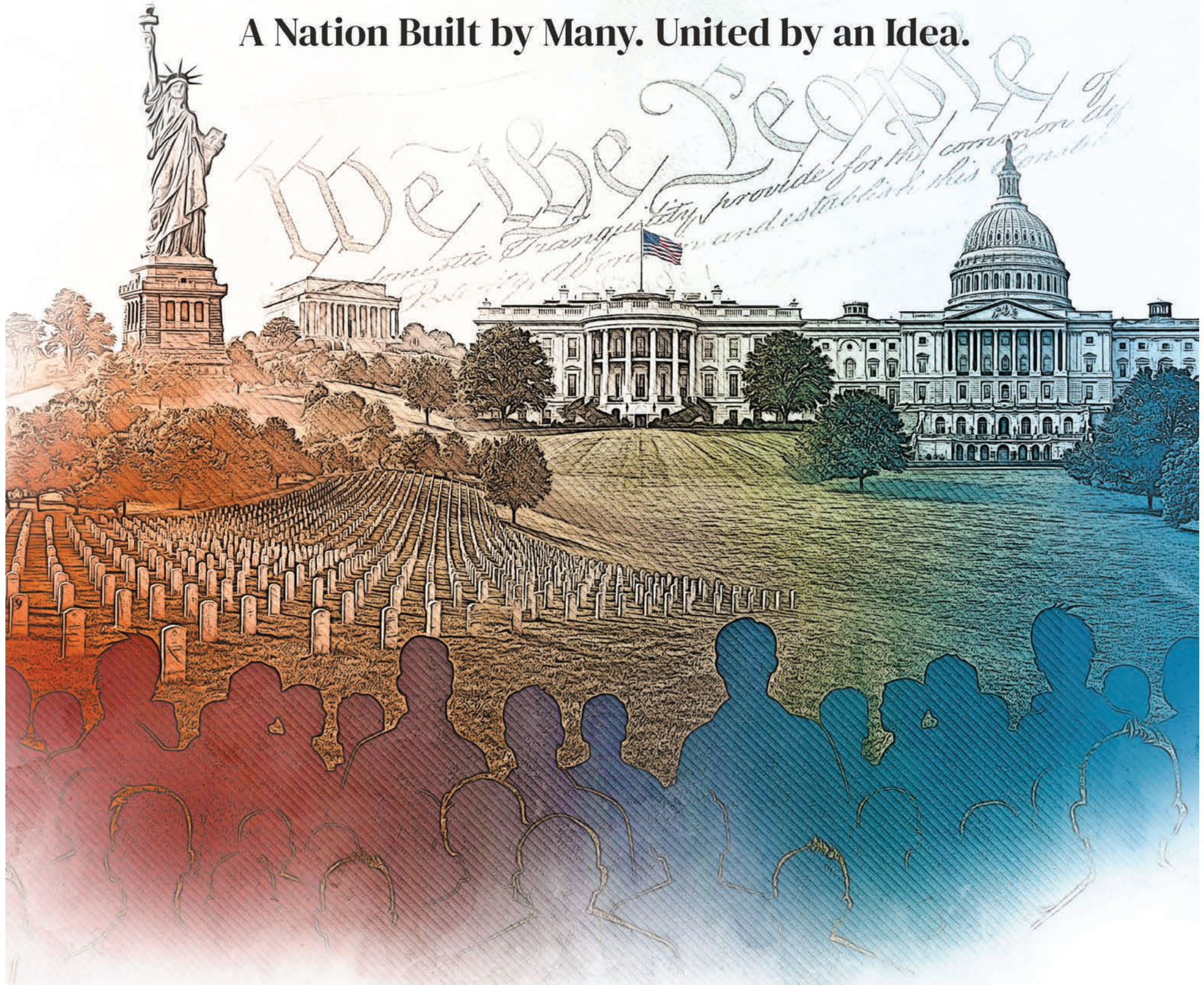


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**WE WISH READERS A
HAPPY 4TH OF JULY**

**WATCH OUT
FOR THE AMERICA
@ 250 SPECIAL
COMMEMORATIVE
EDITION**



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Trump kicks off July Fourth festivities at Mount Rushmore

Touted America as a unique and strong nation whose best days are ahead of it, in a speech at Mount Rushmore ahead of Saturday's celebration in Washington, D.C.



The America 250 celebration at Mt. Rushmore ended with a fireworks show after President Donald Trump's remarks.

Photo credit/ Donna Kennedy

**JULY 3, 2026
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)**

US President Donald Trump on Friday, July 3 proclaimed July 4, 2026, as the 250th anniversary of the adoption of the 'Declaration of Independence', signed pardons for six people who were prosecuted under the Biden administration, and delivered Independence Eve remarks at Mount Rushmore.

