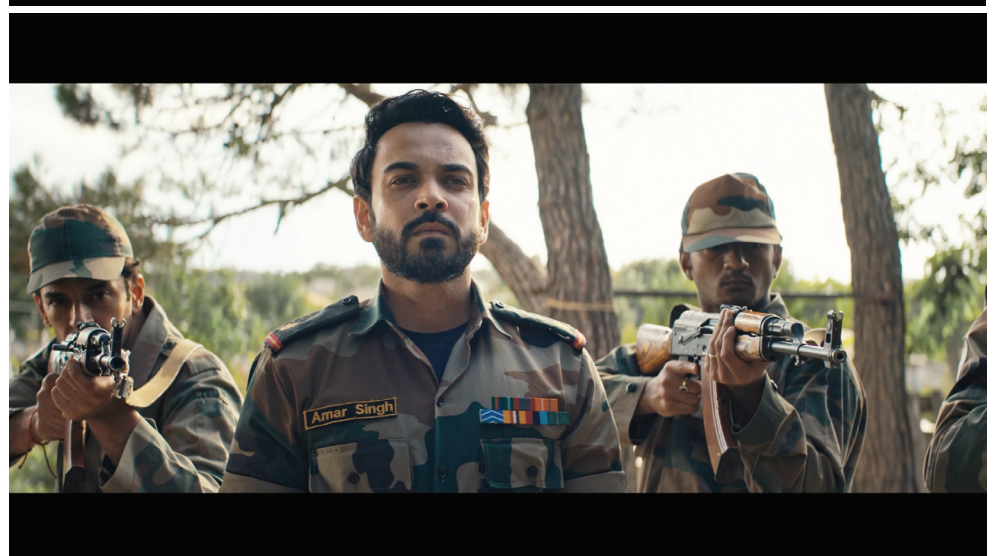
"We sought to move beyond the traditional war narrative and focus on the quiet, devastating impact of conflict on families and identity," said Director Travis Hodgkins. "The film honors the visual poetry of Waheed's prose to tell a story of friendship and survival that is tragically universal."

UPCOMING SOUNDTRACK RELEASE

In response to overwhelming demand for the film's evocative musical landscape composed by Wayne Sharpe, the official original motion picture soundtrack will be released on May 1, 2026. The score, which weaves traditional regional influences with modern tension, will be available on all major streaming platforms including Spotify and iTunes.

Key Details:

- Digital Release Date: April 17, 2026
- Platforms: Apple TV and Google Play
- Soundtrack Release Date: May 1, 2026



- Director/Writer: Travis Hodgkins
- Cast: Rudi Dharmalingam (The Lazarus Project), Nitin Ganatra (EastEnders), Vikram Kapadia (The Night Manager), and introducing Nikhil Singh Rai and Anastasia Jairath.
- Producers: Produced by a dynamic and all-women team - Rashaana Shah, Cristy Coors Beasley, Namrata

Sharma, Chaitra Vedullapalli and Swetha Pakala.

Line of Control is a production of Mulberry Films, Fabled Frames, and Metro Productions. For further information and official trailers, please visit the official Instagram or the Fabled Frames website.

For media enquiries, please contact rashaana@mulberry-films.com

For advertising in The Indian Panorama
visit www.theindianpanorama.news or Call 646-247-9458

India-Romania Hybrid B2B Meeting on Construction Sector Strengthens Business Synergies



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

**APRIL 27, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)**

The Embassy of India successfully hosted a hybrid Business-to-Business (B2B) meeting focused on the construction sector on 24 April 2026 at the Embassy premises. The event brought together leading Indian and Romanian companies, providing a dynamic platform to explore collaboration opportunities, exchange expertise, and deepen bilateral economic engagement in the infrastructure and construction domain.

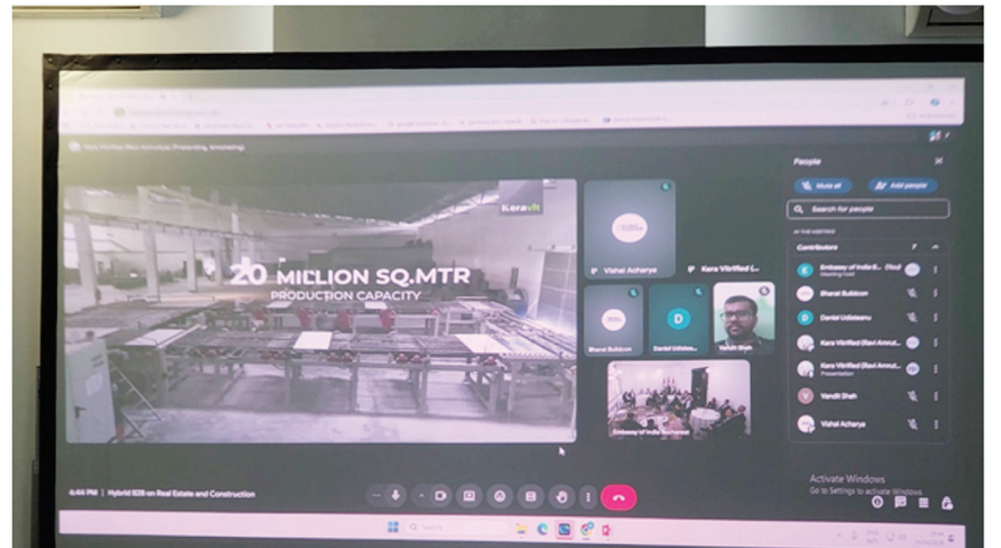
The programme commenced with the virtual onboarding of Indian companies

via an online platform, followed by the arrival and welcome of distinguished guests from Romania's construction and infrastructure industry. The hybrid format enabled wide participation, facilitating direct interaction between stakeholders from both countries.

In his special remarks, Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra underscored the strong and growing economic partnership between India and Romania. He highlighted the vast potential for collaboration in the construction sector, particularly in areas such as infrastructure development, smart cities, sustainable construction



Mr. Vishal Acharya presented a detailed overview of the Bharat Buildcon exhibition



Indian companies joined virtually and showcased their products and expertise



Romanian companies actively participated and explored opportunities with Indian firms



Group photo: Hybrid B2B Meeting on Construction (24 April 2026)

practices, and technology transfer. The Ambassador emphasized that India's rapidly expanding infrastructure landscape and Romania's strategic location within the European Union create complementary opportunities for meaningful partnerships.

Mr. Vishal Acharya, representing Bharat Buildcon, delivered a comprehensive address outlining the scope and opportunities associated with the upcoming Bharat Buildcon exhibition scheduled for June 18-21, 2026, at Yashobhoomi (India International Convention & Expo Centre), New Delhi. He provided valuable insights into the

event, including logistical arrangements, participation benefits, and avenues for international cooperation. His presentation encouraged Romanian companies to actively engage with Indian counterparts and explore participation in the exhibition as a gateway to the Indian market.

The event featured presentations by Indian companies showcasing their capabilities, innovative technologies, and project portfolios in the construction sector. These presentations highlighted India's strengths in engineering, project execution, cost-effective solutions, and sustainable practices.

An interactive Q&A session followed, allowing Romanian companies to engage directly with Indian participants and representatives from Bharat Buildcon. The discussion facilitated a deeper understanding of market expectations, regulatory frameworks, and potential areas for joint ventures and partnerships.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks, reaffirming the Embassy's commitment to fostering stronger economic ties and facilitating business linkages between India and Romania.

The Embassy of India remains dedicated to promoting trade and investment partnerships and will continue to organize such sector-specific engagements to unlock new avenues of bilateral cooperation.

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

Streets of Toronto reverberate to beating of drums and recitation of holy hymns to mark Khalsa Day Parade

BY
PRABHJOT SINGH



Khalsa Day Parade Toronto -Photo/ courtesy Inderpaul Singh Chandhoke

APRIL 27, 2026
TORONTO (TIP)

Streets of Toronto, the business capital of Canada, reverberated to the beats of music, recitation of holy hymns from sacred Sri Guru Granth Sahib besides amazing display of gatka, traditional martial art of Sikhs, to mark the Khalsa Srijana Divas. Hundreds of thousands of Sikhs drawn from all over Greater Toronto area and nearby areas assembled at Nathan Philip square to mark celebrations held annually to recognize the Sikh New Year and the establishment of Khalsa, the purest of

the pure.

Toronto's downtown witnessed a splash of colors to mark the festivities that also rich overtones of music and festivities as part of this year's Khalsa DaVancouver this year had to be restricted to Downtown Toronto and Nathan Phillip Square Area because of the ongoing preparations for the FIFA World Cup as Toronto and Vancouver will hold 13 of the FIFA World Cup matches starting on June 12.

Also known as Vaisakhi, Khalsa Day recognizes the Sikh New Year and the establishment of the Sikh community in



Khalsa Day Parade Surrey -Photo courtesy/ Gurdwara Dasmesh Darbar

1699. Organized by the Ontario Sikhs and Gurdwaras Council, the annual parade is the third-largest in Canada and typically attracts thousands of spectators.

To accommodate the influx of people in Toronto for the parade on Sunday, both the TTC and GO Transit added extra services.

As the 2026 Toronto Khalsa Day (Vaisakhi) Parade was held at Nathan Phillips Square (City Hall) with festivities from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the parade that started at 1:30 p.m., leaders of all major political parties made a beeline to address the Punjabis in general and the Sikhs in particular. Due to FIFA-related events, the downtown parade followed a modified route starting and finishing at City Hall.

On the other coast, the 2026 Surrey Khalsa Day Vaisakhi Parade, recognized

as the world's largest, took place last Saturday drawing over 500,000 attendees. The event featured a massive Nagar Kirtan procession starting and ending at the Gurdwara Dasmesh Darbar Temple showcasing community floats, live music, and free food (langar).

Festivities ran from 9 in the morning to 6 in the evening, with the main procession starting around 9 am. Thousands of participants and visitors enjoyed extensive Langar (free community meals) provided by local businesses and families. The parade was a massive, multi-cultural event attracting over 500,000 people, making it one of the largest Vaisakhi celebrations outside of India.

Similar parades were organized elsewhere in Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg and other places this month.

Hemant Shah to head Trade Development Committee

APRIL 29, 2026
TORONTO (TIP)

Regular exchange of visits, including those by trade missions, has raised hopes of taking the ongoing dialogue to the logical conclusions for strengthening the bilateral trade between India and Canada.

Sources indicate that there have been considerable and positive developments ever since the resumption of talks between the two nations.

This renewed focus follows high-level engagements, including a visit by the Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney to India for the Canada-India Growth and Investment Forum in Mumbai, signaling a commitment to repairing and deepening economic ties.

As of March 2026, India and Canada have renewed their economic partnership, aiming to finalize a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) by the end of 2026 to increase bilateral trade. The initiative focuses on enhancing investments in energy, critical minerals, and technology, with a goal to expand trade to CAD 70 billion (~INR 4.65 lakh crore) by 2030.

Key pillars of this initiative, as

announced in the March 2026 joint statement, include both countries launching formal negotiations to create a durable economic anchor for trade, aiming for a final agreement by year-end 2026.

A focus on long-term liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) supply arrangements and investments in critical minerals, highlighted by a major uranium supply agreement with Kamico. Support for private investment, including pension fund participation in infrastructure and renewable energy. Strengthening ties through the National Payments Corporation of India and Payments Canada regarding instant payments and cross-border remittances. A Joint Work Plan under the India-Canada Energy Dialogue to explore long-term contracts and address trade logistics.

The Canadian Hindu Chamber of Commerce (CHCC) has decided to build further on this progress by constituting a dedicated India trade development committee under the chairmanship of a veteran business manager and promoter, Hemant Shah. The mandate of this

committee would be to complement The Canadian Hindu Chamber of Commerce (CHCC), Toronto, along with its chapters across Canada, has an India Trade Development Committee to complement government initiatives and strengthen economic ties between Canada and India.

With over five decades of active involvement in the Manitoba-India trade, Hemant brings extensive experience across sectors, including agricultural exports (grains), mining equipment, aviation (corporate aircraft), machinery, and pilot training.

A seasoned global traveler, Hemant has made numerous visits to India and the subcontinent, earning him the nickname "Mr. India" of Winnipeg, Canada.

Hemant is a forward-thinking and community-minded business leader with more than five decades of experience in the promotion and development of international trade. He has successfully established export opportunities across India and the subcontinent and has been recognized with several prestigious awards from business communities and governments.

At CHCC, Hemant and his team look



Hemant Shah

forward to collaborating closely with government officials and the private sector to further enhance bilateral trade and investment opportunities between the two nations.

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

Drug trafficker Salim Dola lived in Turkiye on Bulgarian passport, used fake name 'Hamza': Officials

MAY 1, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Mohammad Salim Dola, the absconding international drugs trafficker brought to India from Turkiye recently, was living in that country on a Bulgarian passport under the assumed name of 'Hamza', officials said on Friday, May 1.

On Thursday, April 30, a local court in Mumbai sent Dola, 59, to the custody of the Narcotics Control Bureau till May 8.

Officials privy to the developments said initial probe found Dola was staying in Turkiye on a Bulgarian passport under the name 'Hamza'.

It is being ascertained if his Bulgarian passport was valid or fake, they said.

The probe agency told the Mumbai court that Dola's name emerged as an international drug trafficker associated with Dawood Ibrahim, and that he has been identified as the key supplier of a commercial quantity of mephedrone drug seized from south Mumbai in June 2023.

Dola was arrested in Turkiye on the basis of an Interpol Red Notice issued on India's request in March 2024. He was wanted in multiple narcotics trafficking cases in India and had been absconding from law enforcement agencies.

He was brought to Delhi from Turkiye on Tuesday. *Source: PTI*

Overseas Citizen of India registration system revamped, fully digitised

MAY 1, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Ministry of Home Affairs on Thursday, April 30, notified the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026, bringing changes to the Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) framework and broader citizenship procedures. Amendments take force immediately.

A major overhaul involves complete digitisation of the OCI registration and cancellation system.

From now on, all applications for OCI card-holdership under Section 7A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 must now be filed exclusively through the designated online portal ociservices.gov.in. The earlier requirement of submitting applications in duplicate has been done away with.

In a significant modernisation of the system under amended Rule 33, registered OCI cardholders will now be issued either a physical OCI card or an electronic OCI (e-OCI) registration.

The issuing authority will henceforth maintain all records electronically.

A major new provision inserted into Rule 3 of the Citizenship Rules makes it clear that a minor child holding an Indian passport cannot simultaneously hold the passport of any other country "at any time". The proviso "at any time" has been added afresh.

Applicants are required to formally acknowledge this condition and a corresponding declaration has been added to the related form.

In another change, the amendments add a new consent clause to the application and allows OCI applicants to share their biometric data for automatic



or application-based registration under the Fast-Track Immigration Programme. The aim, officials said, is streamlining future immigration processing.

Amendments also make OCI renunciation process online and says declaration of renunciation of OCI card-holdership under Section 7C must now be filed electronically via the online portal. Where a physical card was issued, the original must still be physically surrendered to the Indian Mission, Post or Foreigners Regional Registration Officer concerned.

The new norms strengthen OCI card cancellation provisions. The revised Rule 35 empowers the Centre to treat an e-OCI registration as cancelled by direction, even without physical card surrender. "If a physical card is not

delivered upon notice, the government may similarly direct it to be treated as cancelled," the rules state.

The amended Rule 42 restructures the appellate process. Citizenship applicants aggrieved by an order may now approach an authority one rank higher than the original deciding authority. For OCI-related grievances, the Centre will designate the revision authority. A new Rule 42A separately provides for review of orders under the newly inserted Section 15A of the Act. The notification signed by Nitesh Kumar Vyas, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, has been made under the principal Citizenship Rules originally notified in February 2009 and last amended in March 2024.

Source: TNS

Exit polls cheer UDF; LDF finds hope in margin of error

MAY 1, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): A day after most of the exit polls predicted UDF victory in the Kerala Assembly polls, leaders of the Congress-led alliance appeared jubilant, while the CPM-led LDF dismissed the projections, citing the historically poor record of the exit polls in the state.

While the Axis My India poll predicted that UDF would win 78-90 seats, the Manorama C-Voter poll said the UDF could win as high as 94 seats. The halfway mark in the 140-member Assembly is 71. The two polls gave the LDF 49-62 seats and 44-56 seats respectively. The NDA will remain a marginal player and could potentially open its account in the state Assembly, most polls said.

KPCC chief Sunny Joseph said that the exit poll results underline the party's calculations post polling.

"We are optimistic about our

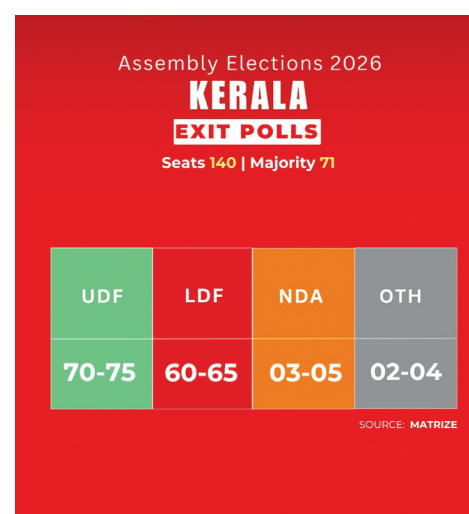
chances of victory. The exit poll results have shown the same trend. We are evaluating its analysis as well. We are sure that the public sentiment is in favour of the UDF," said Joseph.

He said that the party faced a lot of challenges in the run up to polling. "There was the SIR which created a lot of hassles. Polling officials were appointed in a biased manner. Some incidents of violence and injustice have taken place. Yet, against these challenges, we will win," added Joseph.

At the same time, Public works minister PA Mohammed Riyas said he would not take the exit polls seriously.

"Exit polls have been wrong earlier too. The LDF is poised for a historic third term in power," said Riyas.

CPI(M) state secretary MV Govindan interpreted the exit poll results as positive indicators for a continued governance of the LDF.



"Some surveys predict the LDF to get between 60 and 69 seats. There is a margin of errors in those surveys. So even if there is a minor correction, we will end up winning," said Govindan. He claimed that the surveys point to the absence of any

anti-incumbency sentiments in the state. "The survey also ranks Pinarayi Vijayan as the most preferred candidate for the chief minister post," said Govindan.

IUML indicates support for VD Satheesan as CM

IUML, the second biggest partner of the UDF, indicated its support for VD Satheesan as the CM candidate if the UDF wins.

Syed Sadiq Ali Shihab Thangal, the IUML state president, told reporters, "I think Satheesan enjoys the highest amount of support as chief minister in what is seen in most of the exit poll surveys. That means people have given their verdict. The Congress high command will take the final decision. I think they will also consider the public sentiment."

Satheesan, along with Ramesh Chennithala and KC Venugopal are the leading contenders for the CM's post.

No legislative vacuum on hate speeches: Supreme Court

MAY 1, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Supreme Court said the existing framework of criminal law adequately addresses the issue of hate speeches and no "legislative vacuum" exists warranting intervention.

"The contention that the field of hate speech remains legislatively unoccupied, is misconceived," a Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said.

The top court delivered its verdict on a bunch of petitions seeking action against those involved in hate speeches and also for mechanism to deal with such instances. The Bench said it would be open to the Centre and the competent legislative authorities to consider in their wisdom whether any further legislative or policy measures were warranted in light of the evolving societal challenges or to bring about suitable amendments as suggested by the Law Commission's 267th report of March 2017. "While we decline to issue directions of the nature sought, we deem it appropriate to observe that the issues relating to hate speeches and rumour-mongering bear directly upon the preservation of fraternity, dignity and constitutional order," Justice Nath said while pronouncing the verdict.

Triple blow to Mamata Banerjee ahead of Bengal election results

MAY 1, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): With just days to go before votes are counted on May 4, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and her party, the Trinamool Congress (TMC), are staring at a convergence of political, legal and administrative setbacks - intensified by a dramatic night of protests and counter-allegations over EVM security.

The first setback came on Wednesday, when multiple exit polls indicated a strong showing by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), suggesting it could dislodge the TMC after 15 years in power.

Pollster Matrize projected the BJP at 146-161 seats and the TMC at 125-140, hinting at a tight race but with an edge to the BJP. P-Marq went further, forecasting 150-175 seats for the BJP against 118-138 for the TMC. Poll Diary predicted a clearer victory for the BJP with 142-171 seats, while placing the TMC between 99-127. However, People's Pulse offered a contrasting view, projecting the TMC retaining power with 177-187 seats, and the BJP at 95-110.

Banerjee dismissed the projections outright, alleging they were "fabricated" and part of a psychological campaign to demoralise her party cadre ahead of counting.

On Thursday, April 30, the TMC suffered a legal setback after the Calcutta High Court dismissed two petitions related to counting arrangements.

One plea challenged a directive mandating the inclusion of Central government or PSU employees as counting supervisors or assistants. The court said it found "no merit" in the petition, noting that no evidence was presented to show prejudice.

In a separate petition, TMC MLA Javed Khan questioned the shifting of a counting centre. The court ruled there was no illegality in relocating the venue from Gitanjali Stadium to Viharilal College.

The most dramatic developments unfolded late on April 30,



West Bengal CM and TMC candidate for Bhabanipur constituency, Mamata Banerjee speaks to the media during her visit to a counting centre. (PTI)

when Banerjee herself reached an EVM strongroom at Sakhawat Memorial School in Bhabanipur and stayed inside the premises for nearly four hours, leaving shortly after midnight.

Arriving as a candidate, she initially faced resistance from central forces before being allowed entry upto the permitted area. Banerjee said she rushed to the site after seeing visuals and receiving complaints of alleged "manipulations".

"If there is any plan to tamper with the counting process, it will not be tolerated," she said, stressing the need for transparency and protection of votes.

Her visit capped a day of escalating tensions. Earlier, senior TMC leaders Kunal Ghosh and Shashi Panja staged a sit-in outside the Khudiram Anushilan Kendra strongroom complex, alleging that CCTV footage showed unauthorised individuals "fiddling with ballot papers". The party also posted the clip on social media, calling it evidence of "electoral fraud".

Source: HT

PM Modi wants to delay caste census; details of exercise still awaited: Congress

MAY 1, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Attacking the government over the caste census issue, the Congress said it is yet to come out with any details of how this enumeration will be done and alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has every intention of delaying the exercise.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said today exactly a year ago, the Modi government had announced that caste enumeration of the entire population will be included in the upcoming Census.

"The recent chronology relating to this dramatic U-turn by the Prime Minister is this: On July 21 2021, the Home Minister had answered a question in the Lok Sabha asked by a BJP MP Smt Raksha Nikhil Khadse (now a Minister herself) and said that the Government of India had decided as a matter of policy not to enumerate caste-wise population," Ramesh said on X.

On September 21 2021, the Modi government filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court stating that any directive by the court to enumerate caste-wise population would be tantamount to interfering with a policy decision already taken by the Modi government, he said. On April 16, 2023, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge wrote to the PM demanding an up-to-date caste census as part of the regular census, Ramesh pointed out.

"On April 28 2024, in a television interview to

News18 Network, the Prime Minister attacked the Congress saying that its demand for a caste census was indicative of 'urban naxal' thought," he said.

The Prime Minister owes the leadership of the Congress an apology for his accusation, Ramesh said, adding that more importantly, he owes the people of India an explanation of why he allowed his mind to be contaminated by "urban Naxal" thought when he announced a caste census on April 30, 2025.

"A full year has passed. The details of how this caste enumeration will be done are still awaited. There has been no dialogue with Opposition parties and state governments, let alone with experts in this subject," Ramesh said.

"The President of the Indian National Congress had written to the PM again on May 5, 2025, on the issue of the caste census. That letter was not even acknowledged. The issues raised in that letter remain very valid even now," he said.

In fact, they are more relevant after the recently concluded special session of Parliament where it was evident that the PM has every intention of delaying the caste census, Ramesh claimed.

He also shared on X Kharge's May 5, 2025 letter to Modi in which the Congress president had said that conducting any exercise such as the caste census which gives the backward, the oppressed and the marginalised sections of our society their rights cannot and should not be considered divisive in any way.

SC grants pre-arrest bail to Pawan Khera in case linked to Assam CM's wife

MAY 1, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Supreme Court on April 30 granted anticipatory bail to Congress leader Pawan Khera in a defamation and forgery case registered against him by the Assam Police. A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and AS Chandurkar set aside the Gauhati High Court's order refusing anticipatory bail and held that the circumstances of the case indicated the presence of political rivalry, warranting protection of Khera's personal liberty.

The case alleging defamation, forgery and criminal conspiracy was registered against Khera following his recent claims at a press conference that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife Riniki Bhuyan holds multiple foreign passports and undisclosed assets abroad.

Assam Police had visited Khera's residence in Delhi on April 7 but he was not present there.

Khera later approached the Telangana High Court seeking transit anticipatory bail. The Telangana High Court granted him a week's relief on April 10 to enable him approach the courts in Assam for anticipatory bail.

On April 15, the Supreme Court stayed Telangana High Court's April 10 order on an appeal moved by Assam government.

Subsequently, on April 17, the top court refused to extend the transit bail period. It asked Khera to approach the Gauhati High Court instead. Khera then moved the Gauhati High Court. In his petition before the Gauhati High Court, Khera argued that the allegations against him arise out of statements made in a public and political context during a press conference. He said that the same were "selectively construed" to initiate the criminal proceedings.

India in history this Week

MAY 1 TO MAY 7

01 MAY



1897 Swami Vivekananda established the Ramakrishna Mission.

1908 Prafulla Chaki shot himself after executing the Muzaffarpur bombings.

1914 Carmaker Ford became the first company to implement an eight-hour rule for its employees.

1923 Start of celebrating May Day in India.

1960 Maharashtra and Gujarat became separate states.

1972 Nationalization of the country's coal mines.

1914 Carmaker Ford became the first company to implement an eight-hour rule for its employees.

02 MAY

1907 There was a fire of riots in Rawalpindi which spread from West Bengal to Punjab.

1926 Hindu women had the right to take elected office.

1968 The Public Provident Fund Act was approved in the Lok Sabha.



1996 The famous Guru Chandraswami was sentenced to Tihar Jail on charges of cheating.

1998 10.5 kg of Charas was captured by the Indian Army from Bandipura market.

1921 Birth of filmmaker, director and writer Satyajit Ray, ornamented with Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan, Bharat Ratna, and Oscar Award.

1922 Birth of India's professional billiards player Wilson Jones.

1929 Birth of Indian politician and litterateur Vishnu Kant Shastri.

1949 Trial of Mahatma Gandhi murder case begins.

1985 Banarsidas Chaturvedi passed away. He was a famous journalist and litterateur.

2003 India announced to re-establish diplomatic relations with Pakistan. The relationship was severed following the December 2001 terrorist attack on Parliament.

03 MAY

1764 Nawab Mir Qasim of Bengal was defeated by the British.

1896 India's nationalist, politician, diplomat and former Defense Minister of India V.K. Birth of Krishna Menon

1913 The first Indian feature film Raja Harishchandra was released.



1919 The invasion of British India by Amanullah Khan which led to the Anglo-Afghan War.

1930 Birth of famous woman politician Sumitra Singh of Rajasthan.

1969 Third President of India Zakir Hussain passed away.

1977 The birth of the first female mathematician Maryam Mirzakhani to receive the 'Fields Medal', a prestigious world mathematics award.

1981 Indian cine actress Nargis died.

1989 Launch of country's first 50 kW solar power plant in Haryana.

2008 Tata Steel Limited got its first coal mining license in the UK.

1939 Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose established the All India Forward Block.

04 MAY

1980 Cole Mines Day was announced.

1799 Tipu Sultan died during a war.



1854 The country's first postage stamp was released in Kolkata.

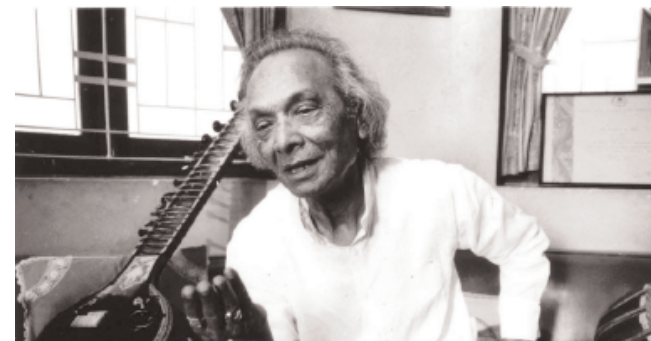
1923 Renowned filmmaker Mrinal Sen was born.

1959 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru refused the treaty between India and Pakistan.



1980 Mazdoor Day was observed for the laborers working in the coal mines.

05 MAY



2006 Music director Naushad Ali, who is said to be the right mix of music and success, said goodbye to the world on this day.

1883 Surendra Nath Banerjee became the first journalist to go to jail.

1479 The third Sikh Guru, Guru Amar Das was born.

1888 Birth of the great revolutionary Triloknath Chakravarty.

1916 Former President Gyani Zail Singh was born.

06 MAY

1944 Gandhiji released from Aga Khan Palace in Pune.

1967 Zakir Hussain became the first Muslim President of India.

2010 Ajmal Amir Kasab, convicted for the 26/11 attack in Mumbai, was sentenced to death.

1861 Motilal Nehru was born.

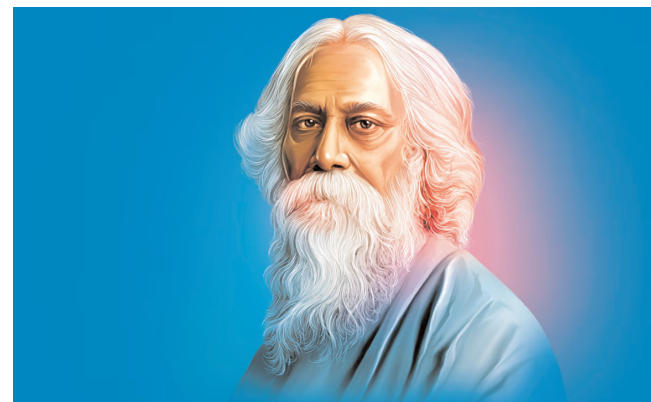
1964 Khajan Singh, one of the famous swimmers of India, was born.

1589 The great musician Mian Tansen died.

1946 Eminent jurist, prominent parliamentary leader and trusted aide of Mahatma Gandhi, Bhulabhai Desai died.

07 MAY

1861 Rabindranath Tagore was born into a prosperous family in Calcutta. Tagore is the first person



in Asia to receive the Nobel Prize.

1907 The first electric tram car operated in Bombay.

1973 The foundation stone of the new capital of Arunachal Pradesh was laid at Itanagar.

1989 Diplomatic contact between Britain and Iran broke in 1989 after an Iranian fatwa against Indian-origin writer Salman Rushdie.

2002 The International Religious Freedom Commission expressed serious concern over the violence in Gujarat.

1889 Renowned freedom fighter and founder of 'Hindustani Sevadal' N. s. Hardiker was born.

1880 The great Indian Sanskritist and scholar Pandit Pandurang Vaman Kane was born.

IFFLA ANNOUNCES 2026 AWARD WINNERS

BY MABEL PAIS

The 24th Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA) was held April 23-26, 2026. At the Closing Night Awards Ceremony held at Landmark Sunset Hollywood, the winners of the 2026 Jury and Audience Choice Awards were announced.

FEATURES JURY MEMBERS

One of the three Features Jury Members was Cinematographer Farhad Ahmed Dehlvi. He is of Asian Indian origin and based in Los Angeles, CA. He was born and raised in New Delhi.

As an immigrant and a person of color, Farhad brings a unique perspective to the stories he helps tell, and delights in photographing the unspoken relationships that permeate daily interactions. He strives to create compassion and empathy by taking the audience on a journey through the protagonist's eyes.

The other two jury members were filmmaker Juan Pablo González and film curator Caroline Libresco.

SHORTS JURY

One of the two Shorts Jury members was filmmaker Alisha Tejpal. She is an Indian filmmaker whose practice spans fiction and non-fiction, exploring the intersection of anonymity and intimacy in urban landscapes. Her work investigates the invisible social, political, and economic structures that



IFFLA Filmmaker Award winners. Left to right: Ben Rekhi (Breaking the Code), Sarmad Khoosat (Lali), Kislav (Shape of Momo), Seemab Gul (Ghost School), Salman Alam Khan (Permanent Guest), Sana Zahra Jafri (Permanent Guest), Priyanka Krishnan (Flowers Bloom When Touched), Raman Nimmala (Flowers Bloom When Touched), Amarik Singh Khosa (Blind Tiger) Credit: www.indianfilmfestival.org

govern quotidian life.

The other jury member was film curator Malin Kan.

THE AWARDS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

GRAND JURY PRIZE FOR BEST FEATURE

“Shape of Momo”; Director: Tribeney Rai

The jury stated, “We are honored to award the Grand Jury Prize to a debut film that deftly creates a protagonist who inhabits the gray area between righteousness and humility, and

delicately charts her journey through the complexities of class and gender in a place steeped in tradition.”

FEATURE JURY HONORABLE MENTIONS

“Ghost School”; Director: Seemab Gul
“Lali”; Director: Sarmad Sultan Khoosat

GRAND JURY PRIZE FOR BEST SHORT

“Room At The Farm”; Directors: Jasmine Kaur Roy & Avinash Roy

The jury stated, “A delicate and nuanced allegory of the fragility of

human relationships when faced with the impact of modernization. This film represents rural Punjab with a gaze rarely seen, one that centralizes humanity and desire. Over the course of twenty-three succinct minutes, it allows us to negotiate a devastating reality alongside its characters.”

SHORT JURY HONORABLE MENTIONS

“Bleat!”; Director: Ananth Subramaniam

“Permanent Guest”; Director: Sana Zahra Jafri

AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD FOR BEST FEATURE

“Breaking The Code”; Directors: Ben Rekhi and Svetlana

AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD FOR BEST SHORT

“Rihanna”; Director: Suraj Paudel

LAUNCHPAD: PITCH COMPETITION WINNER

Amarik Singh Khosa's project, “Blind Tiger”

PITCH COMPETITION HONORABLE MENTION

Priyanka Krishnan and Raman Nimmala's project,

“Thottal Poo Malarum” (Flowers Bloom when Touched)

INDIAN FESTIVAL OF LOS ANGELES (IFFLA)

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

GUITAR VIRTUOSO GUTIERREZ WITH OTHERS CELEBRATES MILES DAVIS CENTENNIAL

BY MABEL PAIS

The MILES DAVIS BIRTH CENTENNIAL of the jazz legend in 2026 will be honored with a celebration by the Gil Gutiérrez Trio and guests in “Miles y Mas,” a special two-night engagement at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Dizzy's Club. Performances will take place on Tuesday, May 12 and Wednesday, May 13, with each day's shows at 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

GIL GUTIERREZ TRIO & GUESTS

The Gil Gutiérrez Trio features some of the finest musicians in jazz today:

Gil Gutiérrez – Guitar

Dave Rodriguez – Bass

Bob Stern – Violin

Special guests will include:

Cyro Baptista – Percussion

Jon Faddis – Trumpet

“Miles y Mas” honors the centennial of jazz legend Miles Davis, reimagining his iconic works through a Latin lens. Audiences will experience fresh interpretations of Davis' masterpieces, from “Sketches of Spain” to selections from both his acoustic and electric periods. The program will also highlight music from Gil Gutiérrez acclaimed collaborations with Mexican, Argentine, and Cuban artists.

Gil Gutiérrez is celebrated as one of Mexico's preeminent guitarists, renowned for his artistry in blending classical, jazz, flamenco, and son cubano. He has toured internationally with luminaries like Ana Gabriel, Arturo Sandoval, Ricardo Arjona, Pedro Guerra, and Doc Severinsen, and was recently featured in Severinsen's 2022 PBS Masterworks biopic. Gutiérrez's performances are famed for drawing surprise guest appearances from celebrities such as Bonnie Raitt, Meryl Streep, and Doc Severinsen.

Joining Gutiérrez onstage is New Jersey's Dave Rodriguez, a Grammy and Emmy-nominated bassist,



Gil Gutierrez trio.

Left to right: Bob Stern, Gil Gutierrez, Dave Rodriguez.

Credit: www.pranamarketing.com

producer, and performer. His musical journey spans venues from Carnegie Hall to the Apollo Theater, collaborating with artists including Max Roach, Tito Puente, and the Rochester Philharmonic. Rodriguez currently serves as Executive Producer at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC).

Violinist Bob Stern brings a wealth of experience, having performed with a diverse array of classical and pop artists such as Jerry Miller (Moby Grape), Charlie Prichard, and Laura Branigan.

Special guest percussionist Cyro Baptista is known for his genre-defying collaborations with Herbie Hancock, Carly Simon, Trey Anastasio, and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra.

Trumpet virtuoso Jon Faddis — whose illustrious career spans work with Dizzy Gillespie and Charles Mingus — was Grammy-nominated in 2025 for Best Latin Jazz Album.

Gil Gutiérrez Trio and their special guests will lead the audience on a remarkable musical journey celebrating the legacy of Miles Davis and the vibrant fusion of Latin jazz.

TICKETS

Secure tickets at www.jazz.org to be part of this extraordinary centennial tribute.

EVENT DETAILS

Dates Tuesday, May 12 & Wednesday, May 13, 2026

Times 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

Venue Jazz at Lincoln Center – Dizzy's Club, 10 Columbus Circle, New York, NY

Tour Dates For upcoming tour dates, visit <https://gilgutierrez.com>

GIL GUTIERREZ

Gil Gutiérrez is a virtuoso of the nylon string guitar, lauded for his innovative fusion of classical, jazz, and flamenco. Revered by peers and audiences alike, he has earned an international reputation and a devoted following spanning Latin America, the United States, and Spain.

His stellar collaborations extend to superstars such as Ana Gabriel, Francisco Céspedes, and Arturo Sandoval. Gutiérrez was recently featured on PBS American Masters' “Never Too Late,” chronicling Doc Severinsen's legendary career.

As music director for the San Miguel Five, Gutiérrez performed at renowned venues including The Kennedy Center, the Mexican Cultural Institute of the Mexican Embassy in Washington D.C., and New York's Carnegie Hall with the New York Pops.

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

SFFILM ANNOUNCES 2026 HONOREES OF SLOAN SCIENCE IN CINEMA INITIATIVE

BY MABEL PAIS

The 69th San Francisco International Film Festival (SFFILM,) which runs April 24 - May 4, 2026, announced \$115,000 in awards and grants for the Sloan Science in Cinema Initiative. The awards presentation took place on Sunday, April 26 at 7 pm at the Premier Theater at One Letterman, San Francisco, California.

This Cinema initiative is in partnership with Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, a New York based, philanthropic institution that makes grants for research in science, technology, and economics; quality and diversity of scientific institutions; and public engagement with science.

SFFILM's Executive Director, Anne Lai, expanded on this unique partnership, which is also responsible for supporting filmmakers at the screenwriting and development stages. "When we launched this initiative with the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation in 2015, the premise was simple and also ambitious: bringing science and cinema together would elevate and spotlight both mediums in a complimentary way, helping audiences connect to and better understand the world we all share. Ten years later, with 40 supported artists and growing, that theory has proven to be true. This year's fellows and grantees are at the very beginning of that journey—developing screenplays where real scientific discovery and processes shape the story from the ground up."

THE SLOAN INITIATIVE HONOREES

2025 SLOAN STORIES OF SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT FUND RECIPIENTS

"One Inch From Earth"

Writers: Sid Gopinath, Aditya Joshi
A group of plucky scientists must



Sid Gopinath -Credit: <https://sidgopinath.com>

overcome NASA leadership, rival teams, the specter of Mars, and the US government to launch a mission that proves life exists on a distant moon of Jupiter.

Sid Gopinath is a Brooklyn-based filmmaker, musician, and photographer.

In 2021, his writing partner Aditya Joshi and he sold SHIKAAR, a horror thriller TV show set in colonial India, to FX. Most recently, Sid was a writer on Seasons 1 and 2 of the Amazon show WE WERE LIARS and co-directed the short documentary FINDING OUR WILD, created with REI Co-Op Studios. He also has directed music videos for various indie artists including Mayyadda, bluesoul, and NOAMZ.

Sid is a 2025 WGAE & Filmnation New York Screenwriting Fellow, 2025 Ucross Artist in Residence, 2025 Stio x 5Point Short Film Challenge Winner, 2024 Signpost Fellow, 2024 Birch Fellow at Tofte Lake Artist Residency, Rideback RISE Circle Member, and was selected



Aditya Joshi -Credit: <https://adityamov.com>

for the Rickshaw Shorts Program. As the son of Indian immigrants, Sid tells stories about memory, belonging, and defragmentation.

ADITYA JOSHI IS A...

Writer. On screen, Aditya was most recently a story editor on the second season of WE WERE LIARS from Amazon & UTV. He co-wrote episode 105, which premiered on June 18, 2025. Previously, he sold and developed SHIKAAR, a limited series about a doomed tiger hunt in colonial India, at FX. In collaboration with Sid Gopinath, Aditya is a 2025 WGAE/Filmnation New York Screenwriting Fellow, where they are developing Aditya's feature directing debut film under the guidance of Tom McCarthy (Spotlight) and Anne Carey (Can You Ever Forgive Me). He is also a 2026 SloanxSFFILM Stories of Science Grantee and a member of the 2026 Rideback Rise Circle.

In the theatre, Aditya is a member of

the 2026 Page 73 Writers Group and the 2026 Workshop Theatre Spring Intensive. His plays includes La Tormenta (SolFest 2024, LPC, 2026 Step Up Residency @ Pregones/PRTT, 2025 Distillery Selection @ Seattle Public Theatre, 2026 Repertorio Español Play Festival, DQT Playtime Lab) and The Last Shaker (2025 Princess Grace Award Semifinalist, 2026 Workshop Theatre Intensive). He also produced the LATA award winning La Traición en la Amistad Off-Broadway at Repertorio Español.

Director. Aditya's latest short film, A WEST SIDE STORY STORY, had its world premiere at the 2025 Tribeca Festival and is EP'd by Luis Guzman (Magnolia). He also co-directed the REI Co-Op documentary short, FINDING OUR WILD, which premiered at the the American Documentary and Animation Film Festival before receiving a limited theatrical release through AMC & Mountainfilm.

Model. Aditya also indulges his vanity of the camera as an actor and model, modeling in campaigns for Indian boutique label Kalki Fashions and walking in 2022's South Asian New York Fashion Week and 2024's NYRAA (a one-stop online marketplace for the latest South Asian fashion) Fashion week.

In this initiative, besides Sid and Aditya, the other honorees are Destiny Macon, Justin Kim WooSok, Lane Unsworth.

SAN FRANCISCO FILM FESTIVAL

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

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POETS USE THEIR WORK TO STEP INTO THE ROLE OF ADVOCATE FOR A MORE COHESIVE FUTURE

BY MABEL PAIS

Four poets: Cortney Lamar Charleston; Mayda del Valle, Camonghne Felix, and Danez Smith through their work will engage in a virtual conversation that grapples with contemporary politics. This will take place via zoom on Thursday, May 7, 2026 at 7 PM. This event is a collaboration of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJ PAC - <https://njpac.org>) and the Dodge Poetry Foundation (<https://grdodge.org>).

Cortney Lamar Charleston, whose verses examine how national political decisions ripple through and specifically impact Black communities;

Mayda del Valle, the Poet Laureate of Chicago, who brings the voice of the South Side to the highest levels of government, having performed at the Obama White House;

Camonghne Felix, provides a direct link between the literary and the legislative, drawing from her personal experience working with Senator Elizabeth Warren; and

Danez Smith of Minneapolis, who



Poets Advocating Change: left to right - Cortney Lamar Charleston, Mayda del Valle, Camonghne Felix, Danez Smith

-Credit: Courtesy, www.njpac.org

uses poetry as a tool to support and uplift that city's immigrant populations.

In an era when the headlines highlight our national fractures, can poetry help us navigate the complexities of both national politics and local struggles? Americans have always embraced diverse and conflicting political views — but in our particularly divisive time, poets are stepping into the role of

advocate, using their work to foster understanding and call for a more cohesive future.

REGISTRATION

RSVP @ https://formstack.io/_wdlMrbzMDtkatoapnuBR94r99mSt8M8dGgjOKHtHm_OUMLVc1lNYqfcz-m2ymTUK5hcw5Of0CCuonkcKRjA

DODGE POETRY FOUNDATION

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

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJ PAC)

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

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

RITUAL4RETURN: TESTAMENT TO POWER OF THE ARTS TO HEAL AND BUILD COMMUNITY



Past participants of Ritual4Return, an NJPAC Arts & Well-being initiative, that helps those who return from incarceration reintegrate with their communities by creating a theatrical retelling of their life stories

Credit: Courtesy, njpac.org



Kevin Bott, Founder & Executive Director of Ritual4Return. -Credit: ritual4return.org

BY MABEL PAIS

Ritual4Return (R4R) (<https://ritual4return.org>), one of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center's Arts & Well-Being initiatives, will be offered on Saturday, May 2, 2026 starting at 1 PM at NJPAC's Chase Room.

The initiative is a workshop offered twice a year to those who have returned from incarceration. This is a remarkable, moving theatrical event.

Ritual4Return (R4R) is a 14-week program utilizing theater, improvisation, mindfulness exercises, chant, mask-making and storytelling to help returning citizens address and overcome the shame, stigma and trauma of incarceration.

On May 2, participants will enact the theatrical rite of passage they created together to formally mark the transition from prison back to their communities and into a new chapter of their lives.

EVENT SCHEDULE

1PM: Pre-event audience workshop and dialogue

3PM: Homecoming ritual

5PM: Dinner and celebration

REGISTRATION

The program is free, but registration is a must.

Register @ <https://njpac.org/event/ritual4return-a-homecoming-rite-of-passage-for-returning-citizens/>

Attendees are welcome to stay for a celebratory dinner afterward.

THE PROGRAM

Over the course of 14 weeks, participants learn how to use improvisation, drumming, mask-making and other theatrical techniques to tell the stories of their lives.

Then, at the end of that process, they offer a public performance of the work they've created, which also serves as a

symbolic return and reengagement with the communities they were separated from while imprisoned.

John Schreiber, President and CEO of NJPAC adds, "And it's both heartbreaking and hope-restoring, every time."