In his proclamation marking America's 250th Independence anniversary, Trump declared, "Now, therefore, I, Donald J. Trump, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim July 4, 2026, as the 250th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

CONTD ON PAGE 52

10 Indian-origin CEOs leading America's biggest companies as US turns 250



Satya Nadella, Sundar Pichai, Indra Nooyi and Ajay Banga-four Indian-origin leaders who have helped shape Corporate America across technology, consumer goods, finance and global development. (AI-generated image)

**JULY 3, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

From Silicon Valley to Wall Street, Indian-origin executives have left an outsized imprint on some of America's

most influential corporations, leading transformations in cloud computing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital payments and healthcare.

CONTD ON PAGE 64

"Deeply Hurt by Ram Temple Donation Theft": RSS Calls for Severe Punishment

**INDRAJIT SALUJA
JULY 4, 2026
NEW DELHI (TIP)**

The RSS, which led the Ram Janmabhoomi movement for three decades, today broke silence on the Ayodhya Ram Temple donation row, calling the incident "highly condemnable and exceptional", one that has "pained and angered everyone".

In a statement, the RSS second in command, Dattatreya Hosabale, while calling for severe punishment against anyone found guilty and urging the Ram Mandir Trust to do what it takes to restore the lost faith of Hindus whose sentiments have been hurt, also appealed to the community to foil the attempt of "anti-national forces to



A view of Ram temple in Ayodhya. Photo: X/@ShriRamTeerth

exploit the temple theft incident". "The RSS calls upon the entire Hindu society to display necessary patience and

CONTD ON PAGE 52

Widespread applause for Dr. Samin K. Sharma's appointment as Chief of Clinical Cardiology at Mount Sinai



**INDRAJIT SALUJA
JULY 2, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

Dr. Samin Sharma's appointment as Chief of Clinical Cardiology at Mount Sinai has been widely applauded.

Dr. Purnima Voria, Founder & CEO, National U.S.-India Chamber of Commerce (NUICC, and President, Rajasthan Foundation USA Inc. congratulated Dr. Samin K. Sharma on his appointment as Chief of Clinical Cardiology at Mount Sinai Health System.

In a note to The Indian Panorama, Dr. Voria said that this "prestigious appointment is a fitting recognition of Dr. Sharma's exceptional leadership, pioneering contributions to interventional cardiology, unwavering dedication to patient care, and his lifelong commitment to advancing cardiovascular medicine.

CONTD ON PAGE 62

Dr. Samin K. Sharma is well known for performing maximum number of complex coronary interventions in the country with highest success rates while achieving an extremely low complication rate.



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COMMENT

America at 250: History Is the Story of People

BY INDRAJIT
SALUJA

What a bliss it is to be alive to witness the celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America!

Few generations are blessed with the privilege of witnessing such a historic milestone. We are among them. We are not merely celebrating another Fourth of July. We are celebrating the extraordinary journey of an idea that, over two and a half centuries, became one of humanity's greatest democratic experiments.

For me, this anniversary has become much more than a national celebration. It has become a voyage of discovery.

Over the past several months, I have travelled-not across continents, but across centuries. I journeyed back to a time before there was an America as we know it today. I walked through the age of exploration, the colonial settlements, the struggle for independence, the

not had the opportunity to study it in depth, what about the millions of immigrants who today proudly call this country home? They contribute immensely to America's economy, medicine, science, education, business, technology, public service, and culture. Yet many know little about the long and often difficult journey that transformed thirteen colonies into the United States of America.

I have always believed that you cannot truly understand a country until you understand its history. You cannot fully understand a people until you know where they came from. You cannot appreciate a nation's institutions unless you understand the struggles that gave birth to them.

History gives a nation its memory.

Without memory, even the strongest nation loses part of its identity.

That realization planted a simple thought in my mind.

What gift could The Indian Panorama offer America on the occasion of its 250th birthday?

The answer came almost instinctively.

Why not tell the story of the making of America in 250 pages-one symbolic page for every year of this nation's extraordinary journey?

As an immigrant who came to America with dreams, hope, and faith in its promise, I have

Yet it has also become one of the most rewarding journeys of my journalistic life.

Together with my dedicated colleagues, we continue to work with affection, commitment, and a deep sense of responsibility. Our hope is that when this commemorative edition reaches our readers, it will become more than a publication. We hope it will become a companion-a volume to read, preserve, revisit, and perhaps pass on to the next generation.

History is not written merely to remember yesterday. It is written to illuminate tomorrow.

As we celebrate this historic Fourth of July, another thought naturally comes to mind.

Long before there was the United States of America, there were people. Before constitutions were framed, governments established, and institutions created, there were human beings with hopes, fears, dreams, and aspirations.

A nation exists because of its people.

It exists for its people.

Perhaps no one expressed that eternal truth more memorably than President Abraham Lincoln when he described democracy as "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

The Constitution begins just as profoundly-with three simple but majestic words:

"We the People."

Everything begins there.