"The state locks people up for 20, 30 years – and then they hit the streets," explains Kevin Botts, the founder and Executive Director of Ritual4Return. Often, they return to a world that is bafflingly changed; in one memorable moment in a recent Ritual4Return performance, a recently released man recalled how he had searched, fruitlessly, for a phone booth.

"Social service agencies may offer food, housing, education, all important things. But there's an aspect of shame, of trauma, that they don't address."

This program does.

Kevin, who is also the director of Rutgers Arts Online at Mason Gross School of the Arts, developed Ritual4Return as a graduate student at the Steinhardt School at New York University, after running theater workshops in prisons in New York. Now, the program is offered jointly by NJPAC and Rutgers University-Newark; every season, two cohorts of returning citizens – one made up of men, one of women – go through the workshop and perform their works as its finale.

"It's one thing to know that someone killed another man. It's another thing to also know that he was beaten with an extension cord from the time he was four years old," Kevin tells me, about the context into which these performances put the lives of the participants.

"One of our guys this year, his first memory is running drugs from his parents to the stash house. He became a drug runner because that was literally the family business."

Participants may have been out of prison for a few months, or for decades, by the time they take part in Ritual4Return. But the program offers them all an opportunity to tell their story

to others, and to process it themselves, in a way they never have before.

A formerly incarcerated man Dallie says, "The people I know at work? They know Dallie the bro; they never met the person I am at Ritual4Return," explains Dallie Shell of Newark. A social worker at the City of Newark's Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery, Dallie had been incarcerated four times – but he'd been out of prison for years, and was working and simultaneously earning his second master's degree, when he joined the program last fall. "The program reconnected me with a lot of stuff I had closed off and put aside. I had never dealt with it," he says.

During the performance, Dallie spoke of growing up with parents who were also incarcerated; often his mother and father were imprisoned at the same time. He told his story in the form of a spoken-word poem that had the audience leaning forward to catch every word:

*I was born
in a part of the city where the
concrete never slept—
where crack smoke hugged the block
and the streetlights flickered
like even they were scared of what
they saw.
I grew up visiting jails
before I ever visited a campus.
Little kid hands
pressed against that cold
plexiglass,
trying to touch parents
the system kept stealing from me.*

Each person's story is different, and told through a different medium; participants have presented critical moments in their lives through dances, hip hop and R&B songs, and play-like scenes with a full cast of characters. They perform most of the ritual in masks, physical manifestations of the personas they needed to adopt to survive.

What unites all their stories is an openness, an honesty that invites connection and understanding.

"We're not changing their life stories,

not escaping them – but through this introspection, this storytelling, the participants are able to have agency over their story and narrative. As one of them said last time: They went from being owned by their story to owning their story," Kevin says.

And at the end of the performance, their masks come off.

The women's cohort of Ritual4Return is the group presenting their final performance this Saturday at 3PM in the Chase Room.

"Women jump into the emotional depths with this; they are ready to go there on week one. We start deep and go deeper," Kevin says. "But the men are getting there, especially as word has gotten out in Newark that this is a good program, it's a worthwhile thing to do."

Kevin and NJPAC will now offer the program in Camden as well as Newark.

And past participants and prison theater organizations have worked with Kevin to start sister initiatives in Boston and the Twin Cities.

"There are 700,000 people released from prison every year," Kevin says. "And more than half of them will be arrested again within ten years. The system is set up for them to fail. And instead of investing in schools and arts centers and rec centers, our response to that is to build more prisons."

"I would love to eventually be able to train teams of teaching artists to take Ritual4Return across the country," he says.

I hope someday we can. We're working on it! Until then, every person who is brave enough to walk onto our stage and tell his or her story represents a step in the right direction – and a testament to the power of the arts to heal and build community.

Learn more about Ritual4Return at <https://ritual4return.org>

(Excerpted and adapted from John Schreiber's newsletter)

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

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Aditya Dhar planning new big film with Ranveer Singh

Filmmaker Aditya Dhar has reportedly begun developing his next project and may reunite with Ranveer Singh after Dhurandhar. According to a report by Pinkvilla, the film is still in the early stages and Singh has emerged as the frontrunner to headline it.

The report said Dhar is aiming to take the yet-untitled film on floors by March 2027. Quoting a source, it said, "Aditya Dhar has cracked an idea and is currently working on it. He's excited about the concept and is developing it actively, with a plan to start the film by March 2027."

According to the report, Dhar has already cracked a fresh idea and has started working on developing it into a full-fledged film. Discussions have also begun with Singh for the lead part, although the paperwork has not been finalised yet.

The report added that the film is expected to be a high-concept, larger-than-life project. Singh has emerged as the top choice for the role, with the report saying he fits Dhar's vision for the film. With Dhurandhar: The Revenge also building buzz, Dhar appears to be continuing in the space of ambitious stories mounted on a grand scale. Dhar, known for Uri: The Surgical Strike and the Dhurandhar film series, enjoys a 100 per cent success record at the box office.

Aamir Khan confirms 3 Idiots sequel, says script set 10 years later

More than a decade after 3 Idiots became a phenomenon, a sequel is now officially in the works. Actor and producer Aamir Khan has confirmed that filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani is developing 3 Idiots 2, with the story set to revisit its beloved characters years later.

Speaking about the project, Aamir revealed that he had heard the story and described it as "wonderful", noting that the script is still being refined. According to Aamir, the sequel will pick up the lives of Rancho, Farhan and Raju nearly 10 years after the events of the original film.

In an interview with Amar Ujala, Aamir said, "Raju is working on 3 Idiots 2 right now. I've heard the story, and it's wonderful." He added that while the screenplay needs further work, the core idea stands out. "It's unusual, with the same humour as the first film, and follows the characters 10 years later," he said. Aamir also expressed excitement about stepping back into the role of Phunsukh Wangdu. Calling it a "beautiful story" conceived by Hirani and writer Abhijat Joshi, he said he is looking forward to revisiting the character. Released in 2009, 3 Idiots starred Aamir alongside R Madhavan, Sharman Joshi and Kareena Kapoor Khan. The film struck a chord with audiences for its take on India's education system, friendship and the idea of choosing passion over societal expectations.

Its performances, memorable dialogues and music have helped it remain widely popular over the years, with speculation around a sequel



frequently resurfacing. Aamir also shared that his planned reunion with Hirani for a biopic on Dadasaheb Phalke has been put on hold due to script-related issues. Separately, reports suggest that Aamir is in talks to portray BharatPe co-founder Ashneer Grover in a biopic, with Shraddha Kapoor reportedly being considered as the female lead and Rahul Mody as director. An official announcement on the project is still awaited.

Aamir Khan feels 'complete' after meeting Gauri

Aamir Khan has opened up about finding love again with girlfriend Gauri Spratt, saying he feels fortunate to have met her and is at peace in their

relationship. The actor also reflected on his past marriages with Reena Dutta and Kiran Rao while speaking about his biggest life regret.

In a recent interview with Navbharat Times, Aamir reflected on his personal life and spoke about how his relationship with Gauri has changed him emotionally.

"I am very fortunate that I met Gauri, and our relationship started together. She is great, I feel at peace with her. Although my relationship with (ex-wives) Kiran Rao and Reena Dutta was also very deep, but things didn't work out. When you asked, I felt that I am very blessed that Gauri entered my life. We are very happy together. Mujhe lagta hai ab jaake mai mukammal hua hu (I feel complete today)," he said.

King arrives on Christmas, makers of SRK's film confirm release date



The makers of Shah Rukh Khan's King confirmed the film's release date on Friday after announcing it first last year on the actor's birthday. Sharing a special teaser on social media, Red Chillies Entertainment said the film would arrive as a big Christmas release this year. The announcement was accompanied by an interesting caption on Instagram, referring to SRK's popularity as the 'king of Bollywood'. The caption on the post read, "A ROAR loud enough to shake the KINGdom. #KING arriving on 24.12.2026. #ItsKINGTime (sic)."

The film, directed by Pathaan fame Siddharth Anand, marks the big Bollywood debut of Shah Rukh Khan's daughter, Suhana Khan. It is scheduled to hit the screens on December 24, 2026.

Earlier, the makers unveiled a glimpse into the world of King. The imagery showcased Shah Rukh in a fierce new avatar, set against vivid landscapes and stylised frames. The actor could be seen performing death-defying stunts in the clip.

The film features an expansive cast,

including Rani Mukerji, Deepika Padukone, Jackie Shroff, Abhishek Bachchan, Anil Kapoor, Saurabh Shukla, Arshad Warsi, Raghav Juyal and Abhay Verma among others.

During his birthday event in November 2025, SRK confirmed that he has a romantic angle with Padukone in the film.

Anticipation for the film has been building steadily since the title-reveal on November 2 last year, which coincided with the superstar's birthday. The reveal introduced his silver-haired, action-driven look, an original theme track and a powerful line delivered by the actor "Darr nahi, dehshat hoon," triggering widespread reactions across social media platforms.

Produced by Red Chillies Entertainment and Siddharth Anand's Marflix Pictures, King is shaping up to be one of the most awaited big-screen spectacles of 2026. With its Christmas Eve release now locked, expectations continue to rise for what is being positioned as a high-octane entertainer backed by scale, style and star power.



Selena Gomez-Benny Blanco to divorce?

Rumors about actor-singer Selena Gomez's marriage to record producer Benny Blanco have been doing the social media rounds, months after their September 27, 2025, wedding in California. Posts across online platforms have claimed that the couple are headed for a divorce. Some users are sharing old photographs, edited screenshots and other unverified material to support the claim.

The speculation started gathering pace a few days ago when viral posts alleged that Gomez had caught Blanco cheating after seeing suspicious text messages. One post even claimed she had declared she was "single".

However, there has been no confirmed evidence about the couple's plans to separate. Neither Gomez nor Blanco has issued any official statement to suggest marital rift or divorce.

Reports suggest the divorce rumour began when a parody social media account posted false claims about the couple's relationship status. As the rumour spread online, some users posted old images and edited screenshots as proof that the marriage was in trouble. Others pointed to changes in online posting patterns. However, there has been no verified evidence of cheating or divorce.

The supposed Instagram story and X post about Gomez being "single" was reportedly linked to a parody account, not her official handle. Recent social media activity and public appearances have instead suggested that the couple remain together.

Gomez and Blanco were collaborators before they became romantically involved. He worked on her earlier music, and that bond developed into a relationship over time. Describing the relationship to People, Gomez said it was the "safest" she had ever felt.

The pair went public with their romance in late 2023. In December 2024, Gomez announced their engagement on Instagram and captioned a photograph, saying: "Forever begins now."

In March 2025, the couple released the collaborative music project I Said I Love You First, which documented their journey.

They got married in an intimate ceremony in California attended by friends and celebrities on September 27, 2025.

Anne Hathaway denies thinner models being fired from The Devil Wears Prada 2 set

Actor Anne Hathaway has clarified a viral story from the set of *The Devil Wears Prada 2*, saying thinner models were not fired after she pushed for size inclusivity during production. This came after her co-star Meryl Streep, in a recent interview from March, talked about how Hathaway pushed the film's producers to cast size-inclusive models.

Hathaway, who returns as Andy Sachs in the film, addressed the matter on *Good Morning America* after repeated questions about what happened on set. She said the incident had grown into a much bigger story than it was at the time and rejected claims circulating on social media that models had been removed from the production.

"It was just this kind of quick thing that happened on set, and now it's become a much bigger story," the actor said about the moment while clarifying that she never once advocated for models to be fired from the production, which is how some on social media interpreted the story. She also directly addressed the suggestion that jobs were lost because of the move.

"I do want to mention there's a little misinformation getting out there right now that people were fired because of the size inclusivity and that just didn't happen," Hathaway added.

The actor said, "Nobody lost their jobs. In fact, it created more jobs. It's so hard because I can't say what the scene is about, but there's a song that Lady Gaga wrote, and it's a beautiful, amazing song. Isn't it better when you see so many different types of bodies up there with that?"

Streep, in an interview with *Harper's Bazaar* in March, had said that she was surprised by how skinny the models on the film's set were and said Hathaway had stepped in to have a word with the producers.

"Annie clocked it too, and she made a beeline to the producers about it, securing promises that the models in the show that we were putting together for our film would not be so skeletal! She's a stand-up girl," she added.

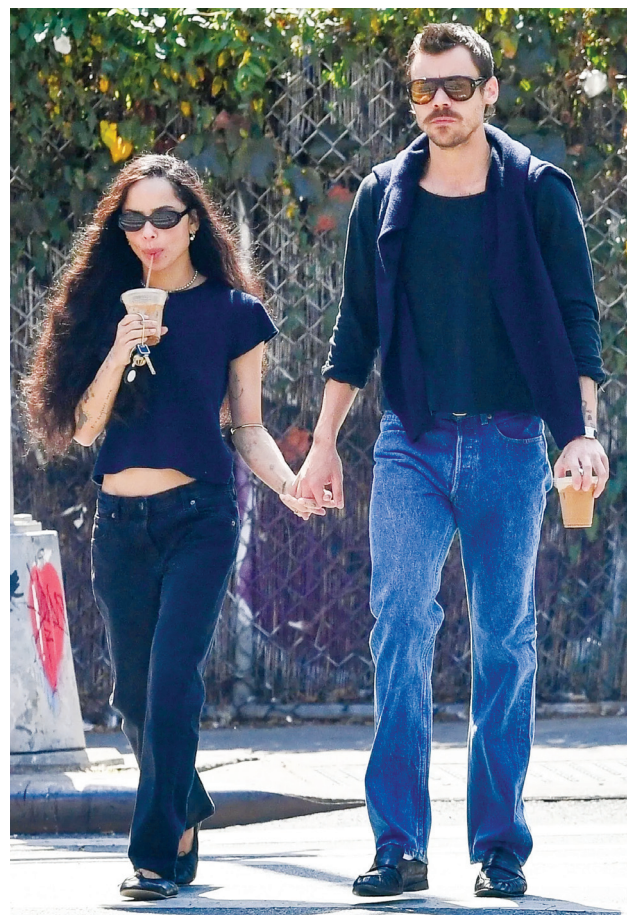
Hathaway clarified to *Good Morning America* that getting the film's producers to hire size-inclusive models did not



mean the models originally cast lost their jobs. The aim, she said, was for the scene being filmed to represent different models and body types, while ensuring that no one was removed from the production.

The Devil Wears Prada 2 reunites the original film's lead cast with director David Frankel and writer Aline Brosh McKenna. Along with the returning stars, new actors in the cast include Kenneth Branagh, Simone Ashley, Justin Theroux and Lucy Liu.

Apart from Emily Blunt and Stanley Tucci, fans will also see some other familiar faces from the first film such as Tracie Thoms and Tibor Feldman.



Harry Styles-Zoe Kravitz get engaged; The Batman actor seen sporting ring worth over \$600,000

Merely six days after Zoe Kravitz was seen sporting a large rock on her ring finger while kissing boyfriend Harry Styles, rumors began doing the rounds that the two are now engaged. Now, Page Six has confirmed that though there's no official word from either of them yet, the actor and the singer have indeed gotten engaged recently.

Harry and Zoe have been dating for the past eight months. They were first spotted walking arm-in-arm on the streets of Rome in August 2025. They were also seen kissing in London around the same time. Harry was accompanying his love interest on her press tour of Darren Aronofsky's black comedy thriller *Caught Stealing* in order to spend more time with her. Harry and Zoe were subsequently spotted together multiple times in London and New York City, though they chose to remain tight-lipped about their closeness. They soft-launched their relationship last month when they arrived together for a *Saturday Night Live* afterparty Harry hosted.

Page Six reported that while Zoe sported a ring worth \$500,000 while engaged to Channing, her ring with Harry is worth far more. Its price could range between \$600,000 and \$800,000, but definitely more than half a million dollars. Meanwhile, while Harry has dated a long list of celebrities, he's never been married or engaged before.

Labour Day, May 1: A global salute to work, workers and the long struggle for dignity

Labour Day, commonly celebrated on May 1st (International Workers' Day) in many countries, honors the achievements and rights of workers, particularly the 8-hour workday movement. It is a public holiday in over 160 nations, marked by rallies, parades, and demonstrations for fair wages. While much of the world celebrates in May, the United States and Canada celebrate on the first Monday in September.

Each year on May 1, cities, towns, and industrial hubs across continents come alive with marches, speeches, cultural events, and quiet moments of reflection. Known globally as International Workers' Day or May Day, Labour Day is more than a commemoration—it is a living chronicle of human resilience, collective struggle, and the enduring pursuit of justice in the world of work. Beneath its festive surface lies a profound narrative shaped by sacrifice, ideology, and the universal aspiration for dignity.

The Industrial Age and the Birth of a Movement

To understand Labour Day, one must return to the transformative upheaval of the Industrial Revolution. As mechanization reshaped economies in the 18th and 19th centuries, it also redefined the lives of workers. Factories replaced farms, and cities swelled with laborers seeking livelihoods. However, this economic progress came at a steep human cost—long hours, unsafe conditions, child labour, and meager wages became the norm.

In countries like the United States and across Europe, workers began organizing themselves into unions and associations. Their demands were simple yet revolutionary for the time: fair wages, safe working conditions, and a reasonable workday.

The rallying cry—"Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, eight hours for what we will"—captured the essence of the movement. This demand culminated dramatically in 1886, when tens of thousands of workers went on strike across American cities.

The Haymarket Affair: A Turning Point in History

The movement reached a critical moment during the Haymarket Affair in Chicago. What began as a peaceful rally in support of striking workers turned tragic after a bomb was thrown at police, triggering violence and chaos. Several people were killed, and the aftermath saw a controversial trial leading to the execution of labour activists.

Though the incident shocked the world, it also immortalized the cause of workers' rights. The fallen activists became symbols of resistance, and their sacrifice galvanized labour movements globally.

International Recognition and the Rise of May Day

In 1889, the Second International, a



federation of socialist and labour parties, declared May 1 as International Workers' Day. The date was chosen to honor the Haymarket martyrs and to unify workers across nations under a shared cause.

From that moment, May Day evolved into a global platform for workers to voice demands, celebrate achievements, and advocate for social justice. It became deeply intertwined with political ideologies such as socialism and communism, especially in the early 20th century.

Labour Day in India: From Colonial Struggles to Modern Realities

In India, Labour Day holds a distinct historical trajectory. The first celebration took place in 1923 in Chennai, organized by labour leader Singaravelu Chettiar. It was a significant moment, marking the formal recognition of workers' rights in a colonial society.

During India's independence movement, labour unions played a crucial role in mobilizing masses and resisting colonial exploitation. Post-independence, labour laws were gradually established to protect workers, including regulations on wages, working hours, and workplace safety.

Today, Labour Day in India is observed with rallies, seminars, and public awareness campaigns. Trade unions highlight issues such as minimum wage enforcement, job security, and the rights of informal workers—who constitute a significant portion of the workforce.



FROM PAGE 24

A World of Diverse Observances

Labour Day is celebrated in varied ways across different cultural and political landscapes, reflecting both unity and diversity.

In China, the day is marked by a national holiday period, often referred to as "Golden Week," where citizens travel and celebrate the contributions of workers to national progress. In Cuba, massive parades fill the streets of Havana, showcasing solidarity and national pride, with participation from workers across sectors.

European nations bring their own traditions to the observance. In France, people exchange muguet (lily-of-the-valley) flowers as tokens of good luck and unity. In Germany, Labour Day blends political demonstrations with community festivals. Meanwhile, Italy hosts large-scale concerts celebrating workers and culture.

In Latin America, Labour Day often takes on a more activist tone, with marches addressing economic inequality, workers' rights, and social reforms. In countries like Brazil and Argentina, it is both a celebration and a platform for political discourse.

Interestingly, nations like the United States and Canada celebrate Labour Day in September, a divergence rooted in efforts to distance the observance from radical labour movements of the late 19th century.

Symbols, Rituals, and Cultural Layers

Labour Day is rich in symbolism. The red flag, widely associated with labour movements, represents the sacrifices of workers who fought for rights and justice. Banners, slogans, and songs echo themes of equality, solidarity, and resistance.

In many parts of the world, May Day also intersects with ancient spring festivals. Historically, May 1 was celebrated as a day of renewal and fertility in Europe, with traditions like maypole dancing and floral decorations. Over time, these cultural elements merged with labour observances, creating a unique blend of festivity and activism.

The Evolution of Workers' Rights

The legacy of Labour Day is reflected in the rights and protections many workers enjoy today. The eight-hour workday, minimum wage laws, workplace safety regulations, and the right to unionize are all outcomes of sustained labour struggles.

International organizations such as the International Labour Organization have played a pivotal role in setting global labour standards, advocating for fair treatment, and addressing issues like child labour and forced labour.

However, progress has been uneven, and challenges persist.

Modern Challenges in the World of Work

In the 21st century, the nature of work is undergoing rapid transformation. The rise of automation, artificial intelligence, and the gig economy has redefined employment patterns. While these changes bring efficiency and innovation, they also raise concerns



about job security, workers' rights, and income inequality.

Gig workers, freelancers, and contract employees often lack the protections traditionally associated with full-time employment. Informal labour sectors—particularly in developing countries—continue to face issues such as low wages, lack of social security, and unsafe working conditions.

The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed these vulnerabilities, highlighting the essential role of healthcare workers, delivery personnel, sanitation workers, and other frontline staff. It also underscored the urgent need for resilient labour systems and inclusive policies.

Gender, Migration, and Invisible Labour

Labour Day also brings attention to often-overlooked dimensions of work. Women, for instance, continue to face wage disparities, limited opportunities, and the dual burden of professional and domestic responsibilities.

Migrant workers, who form the backbone of many economies, frequently encounter exploitation, discrimination, and lack of legal protection. Domestic workers and caregivers, whose contributions are vital yet undervalued, remain largely invisible in economic statistics.

Recognizing these realities is essential to building a more equitable and inclusive workforce.

A Day of Reflection and Renewal

Labour Day is not merely about celebrating achievements; it is also about acknowledging ongoing struggles and envisioning a better future. It invites governments, employers, and society at large to reflect on the value of human labour and the need for fairness in economic systems.

It is a day to honor the dignity of every worker—from factory laborers and farmers to teachers, engineers, and service providers—whose efforts sustain



the fabric of society.

The Enduring Spirit of May 1

More than a century after its origins, Labour Day continues to resonate with relevance and urgency. It serves as a reminder that progress is often born out of collective action and that rights once won must be continually protected.

As the world evolves, so too must the

principles that guide it. Labour Day stands as a beacon of solidarity, urging humanity to strive for a future where work is not just a means of survival, but a source of dignity, fulfillment, and respect. On May 1, the world does not merely celebrate labour—it honors the spirit of those who dared to demand a fairer world, and those who continue that journey today.

Glimpses of Incredible India: Seattle's leading photographer's exhibit on India travels across the Pacific Northwest



Incredible India Photo Exhibit on display at Shoreline College (28 April 2026, Shoreline, Washington)



President Jack Kahn of Shoreline College sharing experiences of his India visit (28 April 2026, Shoreline, Washington)



Incredible India Photo Exhibit on display at Shoreline College (28 April 2026, Shoreline, Washington)



Incredible India Photo Exhibit on display at Shoreline College (28 April 2026, Shoreline, Washington)



Inauguration of Incredible India Photo Exhibit by US Congressman Adam Smith, Mayor of Kent Dana Ralph, Mayor of Tukwila Tom McLeod and Mayor of Issaquah Mark Mullet (26 April 2026, Seattle)



Incredible India Photo Exhibit on display at Consulate General of India, Seattle (26 April 2026, Seattle)

APRIL 28, 2026 SEATTLE (TIP)

Shoreline College President Jack Kahn hosted an inaugural session on the "Glimpses of Incredible India Photo Exhibit" today at Shoreline College and shared his firsthand experience of visiting India as part of a CGI Seattle-organized delegation from US Pacific Northwest that recently visited India in March 2026.