Governments derive their authority from the people. Institutions derive their legitimacy from the people. Administrations receive their mandate from the people. Political parties come and go. Governments change.

Policies evolve. But the people remain the enduring foundation of the Republic.

May no administration ever forget that fundamental truth.

The first duty of government is not merely to govern. It is to serve.

A nation cannot measure its greatness merely by the size of its economy, the strength of its military, the height of its skyscrapers, or the sophistication of its technology. Those are remarkable achievements, but they are not the ultimate measure of civilization.

The true measure of a nation is found in the dignity it affords its people, the justice it guarantees, the opportunities it creates, the compassion it practices, and the hope it inspires.

People are both the creators of a nation and the beneficiaries of its existence. They are the cause and the purpose of the Republic.

As America steps into its next quarter millennium, may it continue to draw strength from its founding ideals, wisdom from its history, confidence from its diversity, and inspiration from its people.

May it never lose sight of the profound truth proclaimed in its Constitution: "We the People." Those three words remain the moral compass of the American experiment.

On this historic Fourth of July, let us celebrate not merely the birth of a nation, but the triumph of an idea-an idea that liberty is the birthright of every human being, that democracy flourishes when people participate, and that diversity, when united by common purpose, becomes a nation's greatest strength.

Happy Birthday, America.

Thank you for proving that an idea can become a nation, a nation can become an inspiration, and that the story of people-guided by liberty, courage, and hope-can become the story of humanity itself.

May the next 250 years be as remarkable as the first, and may history record that this generation, too, remained faithful to the ideals that gave birth to this great Republic!

framing of the Constitution, the westward expansion, the Civil War, industrialization, immigration, the Civil Rights Movement, scientific achievement, and America's emergence as a global leader.

The deeper I travelled into that extraordinary story, the more fascinated I became. Every chapter reminded me that nations are not born complete. They are shaped patiently by countless men and women-some famous, most forgotten-whose courage, sacrifice, imagination, perseverance, and faith gradually transform dreams into reality.

As I immersed myself in America's past, one thought stayed with me:

"History is not merely a record of what happened. It is the story of people, ideas, courage, failures, renewal, and hope. Tell that story well, and generations will remember both the nation and the journey."

Those words became the guiding philosophy of a remarkable undertaking that my colleagues and I have embarked upon.

One question kept returning to my mind.

How many Americans truly know this remarkable journey?

And if many Americans themselves have

been richly rewarded by this great nation. America gave me not merely opportunities to pursue my profession, but the freedom to think, to write, to speak, and to serve the community through journalism. It welcomed me, embraced my aspirations, and enabled me to build a life that would have remained only a dream elsewhere.

Gratitude, I believe, is best expressed not merely in words but through meaningful action.

This commemorative edition is, therefore, my humble tribute to America, a small offering of thanks to the country that became my home, enriched my life, and reaffirmed my faith in the enduring power of liberty, democracy, and human dignity.

That is precisely what my colleagues and I have set out to do.

I had hoped to present this gift on the Fourth of July itself. Soon, however, I realized that telling America's story honestly, fairly, and comprehensively is no ordinary assignment. It demands painstaking research, historical balance, thoughtful judgment, and profound respect for facts. The task proved far more challenging than I had imagined.





विनय क्वात्रा
Vinay Kwatra



भारत का राजदूत
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA
2107 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008



July 2, 2026

Message

I extend my sincere greetings to the readers of The Indian Panorama on this important milestone — the 250th anniversary of the signing of the United States Declaration of Independence.

As the United States marks 250 years of independence, this is a moment of celebration not only for Americans, but for all those around the world who share the democratic values of equality, liberty, and justice.

India and the United States are nations separated by oceans and geography, yet our stories have always been connected in ways that transcend distance. Today, the world's two largest democracies have built a Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership spanning almost every area of human endeavor — driven by shared democratic values, converging interests across a range of issues, and vibrant people-to-people ties.

The contributions of the esteemed members of the Indian-American community to this relationship, and to both our countries, cannot be overstated. I am confident that you will continue to enrich this partnership through your role as a bridge between our two nations. Looking ahead, I am pleased to note that our partnership grows stronger by the day, for the benefit of our two peoples and the world.

Vinay Kwatra
(Vinay Kwatra)

Binaya S. Pradhan



Consul General of India
New York

June 16, 2026

MESSAGE

It is a pleasure to extend warm greetings to the readers of The Indian Panorama on the occasion of its special edition commemorating America@250.

The 250th anniversary of American independence is a landmark moment in the nation's journey, celebrating the enduring ideals of liberty, democracy, equality of opportunity and the pursuit of happiness, principles that continue to inspire people across the world.

This milestone is also an opportunity to recognize the outstanding contributions of the Indian-American community to the American story. Through enterprise, talent and hard work, Indian-Americans have excelled in diverse fields, including science and technology, medicine, education, business, innovation, arts, culture, public service and community leadership.