The photo exhibit features curated clicks by acclaimed Seattle-based photographer Sam Horine, whose images bring to life the sights and sounds of India, focusing on its people, their daily lives, some UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and cultural landscapes of India. Horine's work has earlier been published in leading international publications including National Geographic, The New Yorker, The New York Times, and Travel and Leisure.



Incredible India Photo Exhibit on display at Consulate General of India, Seattle (26 April 2026, Seattle)

It may be noted that "Glimpses of Incredible India Photo Exhibit" was jointly inaugurated by US Congressman Adam Smith, Mayor of Kent Dana

Ralph, Mayor of Tukwila Tom McLeod and Mayor of Issaquah Mark Mullet on 26 April 2026 at the Consulate premises.

Horine's photographs were taken during a ten-day delegation visit to India organized by CGI Seattle in March 2026 (9-18 March). The thirteen-member delegation, which also included President Jack Kahn of Shoreline College, brought together distinguished professionals from Washington, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska, representing trade offices, state and local governments, leading universities, journalism, and the arts.

The exhibit is now travelling across CGI

In March 2026, the Consulate General of India, Seattle organized a ten-day delegation visit to India, bringing together thirteen distinguished professionals from Washington, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. The delegation represented a cross-section of American professional life: trade offices, state and local governments, leading universities, journalism, and the arts.



Over ten days, the delegates explored UNESCO World Heritage Sites including the Taj Mahal and the Konark Sun Temple, engaged with senior officials of Government of India on trade and educational partnerships, visited grassroots educational institutions and taught to tribal girl students in India, participated in the Blue Economy Summit in Bhubaneswar and experienced India's culture, cuisine, and people firsthand.

Among the delegates was **Sam Horine**, a Seattle-based photographer whose images of daily life in India were curated for this exhibit!

Details of Incredible India Photo Exhibit

Seattle's consular jurisdiction with upcoming stops scheduled at Oregon State University (2 May), South Dakota (7-8 May) and Montana State University Bozeman (12 May), and will follow subsequently at several more leading US Universities across the US Pacific Northwest states in the coming weeks. The exhibit aims to present the pluralistic diversity of India, its cultural richness, scenic majesty and the warmth of its people, and aims to inspire more young Americans to consider visiting India and experiencing the magic of Incredible India!



A photograph from the Incredible India Photo Exhibit organized by CGI Seattle



A photograph from the Incredible India Photo Exhibit organized by CGI Seattle

American Punjabi Society Celebrates Vaisakhi with Grandeur, Unity, and Distinguished Participation

Consul General of India Hon'ble Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan Joins Celebrations



Awardees with the Nassau County Executive Bruce A. Blakeman, Consul General of India in New York, Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, and organizers, including APS Patron Harry Bolla and President Gary Sikka

APRIL 23, 2026
MINEOLA, NY (TIP)

The historic Theodore Roosevelt Executive and Legislative Building came alive with vibrant energy, cultural pride, and community spirit as the American Punjabi Society (APS), in collaboration with Bruce A. Blakeman, the Consulate General of India, New York, the Office of the Chairman, Human Rights Commission, and the Nassau County Office of Asian American Affairs, hosted a grand celebration of Vaisakhi - the sacred Khalsa Sajna Diwas and Punjabi harvest festival.

The event commenced under the leadership of Mr. Own Naqvi, Director of the Office of Asian American Affairs, setting a warm and dignified tone for the evening. Mr. Bobby Kalotee, Chairman of the Human Rights Commission, played an important role as one of the organizers.

The celebration was further honored by the presence of Consul General of India Hon'ble Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, whose participation underscored the strong cultural and diplomatic ties between India and the Indian American community.

The event brought together elected officials, dignitaries, and community leaders, reflecting the shared values of unity, gratitude, and seva.

A CELEBRATION OF CULTURE, COMMUNITY, AND HERITAGE

Led by APS Global President Gary S. Sikka and Founder Patron Harry Singh Bolla, the evening began with warm hospitality, including appetizers and refreshments served prior to the formal program.

APS General Secretary V.P.S. Sikka opened the program with an overview of APS's initiatives and ongoing



Town of North Hempstead Town Clerk Ragini Srivastava spoke highly of the Sikh religions and the Sikh community

community service efforts.

The program featured a dignified Presentation of Colors, followed by vibrant cultural performances including traditional bhangra and giddha, along with presentations highlighting the significance of Vaisakhi.

INSPIRATIONAL AND SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Nassau County Executive Bruce A. Blakeman acknowledged the significant contributions of the Punjabi community to the cultural and social fabric of Nassau County and expressed appreciation for APS's role in promoting unity, diversity, and community engagement.

APS Founder Patron Harry Singh Bolla reflected on the profound spiritual and historical significance of Vaisakhi as the birth of the Khalsa and a defining



President of the APS, Gary Sikka reaffirmed APS's commitment to strengthening cultural identity, engaging youth, and building bridges across communities through meaningful initiatives

moment in Sikh history. He emphasized that Vaisakhi serves as a powerful reminder of the core values of faith, courage, equality, and selfless service (seva), and highlighted the importance of preserving these traditions while passing them on to future generations.

APS Global President Gary S. Sikka elaborated on the broader message of Vaisakhi as not only a religious and cultural celebration but also a call to action for community building and service. He reaffirmed APS's commitment to strengthening cultural identity, engaging youth, and building bridges across communities through

meaningful initiatives, while promoting unity and collaboration within the diverse Indian American community.

Prominent oncologist and Padma Bhushan awardee Dr. Nori also addressed the gathering.

Jathedar of Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib, Professor Manjeet Singh, delivered an insightful address on the religious significance of Vaisakhi, highlighting the historic importance of Khalsa Sajna Diwas and its enduring message of equality, courage, and service.

DISTINGUISHED PRESENCE

The presence of Consul General of India Hon'ble Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan added special significance to the event, reinforcing the global importance of Vaisakhi and strengthening ties between India and its diaspora.

The celebration was attended by numerous elected officials, community leaders, representatives of prominent Indian American organizations, and members of the Sikh Officers Association of NYPD.

SPIRITUAL UNITY AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

All five major Gurdwaras of New York were represented, reflecting unity and collective pride across the Sikh community:

- Mata Sahib Kaur Gurdwara, Glen Cove, NY - represented by Harcharan Singh Sachdev and Harvinder Bhatia
- Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Center, Plainview, NY - represented by Inderpal S. Singha and V.P.S. Sikka
- Guru Nanak Darbar of Long Island, Hicksville, NY - represented by Dayal Singh Vohra, Herman Singh Vohra, Lok Singh Vohra, and Santokh Singh
- Gurudwara Shaheedan, Hicksville, NY - represented by Ranjit Singh Bhatia
- Baba Makhan Shah Lubana Sikh Center, Richmond Hill, NY - represented by its leadership team

In addition, Sardar Satnam Singh Parhar and Dr. Avtar Singh Tinna represented the Vaisakhi 5K Run initiative.

HONORING EXCELLENCE AND SERVICE

A highlight of the evening was the recognition of distinguished individuals for their contributions to community service, leadership, and cultural enrichment.

Honorees - APS Vaisakhi 2026 Community Service Recognition:

1. Dr. Avtar Singh Tinna
2. S. Dayal Singh Vohra
3. S. Raghbir Singh Subhanpur
4. S. Maninder Singh Sethi
5. S. Jasbir Singh Arneja
6. S. Rajinder Singh Taneja
7. Ms. Beena Kothari
8. Ms. Arti Majithia
9. S. Saheb Singh Dhiman
10. S. Ranjit Singh Bhatia
11. Ms. Janessa Sondhi
12. Mr. Pradeep Tandon
13. Sgt. Gurvinder Singh (NYPD)
14. S. Ravinderpal S. Narang



Consul General of India Hon'ble Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan congratulated the Sikh community on the occasion of Vaisakhi celebrations



Founder Patron Harry Bolla emphasized that Vaisakhi serves as a powerful reminder of the core values of faith, courage, equality, and selfless service (seva), and highlighted the importance of preserving these traditions while passing them on to future generations.



Vaisakhi celebrations without a vibrant Bhangra performance are incomplete

A CELEBRATION TO REMEMBER

Guests enjoyed appetizers and refreshments prior to the program and a sumptuous dinner following the event, graciously provided by Mint, offering an authentic Punjabi culinary experience.

The event concluded with a Vote of Thanks delivered by Paul S. Bindra.

The American Punjabi Society also acknowledges the valuable contributions of Navneet K. Sondhi and Janessa Sondhi in advancing its Women's Council and Youth initiatives.

ABOUT AMERICAN PUNJABI SOCIETY (APS)

The American Punjabi Society continues to lead impactful initiatives in cultural, educational, and community service domains, fostering unity and preserving heritage across generations.

(Based on a press release issued by Pradeep Tandon, Director, Media & Public Relations, American Punjabi Society (APS)
Phone :718-564-3092)

World Press Freedom Day: Defending truth, democracy and the right to know in a changing world

World Press Freedom Day is celebrated annually on May 3rd to highlight the importance of free and independent media, evaluate press freedom worldwide, and honor journalists who risk or lose their lives in the line of duty. Proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993, it marks the anniversary of the 1991 Windhoek Declaration, which established principles for a free press.

Every year on May 3, nations across the globe observe World Press Freedom Day, a moment that compels humanity to reflect on one of its most essential freedoms—the right to seek, receive, and share information without fear or interference. While it may appear as a symbolic date on the international calendar, its significance is far deeper. It is a reminder that democracy, human rights, and social justice are inseparable from the ability of journalists to operate freely and independently.

In today's hyper-connected yet deeply polarized world, the value of press freedom has taken on new urgency. Information travels faster than ever before, but truth itself is increasingly contested. Governments wield new tools of surveillance and control, while digital platforms amplify both credible reporting and misinformation at unprecedented scales. Against this backdrop, the role of journalism has become both more powerful and more vulnerable.

World Press Freedom Day is not merely a celebration of media—it is a global checkpoint. It asks difficult questions: Are journalists safe? Are citizens well-informed? Are institutions transparent? And most importantly, can truth survive in an era of noise?

Historical Origins: From Windhoek to a Global Movement

The foundation of World Press Freedom Day lies in a pivotal historical moment—the adoption of the Windhoek Declaration. In April 1991, a group of African journalists gathered in Namibia at a time when many nations on the continent were transitioning from authoritarian regimes to more democratic systems. The media landscape in much of Africa had long been characterized by state control, censorship, and limited access to independent reporting.

The journalists at Windhoek envisioned a different future. They called for a press that was not only free from government interference but also independent in its operations and pluralistic in its representation of diverse voices. Their declaration emphasized that press freedom was essential for democracy, development, and human dignity.

The significance of this declaration resonated far beyond Africa. Recognizing its global relevance, UNESCO championed the cause, urging the international community to formally recognize the importance of press freedom.



In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed May 3 as World Press Freedom Day. The date was chosen to commemorate the anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration, transforming a regional milestone into a global observance.

Since then, the day has evolved into an annual platform for dialogue, advocacy, and reflection. Conferences, awards, and campaigns are organized worldwide, bringing together journalists, policymakers, academics, and civil society leaders to discuss the challenges and future of media freedom.

Philosophical Foundations: The Right to Know

Press freedom is deeply rooted in the broader concept of freedom of expression, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 19 of this foundational document affirms that every individual has the right to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information through any media.

This principle has been championed by thinkers throughout history. Philosophers like John Milton argued against censorship, emphasizing the importance of open debate. Later, John Stuart Mill articulated the idea that truth emerges from the competition of ideas, and that suppressing expression harms society as a whole. Political leaders such as Thomas Jefferson saw a free press as indispensable to democracy.



At its core, press freedom is about more than journalists—it is about the public. It ensures that citizens have access to information necessary for making informed decisions. It empowers individuals to question authority, participate in governance, and hold institutions accountable.

Without press freedom, the flow of information becomes restricted, and societies risk descending into ignorance, manipulation, and authoritarian control.

The Role of Journalism: Watchdog,

Witness, and Public Service

Journalism serves multiple roles in society, each critical to maintaining democratic values.

The Watchdog Function

One of the most important roles of the press is to act as a watchdog over those in power. Investigative journalism exposes corruption, abuse of authority, and systemic injustices. From financial scandals to human rights violations, journalists often uncover truths that would otherwise remain hidden.

FROM PAGE 28

This function is essential for accountability. Governments and institutions are more likely to act responsibly when they know they are being scrutinized.

The Witness to Events

Journalists document events as they unfold, creating a record of history. Whether reporting on wars, elections, natural disasters, or social movements, their work provides a factual account that shapes public understanding.

This role is particularly important in times of crisis, when accurate information can save lives and guide decision-making.

The Voice of the Voiceless

A free press amplifies marginalized voices, bringing attention to issues that may otherwise be ignored. It highlights social inequalities, advocates for justice, and fosters inclusivity.

The Informer and Educator

Journalism helps citizens understand complex issues, from economic policies to scientific developments. By providing context and analysis, it enables informed public discourse.

Global State of Press Freedom:

A Fragile Landscape

Despite its recognized importance, press freedom is under significant strain worldwide. The global media environment reflects a complex and often troubling reality.

In many countries, journalists face censorship, legal restrictions, and political pressure. Governments may use laws related to national security, defamation, or public order to suppress critical reporting. In extreme cases, media outlets are shut down, and journalists are imprisoned.

Even in democratic nations, press freedom is not immune to challenges. Political polarization, attacks on media credibility, and economic pressures have created an environment where journalism struggles to maintain independence.

Violence against journalists remains a major concern. Reporting from conflict zones, investigating organized crime, or exposing corruption can be life-threatening. Many journalists have lost their lives in the pursuit of truth.

The Digital Revolution: Transforming Journalism

The rise of digital technology has fundamentally changed the media landscape. The internet and social media have democratized information, allowing individuals to access news instantly and participate in public discourse.

Platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and X have become major sources of news for millions of people.

This transformation has created new opportunities for journalism. Independent voices can reach global audiences, and citizen journalism has expanded the scope of reporting.

However, it has also introduced significant challenges.

Misinformation and Fake News



False information can spread rapidly on digital platforms, often outpacing verified reporting. This can influence elections, create social unrest, and undermine trust in institutions.

Algorithmic Influence

Social media algorithms prioritize engagement, which can lead to the amplification of sensational or misleading content. This affects what people see and how they perceive reality.

Artificial Intelligence and Deepfakes

Advancements in AI have made it possible to create realistic but fake content, including images, videos, and audio. This poses a serious threat to the credibility of information.

Economic Challenges: The Struggle for Sustainability

The financial model of journalism has undergone significant disruption. Traditional revenue sources such as print advertising have declined, forcing many media organizations to cut costs, reduce staff, or shut down entirely.

This economic vulnerability affects the quality and independence of journalism. Media outlets may become reliant on corporate or political funding, which can influence editorial decisions.

Local journalism has been particularly affected. The decline of local newspapers has created information gaps in many communities, reducing coverage of local issues and governance.

Press Freedom in India: Strengths and Challenges

In India, press freedom exists within a complex and dynamic environment. The country has one of the largest and most diverse media ecosystems in the world, with publications and broadcasts in numerous languages.

Indian journalism has a strong tradition of investigative reporting and public engagement. It has played a crucial role in exposing corruption, highlighting social issues, and shaping

national discourse.

However, challenges remain. Concerns have been raised about media ownership concentration, political influence, legal pressures on journalists, and the spread of misinformation.

The digital revolution has further complicated the landscape, with social media playing an increasingly important role in shaping public opinion.

Ethics and Responsibility: The Foundation of Trust

Press freedom is accompanied by responsibility. Ethical journalism is essential for maintaining public trust and credibility.

Key principles include:

- Accuracy and fact-checking
- Fairness and impartiality
- Accountability and transparency
- Respect for human dignity

In an era of rapid information exchange, adherence to ethical standards is more important than ever.

Journalist Safety: A Continuing Concern

Journalists often work in dangerous environments. Organizations such as Reporters Without Borders and the Committee to Protect Journalists monitor threats to media freedom and advocate for journalist safety.

Despite these efforts, many crimes against journalists go unpunished. Ending impunity is essential for protecting press freedom.

World Press Freedom Day Today: Themes and Global Dialogue

Each year, World Press Freedom Day is marked by a global conference organized by UNESCO. The event focuses on current challenges and emerging trends in journalism.

Themes often address issues such as:

- Journalism and technology
- Media sustainability
- Safety of journalists
- Combating misinformation

The day also features the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, which honors individuals or organizations that have made significant contributions to defending press freedom.

The Future of Press Freedom

The future of press freedom will be shaped by multiple factors, including technological advancements, political developments, and societal attitudes.

Key priorities include:

- Strengthening legal protections for journalists
- Promoting media literacy among citizens
- Ensuring transparency in digital platforms
- Supporting independent journalism

As the world becomes more interconnected, the need for reliable and trustworthy information will only grow.

A Shared Responsibility

World Press Freedom Day is a reminder that the fight for truth is ongoing. Press freedom is not guaranteed-it must be protected and defended continuously.

A free press is essential for democracy, human rights, and social progress. It empowers citizens, holds power accountable, and ensures that truth remains accessible.

In a world where information shapes reality, the importance of press freedom cannot be overstated. It is not just a right for journalists-it is a right for everyone. As we observe May 3, the message is clear: safeguarding press freedom is a collective responsibility. Governments, institutions, media organizations, and citizens must work together to ensure that the voice of truth is never silenced.

Because when the press is free, society thrives. And when it is not, democracy itself is at risk.

Myanmar ex-leader Aung San Suu Kyi moved from prison to house arrest

MAY 1, 2026

NAYPYIDAW (TIP): Myanmar's detained former leader Aung San Suu Kyi is to be moved to house arrest, state media reported on Thursday, more than five years after the military ousted the civilian government she led and jailed the Nobel laureate.

Suu Kyi, 80, has been detained by the junta since and her whereabouts have been unclear amid a deadly civil war that was triggered by the February 2021 coup that has engulfed much of the impoverished Southeast Asian nation.

"...the remaining portion of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's sentence has been commuted to be served at a designated residence," state-run MRTV reported, using an honorific for the veteran politician.

State media also broadcast a photograph of Suu Kyi, seated on a wooden bench and flanked by two uniformed personnel - the first public image of her in years.

In a statement, her son Kim Aris said Thursday's announcement by Myanmar authorities did little to dispel fears about her condition or even confirm that she was still alive.

"I still do not know where my mother is. I do not know how she is. I remain deeply concerned about whether she is still alive," he said. "If she is alive, I ask for proof of life."

In December, Aris told Reuters he has not heard from his mother in years, only receiving sporadic, secondhand details about her heart, bone and gum problems since her detention. "It is good to hear that the house arrest has been confirmed but we haven't received any direct notification," a member of her legal team told Reuters. "We only found out about it from the news announcement."

How the UAE's OPEC exit could affect its trade ties with Saudi Arabia

MAY 1, 2026

ABU DHABI (TIP): The United Arab Emirates' withdrawal from OPEC weakens the group's control over global oil markets and potentially risks widening a rift with Gulf neighbour Saudi Arabia, the de facto leader of the crude producers' organisation.

From diverging oil policies to geopolitical tensions over Yemen and Sudan, and growing economic rivalry, the UAE and Saudi Arabia's relationship had been heading for a showdown for a while now, according to analysts.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE are so deeply enmeshed in trade, investment and logistics that analysts say a full-blown economic rift is unlikely and would serve neither's self-interest.

The region is already reeling from the fallout of the Iran conflict and its impact on investor and business sentiment. The last thing Gulf Cooperation Council nations need is more disputes and disruptions to the smooth conduct of business in the region, said Fareed Mohamedi, managing director at SIA-Energy International.

Still, trade links in the region have been reshaped before. In June 2017, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt severed ties with Qatar almost overnight over a range of allegations, including fomenting regional unrest that Doha denied.

The Qatar blockade targeted a smaller economy with fewer interdependencies. Qatar, a much smaller oil producer, left OPEC in 2019. The UAE, which has a capacity of around 5 million barrels a day, and a large excess capacity, has the ability to significantly disrupt oil markets.

Saudi Arabia is the UAE's largest trading partner in the Arab world.

The value of Emirati-Saudi non-oil bilateral trade totalled \$41.3 billion in 2024 according to the UAE's economy ministry, up from \$37.3 billion in 2023. Saudi data showed that annual bilateral trade was up roughly 42% since 2020. The UAE was the kingdom's fifth-largest destination for exports and its third-largest source of imports in 2024.

Commerce between the two runs deep, spanning everything from refined petroleum and gold, to jewellery and re-exported consumer goods like electronics. Much of this trade flows through Dubai's Jebel Ali port, a major hub for goods entering the Saudi market, even as Riyadh spends big to expand its own ports to capture more direct shipments.

In March, the Saudi Ports Authority (Mawani) announced the opening of a new trade corridor with new shipping services linking King Abdulaziz Port in Dammam with ports in Sharjah and Abu Dhabi in the UAE.

Consumer markets are deeply intertwined. Shoppers at Lulu hypermarkets, an Emirati chain ubiquitous in both countries,



routinely toss Saudi-made staples into their trolleys: Almarai milk, Jomara dates, Alyoum chicken.

A move toward a boycott would undermine both countries' wider economic goals, said Alice Gower, a partner at London-based advisory firm Azure Strategy.

The UAE was the second-largest contributor by volume to Saudi Arabia's net foreign direct investment inflows in 2024, with inflows worth 9 billion riyals (\$2.4 billion), according to Saudi Arabia's General Authority for Statistics. Saudi direct investments in the UAE are over \$4.3 billion, according to Emirati data.

An HSBC survey in November revealed that nine out of 10 international businesses in the UAE plan to increase trade and investment with the kingdom over the next five years.

Yes. The UAE has forged nearly 30 bilateral trade deals with countries, leapfrogging slower Gulf Cooperation Council negotiations that would have included Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia has also taken steps seen as competitive, such as its 2021 directive requiring foreign firms to set up regional headquarters in Riyadh to qualify for government contracts – a move widely viewed as an effort to lure companies away from Dubai, the Gulf's finance and tourism hub.

The Saudi-UAE economic relationship underpins much of the region's trade and investment flows. Both countries act as a gateway for capital, goods, and services – Saudi Arabia as the largest Arab economy and the UAE as a major logistics and financial hub.

Regional stability is the top priority for both Gulf states, and any boycott would risk undermining confidence in their long-term economic masterplans and discourage investment and engagement in the region, Gower said.

Any prolonged strain between the two states would ripple across the Middle East.

Source: Reuters

Chinese investment in US seen stagnant even if Xi-Trump summit happens

MAY 1, 2026

BEIJING (TIP): Chinese foreign direct investment in the US is unlikely to rebound meaningfully even if Washington and Beijing restart high-level negotiations that are expected to place such investments on the agenda, according to a new report by Rhodium Group.

Investment from China has remained subdued for five years since collapsing after a surge in 2016 and 2017, the report showed. Total Chinese FDI in the US over the past decade reached about \$190 billion – far below the \$1 trillion figure floated in last year's high-level discussions in Madrid – highlighting the gap between political rhetoric and economic reality, analysts at the research



group noted. Washington and Beijing are both moving to tighten control over cross-border investment in critical sectors as part of an effort to protect strategic technologies and reduce mutual dependencies. Their competition

to dominate artificial intelligence has mostly sealed off from each other the hundreds of billions of dollars in spending by the industry.

Against that backdrop, promises of large investments have given way to a more constrained reality, where structural tensions are reshaping capital flows between the world's two largest economies. That dynamic is expected to prevail even after the meeting scheduled next month between Chinese leader Xi Jinping and President Donald Trump.

"Washington's national and economic security concerns will continue to limit Chinese participation in core areas of the US economy," Rhodium analysts including Thilo Hanemann wrote. "More importantly, Chinese regulators now

treat outbound investment in greenfield manufacturing projects as a potential channel for technology leakage, industrial erosion and job losses."

A trade deal between the US and China may help revive Chinese FDI but is unlikely to trigger a new investment boom, according to the report.

"Bilateral negotiations could provide some guardrails, but it would not address the core reasons for the slowdown, which are deeply embedded in US-China strategic competition and distrust," the researchers said.

In the final weeks before the summit between Xi and Trump, both nations are seeking to armor their supply chains, lock down critical intellectual property and build leverage. Source: Bloomberg

EU says troop deployments in Europe 'in US interest'

MAY 1, 2026

BRUSSELS (TIP): The EU said on April 30 that the deployment of US troops in Europe was in Washington's interest, after President Donald Trump threatened to reduce force numbers in Germany.

European Union spokeswoman Anitta Hipper said the United States was "a vital partner in contributing to Europe's security and defense".

"The deployment of US troops in Europe is also in the US interest in support of its global role," she added.

Trump said the United States was considering reducing its troop deployment, following a row with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz over the Iran war.

The spat is the latest to rile up Trump against Washington's European NATO allies, with the US leader already lashing out over their response to his attack on Iran.

In the face of worries about Trump's commitment to NATO and the Russian war in Ukraine, Europe has ramped up its defense spending.

"Our NATO allies are also increasing their defense spending at an unprecedented pace," Hipper said.

She pointed out that Germany had announced a "three-fold increase" in its defense budget over the coming years.

Indians are now Australia's largest migrant group, surpassing the English

MAY 1, 2026

BRUSSELS (TIP): Indians are now Australia's largest migrant group, supplanting the English for the first time ever, in a change that highlights the rise of immigration as an increasingly contentious political issue. Some 971,020 people in Australia — or 5.2% of the population — were born in India, narrowly surpassing the 970,950 born in England, according to data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The England-born population slipped from just over 1 million in 2013. The third-largest cohort comprises those born in China, at 732,000, followed by 638,000 from New Zealand. Migration has long been a key pillar of Australia's economic growth, helping the country avoid recession since the early 1990s, aside from a brief contraction during the pandemic. The population fell in 2021 due to international border closures, but the share of overseas-born residents has steadily risen each year since, climbing to 32% in 2025 from 29.5% in 2022, according to the ABS. At the same time, immigration has become a political flashpoint as Australia grapples with its worst housing shortage in a generation.

UK raises terrorism threat level to 'severe' after stabbings, Starmer vows to protect Jews

MAY 1, 2026

LONDON (TIP): Britain raised its national threat level from "substantial" to "severe" on Thursday, April 30, a day after an antisemitic stabbing attack in north London. Prime Minister Keir Starmer vowed stronger action to protect Jewish people and said they were living in fear.

The increase to the second-highest threat level out of five means a terrorist attack within the next six months is highly likely, news agency Reuters reported.

On Wednesday, April 29, Jewish men in the Golders Green area were stabbed after a knifeman was seen running down a street near a synagogue. Starmer said that the decision to raise the threat level was made independently by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre.

Britain last faced such a threat level in November 2021, after the Liverpool Women's Hospital bombing and the killing of lawmaker David Amess, before it was lowered to "substantial" in early 2022.

According to the interior minister, Shabana Mahmood, the assessment reflects the larger trend of a rise in extremist threats. The decision was not made solely in response to the Golders Green attack.

Amid mounting criticisms from the Jewish community, Starmer promised more police in Jewish areas, a crackdown on those spreading antisemitism, and new legislation to deal with state-sponsored threats from the likes of Iran.

He asserted that people are scared to show who they are in their community, and are "scared to go to synagogue and practice their religion." He said that the Jews in the country are scared to go to university or to send their children to school as Jews.



The Starmer government has been criticised for their inaction towards violence against Jews. Recently, he was heckled by a small crowd waving banners reading "Keir Starmer Jew Harmer" when he visited Golders Green, where the latest attack took place.

The suspect in the attack, a 45-year-old British national who was born in Somalia, had a history of serious violence and mental health issues, police said.

Also read: UK PM Starmer condemns antisemitic stabbing of 2 men near synagogue

Amid widespread calls for more protection for Britain's small community of about 290,000 Jews, Starmer said the government would do "everything in our power to stamp this hatred out."

This included stronger powers to shut down charities promoting extremism and a clampdown on "hate preachers," he said.

US war in Iran has cost \$25 billion so far, figure equal to NASA's annual budget

MAY 1, 2026

WASHINGTON (TIP): The United States' war in Iran has cost \$25 billion so far, a senior Pentagon official said, providing the first official estimate of the military's price tag for the conflict.

With just six months before the midterm elections in which President Donald Trump's Republicans may face an uphill battle to keep their House majority, Democrats are riding high in public opinion polls as they attempt to link the unpopular Iran war with affordability.

Jules Hurst, who is performing the duties of the comptroller, told lawmakers on the House Armed Services Committee that most of that money was for munitions.

Hurst did not detail what that cost estimate included and whether it took into account the projected costs of rebuilding and repairing base infrastructure in the Middle East damaged in the conflict.

Rep. Adam Smith, the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, responded to Hurst: "I'm glad you answered that question. Because we've

been asking for a hell of a long time, and no one's given us the number."

The \$25 billion cost is equal to the entire budget of NASA for this year.

But it is unclear how the Pentagon arrived at the \$25 billion amount given that a source had told Reuters last month that President Donald Trump's administration estimated that the first six days of the war had cost the United States at least \$11.3 billion.

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth told lawmakers that the cost was justified given the US goal of ensuring Iran will not have a nuclear weapon.

"What would you pay to ensure Iran does not get a nuclear bomb? What would you pay?" Hegseth asked.

Hegseth sought to defend the Iran war more broadly in fiery remarks, saying it was not a quagmire and attacking Democratic lawmakers as "feckless" for criticising the unpopular conflict.

"You call it a quagmire, handing propaganda to our enemies? Shame on you for that statement," Hegseth said in response to Garamendi, and slammed "reckless, feckless, and defeatist"

Congressional Democrats.

The United States started carrying out strikes against Iran on February 28 and the two sides are currently maintaining a fragile ceasefire. The Pentagon has poured tens of thousands of additional forces into the Middle East, including keeping three aircraft carriers in the region. Thirteen US troops have been killed in the conflict and hundreds wounded.

Few issues resonate with US voters more deeply than price increases, and the latest inflationary upswing is unsettling Republican insiders worried about their party's prospects before November elections that will determine control of the House and possibly the Senate.

Disruptions in shipments of oil and natural gas since the war started have caused a run-up in US gasoline prices and agricultural products such as fertilisers, on top of the long list of other high consumer prices.

The average US gasoline price on Tuesday rose to its highest level in nearly four years, according to data from the American Automobile Association.

Nepal Airlines apologises for showing J-K as part of Pakistan in 'network map'

MAY 1, 2026

KATHMANDU (TIP): Nepal Airlines has apologised for what it described as cartographic inaccuracies in the wake of a furore showing Jammu and Kashmir as part of Pakistan in a "network map".

The airlines had deleted the social media post on April 29 following the backlash.

"We sincerely apologise for error in the network map recently shared on our social media channels. The map contained significant cartographic inaccuracies regarding international boundaries that do not reflect the official stance of Nepal or Nepal Airlines," it posted on X.

"We have immediately removed the post and are conducting an internal review to ensure our materials meet the highest standards of accuracy.

"We deeply value our strong relationships with our neighbours and friends in the region and regret any offense the post has caused," the airline added.

Pak's Punjab sets 18 years as minimum marriage age for girls

MAY 1, 2026

LAHORE (TIP): Pakistan's Punjab government has changed the 97-year-old law by setting 18 years as the minimum legal age for marriage for girls and declaring underage marriage a non-bailable offence.

Previously, the minimum legal age for marriage in Punjab, a province of 130 million people, was 16 years for girls under the Punjab Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929.

The Maryam Nawaz government of Punjab introduced the "Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2026" in the Punjab Assembly, which was adopted this week.

According to the new law, marriage below the age of 18 for both males and females is a non-bailable and cognisable offence. Adults marrying a female child (under 18) will face up to three years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of up to PKR 500,000.

"Parents or guardians who facilitate, promote, or fail to prevent child marriage face up to three years of rigorous imprisonment and fines up to PKR 500,000. Nikah Registrars (Marriage registrars) who facilitate or register such marriages face up to one year in prison and a fine of PKR100,000," according to the law.

The law further says cohabitation resulting from child marriage is classified as child abuse, carrying up to years of imprisonment and a minimum fine of PKR 1 million.

Pak Army launches strikes along Afghan border; Taliban urges end to clashes

MAY 1, 2026

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan Army has intensified operations along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border under Operation Ghazab lil-Haq, targeting positions of Afghan Taliban and offshoot of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Fitna al-Khawarij in response to what it termed "unprovoked aggression," even as Taliban officials called for an end to hostilities amid rising humanitarian concerns.

According to ARY News, security sources said Pakistan Army carried out precision strikes in the Chaman sector, destroying several Afghan Taliban posts and vehicles. The operations reportedly forced terrorists to retreat, with officials asserting that the campaign would continue until all objectives are achieved.

Pakistan's military also conducted intelligence-based operations in Khyber district, where, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), 22 terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Khawarij were killed in a prolonged exchange of fire. However, the operation also resulted in the death of a 10-year-old child after terrorists allegedly opened indiscriminate fire. Security forces



recovered weapons and ammunition from the slain militants, who were believed to be involved in multiple attacks in the region.

Meanwhile, according to Afghanistan's Khaama Press, senior Taliban official Abdul Wasi urged an immediate end to clashes during talks with UK envoy Richard Lindsay.

Wasi condemned Pakistani strikes on civilian areas, including homes and educational institutions, on Monday, and stressed the need for restraint to avoid further escalation. He reiterated that Afghan territory would not be used against other countries and called for improved bilateral cooperation.

Reports from TOLO news indicated that Pakistan's military carried out more

than 200 missile strikes in Kunar province over the past 24 hours, resulting in civilian casualties and widespread displacement. Local officials said at least three people were killed and 12 were injured, with women, children, and the elderly among the victims. Residents described significant destruction to homes and livelihoods, forcing many families to seek refuge along riverbanks.

Furthermore, Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday summoned the Charge d'Affaires of the Pakistani Embassy in Kabul and issued a formal protest over the cross-border strikes along the Durand Line.

According to an official statement posted on X, the Afghan Foreign Ministry said it handed over a protest letter condemning attacks by Pakistani forces on civilian targets and public infrastructure in areas near the university in central Kunar province.

Describing the incidents as a violation of Afghanistan's airspace and territorial integrity, the ministry strongly condemned the strikes and termed them "contrary to international principles" and a "provocative act".

Pakistan facing 'major' economic fallout due to Iran war, says PM Shehbaz Sharif

MAY 1, 2026

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that the US-Iran war has dealt a serious blow to Pakistan's economic progress made over the past two years, as he asserted that his government will continue its efforts to help ease tensions between the two warring sides and restore peace in West Asia.

Speaking during a Cabinet meeting, Shehbaz said Pakistan's oil import bill had surged from \$300 million before the conflict to \$800 million, placing additional pressure on the economy. He also noted a reduction in petroleum consumption during the current week compared to the previous one.

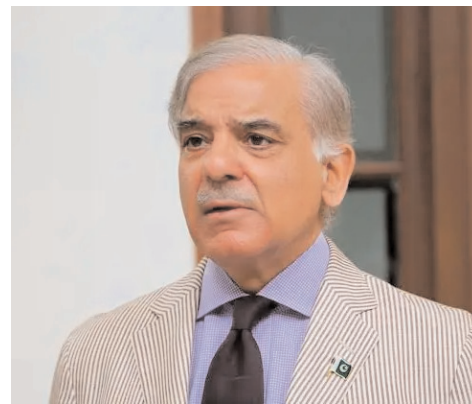
Shehbaz said a task force is monitoring the situation daily, according to an official statement.

He said collective efforts are needed to tackle the challenges.

Apprising the Cabinet about the progress made in the US-Iran talks and Pakistan's efforts to ease tensions in the region, Shehbaz said Islamabad made sincere efforts to promote regional stability.

He highlighted that marathon talks between Iran and the US held in Islamabad on April 11 lasted for 21 hours and marked a significant diplomatic breakthrough.

Pakistan made sincere and



Pakistan's oil import bill had surged from \$300 million before the conflict to \$800 million, placing additional pressure on the economy

coordinated efforts for the success of the negotiations, with contributions from Field Marshal Asim Munir, Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, and other senior officials.

As a result of these efforts, he noted, the ceasefire between Iran and the United States was extended and continues to hold.

The prime minister informed the cabinet that Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi visited Pakistan with his delegation and held multiple rounds of talks, including a two-hour session with him. He said Araghchi assured that Iran would respond positively after

consultations with its leadership.

"Before the Iranian foreign minister visited Russia, I spoke with him on the phone, in which he assured me that all his meetings in Oman were held with sincerity of intent, and after consultation with his leadership...he will give a positive response soon," he said while talking about Araghchi's whirlwind visits to Islamabad, Muscat and Moscow over the weekend.

He expressed hope that the conflict would end soon.

Pakistan plans to host a second round of talks between the United States and Iran.

The Iranian minister made two brief visits to Pakistan within 48 hours over the weekend, meeting with Field Marshal Munir and PM Shehbaz to discuss the regional situation.

Trump on Sunday reiterated that the US and Iranian officials can talk by phone for a peace solution to the conflict.

Last week, Trump extended the two-week ceasefire with Iran indefinitely to give Tehran more time to prepare a unified proposal to end the war.

The war began when the US and Israel jointly attacked Iran on February 28, killing Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several top commanders. The retaliation by the Islamic Republic extended the war to the entire Gulf region.

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Sikh History This Week

MAY 1 TO MAY 7

1st May

1635 Guru Hargobind arrived at Kiratpur.



1837 Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa fatally wounded in Jamraud battle.

2nd May

1940 Sardar Baldev Singh Pact was signed. Singh negotiated an agreement with Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the leader of the Unionist Party to form a government in Punjab, and became the provincial Development Minister for a brief time in the summer of 1942.

3rd May

1705 Siege of Anadpur was initiated. It lasted seven months and ended on Dec. 4, 1705.



1718 Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was born. Sardar JASSA SINGH AHLUWALIA was born in 1718. He was son of Ahluwalia resident Bader Singh. His close association with Nawab Kapur Singh influenced him in service of GurPanth. Raja Amir Singh of Patiala was introduced to amrit by him. He was a great General of the Khalsa forces during the 18th century and was called Sultan-ul-Quom, king of the nation, his heroic deeds and qualities of leadership. He killed Hakim SalabatKhan of Amritsar, in 1748, and captured the surrounding region. In 1789, he helped Diwan KodhaMal in removing ShahanWadh from Multan. In 1753, he defeated Hakim Adinabaegh and conquered Fataibad. He won the successful release of enslaved Hindu men and women from Ahmad Shah Durani. As a result he came to be popularly known as BandiShoadh (liberator). He bravely fought in Wada Ghulughara (the big holocaust). Even after receiving 22 grave bounds, he kept fighting. He was head as well as the life of the Ahluwalia Misl. In 1774, he captured Kapurthala state, established his capital there, and issues coins under our Gurus name. He was extremely popular among our Panth. He dies in 1783 in Amritsar. A monument in his memory was erected near Baba Atal, in Amritsar.

1914 Morcha launched for Rakab Ganj Gurudwara.

4th May



1479 PRAKASH UTSAV, Patshahi Third, Guru Amardas Ji.

The Third Patshah, Guru Amardas Ji, came to this planet. He was born in Baserke, district Amritsar, 13 kilometers from the city of Amritsar, in the house of Baba Tej Bahan and Matta Lakho. He was ten years younger than Guru Nanak. Today is the actual date of prakash, though Guru Khalsa Panth observes it on a different date (See description below for details on Guru Amar Das Ji).

1686 Janam Utsav of Sahibjada Baba Ajit Singh Ji, the eldest son of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, was born to Mata Sundari at Paonta Sahib on Magh 23 sunmat 1743. He fought valiantly and accepted martyrdom in the battle field at Chamkaur on Poh 8th sunmat 1761 (Dec. 22, 1704).

5th May



1723 Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was born. Ramgarhia, son of Giani Bhagwan Singh of Saedbaegh village, Lahore. He was an accomplished scholar of weaponry and an effortfull individual. He together with Nand Singh Sanghani constructed the "Ram Rahuni" from scratch. When the Adinabaeg general blew up the Ram Rahuni, Jassa Singh re-erected it and named it "Ram Gadh". Henceforth, he came to be known as Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. And his group also was popularly known as Ramgarhlias. Just like other Sikh misls, the Ramgarhia misl established its rule and served the GurSikh Panth.

1739 Sikhs attacked Nadar on his return trip to Persia and rescued a large booty and thousands of captive Hindu women.

1834 Peshawar conquered and Khalsa raj extended Raj upto Jamraud, Afghanistan. Kanwar Naunihal Singh and Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa conquered

Peshawar and extended the territory of Khalsa Raj upto Jamraud (Afghanistan). Further this territory was named Sumaergadh.

1948 Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) was formed. EAST PUNJAB STATES: Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot, and Malerkotla were the Sikh states in the East Punjab before the integration of Indian States in 1948. The first four were the Sikh states under the sovereignty of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and were brought under British protection by the 1809 treaty of Amritsar. Patiala, Nabha, and Jind, also known as Phulkian states, share a common ancestor Phul, who was descendent of Baryam. The Emperor, in 1526, had granted Baryam, the office of revenue collection for the waste country south-west of Delhi. Emperor Shah Jahan continued Phul in this office. From his eldest son descended the families of Nabha and Jind while from his second son the Patiala family. The Faridkot family, founded in the middle 16th century sprang from the same stock as the Phulkians chiefs.

6th May



1897 First year classess of Khalsa College were held in Amritsar. The first year classes of Khalsa College were held in the newly and partly built building in Amritsar, near the present Guru Nanak Dev University campus.

1930 Firing at the Sees Ganj, Delhi.

The police fired on Gurudwara Sees Ganj, Delhi. Congress workers had entered the Gurdwara premises and were throwing brickbats on police. In retaliation, the police fired, when the bullets hit Guru Granth Sahib. This caused widespread resentment among the Sikhs. The SGPC launched a campaign for boycott and picketing of foreign cloth shops in protest against this firing. Though Kharak Singh sought to maintain a distinct identity of the Sees Ganj agitation, it certainly gave strength to the Civil Disobedience Movement. Sikhs contributions to this movement was disproportionately large.

7th May

1665 Guru Tegh Bahadur visited Kiratpur.

1845 Baba Bir Singh of Naurangabad was assassinated at the hands of the treacherous dogra Raja Hira Singh. He was a great Sikh saint of Khalsa Raj period. BHAIR SINGH was born on Saun Sudhi 3 Sunmat 1825, in village Gugobuha (near Amritsar) to father Sewa Singh and mother Matta Dharam Kaur. During his youth, he served in the forces of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

1923 Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha deposed by the British.

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NOTICE

NAME CHANGE

I, Sumeet Gill, born on February 1, 1991, wife of Indermohan Singh, holder of US Passport number M3291799, residing at 8 Hilltop Rd, Albertson, NY, 11507, have changed my name from Sumeet Gill to Sumeet Kaur.

All concerned may please note.

Back to nature: Herbal pastes for naturally coloring hair

Unlike synthetic dyes that coat the hair shaft, herbal treatments penetrate deeply, working at the root level. They stimulate melanin production—the pigment responsible for hair color—while improving blood circulation to the scalp. Over time, this holistic approach can darken hair, reduce premature greying, and enhance shine. Natural methods require patience, but the results are often richer, healthier, and free from the long-term damage associated with chemicals.

Herbal Pastes

Henna and Indigo

The most trusted combination for natural hair coloring is henna (mehndi) and indigo.

- Henna (*Lawsonia inermis*): Imparts a reddish-brown tint while conditioning the hair.
- Indigo (*Indigofera tinctoria*): When applied after henna, it deepens the color to dark brown or black.

How to use:

Apply henna paste first and rinse. Follow with indigo paste for darker tones. This two-step method gives a natural, long-lasting color.

Amla, Bhringraj, and Brahmi Paste

This powerful herbal blend is more about restoring natural pigmentation than adding artificial color.

- Amla (Indian gooseberry): Rich in vitamin C, it boosts melanin production.
- Bhringraj: Known as the "king of herbs" for hair, it helps prevent premature greying.
- Brahmi: Strengthens hair roots and improves scalp health.

Preparation

Mix these powders with warm water or tea decoction to form a paste. Apply weekly for gradual darkening and improved texture.

Coffee and Black Tea Infusion

For subtle darkening and shine:

- Brew strong coffee or black tea
- Mix with herbal powders or use as a rinse

These natural colorants enhance brown tones and add depth to dull hair.

Curry Leaves and Hibiscus Paste

- Curry leaves: Help restore natural hair pigment
- Hibiscus flowers/leaves: Add shine and promote hair



growth
Grind into a paste with coconut oil or water and apply regularly for visible improvement in hair tone and strength.

Oil Massages

Hair oiling is not just about conditioning—it plays a crucial role in restoring hair's natural vitality and slowing greying.

Coconut Oil with Curry Leaves

Heating curry leaves in coconut oil releases nutrients that nourish hair roots and may help darken greying strands over time.

Benefits:

- Strengthens follicles
- Enhances natural pigmentation
- Adds softness and shine

Amla Oil Massage

Amla-infused oil is a staple in traditional hair care routines.

- Stimulates melanin production
- Prevents premature greying
- Improves scalp circulation

Massage gently into the scalp 2-3 times a week for best results.

FOOD CORNER

Lamb Kofta

Ingredients:

Minced lamb - 250 gms, Breadcrumbs - 1/2 cup, Onion - 1, small, finely chopped, Egg - 1, beaten

Mint leaves - handful, finely chopped, Coriander leaves - handful, finely chopped, Cinnamon powder - 1 tsp, Cardamom powder - 1 tsp, Cumin powder - 1 tsp, Red chilli powder - 1/2 tsp, Turmeric powder - 1 tsp, Salt as per taste

Black pepper powder as per taste, Wooden skewers - few, soaked in cold water for 30 minutes, Olive oil - little, Optional ingredients: Ginger garlic paste - 1 tsp, Red chilli flakes - 1/4 tsp

Method:

- Combine the minced lamb and breadcrumbs in a bowl.
- Mix well.
- Add the onions, mint leaves, coriander leaves, cinnamon powder, cardamom powder, cumin powder, red chilli powder and turmeric powder.
- Sprinkle some salt and pepper powder.
- Mix well.
- Add the egg and mix again until all ingredients are evenly combined.
- Make small balls of the mixture and insert a skewer into the center.
- Gently press the mixture around the skewer and keep aside.
- Heat a grill pan over medium flame.
- Add some olive oil and grill the prepared koftas until golden brown on all sides.
- Remove and serve with naan/parathas and lemon wedges.