The community stands as a strong example of successful integration while remaining deeply connected to its Indian heritage. By preserving India's civilisational values, languages, festivals, family traditions and cultural practices, Indian-Americans have enriched America's diversity and strengthened mutual understanding between India and the United States.

As two vibrant democracies, India and the United States share a growing partnership anchored in shared values, mutual respect and strong people-to-people ties. The Indian-American diaspora continues to serve as a vital bridge, advancing cooperation across trade, technology, education, research, investment and culture.

I commend The Indian Panorama for bringing out this commemorative edition and for its continued contribution to informing and connecting the Indian-American community. I extend my best wishes for the success of this publication and for the continued strengthening of India-US friendship.

B. Pradhan
(Binaya S. Pradhan)



Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra,
Ambassador of India to
Romania



Message on the Occasion of the 250th Anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America

As the United States of America commemorates the 250th anniversary of its independence, I am honoured to join the American people in celebrating this extraordinary milestone in the history of a nation whose enduring commitment to liberty, democracy, and human dignity has inspired generations across the world.

The story of the United States is one of remarkable resilience and renewal. Across generations, Americans have demonstrated an extraordinary capacity to innovate, adapt, and expand the promise of freedom and opportunity to ever broader segments of society. Through moments of challenge and triumph alike, the strength of democratic institutions, the rule of law, and the energy of a diverse people have enabled the United States to emerge as a global leader in science, technology, entrepreneurship, culture, and public service.

This anniversary also offers an opportunity to reflect on the extraordinary evolution of India-United States relations. What was once a relationship shaped primarily by diplomatic engagement has matured into one of the defining partnerships of the twenty-first century. Today, India and the United States work together across a wide spectrum of areas, including trade and investment, defense, critical and emerging technologies, healthcare, education, clean energy, and space exploration. At its foundation lies a shared faith in democracy, pluralism, innovation, and the belief that free societies are best positioned to unlock human potential and address global challenges.

Few stories better illustrate the strength of this partnership than that of the Indian-American community. Numbering over five million people, the Indian diaspora has become an integral part of the American story. Yet the connection between India and America extends back much further. Long before the emergence of today's vibrant community, Indians arrived on American shores as sailors, traders, students, and workers, contributing in quiet but meaningful ways to the growth of their adopted homeland.

Today, Indian Americans are helping shape the future of the United States in virtually every field of endeavor. They serve in public office, lead major universities and research institutions, and contribute to the nation's healthcare system as physicians, scientists, and medical professionals. They have helped build America's innovation economy, strengthened Silicon Valley's entrepreneurial ecosystem, and founded thousands of businesses that create jobs and drive economic growth. Indian-origin leaders today head some of the world's most influential technology companies, while Indian-American scientists, engineers, and researchers continue to advance discovery and exploration, including through pioneering work at institutions such as NASA.

These achievements are not significant merely because of the prominence of individuals. They represent something larger: the success of a society that welcomes talent, rewards merit, and allows aspiration to flourish. The contributions of Indian Americans stand as a powerful testament to the opportunities created by American democracy and to the values that India and the United States hold in common, including education, innovation, entrepreneurship, public service, and respect for diversity.

As we mark this historic anniversary, we celebrate not only the accomplishments of the past but also the possibilities of the future. The India-United States partnership has never been stronger, and its greatest achievements may still lie ahead. Guided by our shared democratic traditions and inspired by the aspirations of our peoples, our two nations will continue to work together to advance peace, prosperity, innovation, and human progress.

As India and the United States strengthen their strategic partnership, the value of cooperation among democratic nations becomes ever more evident. From Romania, a country that enjoys close ties with both India and the United States, one can appreciate the importance of partnerships founded on shared values, mutual respect, and a commitment to peace and prosperity. The growing engagement among our nations reflects the increasingly interconnected nature of today's world and our common aspirations for innovation, economic growth, and human progress.

On behalf of the Embassy of India in Romania, I extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to the people of the United States on this historic occasion. As America enters its third century of independence, may the bonds of friendship between India and the United States continue to flourish, guided by our shared democratic values and common aspirations for peace, prosperity, innovation, and human advancement. The partnership between our nations remains a powerful force for global good, and I am confident that the years ahead will bring even greater opportunities for cooperation and shared achievement.

Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra



Senate Democratic Leader
US Senator for New York

MESSAGE

"This year, as we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and commemorate America's 250th birthday, we reflect on our nation's founding ideals and the people and partnerships that continue to strengthen them. Among them is the ever-growing relationship between the United States and India—the world's oldest and largest democracies.

"In 2023, I led the largest and most senior Senate delegation to India. India was my first congressional delegation (CODEL) as Senate Majority Leader, underscoring my commitment to this vital partnership.

"As America celebrates 250 years of independence, I am especially proud to represent New York's vibrant Indian American community. Indian Americans embody the values that have fueled our nation's success for two and a half centuries: hard work, entrepreneurship, innovation, and a belief in the promise of America. Their contributions have helped shape every facet of our society—from medicine and science to technology, business, education, and public service.

"I look forward to continuing to strengthen the ties between our two countries, advancing our shared democratic values, and supporting Indian Americans, whose achievements have enriched our nation and will continue to do so for the next 250 years."—U.S. Senator Charles Schumer



Congressman Tom Suozzi
New York-3 Congressional District

MESSAGE

"As we commemorate America's 250th anniversary, we celebrate not only our nation's founding ideals, but also the generations of people who have helped turn those ideals into reality.

The Indian American community has enriched our country in countless ways through entrepreneurship, innovation, public service, medicine, education, and civic engagement. Their contributions have strengthened our economy, enriched our culture, and helped make America a more vibrant and successful nation.

I am especially grateful for the friendship and unwavering support I have received from the Indian American community over the years. That support has been invaluable to me, and I am proud of the strong relationships we have built together. While we have accomplished much, there is still important work ahead, and I look forward to continuing to work together to advance our shared goals and strengthen our communities.

As we look to America's next 250 years, I am confident that by working together, we can continue to make a positive and lasting impact, expand opportunity, and ensure that the promise of America remains strong for future generations."

(Tom Suozzi)



Harry Singh Bolla
Founder, President,
Chairman & CEO
Bolla Group of Companies

MESSAGE

I extend my warmest congratulations to the readers of The Indian Panorama and to the proud people of the United States of America on the historic occasion of the 250th Anniversary of American Independence.

I also congratulate Prof. Indrajit Singh Saluja, Chief Editor of The Indian Panorama, for his visionary initiative to publish a Special Commemorative Edition commemorating this extraordinary milestone in the history of one of the world's greatest democracies. Through this remarkable endeavor, he is helping bring the Indian American community even closer to the mainstream of American life while highlighting its invaluable contributions to the growth and progress of this great nation.

My own journey—from a small village in Punjab to realizing the American Dream in the United States—is a testament to the opportunities this country offers to those who are willing to work hard, dream big, and persevere. I hope my story inspires others to believe that no dream is beyond reach when pursued with determination, integrity, and commitment.

To me, America's greatest strength lies not only in its economic opportunities but also in its unwavering commitment to fairness, equal opportunity, and the rule of law. It is a nation where hard work is rewarded, education opens doors, and individuals are encouraged to achieve their fullest potential. If you work hard, you succeed. If you aspire to accomplish more, work even harder. America offers opportunities to everyone prepared to earn them through dedication and perseverance.

For immigrants like me, America provides something truly priceless—the opportunity to build a meaningful life, contribute to society, and create a better future for generations to come.

However, I believe our responsibility extends far beyond personal success. We must become active participants in the civic life of this nation. We should build a strong and respected voice, not merely as Indians living in America, but as proud Americans committed to the continued growth, prosperity, and well-being of our adopted homeland.

That does not mean leaving our heritage behind. On the contrary, we enrich America by sharing the richness of our culture, our traditions, and our values. We should remain proud of our roots while helping others understand and appreciate our heritage instead of isolating ourselves from the broader community.

If we truly wish to represent the Indian American community effectively, we must rise above differences of religion, region, language, race, and caste. Unity has always been our greatest strength, and together we can make an even greater contribution to American society.

I especially appeal to our younger generation to broaden their horizons. While Indian Americans have earned distinction as entrepreneurs, physicians, engineers, scientists, educators, and business leaders, many more should also enter public service and politics. Representation matters. Communities become stronger when they engage actively in the democratic process and help shape the future of the nation.

People may speak of my business achievements, but I measure success differently. To me, true success lies in serving others, giving back to the community, and representing India and the Indian American community as hardworking, honest, compassionate people of integrity.

As America celebrates 250 glorious years of independence, freedom, democracy, and opportunity, let us proudly join our fellow Americans in commemorating this extraordinary milestone. Let us celebrate not only the opportunities this nation has given us but also the responsibility we share to strengthen it for generations to come.

May the enduring ideals of liberty, justice, equality, and opportunity continue to guide America toward an even brighter future.

God Bless America!
(Harry Singh Bolla)



MESSAGE



NEW YORK STATE SENATE
SENATOR JOHN C. LIU
16TH SENATE DISTRICT
MAJORITY CONFERENCE VICE CHAIR

- CHAIR
- NYC EDUCATION
- COMMITTEES
- EDUCATION
- FINANCE
- HIGHER EDUCATION
- JUDICIARY
- RULES
- TRANSPORTATION

July 4, 2026

The Indian Panorama
124 Dean Street
Hicksville, NY 11801

Dear Friends,

With great pleasure, I extend my best wishes to the Indian Panorama on publishing its special issue celebrating the United States of America's 250th Independence Day!