For many women trying to conceive, fertility is often discussed in terms of age, hormones, and medical conditions. Yet researchers are increasingly exploring another factor that may quietly influence reproductive health—stress. While stress alone is unlikely to be the sole cause of infertility, studies suggest that prolonged emotional strain may affect the body in ways that can make conception more difficult.

The female reproductive system depends on a delicate balance of hormones that regulate ovulation, menstruation, and pregnancy. When a woman experiences chronic stress, the body releases higher levels of cortisol and adrenaline, hormones designed to help respond to difficult situations.

In short periods, these hormones are harmless. But when stress becomes constant, they can interfere with the

Stress may play a hidden role in female fertility challenges

brain's communication with the ovaries, potentially disrupting the reproductive cycle.

This may lead to:

- Irregular menstrual cycles
- Delayed ovulation
- Reduced libido
- Hormonal fluctuations
- Difficulty maintaining overall reproductive balance

Because fertility is closely tied to hormonal rhythm, even subtle disruptions can have an impact over time.

Stress can influence fertility both physically and emotionally.

Hormonal Disruption

The brain controls reproduction

through the hypothalamus and pituitary gland. Chronic stress may disturb this signaling system, affecting estrogen and progesterone production and altering ovulation.

Lifestyle Changes

Stress often changes daily habits in ways that can affect fertility:

- Poor sleep
- Unhealthy eating
- Weight gain or loss
- Increased smoking or alcohol use
- Reduced physical activity

These changes may further reduce the chances of conception.

Some researchers believe chronic stress can increase inflammation, which may negatively affect reproductive

organs and egg quality.

The relationship between stress and fertility can become cyclical. Trying to conceive month after month can itself become a major source of anxiety.

Women facing fertility challenges often experience:

- Emotional exhaustion
- Feelings of failure
- Depression
- Social isolation
- Relationship strain

This emotional burden can deepen stress levels, creating a difficult loop that affects both mental and physical well-being. Although reducing stress cannot guarantee pregnancy, many fertility specialists believe emotional wellness may support reproductive health.

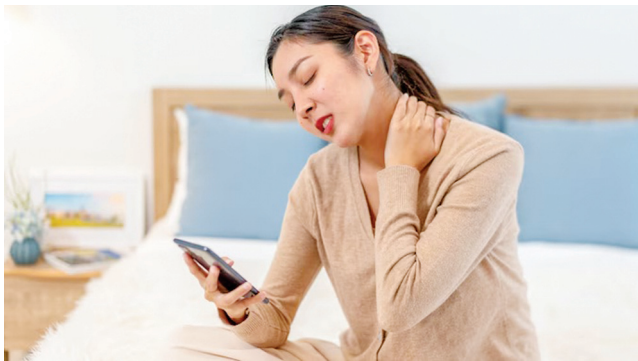
Bent neck, burdened heart: Smartphone habits are taking a toll on your health

The modern smartphone has become an extension of daily life—rarely out of reach, constantly in use, and quietly reshaping the way the human body functions. What appears to be a harmless habit of scrolling, texting, or browsing for hours has given rise to a condition popularly known as "text neck." While it is often dismissed as a minor posture issue, growing awareness suggests that its effects may extend far beyond the neck, subtly influencing stress levels and even heart health.

Text neck develops when the head is consistently tilted forward while looking at a phone or other digital devices. The human head, when upright, weighs around 4 to 5 kilograms, but as it tilts forward, the strain on the neck increases dramatically—sometimes equivalent to carrying over 20 kilograms of weight. Over time, this unnatural posture places continuous pressure on the cervical spine, leading to stiffness, muscle fatigue, and chronic discomfort. Many individuals begin to notice persistent neck pain, headaches, and tightness in the shoulders, often without immediately connecting these symptoms to prolonged phone use.

However, the implications of this habit are not limited to musculoskeletal strain. The posture associated with excessive phone use can influence breathing patterns, compressing the chest and encouraging shallow breathing. When breathing becomes inefficient, the body may respond by increasing heart rate to maintain oxygen supply, placing subtle yet continuous stress on the cardiovascular system. At the same time, the sedentary nature of prolonged screen time reduces physical activity, a well-known factor linked to heart-related concerns such as poor circulation and elevated blood pressure.

Equally significant is the psychological dimension of excessive smartphone use. Constant notifications, social media engagement, and the pressure to remain digitally connected can heighten anxiety and mental fatigue. This persistent state of alertness triggers the body's stress response, releasing hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. While these hormones are useful in short



bursts, their prolonged elevation can contribute to long-term strain on the heart. In this way, what begins as a physical posture issue gradually evolves into a broader lifestyle concern, intertwining physical discomfort with emotional stress.

Sleep patterns are also affected, particularly when phone usage extends late into the night. The blue light emitted by screens interferes with the body's natural sleep cycle, making it harder to fall asleep and reducing sleep quality. Poor sleep, in turn, has been strongly associated with increased risks of cardiovascular problems, creating yet another link between digital habits and heart health. The cycle becomes difficult to break—fatigue leads to more screen time, which further disrupts sleep and increases stress.

What makes this issue particularly relevant today is its subtlety. Unlike acute illnesses, the effects of text neck and excessive phone use develop gradually, often going unnoticed until they begin to interfere with daily life. The discomfort in the neck, the rising stress levels, and the fatigue may seem unrelated, yet they are often interconnected through the same underlying habits.

Addressing this modern health challenge does not require abandoning technology but rather adopting mindful usage. Simple changes—such as holding the phone at eye level, taking regular breaks, staying physically active, and limiting screen exposure before bedtime—can significantly reduce strain on both the body and mind.

Are we overdoing protein? How to get it right

Protein has quietly taken centre stage in India's wellness economy. From supermarket shelves lined with fortified cereals and protein bars to gym routines built around shakes and supplements, the message is clear: more protein equals better health.

But doctors and nutrition experts are beginning to push back. The concern isn't about protein itself, it's about how much, how often, and in what form people are consuming it.

"Protein is essential for health, but the way we are consuming it today needs a pause," says Dr Piyush Kumar Thakur, Consultant in Gastroenterology and Hepatology.

"The market is flooded with powders, bars, and fortified foods, making it easy to overdo protein without even realising it. More is not always better."

Excess protein, particularly from supplements or animal sources, can strain the digestive system. This becomes even more relevant in India's summer months, when high temperatures already make the gut more sensitive. Research has also begun to question the assumption that higher protein automatically translates into better health. Studies, including those from the University of Missouri School of Medicine, suggest that

consuming protein beyond recommended levels may trigger adverse metabolic and cardiovascular effects, without necessarily improving muscle gain.

A less discussed reality is that not everyone can tolerate increased protein intake—especially those with underlying digestive issues.

Many people advised to "eat more protein" report symptoms like bloating, acidity, heaviness, or discomfort.

"In such cases, forcing large portions of protein or relying only on supplements is not the answer," says Dr Thakur. "The body may not be able to handle it, and this can lead to further gut issues."

The problem intensifies in hot weather. Heat diverts blood flow away from the digestive system and increases dehydration, both of which can impair digestion. Add a heavy protein load to this, and the gut can struggle.

The challenge, then, is not eliminating protein—but adjusting how it is consumed.

Doctors recommend shifting from heavy, concentrated sources to lighter, more digestible options. Well-cooked dals, curd, paneer, khichdi, and soaked nuts are easier on the gut compared to dense protein supplements or large portions of meat.



Eat fruits the right way: Simple habits for better digestion and health

Fruits are often described as nature's most complete food, packed with essential vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and natural sugars that provide instant energy and nourishment. However, while most people include fruits in their daily diet, few pay attention to how and when they should be eaten. The way fruits are consumed can significantly influence digestion, nutrient absorption, and overall health, making it important to adopt a mindful approach rather than simply eating them at random times.

One of the most widely recommended practices is to eat fruits on an empty stomach, particularly in the morning. After a night of fasting, the body is ready to absorb nutrients efficiently, and fruits, being light and easy to digest, provide a quick source of energy. Consuming fruits at this time can help kickstart metabolism, hydrate the body, and prepare the digestive system for the day ahead. They also make for an excellent mid-morning or evening snack, offering a natural alternative to processed foods that are often high in sugar and unhealthy fats. On the other hand, eating fruits immediately after a heavy meal may not always be ideal, as it can slow down digestion and, in some individuals, lead to bloating or discomfort.

Another important aspect to consider is food combination. Fruits digest faster than most other foods, and when they are eaten alongside heavy meals rich in fats or proteins, they may remain in the stomach longer than usual. This can sometimes cause fermentation, leading to gas or acidity. For this reason, many nutrition experts suggest eating fruits separately for optimal digestion. However, this does not mean fruits cannot be combined at all—pairing them with light foods such as yogurt or a handful of nuts can still be beneficial and enjoyable, as long as portions are moderate and the body tolerates the combination well.

The form in which fruits are consumed also plays a crucial role. Whole fruits are always a better choice compared to fruit juices. When eaten whole, fruits retain their natural fiber, which aids digestion, regulates blood sugar levels, and promotes a feeling of fullness.

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Anthropic expands Claude AI capabilities with new creative connectors for Adobe, Blender and more

Anthropic is back with one more new feature for its Claude AI model. The company has rolled out a set of connectors which will allow Claude to tap into popular creative software, including Adobe's Creative Cloud apps, Affinity, Blender, Ableton, Autodesk, and more. This feature arrives weeks after the company launched Claude Design, which lets users create visual content simply by describing what they want in plain text.

These new sets of connectors will enable Claude to access apps, retrieve data, and take actions within connected services. Anthropic says these connectors will help with the "parts of the creative process" by handling repetitive tasks and eliminating manual toil.

For example, the Adobe connector for creativity can pull from Creative Cloud apps like Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Premiere Pro, and Adobe Express to help create images, videos, and designs within Claude.

The Ableton connector lets Claude answer questions using information from the software's official documentation, while the Blender integration allows users to interact with the 3D modeling app's Python API using natural language.

"Claude can't replace taste or imagination, but it can open up new



ways of working—faster and more ambitious ideation, a more expansive skillset, and the ability for creatives to take on larger-scale projects," Anthropic wrote in a blog post.

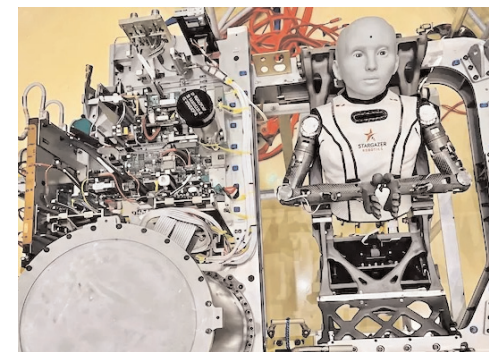
How this is different from Claude Design

Claude Design is a new AI-powered tool that can generate prototypes, presentations, and marketing visuals from simple text prompts. Instead of opening a design app and building layouts element by element, users can type a prompt and Claude generates a first draft within seconds.

The difference is that using Claude for creative work refers to its overall capabilities as a broad creative

assistant—it can help you learn tools, write code, connect different software, generate ideas, and handle repetitive tasks across various creative fields. In contrast, Claude Design is a specific product focused mainly on design, where you can quickly visualize ideas, iterate on them, and export them to tools like Canva.

In simple terms, Claude is the all-in-one creative helper, while Claude Design is a specialised space built specifically for designing and refining visual concepts. Claude Design is currently available in research preview for Claude Pro, Max, Team, and Enterprise subscribers at no additional cost.



Gaganyaan: Isro integrating Vyommitra in crew module, key safety tests underway

India's human spaceflight ambitions are entering a decisive phase, with the Indian Space Research Organisation initiating pre-flight integration of its humanoid robot Vyommitra ahead of the maiden uncrewed mission of the HLV-M3-G1/OM1.

Vyommitra, designed to simulate astronaut functions in space, will play a crucial role in testing life-support systems, crew interfaces and microgravity conditions during the upcoming mission.

The robot is expected to gather vital data that will help refine systems before Indian astronauts, referred to as Gaganyatris, are sent into orbit under the Gaganyaan mission.

The HLV-M3 rocket, a human-rated version of India's heavy-lift launch vehicle, will carry Vyommitra on this critical test flight.

Engineers are currently focused on integrating the robot with onboard systems, ensuring seamless communication, environmental monitoring and response simulations during the mission.

Parallel to flight preparations, Isro is also advancing ground safety systems, a key requirement for any human spaceflight programme.

Among these is the Flight Crew Emergency Egress System, a specialised infrastructure designed to evacuate astronauts from the launch pad in case of emergencies such as fire, fuel leaks or other pre-launch hazards.

Unlike the onboard Crew Escape System, which activates during in-flight emergencies, the egress system is intended for use while the rocket remains on the launch pad. It functions as a rapid evacuation mechanism, allowing astronauts to exit the crew module and move to safety within seconds.

The system uses a zipline-based mechanism, enabling Gaganyatris to slide away quickly from the launch tower to a secure distance.

This ground-based "emergency exit" is a standard feature in global human spaceflight operations and is critical for ensuring crew safety during the most vulnerable pre-launch phase.

There have been speculations for quite some time that OpenAI is working on hardware products. Now, a recent report has provided some hints at an upcoming OpenAI device. In an X article, analyst Ming-Chi Kuo has suggested that the AI company is working with MediaTek and Qualcomm to develop smartphone processors. As per the analyst, the company has also partnered with Luxshare as the exclusive system co-design and manufacturing partner, with mass production expected to begin in 2028. The move signals OpenAI's growing interest in hardware, particularly as it looks to optimise devices for AI-native experiences rather than traditional app-based usage.

Smartphones have been stagnant for the last few years. There have been changes with each new iteration of smartphones, but they are not that significant, but OpenAI wants to change that now. As per Ming-Chi Kuo, at the center of OpenAI's effort is the idea of an AI agent-led smartphone. Instead of navigating through multiple apps, users would rely on AI to complete tasks, which will fulfil users' needs directly.

It will also shift how users think about smartphones — not as collections of apps, but as systems designed to execute

OpenAI is making AI smartphone with agentic capabilities



user intent. In this model, AI becomes the primary interface, reshaping user interaction.

Ming-Chi Kuo said there are several reasons driving OpenAI's push into smartphones.

First, controlling both the operating system and hardware would allow the company to deliver a fully integrated AI agent experience. Second, smartphones uniquely capture the user's real-time

state, making them the most valuable device for contextual AI inference. Third, smartphones are expected to remain the largest-scale device category for the foreseeable future.

Together, these factors make the smartphone a critical platform for deploying advanced AI systems at scale.

Ming-Chi Kuo says OpenAI's advantages lie in its strong consumer brand, years of accumulated user data, and leading AI models. With smartphone hardware already highly mature, the company can rely on existing supply chains while focusing on differentiation through AI.

On the business model side, OpenAI could bundle subscriptions with hardware and build a new AI agent ecosystem involving developers, potentially reshaping how software is distributed and monetised on mobile devices.

Ming-Chi Kuo hints that the envisioned device would rely on a tightly integrated mix of on-device and cloud-based AI.

US economy grows 2% in Q1 amid global uncertainties

MAY 1, 2026

NEW YORK (TIP): The United States economy experienced a growth rate of 2% in the first quarter of the year, indicating a rebound following economic shutdowns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This growth represents a significant recovery effort as businesses continue to adapt to changing circumstances and demand.

While the 2% growth reflects a return to a certain level of economic activity, recent geopolitical developments have introduced new variables into the economic landscape. Notably, ongoing tensions in the Middle East, particularly surrounding Iran, have created an environment of uncertainty that could impact economic prospects.

Experts suggest that while the growth is a positive sign, the implications of international conflicts on global trade and oil prices could present challenges. The potential for fluctuating energy costs and their subsequent effect on inflation remains a concern as the nation navigates these uncharted waters.

Economists are analysing the repercussions of these developments closely, as shifts in energy prices typically have broad implications for both consumers and businesses. They warn that any sustained disruptions could slow down economic growth, which has only just begun to re-establish itself following significant downturns.

It is crucial for policymakers to remain vigilant and responsive to these external pressures to foster a resilient economic environment. The data from the first quarter adds a layer of complexity to the discussions surrounding economic recovery, urging stakeholders to consider both domestic and international factors in their projections and strategies moving forward.

As countries grapple with these multifaceted challenges, the resilience of the United States economy will be tested in the months ahead. Keeping a close eye on developments will be essential for understanding the longer-term trajectory of the economy, as well as the potential ripples affecting global markets.



Trump Removes Whisky Tariffs After King Charles III's State Visit

US President Donald Trump has announced the removal of tariffs and trade restrictions on whisky imports from the United Kingdom, following a recent state visit by King Charles III and Queen Camilla. The decision, he said, was made as a gesture of respect for the royal couple and to support long-standing trade ties.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump wrote, "In Honour of the King and Queen of the United Kingdom, who have just left the White House, soon headed back to their wonderful Country, I will be removing the Tariffs and Restrictions on Whisky having to do with Scotland's ability to work with the Commonwealth of Kentucky on Whisky and Bourbon, two very important Industries within Scotland and Kentucky."

Trump also pointed to the shared supply chain, particularly the use of wooden barrels, as a key reason behind the decision. "People have wanted to do this for a long time, in that there had been great Inter-Country Trade, especially having to do with the Wooden Barrels used," he added.

India-NZ FTA opens doors, but only prepared firms will benefit

MAY 1, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): India's newly signed free trade agreement (FTA) with New Zealand has been positioned as a big opportunity for exporters, startups and global trade expansion.

But industry experts say the benefits will not be automatic, especially for smaller businesses.

Siddharth Shankar, Global COO at Komerz Ltd and a trade finance expert, believes the agreement could be transformative—but only for those who are ready to operate at global standards.

While the deal offers duty-free access for Indian exports, Shankar said tariffs were never the biggest hurdle for businesses. "Tariff elimination sounds like a silver bullet, but the uncomfortable truth is that most MSMEs won't benefit automatically," he said.

He pointed out that many Indian MSMEs still lack consistency and technological integration.

"Global value chains today are



technology-led, compliance-heavy, and ruthlessly efficient," he said.

"If an MSME can't deliver predictable quality, data visibility, and supply-chain discipline, zero tariffs won't save them."

According to him, only a small segment of businesses is likely to benefit immediately.

"Where this FTA could be transformative is for the top 15-20% of MSMEs that are already investing in automation and traceability," he added.

One of the standout features of the agreement is the fast-track mechanism

allowing Indian firms to import raw materials from New Zealand duty-free, process them, and re-export.

But Shankar cautioned against overestimating its impact.

"Duty-free inputs alone won't make India a global food processing hub. Discipline will," he said.

He flagged key issues in India's logistics and distribution systems.

"Many networks still operate with outdated infrastructure and inconsistent cold chains," he said.

"That may work domestically, but it collapses under global scrutiny."

He added that real transformation would require investment in traceability, automation and data-driven decision-making. The agreement also includes a commitment from New Zealand to invest \$20 billion in India over the next 15 years.

Shankar called this a strong signal but warned founders against misusing capital.

Excise duty on diesel exports cut to Rs 23/litre, ATF exports to Rs 33/litre

MAY 1, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Indian government has cut the windfall gains tax on the export of diesel to Rs 23 per litre and aviation turbine fuel to Rs 33/litre, effective from May 1.

The finance ministry, in a statement, said there will be no change in existing excise duty rates on petrol and diesel for domestic consumption.

The special additional excise duty on export of diesel was reduced to Rs 23 per litre from Rs 55.5 per litre, and aviation turbine fuel to Rs 33 per litre from Rs 42 per litre.

The special additional excise duty on export of diesel was reduced to Rs 23 per litre from Rs 55.5 per litre, and aviation turbine fuel to Rs 33 per litre from Rs 42 per litre.

The government had, on March 26, imposed an export duty at Rs 21.50 a litre on diesel, and on ATF at Rs 29.5 a litre. In a review on April 11, the duties were hiked to Rs 55.5/litre and Rs 42/litre, respectively.

The windfall tax was levied to increase domestic availability of the fuel amid the US-Israel and Iran war.

The levies were also aimed at not allowing exporters to take undue advantage due to price differences, as globally crude oil prices had risen since the beginning of the war.

On February 28, the United States and Israel launched military strikes against Iran, triggering sweeping retaliation from Tehran. Crude oil prices have surged to a four-year high of USD 126 per barrel, from about USD 73 per barrel before the war.

Jet fuel price for international airlines up by 5 per cent in 2nd straight monthly hike

The price of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF), or jet fuel, for international airlines was increased by 5 per cent on Friday, marking the second straight monthly rise as oil companies pass on the global surge in energy prices in a calibrated manner.

There is no change in the ATF price for domestic airlines. ATF prices have been increased by USD 76.55 per kilolitre, or 5.33 per cent, to USD 1511.86 per kl in Delhi, home to India's busiest airport, according to state-owned oil firms.

This follows the doubling of rates on April 1. On that day, rates for domestic airlines were hiked by 25 per cent to Rs 104,927.18 per kl. Jet fuel prices were deregulated more than two decades ago, and since then, the rates have been aligned with benchmark international prices, as per a written understanding with the airlines. But since the West Asia crisis-induced surge in global energy prices warranted the steepest increase ever to be made in the ATF prices, the government and state-owned oil companies decided to adopt a calibrated approach, industry sources said.



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

ARIES

Ganesha says that the people of Aries may face some problems at the beginning of the week, but the second half will prove to be very auspicious for you. During that time, you will be successful in improving your work area. At the beginning of the week, due to a lack of timely support from close friends and colleagues, the mind may be a little disappointed. During this time, you will need to fulfill your family responsibilities properly. From the point of view of he also, this time can be a bit painful for you. You can be a victim of seasonal disease; in this case, keep food and routine right. In the second half of the week, employed people will get the full support of both seniors and juniors in the field. People connected abroad can get unexpected benefits. There can be profit from buying and selling land and building. There will be intensity in love relations. Sweetness will remain in married life. Normal happiness and cooperation will remain on the child's side.

TAURUS

Ganesha says that this week, the natives of Taurus can achieve success in the work done, even if it is late. New sources of income can be created at the beginning of the week. This week can be normal in terms of health, and you can get full support of luck. More time for women will be spent in worship or auspicious work. In the second half of the week, there will be great success in economic matters. The decision can also come in your favor in matters related to the court. However, be careful while signing any paper, and sign only after reading and understanding. There will be an increase in material comforts and resources in the family.

GEMINI

Ganesha says that this week is going to bring happiness and good fortune to the people of Gemini. Good news can be received from the child's side at the beginning of the week. Those who are preparing for competitive exams will also get some good news. During this, you can get the full results of hard work and effort. However, avoid taking any big steps by getting excited or getting carried away by emotions. Especially do not make the mistake of ignoring the feelings of family members. Desired progress will be seen in both career and business. This week will be good from the point of view of income, but the expenditure will also be in the

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - MAY 4, 2026 TO MAY 10, 2026**By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla**

same proportion. At the end of the week, you can buy any expensive item related to comfort. There will be strength in a love relationship. Sweetness will remain in married life.

CANCER

Ganesha says the first part of the week is going to be better for Cancerians. At the beginning of the week, you may see sudden progress in your career or business. There will be relief in matters related to the court. The opponents themselves may come to you to initiate the agreement. This week, working women may face some difficulties in coordinating between home and office. In the second half of the week, there will be an excess of work in the workplace. Due to some obstacles in the planned work, the mind will remain a little upset. During this, more hard work and effort will be required for success at work. Take a step forward carefully in a love relationship, otherwise, you may get into unnecessary trouble. To keep married life sweet, do not ignore the feelings of your spouse. There will be mental concerns about the health of an elderly person in the house.

LEO

Ganesha says the people of the Leo zodiac may have to take full care of the fact that if caution is removed, an accident may happen. This week, you will need to work harder to achieve the desired success in the field of employment. Beware of hidden enemies in the workplace and ignore the small things people do. During this time, your opponents may try to distract you from your goal. Drive carefully this week and take full care. There is a possibility of an old disease emerging once again. If you get an opportunity to settle the case going on in the court outside, do not miss it at all. Proceed thoughtfully in the love affair and avoid interfering excessively in the personal life of the love partner. In difficult times, your life partner will be with you like a shadow.

VIRGO

Ganesha says for the people of Virgo, this week can be like the fulfillment of dreams. At the beginning of the week, good news related to career business can be heard. For those who have been waiting for their transfer or promotion for a long time, their wish can be fulfilled this week. At the beginning of the week itself, it is possible to meet a senior and influential person, with the help of which profitable plans will be made in the future. During this period, through your intelligence and hard work, you will be able to make progress in your field of work, career, business, etc. This week, more money can be spent out of pocket on things related to comfort. Problems related to land-building will go away. Will get the happiness of the ancestral property. In

the second half of the week, some health-related problems may emerge. Love relations will be strong, and there will be an opportunity to spend quality time with the love partner.

LIBRA

Ganesha says that at the beginning of the week, you may have to travel long or short distances in connection with work. During this time, new sources of your income will be created, but the excess of expenditure can be a bit high. The behavior of relatives and best friends couldn't be more positive. The mind will remain troubled due to not getting timely help from relatives. Those who have been wandering for employment for a long time may have to wait a little longer to achieve their desired success. In the second half of the week, do not make any decisions related to home or business in haste. The interference of a third person in love affairs can be the cause of your troubles. Try to solve any problem through dialogue. A spouse's health can become a major cause of worry.

SCORPIO

Ganesha says this week is a sign of being careful with the people of the Scorpio zodiac. If you are thinking of changing jobs or investing money somewhere in the business, then before taking such a decision, consult your relatives. Think carefully before taking any major decision, otherwise, you may have to repent later. While making decisions on any matter related to family, take full care of the feelings of your relatives. During this, it would be appropriate to move ahead by meeting friends and family members. Do not disclose your plans in the workplace, otherwise, opponents may put obstacles in it. Take a step forward with caution in your love affair; otherwise, things may get spoiled. At the end of the week, there can be a big concern regarding the child's side. Take full care of your health and routine.

SAGITTARIUS

Ganesha says the week has brought good fortune for the people of Sagittarius. At the beginning of the week, with the help of a close friend or influential person, you may feel relieved by completing a long-pending task. There will be full cooperation of senior and junior colleagues in the field. The mind will be happy by getting the desired position or work. The power of people associated with politics will increase. There will be an increase in respect, etc., in the field of social prestige. In the second half of the week, you may have to run a lot in connection with the purchase and sale of property like land, vehicle, house, etc., but your hard work will give you both success and profit. Long or short-distance travel with family is possible at the end of the week. The journey will prove to be pleasant. You will continue to receive maximum happiness and cooperation

from the parents.

CAPRICORN

Ganesha says the people of Capricorn who were worried about the progress of their careers and business, their wishes can be fulfilled this week. Seniors in the workplace will appreciate your work. You may get some important responsibilities. Earlier investment in any scheme or business will bring profit. Students engaged in the preparation for examination competitions can get good news. In the second half of the week, due to the arrival of a dear person in the house, there will be an atmosphere of happiness. Any auspicious work can be completed in the family, or there will be an opportunity to participate in any auspicious occasion. Material comforts will increase. In matters related to love affairs, there will be a need to maintain better coordination with the love partner. Happiness and cooperation will remain with the spouse.

AQUARIUS

Ganesha says the people of Aquarius should take full care of their pockets while spending this week. At the beginning of the week, more money can be spent out of pocket on things related to amenities. If you are thinking of buying a new land, building, or vehicle, then make this decision very carefully. The help and advice of a friend will prove to be very effective in taking the business forward. In the first half of the week, long or short-distance travel is possible with the spouse. The journey will prove to be enjoyable and create new relationships. In the second half of the week, the mind will be worried about the health of an elderly person in the house. During this, be alert to the opponents in the workplace and avoid making any such mistake, due to which there will be a decrease in your social prestige. There is a need to make better coordination with the loved partner in a love affair. Sweetness will remain in married life.

PISCES

Ganesha says that this week is going to be very auspicious for the people of Pisces. At the beginning of the week, there can be chances of profit and progress. During this time, you can be successful in influencing others with your speech and behavior. There will be harmony with siblings. If you have been planning to buy land or a building for a long time, then your wish may be fulfilled this week. You can get the full support of your parents. With the help of best friends, there will be chances of profit in the workplace or business. Students engaged in the preparation for examination competitions can achieve great success. His interest in studies will increase. You will be successful in a love affair. Mutual trust will increase with a love partner. Will have a pleasant time with the spouse. Health will be normal.

**BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : MAY 4 TO MAY 10
BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA****MAY 4**

Ganesha says you will attempt to go to whatever length to carry out and achieve your predetermined plans. Even though your family discussions are bitter, only sweetness will fill the void. Before starting any project, you are a dependable source who carefully investigates all the information. Your health conditions could not satisfy you. Through financial assistance that you might receive due to luck, your assistance to the poor and needy will help to dry their sorrows. Your profession may have many twists and turns, so you must be cautious.

MAY 5

Ganesha says you enjoy leading a self-determined lifestyle. You need to be careful to seize the opportunities that knock on your door. You will become a wonderful person because of your insatiable passion for accomplishing your objectives. Avoiding excessive displays of winning emotions is an urgent need right now. With no expectations or complaints, you will accept life as it is. What you experience in life is a series of ups and downs. To prevent resentment from dividing you from your admirers, try to avoid disagreements with them.

MAY 6

Ganesha says you adore leading an independent life. Opportunities will knock on your door, so be careful to seize them. You will become a wonderful person because of your unquenchable desire to achieve your objectives. Avoiding excessive displays of winning emotions is a crucial current need. With no expectations or complaints, you will accept life as it is. Your life will be full of ups and downs. Avoid disputes with your admirers to prevent resentments from dividing you.

MAY 7

Ganesha says your original concepts would provide you with the most sought-after abilities. A large crew is relatively simple to manage. You would perform exceedingly well in the upcoming time and get amazing honours and awards. But occasionally, because of your snarky and peculiar behaviour, you start to seem mysterious to your friends. On a professional front, you must restrain or conceal your erratic behaviour. You will undoubtedly increase your savings, but you will also likely indulge in extravagant spending. It would be planned to be brief but exciting for a change.

MAY 8

Ganesha says Joining the crowd, you keep yourself informed at all times. Your sense of unbelievableness could propel you to fame shortly. Similar to how honey attracts more flies than vinegar, you are surrounded by kind people. You have good leadership qualities, which will help you succeed as you move up the organisational ladder. To avoid creating factions, you should be devoted to your coworkers. Even if your family comes first in your life, you find yourself having less time to spend with them.

MAY 9

Ganesha says about your life experiences and their substance, people will be inquisitive. This romantic relationship is a win-win for you. Your level of intimacy will probably rise, and you might be preoccupied with creating your wedding invitation. You will fulfil all of your requirements through your spouse and receive your desired outcome. It will take time for you to travel through a long passage, as the number of people who admire you will continue to grow. Love, sacrifices, provocations, disengagement, and peace are all available to you at this moment. You'll always achieve the outcomes you want by learning from experience.

**VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR
BEJAN DARUWALLA****MAY 10**

Ganesha says you're more likely to actively explore the notion of your business deal. You always look into anything that comes your way because you think, "No pain, no gain." Your prowess could occasionally bring you into disrepute. Check your toad-like characteristics, which include conservatism, introversion, and a preference for staying in one place. You can be concerned if the number of people who support you, declines, since it could make you feel as though you have no one to encourage you.

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CONTD FROM PAGE 1

Iran vows to protect its nuclear capabilities, signals 'new rules' for Strait of Hormuz

Secretary Pete Hegseth argued that the '60-day clock pauses, or stops, in a ceasefire'."

"A new chapter for the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz is taking shape," Mr. Khamenei said in a statement, marking Persian Gulf Day. "The Islamic Republic will secure the Persian Gulf region and dismantle the enemies' exploitative schemes in this waterway. The legal frameworks and implementation of new management for the strait will bring peace and progress to the benefit of all the region's nations," he said.

The war on Iran, launched by the U.S. and Israel, has turned into a maritime battle of wills after Mr. Trump announced a ceasefire on April 8. While the ceasefire is still holding, Iran's chokehold of the strait, the mouth of the oil-rich Persian Gulf, remains intact. The U.S. has imposed a blockade on Iran-linked vessels in the Gulf of Oman to exert economic pressure on Tehran.

Last week, U.S. media reported that Iran made a proposal to the U.S. via Pakistan promising to ease its control of the strait in return for the U.S. lifting its blockade. Iran said it would discuss outstanding issues, including the nuclear programme, in the second round.

Mr. Trump, in an interview, said on Wednesday, April 29, that he wanted a deal from Iran addressing America's core concerns, including the nuclear issue. "The blockade is somewhat more effective than the bombing... They want to settle. They don't want me to keep the blockade. I don't want to [lift the blockade], because I don't want them to have a nuclear weapon," he said.

India behind Pakistan, Bangladesh on World Press Freedom Index?

Meanwhile, the RSF itself has described this year's index as the bleakest since it started publishing 25 years ago. More than half the world's countries fall under the "difficult" or "very serious" categories for press freedom.

Norway continues to retain the top spot for the 10th consecutive year. Eritrea has held the last spot for the third consecutive year, while the United States, under Donald Trump, has dropped seven places to 64th - pushed down by his systematic policy of attacking the press, detentions and deportation of journalists and the dismantling of the US Agency for Global Media, which led to the closure or downsizing of Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Radio Free Asia.

Syria, after being relegated for years among the bottom 10 nations, has jumped 36 places to 141st following the fall of Bashar al-Assad's dictatorship in December 2025. The steepest fall has been in Niger.

The sharpest overall decline this year is in the index's legal indicator, which measures the legislative and judicial environment for journalists. The RSF report specifically names India among the countries where the legal environment for journalism deteriorated. The others named in the same group are Egypt, Israel and Georgia.

The RSF describes the global criminalization of journalism as a phenomenon rooted in the misuse of national security laws, emergency legislation and common law. Russia has become its specialist

practitioner, holding 48 journalists behind bars as of April. (Source: TNS)

New H-1B Bill proposes 3-year freeze, \$200,000 minimum salary: impact on Indians

KEY PROPOSALS IN THE BILL

The legislation suggests major changes that could significantly reshape the H-1B system. It calls for a three-year freeze on new visas and proposes reducing the annual cap from 65,000 to 25,000. It also introduces a high minimum salary requirement of \$200,000, which would restrict eligibility to top-tier, high-paying jobs.

Additionally, the bill seeks to bar H-1B visa holders from bringing dependents and prevents them from transitioning to permanent residency. It also proposes banning federal agencies from hiring non-immigrant workers and scrapping the Optional Practical Training (OPT) programme.

Collectively, these measures indicate a shift toward making the H-1B visa more restrictive and strictly temporary.

POLITICAL SUPPORT AND JUSTIFICATION

The bill has gained backing from several Republican lawmakers, including Brian Babin, Brandon Gill, Wesley Hunt, Keith Self, Andy Ogles, Paul Gosar and Tom McClintock.

Explaining the rationale, Eli Crane said the government should prioritize American workers over corporate interests, arguing that the current system puts domestic job seekers at a disadvantage. Supporters claim that companies have misused the program to replace American employees with lower-cost foreign labor. Echoing this concern, Paul Gosar said the system has often been used to substitute domestic workers, while Brandon Gill emphasized the need to ensure immigration policies serve Americans first.

'ONE OF THE STRONGEST' PROPOSALS

Immigration policy expert Rosemary Jenks, who helped draft the bill, described it as one of the most comprehensive proposals introduced so far. She noted that the H-1B programme was originally intended as a short-term solution to address labor shortages but has since expanded beyond its original purpose. According to her, stricter rules could encourage companies to invest more in hiring and training domestic workers, even if it leads to higher costs initially.

IMPACT ON INDIAN PROFESSIONALS

Indian professionals, especially in sectors like technology and healthcare, are among the biggest beneficiaries of the H-1B program. Any tightening of the system is therefore likely to have significant consequences for them.

The proposed salary threshold and reduced visa cap could sharply limit opportunities for Indian workers seeking jobs in the US. Restrictions on dependents and the removal of pathways to permanent residency may further reduce the program's appeal.

The bill follows earlier measures linked to Donald Trump, including a proposed \$100,000 fee on new H-1B applications, which had already raised concerns among visa applicants.

WHAT LIES AHEAD



The bill's introduction marks the start of what is expected to be a heated debate in Congress. While it has strong support from some Republican lawmakers, it is likely to face opposition from industry groups that depend heavily on global talent.

Rupee hits all-time intraday low of 95.34 against \$ as crude spirals past 122 per barrel

94.84, up four paise from the previous day. The local currency fell 20 paise against the US dollar on Wednesday, closing at its previous all-time low of 94.88.

Meanwhile, the US Fed maintained interest rates despite significant inflation pressure driven by rising oil prices. Anil Kumar Bhansali, head of treasury and executive director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said the main effect on the rupee was of the rising oil prices, which touched \$122 per barrel and looked headed for further upside as the US continued with its blockade of Iranian ports, while Iran did not allow any ship/tanker to pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

Meanwhile, the exchange data stated that foreign institutional investors sold stocks valued at about Rs 2,460 crore on Wednesday.

About half of India's natural gas demands and 88 per cent of its crude oil needs are fulfilled by imports, with the Strait of Hormuz being the main route. The rupee has dropped by almost 5 per cent so far in 2026, following a similar decline last year. (Source: TNS)

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Buddha Purnima, also known as Vesak or Buddha Jayanti, stands as one of the most sacred observances in the Buddhist world. Celebrated on the full moon day (Purnima) of the Vaisakha month (April-May), this auspicious occasion commemorates not one, but three pivotal events in the life of Gautama Buddha—his birth, enlightenment, and ultimate liberation (Mahaparinirvana). The day radiates profound spiritual significance, inviting humanity to reflect upon the timeless teachings of compassion, mindfulness, and the path to inner awakening. This year, Buddha Purnima falls on May 1, Friday.

Origin and Historical Context

The origins of Buddha Purnima trace back over 2,500 years to ancient India, where the life and teachings of the Buddha transformed spiritual thought across Asia and beyond. The festival is observed by followers of Buddhism, as well as by seekers of wisdom across cultures.

The celebration was formally institutionalized during the reign of Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE. After embracing Buddhism, Ashoka promoted the observance of Buddha's life events and helped spread his teachings throughout his vast empire and into regions such as Sri Lanka, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia.

Siddhartha Gautam was born in Kapilavastu of Nepal in 623 BC.

The Legend of Buddha's Birth

According to Buddhist tradition, Queen Maya, the mother of the Buddha, experienced a divine dream in which a white elephant entered her womb—symbolizing purity and the descent of a great soul. Soon after, she gave birth to Prince Siddhartha in the serene gardens of Lumbini.

It is believed that the infant Siddhartha took seven steps immediately after birth, and at each step, a lotus flower bloomed. He declared, "I am the foremost in the world," signifying his destined spiritual greatness. Born into the royal Shakya clan, he was named Siddhartha Gautama.

Astrologers predicted that the prince would either become a great king or a spiritual teacher. His father, King Suddhodana, shielded him from the harsh realities of life in hopes of steering him toward kingship.

Great Renunciation and Quest for Truth

Despite a life of luxury, Siddhartha was deeply moved upon encountering the "Four Sights"—an old man, a sick person, a corpse, and an ascetic. These experiences awakened in him the realization of suffering (dukkha) inherent in human existence.

At the age of 29, he renounced his princely life in an event known as the Great Renunciation. For years, he practiced severe austerities and meditative disciplines, seeking the ultimate truth. Eventually, he realized that extreme asceticism was not the path to enlightenment, leading him to adopt the Middle Way—a balanced approach between indulgence and self-denial.

Buddha Purnima: The sacred full moon of enlightenment and compassion



Important information

Buddha Purnima 2026

Friday, 01 May 2026

Featured in religions: Buddhism

Date falls in: Full moon of the month of Vaishakh, usually in April (first), May or June (last).

Enlightenment Under the Bodhi Tree

Siddhartha attained enlightenment at the age of 35 while meditating beneath the sacred Bodhi Tree in Bodh Gaya. After a night of profound meditation, he realized the nature of existence, the causes of suffering, and the path to liberation. From that moment, he became the Buddha—the "Awakened One."

His enlightenment revealed the fundamental truths of life, later articulated as the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path—core principles that guide Buddhist philosophy and practice.

Teachings of the Buddha

The teachings of the Buddha are not dogmatic doctrines but practical insights into the nature of reality and human suffering. His message is universal, transcending boundaries of caste, creed, and nationality.

The Four Noble Truths

- Life is marked by suffering (dukkha).
- Suffering arises from desire (tanha).
- The cessation of suffering (nirvana) is attainable.
- The path to end suffering is the Eightfold Path.

The Noble Eightfold Path

This path provides a comprehensive guide to ethical and mental development:

- Right Understanding
- Right Intention
- Right Speech
- Right Action
- Right Livelihood
- Right Effort
- Right Mindfulness
- Right Concentration

Core Philosophical Concepts

- Impermanence (Anicca): All things are transient.
- Non-self (Anatta): There is no permanent, unchanging self.
- Suffering (Dukkha): Attachment leads to suffering.

The Buddha emphasized compassion (karuna), loving-kindness (metta), and mindfulness as essential virtues for a harmonious life.

Mahaparinirvana: The Final Liberation

At the age of 80, the Buddha attained Mahaparinirvana in Kushinagar. This event signifies the complete release from the cycle of birth and death (samsara). Unlike ordinary death, nirvana represents the extinguishing of all desires and the realization of ultimate peace. Buddha Purnima uniquely

commemorates this final liberation alongside his birth and enlightenment, making it a day of profound reflection on the entire journey of spiritual awakening.

Spiritual Significance of Buddha Purnima

Buddha Purnima is more than a festival—it is a spiritual mirror for humanity. It reminds individuals to:

- Cultivate inner peace through meditation and self-awareness
- Practice compassion and non-violence
- Detach from material desires
- Seek wisdom and truth

Devotees visit monasteries, offer prayers, chant sacred texts, and perform acts of charity. Many release birds or animals as symbols of liberation and kindness.

A Universal Message for Humanity

In an age marked by restlessness and conflict, the message of the Buddha resonates with timeless relevance. His teachings offer a path not only to personal enlightenment but also to collective harmony. Buddha Purnima calls upon humanity to awaken—to see clearly, live ethically, and act compassionately. It is a reminder that enlightenment is not reserved for a select few but is a possibility inherent in every human being.

"Peace comes from within. Do not seek it without." - Gautama Buddha

On this sacred full moon, the light of wisdom and compassion continues to illuminate the path for millions across the world, guiding them toward a life of balance, awareness, and ultimate liberation.

History This Week MAY 01-07

MAY 1

May 1st - Observed as May Day, a holiday and spring festival since ancient times, also observed in socialist countries as a workers' holiday or Labor Day.

May 1, 1707 - Great Britain was formed from a union between England and Scotland. The union included Wales which had already been part of England since the 1500's. The United Kingdom today consists of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

May 1, 1960 - An American U-2 spy plane flying at 60,000 feet was shot down over Sverdlovsk in central Russia on the eve of a summit meeting between President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Soviet Russia's Premier Nikita Khrushchev. The sensational incident caused a cancellation of the meeting and heightened existing Cold War tensions. The pilot, CIA agent Francis Gary Powers, survived the crash, and was tried, convicted and sentenced to 10 years in prison by a Russian court. Two years later he was released to America in exchange for an imprisoned Soviet spy. On his return to America, Powers encountered a hostile public which apparently believed he should not have allowed himself to be captured alive. He died in a helicopter crash in 1977.

May 1, 2004 - Eight former Communist nations and two Mediterranean countries joined the European Union (EU) marking its largest-ever expansion. The new members included Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, along with the island of Malta and the Greek portion of the island of Cyprus. They joined 15 countries already in the EU, representing in all 450 million persons.



Birthdays - Irish-born American labor leader Mary 'Mother' Jones (1830-1930) was born in County Cork, Ireland. She endured misfortune early in life as her husband and four children died in the yellow fever epidemic of 1867. She also lost all of her belongings in the Chicago Fire of 1871. She then devoted herself to organizing and advancing the cause of Labor, using the slogan, "Join the Union, boys." She also sought to prohibit child labor. She remained active until the very end, giving her last speech on her 100th birthday.

Birthdays - World War II General Mark Clark (1896-1984) was born in Madison Barracks, New York. He commanded the U.S. Fifth Army which invaded Italy in September of 1943, fighting a long and brutal campaign against stubborn German opposition.

Birthdays - African American Olympic athlete Archie Williams (1915-1993) was born in Oakland, California. Williams, along with Jesse Owens, defeated German athletes at the 1936 Berlin

Olympics and helped debunk Adolf Hitler's theory of Aryan racial superiority. Williams won a gold medal in the 400-meter race. After the Olympics, he went on to earn a mechanical engineering degree from the University of California-Berkeley but faced discrimination and wound up digging ditches. He later became an airplane pilot and trained Tuskegee Institute pilots including the black air corp of World War II.

MAY 2

May 2, 2011 - U.S. Special Operations Forces killed Osama bin Laden during a raid on his secret compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. The raid marked the culmination of a decade-long manhunt for the elusive leader of the al-Qaeda terrorist organization based in the Middle East. Bin Laden had ordered the coordinated aerial attacks of September 11th, 2001, in which four American passenger jets were hijacked then crashed, killing nearly 3,000 persons. Two jets had struck and subsequently collapsed the 110-story Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York, while another struck the Pentagon building in Washington, D.C. A fourth jet also headed toward Washington had crashed into a field in Pennsylvania as passengers attempted to overpower the hijackers on board.



Birthdays - Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903) was born in Carpino, Italy (as Gioacchino Pecci). He was elected Pope in 1878 at age 67 and lived to govern the church another 25 years, laying the foundation for modernization of Church attitudes toward a rapidly industrializing and changing world.