On this milestone holiday, we celebrate the birth of America with family, friends and community. We pay tribute to the American values and freedoms that have allowed people of all backgrounds to live under the same banners of independence.

Special thanks to the Indian Panorama as it continues to bring its readers the latest news and important information so that our community can stay abreast of current news and events. Since the newspaper's inception in 2006, the Indian Panorama has occupied a central place for the South Asian community as an essential resource in this multicultural, multireligious contemporary American society.

On behalf of the New York State Senate, I commend all the correspondents and staff of The Indian Panorama for their service and for publishing this 250-page commemorative edition. Special thanks to Chief Editor Professor Indrajit S. Saluja for his hard work and dedicated leadership. I look forward to continuing to work as your State Senator on behalf of our community in the future, and I would like to express my best wishes for a joyous Independence Day!

Wishing you and your loved ones a most joyous holiday during this 250th Independence Day!

Sincerely,



MESSAGE

As the United States commemorates the 250th Anniversary of its Independence, I extend my warm congratulations to the American people on this historic milestone. It is an occasion to celebrate a remarkable journey of democratic resilience, innovation, enterprise, and the enduring pursuit of freedom.

Over the past two and a half centuries, the United States has inspired generations through its commitment to democratic institutions and its ability to harness the talents of people from across the world. Among them, the vibrant Indian diaspora has emerged as one of the strongest bridges between India and the United States, enriching every sphere of American life—from science, medicine, and academia to business, public service, arts, and entrepreneurship.

The India-U.S. partnership today stands at an unprecedented level of trust and ambition. What began as a relationship founded on shared democratic ideals has evolved into one that is shaping the future. Whether advancing cutting-edge technologies, deepening defence cooperation, promoting resilient supply chains, or expanding collaboration in space exploration through the growing partnership between ISRO and NASA, our two democracies are working together to address challenges that transcend national borders.

Equally significant are the ever-expanding educational, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges that continue to bring our societies closer. They remind us that the true strength of this relationship lies not only in governments and institutions, but also in the aspirations and contributions of our people.

I commend The Indian Panorama for commemorating this historic anniversary through this special edition. May it serve as a fitting tribute to America's remarkable journey and to the enduring friendship between India and the United States, as together we look toward a future of innovation, prosperity, and shared global leadership.

(Ramesh Babu Lakshmanan)



MESSAGE

On this historic Semiquincentennial, SBI New York is proud to join the nation in commemorating 250 years of American independence, resilience, innovation, and enterprise. This landmark anniversary celebrates a remarkable journey of progress, prosperity, and democratic values that have shaped the United States and inspired people around the world.

As the financial capital of the United States, New York has for long served as a global center for commerce, finance, and innovation, while strengthening the economic relationship between India and the United States. For decades, SBI New York has been privileged to contribute to this enduring partnership by serving the banking needs, facilitating cross-border trade and investment, and supporting businesses that connect the two economies.

Our presence in New York reflects the shared aspirations of the two vibrant democracies committed to growth, entrepreneurship, and international collaboration. Through trusted financial services and enduring relationship, we remain dedicated to fostering stronger commercial and institutional ties while creating lasting value for our customers and other stakeholders.

As we commemorate this historic moment, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to excellence, integrity, and service.

SBI New York extends its warmest congratulations to the people of the United States on this extraordinary occasion and wish continued peace, prosperity, and success.

(Amit Verma)

Message on the 250th Anniversary of American Independence
From the Desk of Dr. V.K. Raju
Founder President, Eye Foundation of America

As the United States of America commemorates the historic milestone of 250 years of Independence, I extend my warmest greetings and heartfelt congratulations to the American people.

For two and a half centuries, America has stood as a beacon of freedom, opportunity, and humanitarian leadership. The ideals enshrined in its founding continue to inspire generations around the world to strive for a more just, prosperous, and compassionate society.

This celebration holds special meaning for all of us at the Eye Foundation of America, as we proudly mark our own milestone—50 years of dedicated service to children, working tirelessly toward a world without childhood blindness. Since 1977, our mission has been guided by the same spirit of hope, service, and commitment to human dignity that has helped shape the American story.

As we honor America's remarkable journey, we also celebrate the countless individuals, institutions, volunteers, healthcare professionals, and supporters whose generosity has enabled us to restore sight, transform lives, and create brighter futures for children across the globe.

On this historic occasion, we reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to see, learn, and achieve their full potential.

May the next chapter of America's journey be marked by continued leadership, unity, innovation, and service to humanity.

Congratulations to the United States of America on 250 years of Independence.

"As America celebrates 250 years of freedom, the Eye Foundation of America celebrates 50 years of bringing the gift of sight and hope to children around the world."

*Dr. V.K. Raju, Founder President, Eye Foundation of America
Celebrating 50 Years of Service to Children (1977-2027)
Working for a World Without Childhood Blindness*

info@eyefoundationofamerica.org



MESSAGE

Celebrating 250 Years of the American Dream

The 250th Anniversary of America's Independence is a time to celebrate not only the birth of a great nation, but also the enduring promise of freedom, democracy, opportunity, and hope that has attracted generations of dreamers from around the world.