MAY 3



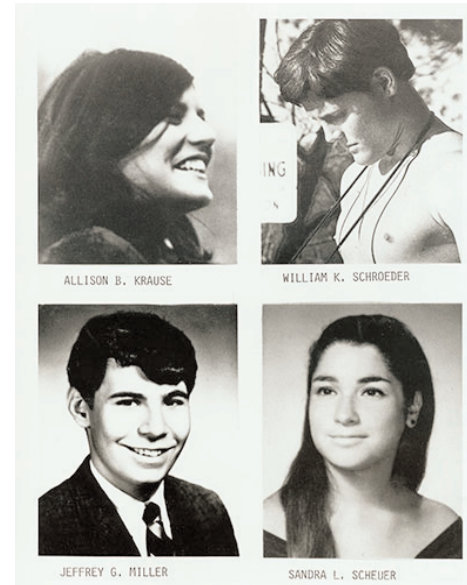
Birthdays - Italian writer and statesman Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) was born in Florence, Italy. He offered a blunt, realistic view of human nature and power in his works *The Prince* and *Discourses on Livy*.

Birthdays - Golda Meir (1898-1978) was born in Kiev, Russia. She was one of the founders of the modern state of Israel and served as prime minister from 1969 to 1974.

MAY 4

May 4, 1494 - During his second journey of exploration in the New World, Christopher Columbus discovered Jamaica.

May 4, 1886 - The Haymarket Square Riot occurred in Chicago after 180 police officers advanced on 1,300 persons gathered in the square listening to speeches of labor activists and anarchists. A bomb was thrown. Seven policemen were killed and over 50 wounded. Four anarchists were then charged with conspiracy to kill, convicted and hanged while another committed suicide in jail. Three others were given lengthy jail terms.



May 4, 1970 - At Kent State University, four students - Allison Krause, 19; Sandra Lee Scheuer, 20; Jeffrey Glenn Miller, 20; and William K. Schroeder, 19 - were killed by National Guardsmen who opened fire on a crowd of 1,000 students protesting President Richard Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia. Eleven others were wounded. The shootings set off tumultuous campus demonstrations across America resulting in the temporary closing of over 450 colleges and universities.

MAY 5

May 5th - Celebrated in Mexico as Cinco de Mayo, a national holiday in remembrance of the Battle of Puebla in 1862, in which Mexican troops under General Ignacio Zaragoza, outnumbered three to one, defeated the invading French forces of Napoleon III.

May 5, 1865 - Decoration Day was first observed in the U.S., with the tradition of decorating soldiers' graves from the Civil War with flowers. The observance date was later moved to May 30th and included American graves from World War I and World War II, and became better known as Memorial Day. In 1971, Congress moved Memorial Day to the last Monday in May, thus creating a three-day holiday weekend.

May 5, 1893 - The Wall Street Crash of 1893 began as stock prices fell dramatically. By the end of the year, 600 banks closed and several big railroads were in receivership. Another 15,000 businesses went bankrupt amid 20 percent unemployment. It was the worst economic crisis in U.S. history up to that time.

May 5, 1961 - Alan Shepard became the first American in space. He piloted the spacecraft Freedom 7 during a 15-minute 28-second suborbital flight that reached an altitude of 116 miles (186 kilometers) above the earth. Shepard's success occurred 23 days after the Russians had launched the first-ever human in space, cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, during an era of intense technological competition between the Russians and Americans

called the Space Race.



Birthdays - Pioneering American journalist Nellie Bly (1867-1922) was born in Cochran's Mills, Pennsylvania (as Elizabeth Cochrane). She was a social reformer and human rights advocate who once posed as an inmate in an insane asylum to expose inhumane conditions. She is best known for her 1889-90 tour around the world in 72 days, beating by eight days the time of Phileas Fogg, fictional hero of Jules Verne's novel *Around the World in Eighty Days*.

MAY 6

May 6, 1937 - The German airship Hindenburg burst into flames at 7:20 p.m. as it neared the mooring mast at Lakehurst, New Jersey, following a trans-Atlantic voyage. Thirty six of the 97 passengers and crew were killed. The inferno was caught on film and also witnessed by a commentator who broke down amid the emotional impact and exclaimed, "Oh, the humanity!" The accident effectively ended commercial airship traffic.



Birthdays - Psychoanalysis founder Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was born in Freiberg, Moravia. His theories became the foundation for treating psychiatric disorders by psychoanalysis and offered some of the first workable cures for mental disorders.

Birthdays - Explorer Robert E. Peary (1856-1920) was born in Cresson, Pennsylvania. He organized and led eight Arctic expeditions and reached the North Pole on April 6, 1909. In another expedition, he proved Greenland is an island. He also proved the polar ice cap extends beyond 82° north latitude, and discovered the Melville meteorite.

MAY 7

May 7, 1954 - The French Indochina War ended with the fall of Dien Bien Phu, in a stunning victory by the Vietnamese over French colonial forces in northern Vietnam. The country was then divided in half at the 17th parallel, with South Vietnam created in 1955.

May 7, 1992 - The 27th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, prohibiting Congress from giving itself pay raises.

Birthdays - Composer Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) was born in Hamburg, Germany. He composed over 300 songs and numerous orchestral, choral, piano, and chamber works, including his German Requiem commemorating the death of his mother.

Tucked away in the enchanting landscapes of Jammu and Kashmir, the breathtaking valley of Sonamarg—literally meaning "Meadow of Gold"—is a destination that feels almost mythical. Framed by snow-draped peaks, alpine meadows, and glacial rivers, Sonamarg is not just a place; it is an experience of raw Himalayan beauty that unfolds like poetry with every turn of the road.

A Gateway to Untamed Himalayan Beauty

Located at an altitude of about 2,730 meters above sea level, Sonamarg lies along the historic route that once connected Srinagar to Leh. Today, it stands as a serene retreat and an adventure hub, drawing travelers seeking both tranquility and thrill.

The drive to Sonamarg itself is a spectacle—winding roads flanked by towering pine forests, the sparkling Sindh River, and distant glaciers shimmering under the sun. As you ascend, the air turns crisp, the skies bluer, and the world quieter.

Why It's Called the "Meadow of Gold"

Come summer, Sonamarg transforms into a vibrant canvas of wildflowers—yellows, purples, and whites carpeting the valley floor. When sunlight touches these blooms, the entire meadow seems to glow golden, giving the region its evocative name.

In contrast, winter cloaks Sonamarg in pristine snow, turning it into a magical white wonderland—ideal for those who dream of silent landscapes and untouched beauty.

Must-Visit Places in Sonamarg

Thajiwas Glacier: A Walk into Frozen Majesty

Just a short trek or pony ride from the main town, the Thajiwas Glacier is one of Sonamarg's most iconic attractions. Even during summer, this glacier retains its icy charm. Visitors can enjoy sledding, snowball fights, and breathtaking views of cascading waterfalls nearby.

Zoji La Pass: Where Adventure Meets Awe

A short distance from Sonamarg lies the dramatic Zoji La, one of the most thrilling high-altitude passes in India. Connecting Kashmir with Ladakh, this pass offers panoramic vistas of rugged mountains and deep valleys—perfect for thrill-seekers and photographers.

Baltal Valley: The Base of Pilgrimage and Beauty

The serene Baltal Valley serves as a base camp for the sacred Amarnath Yatra. Surrounded by towering peaks, Baltal is equally mesmerizing for nature lovers, offering tranquil riverside views and camping experiences.

Nilgrad River: A Sacred Confluence

The mystical Nilgrad River, known for its reddish hue, is believed to possess healing properties. Flowing into the Sindh River, it holds cultural and spiritual significance among locals and pilgrims alike.

Things to Do: From Serenity to

Sonamarg: The meadow of gold where the Himalayas whisper stories



Adventure

Trekking and Nature Walks

Sonamarg is a trekker's paradise, with trails leading to high-altitude lakes like Vishansar Lake and Krishansar Lake. These routes pass through lush meadows, pine forests, and glacier-fed streams.

River Rafting on the Sindh

Adventure enthusiasts can indulge in white-water rafting on the Sindh River. The icy waters and moderate rapids make for an exhilarating experience amidst stunning scenery.

Camping Under the Stars

Few experiences rival spending a night under the Himalayan sky in Sonamarg. Campsites near rivers and meadows offer a peaceful escape, with the sound of flowing water and distant winds creating a natural symphony.

Photography and Birdwatching

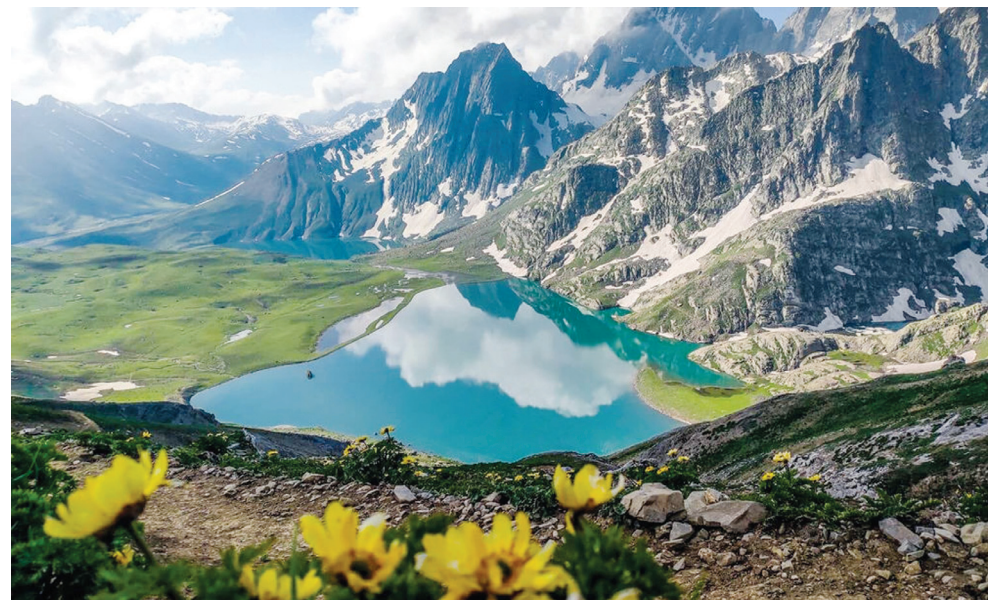
With its diverse landscapes and vibrant flora, Sonamarg is a dream for photographers. Rare Himalayan birds and wildlife also make it a rewarding destination for nature enthusiasts.

Best Time to Visit

- April to June: Ideal for sightseeing, trekking, and pleasant weather.
- July to September: Lush greenery and blooming flowers, though occasional rains may occur.
- October to March: Snow-covered landscapes, perfect for winter lovers, though access may be restricted due to heavy snowfall.

Local Culture and Flavors

While Sonamarg is quieter compared to bustling tourist hubs, it offers glimpses into Kashmiri culture. Visitors



can savor traditional dishes like Rogan Josh, Yakhni, and Kahwa tea, often served with warm hospitality.

Handcrafted woolens, pashmina shawls, and local souvenirs reflect the region's rich artisanal heritage.

Travel Tips

- Carry warm clothing, even in

summer, as temperatures can drop unexpectedly.

- Check road conditions, especially during winter months.
- Respect local customs and preserve the pristine environment.
- Hire local guides for treks to ensure safety and deeper exploration.

HOW THREE 'ISMS' FAILED THE PEOPLE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

BY DANIELLE PLETKA



FROM NASSER TO KHOMEINI, THE REGION'S REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGIES HAVE DELIVERED ONLY RUIN

"THE OUTGROWTH OF THESE DRAMATIC EVENTS WAS AN EXPLOSION OF TERRORISM ROOTED IN THREE DIFFERENT FLAVORS OF EXTREMIST ISLAMISM: IRANIAN-SPONSORED GROUPS SUCH AS HEZBOLLAH IN LEBANON; BROTHERHOOD-ROOTED GROUPS SUCH AS HAMAS IN GAZA, WHICH ALSO ENJOYED IRANIAN SUPPORT; AND SALAFI SAUDI-BACKED GROUPS LIKE AL-QAEDA, WHICH ULTIMATELY TURNED ON RIYADH. THESE TREND LINES WERE NOT DISTINCT. WHILE AL-QAEDA AND HEZBOLLAH AND HAMAS PRIORITIZED DIFFERENT GOALS, THEIR ISLAMIST CREDOS - BOTH SUNNI AND SHIITE - WERE SIMILAR: DOWN WITH THE WEST AND ITS LOCAL PUPPETS, DEATH TO ISRAEL AND A RETURN TO THE TENETS OF THE QURAN."

Should the Islamic Republic of Iran collapse against the backdrop of the U.S.-Israel military campaign, it could mean much more than the demise of a single dictatorship. The regime's fall could mark the exhaustion of Islamism



as a political force - the latest in a line of Middle Eastern ideologies that overpromised and catastrophically underdelivered.

The Middle East has now tried nationalism, socialism and Islamism. All of them have failed, but Islamism, the last of the three to take hold, continues to block the path to stability and prosperity for the people of the region.

This tragic history has unfolded in three overlapping and interconnected waves. First was pan-Arab nationalism, which in the postcolonial era overthrew traditional monarchies in Egypt, Iraq and Libya. Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, the most important leader of the movement, articulated a vision that centralized power ostensibly in the pursuit of national dignity. But his pseudo-socialist, Soviet-style diktats - "ism" No. 2 - led inevitably to economic disaster. Baath Party regimes in Syria and Iraq embraced similar ideals and achieved similar results.

Still, Arab nationalism and socialism had a decades-long run, motivating masses and fueling wars in the 1960s and 1970s. The cynical embrace of the Palestinian cause offered a form of life support for these regimes, intended to distract attention from their other manifest failures. Ultimately, however,

the ventilator gave out.

Inability to uphold lofty promises opened space for yet another "ism" - Islamism - to gain strength in the region. Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and Islamic State "caliph" Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi all promised utopias but delivered disappointment and worse.

The religious appeal of purist Islamism - a construct that rejects any divide between government, religion and culture - is powerful. In its idealized version, neither politics nor profit corrupt life under the dictates of the Quran. Nor does such a system tolerate the subjugation of Muslims under Christians or Jews.

The arrival of Islamism was long in the making. Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, warned in the 1930s against what he called "blind imitation" of the ideologies that predated his recommended Islamism. Islam, he wrote, is the superior alternative and the "road to salvation from Western colonialism."

But the violence that lies at its core also appeared early. Egypt outlawed the Brotherhood in 1948 after it launched a wave of terrorism directed at the monarchy and its constitutional system. Al-Banna, assassinated the following

year, never saw his vision come to life.

Throughout the Arab socialist heyday, the Muslim Brotherhood and related Islamist movements - both Sunni and Shiite - grew in strength behind the scenes. In parallel, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia invested heavily in the export of its own Wahhabi brand of Salafism, or originalist Sunni Islam.

The hinge point came in 1979. Egypt's Anwar Sadat repudiated both Nasser's Soviet alliance and the losing effort to rid the region of the state of Israel. Iranians overthrew their U.S.-aligned shah and embraced Khomeini's Islamic Revolution. Soon after, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan.

The outgrowth of these dramatic events was an explosion of terrorism rooted in three different flavors of extremist Islamism: Iranian-sponsored groups such as Hezbollah in Lebanon; Brotherhood-rooted groups such as Hamas in Gaza, which also enjoyed Iranian support; and Salafi Saudi-backed groups like al-Qaeda, which ultimately turned on Riyadh. These trend lines were not distinct. While al-Qaeda and Hezbollah and Hamas prioritized different goals, their Islamist credos - both Sunni and Shiite - were similar: Down with the West and its local puppets, death to Israel and a return to the tenets of the Quran.

What has this radical Islamism delivered, whether to the Iranian people, the Palestinians or the Muslim Middle East? Just like the "isms" that preceded it, the short answer is nothing good.

Now another hinge point is here, and this one offers a liberalizing pathway that can respect Islam (and Judaism and Christianity) while delivering a better life to the hundreds of millions of people who live in the Middle East.

Such a movement would repudiate the ideologies, from pan-Arab nationalism to socialism to radical Islamism, that overpromised and underdelivered and instead tread the path of slow opening that is now seen in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and even Syria and Lebanon.

These nations have not rejected Islam; they have rejected the lies that socialism, pan-Arabism and Islamism peddled. They recognize the corrupting mix of Islamism and politics, and even more important, they have begun to acknowledge that the practice of religion can be an individual choice. Better still, they acknowledge that more open societies, the free market and religious faith need not be mutually exclusive but rather can coexist and deliver prosperity and stability.

As Islamist tyranny teeters in Iran today, the hope must be that the Iranian people can join ranks with their Arab neighbors, hammer home the nail in the coffin of the last of these 20th century isms and usher in a new era of tolerance and pluralism in the Middle East.

(Danielle Pletka is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.)

Time for Riyan Parag to step up amidst myriad of controversies

JAIPUR (TIP), MAY 1, 2026

Rajasthan Royals return to Jaipur under growing pressure, and even victory in their previous outing has done little to ease the scrutiny surrounding the franchise. As they prepare to host Delhi Capitals at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, the Royals find themselves dealing with far more than just the demands of another crucial IPL fixture.

The spotlight will fall firmly on stand-in captain Riyan Parag, who heads into the contest under mounting pressure after being caught on camera using an e-cigarette in the dugout during Rajasthan's recent game. The incident, which quickly spread across social media, led to Parag being sanctioned by the IPL Governing Council and has placed both the player and the franchise under uncomfortable public scrutiny ahead of Friday's clash.

For Parag, the pressure is no longer limited to captaincy alone. The controversy has only sharpened attention on a season that has already been underwhelming with the bat. Tasked with leading Rajasthan in a crucial stretch of the campaign, Parag has yet to deliver the sort of innings expected of a senior batter carrying added responsibility.

His returns reflect that struggle. Parag has managed just 117 runs this season at a strike-rate of 124, and is yet to register a score of 30 or more. For a player entrusted with leadership and expected to anchor Rajasthan's middle order, those numbers have only added to the scrutiny.

Against a Delhi Capitals side still searching for momentum and consistency, Parag now walks into a fixture where the pressure is personal as much as tactical. In Jaipur, Rajasthan need a captain who can steady the noise around them. Parag needs an innings that can do the same.

IPL 2026

Gujarat Titans take sweet revenge as Royal Challengers Bengaluru endure rare off day

AHMEDABAD (TIP), MAY 1, 2026

Royal Challengers Bengaluru would strongly agree that April 30 marked their most underwhelming outing of IPL 2026, where neither their batting nor their bowling clicked or lived up to expectations. With a chance to secure the top spot in the points table, RCB stumbled as Gujarat Titans defeated them by four wickets on Thursday, April 30, at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

RCB were not even half as convincing as they were against Delhi Capitals, where they had won by nine wickets with 81 balls to spare. GT also exacted revenge on RCB, avenging their earlier defeat when they lost to them in Bengaluru earlier this month.

Asked to bat first, RCB were bowled out for the first time in the competition. They managed 155, which also stood as their lowest first-innings total of this edition of the tournament. Thereafter, RCB needed a strong bowling effort to stay in the game, but they couldn't deliver. Bhuvneshwar Kumar put in a wholehearted effort, but he lacked support from the other end.

For GT, despite the win, they remained fifth in the table and will need more momentum to push higher up the standings. They chased down 156 with 25 balls to spare, improving their net run rate from -0.475 to -0.192.

After being asked to bat first, RCB looked set for another 200-plus total, but the fall of wickets at regular intervals pegged them back significantly. Jacob Bethell fell cheaply, but Virat Kohli arrived firing on all cylinders. Kohli produced an absolute exhibition when he struck Kagiso Rabada for five fours on the trot.

However, Rabada exacted his revenge and removed him with a short ball as Kohli departed for 28 while living by the sword. At one point, Kohli looked well on his way to scoring his fastest IPL fifty, but he fell against the run of play.

Thereafter, Devdutt Padikkal and Rajat Patidar stitched together a 44-run stand for the third wicket to maintain momentum for RCB. But after Arshad Khan removed Patidar, the Titans wrested back control. Jason Holder took an excellent catch at fine leg to send Patidar back, carefully avoiding a collision with Kagiso Rabada, although Kohli and RCB were not pleased with the decision.

Jitesh Sharma, Krunal Pandya and Tim David departed in quick succession, and all of a sudden RCB were reduced to 96 for six in 10.3 overs. In the last 53 balls, RCB could only manage 59 runs. Romario Shepherd cleared the boundary twice off Rashid Khan, but he still managed just 17 at a strike rate of



113.33. Venkatesh Iyer, coming in as an Impact Player, also struggled to get going. Had it not been for Bhuvneshwar Kumar's run-a-ball 15, RCB would have struggled to even cross the 150 mark. For the Titans, Arshad was arguably the standout bowler with three wickets for 22 runs.

Holder had a dream outing as he finished with figures of 4-0-29-2 and also took three catches. Mohammed Siraj and Kagiso Rabada picked up a wicket apiece.

The Titans must have closely observed what Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood did to the Capitals the other night in Delhi. Shubman Gill (43) walked out with clear intent, aiming to unsettle the RCB duo who can be destructive, especially in the powerplay. He began by smashing Bhuvneshwar Kumar for a four followed by a six, before taking 24 runs off Josh Hazlewood's first over.

While Gill made a flying start, there was no joy for Sai Sudharsan, who had scored a hundred against this very opposition in Bengaluru earlier. This time, Sudharsan fell for single digits as Bhuvneshwar Kumar provided the much-needed breakthrough for RCB. Gill also completed 100 IPL sixes for GT and looked set for a half-century before Bhuvneshwar got rid of him. You should have seen Kohli's animated reaction after taking Gill's catch, underlining how crucial that wicket was.

After both openers departed, Jos Buttler (39) kept the momentum going and brought the required run rate down to below a run-a-ball, putting GT in a comfortable position. Once again, it was Bhuvneshwar Kumar who stepped up. He claimed his third wicket, castling Buttler around his legs.

Iran will of course play World Cup matches in USA: FIFA president

ZURICH (TIP), MAY 1, 2026

FIFA President Gianni Infantino said that Iran will "of course" take part in the upcoming FIFA World Cup and play their fixtures in the USA, and it is his responsibility to "bring people together".

Iran has qualified for the expanded 48-team tournament and is placed in Group G, alongside Belgium, New Zealand, and Egypt. As per the current schedule, their matches are slated to be held in Los Angeles and Seattle, starting with a clash against NZ on June 15 at California's SoFi Stadium. The

tournament is scheduled to start from June 11 and will take place till July 19. However, due to ongoing tensions between the USA and Iran due to the killing of the latter's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran has called for its fixtures to be relocated outside USA.

From Iran's side, the decision to take part in the global football extravaganza remains uncertain, with the country's Sports Minister Ahmad Donyamali confirming that a final decision will depend on evolving security and political conditions in the ongoing

tensions between the US and Iran. Comments from US president Donald Trump also intensified the situation after he expressed reservations about the team's safety, suggesting it might not be appropriate for Iran to play in the United States.

During the opening of the FIFA Congress in Vancouver on Thursday, Gianni confirmed that Iran will take part in the tournament. This comes amid speculative reports that Italy, who have made an unfortunate hat-trick of missing three World Cups in a row, could replace them.





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Best Wishes, Peter



Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



New Goutami Institute to be constructed 2024



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