When I arrived in America in 1986 as a young physician from India, I carried with me little more than my education, determination, and a desire to serve. This remarkable nation gave me every opportunity to grow professionally, contribute meaningfully to healthcare, raise a family, and actively serve the broader community. For that, I will always be profoundly grateful.

The Indian American community exemplifies the American Dream. Through hard work, perseverance, and a commitment to excellence, Indian Americans have made significant contributions in medicine, science, technology, education, business, public service, and the arts. Equally important, we have enriched America's multicultural fabric while strengthening the bonds of friendship between India and the United States—two great democracies united by shared values and a common vision for the future.

As a physician, I have been privileged to care for patients from every background and to witness firsthand the strength that comes from America's diversity. As a community leader, I have learned that our greatest achievements come when we work together with compassion, respect, and a spirit of service.

As America embarks on its next 250 years, may we continue to uphold the ideals that have made this nation a beacon of hope. May the partnership between the United States and India continue to flourish, bringing greater peace, innovation, prosperity, and opportunity to the world.

Happy 250th Anniversary, America. May God continue to bless this exceptional nation!

(Avinash Gupta)



MESSAGE

On behalf of the Federation of Indian Associations and the millions of Indian Americans who proudly call this nation home, I extend our heartfelt congratulations to the United States of America as we mark 250 years of independence.

This milestone is not only a celebration of a nation's founding, but of the enduring ideals that have drawn people from every corner of the world to these shores to experience the liberty, opportunity, and the belief that a diverse people can build something greater together.

For the Indian American community, that promise has been deeply personal. From medicine to technology, business to public service, from small towns to the highest offices in the land, Indian Americans have both contributed to and been shaped by the American story. Our two great democracies share more than diplomatic ties as we share values rooted in pluralism, the rule of law, and respect for the dignity of every individual.

As we celebrate this semiquincentennial, FIA reaffirms its commitment to strengthening the bonds between our heritage and our home, and to building a future worthy of the sacrifices that made this nation possible.

In that spirit, I warmly invite you to join us at the 44th India Day Parade on August 16th, where we shall proudly celebrate 250 years of American Independence as a mark of the enduring friendship between our two great nations. It will be a day of color, culture, and unity - a living tribute to all that binds India and America together.

Here's to America for the next 250 years, and to the shared journey of "Harmony in Heritage."

Happy Independence Day!

(Sreekanth Akkapalli)



MESSAGE

A Salute to America

It is indeed commendable that The Indian Panorama is bringing out a special edition to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America. Such an undertaking is both timely and significant, as it provides an opportunity to reflect on the remarkable journey of a nation whose ideals of liberty, democracy, and opportunity have inspired generations across the world.

This initiative comes as no surprise to those familiar with the vision and dedication of Dr. Indrajit Saluja. Over the years, Dr. Saluja has consistently been at the forefront of not only informing readers about contemporary events and issues affecting the Indian American community but also delving into historical developments and their broader linkages. His commitment has always gone beyond reporting the news; it has been driven by a sincere desire to educate, enlighten, and foster a knowledgeable and informed society.

As America celebrates the 250th anniversary of its founding, I join fellow Indian Americans in extending heartfelt congratulations and best wishes on this historic occasion. The story of America remains an inspiration, no matter how often it is retold. It is the story of people who crossed oceans and conquered frontiers in search of freedom, freedom to live, to worship, and to pursue their dreams. Through hard work, sacrifice, and perseverance, they built a nation that became the envy of the world and a beacon of hope for millions. It is that promise which attracted many of us to these shores.

For Indian Americans, the journey to these shores was generally not one born out of political persecution, but rather motivated by the pursuit of opportunity and the desire to fully utilize our God-given talents. Drawn by the promise of freedom and meritocracy, generations of immigrants came seeking not only personal advancement and economic security, but also the chance to contribute meaningfully to the growth, prosperity, and greatness of our adopted homeland. In doing so, they have enriched the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the United States while remaining deeply grateful for the opportunities that this nation has afforded them.

Moreover, we are blessed to enjoy political, economic, and religious freedoms unparalleled in much of the world. Thanks to constitutional principles that safeguard life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, we have been able to flourish and make our mark on American society. With these blessings come responsibilities. As beneficiaries of freedom, we should also stand for those same principles in our countries of origin and wherever human dignity and liberty are threatened.

As we celebrate America's 250th anniversary, let us also remember those in India who continue to face hatred, discrimination, and persecution because of their faith, ethnicity, or beliefs. May we have the courage to stand up for freedom and justice, and may we reaffirm our commitment to the timeless ideals that have made America a beacon of hope for humanity.

On this historic milestone, let us salute America not merely for its power and prosperity, but for its enduring promise of liberty for all.

(George Abraham)



MESSAGE

Congratulatory Message on the 250th anniversary of America's Independence

As the United States celebrates the 250th anniversary of its independence, I join millions across the nation in honoring a country founded on the enduring ideals of liberty, democracy, equality, and opportunity. For 250 years, America has stood as a beacon of hope, welcoming people from around the world to pursue their dreams through hard work, determination, and perseverance.

Having immigrated from India in 1980, I have been privileged to experience the American Dream firsthand. This great nation provided me with opportunities to build a successful professional career, embrace entrepreneurship, and, most importantly, dedicate myself to community service and charitable initiatives. America has shown that true success is measured not only by personal achievement but also by the positive impact we make in the lives of others.

On this historic occasion, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Indian Panorama for publishing its remarkable 250-page Commemorative Edition celebrating America's 250th Anniversary of Independence. This special publication is a fitting tribute to the nation's rich history and highlights the invaluable contributions of the Indian American community to the American story.

As we celebrate this historic milestone, let us reaffirm our commitment to the values that have made America exceptional—freedom, unity, diversity, and service. May God continue to bless the United States of America with peace, prosperity, and continued greatness for generations to come.

(Gobind Munjal)





WEALTH PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP
WEALTH PLANNING ASSET MANAGEMENT

Sekhar Vemparala
PRINCIPAL & FOUNDER

Celebrating 250 Years of American Independence: The Enduring Legacy of Opportunity

A nation's true greatness is measured not simply by its history, but by the opportunities it creates for people to dream, contribute, and leave the world better than they found it. As America celebrates its **250th Anniversary of Independence**, we honor a legacy built on freedom, innovation, resilience, and the belief that every individual has the potential to make a meaningful difference.

For those of us who chose America as our home, this country has provided more than opportunity—it has inspired purpose. It has allowed entrepreneurs to build businesses, families to create lasting legacies, and communities to thrive through service, generosity, and collaboration. Those ideals continue to define the American experience.

I extend my sincere appreciation to **Professor Indrajit Saluja** and **The Indian Panorama** for creating this extraordinary **Commemorative Edition**. Their vision not only celebrates this historic milestone but also recognizes the enduring contributions of Indian Americans who have helped shape the fabric of our nation through leadership, innovation, public service, and philanthropy.

As Founder of **Wealth Planning Advisory Group** and **Wealth Planning Asset Management**, I have witnessed firsthand that lasting success is measured not only by what we achieve, but by what we empower others to achieve. That spirit of opportunity, responsibility, and giving is one of America's greatest gifts.

May this **250th Anniversary** inspire all of us to continue building stronger communities, creating opportunities for future generations, and preserving the values that make America a beacon of hope for the world.

With sincere appreciation,

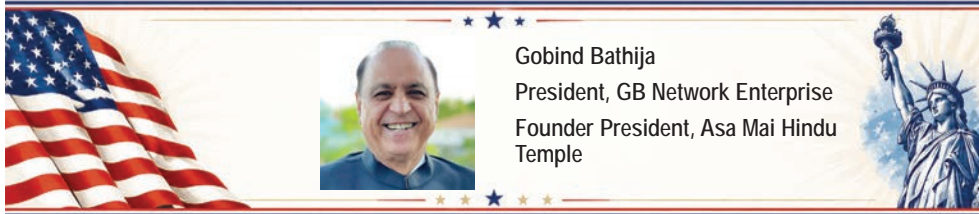


Sekhar Vemparala

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Gobind Bathija
President, GB Network Enterprise
Founder President, Asa Mai Hindu Temple

MESSAGE

Congratulations to Our Community on the 250th Anniversary!

As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of our great community, we honor not only our shared history but also the spirit of opportunity that defines this nation. The United States of America has always been a land where dreams can take root, where hard work is rewarded, and where every individual has the chance to build a better future.

Like so many who came before me, I arrived in this country in 1974 with little more than hope and determination. Through God's grace and the opportunities this nation provides, I was able to pursue an education, build a business, and contribute to the community that welcomed me. My story is just one example of what is possible in America-because here, success is not limited by where you begin, but shaped by the effort you give and the values you uphold.

Today, as we mark this historic milestone, we celebrate the countless families, leaders, volunteers, and organizations who have strengthened our community over generations. Their dedication, unity, and service have made this anniversary possible and continue to inspire future generations.

I thank God for guiding us, for blessing our community, and for blessing this great country. May we continue to grow together, support one another, and uphold the principles that make America a beacon of hope for all.

God bless our community, and God bless the United States of America!
(Gobind Bathija)



Purnima Desai
Founder President
Sriniketan Foundation
Shikshayatan Cultural Center
New York

Message on the Occasion of the 250th Anniversary of American Independence

As America celebrates the 250th Anniversary of its Independence, I extend my heartfelt greetings and warmest congratulations to the people of this great nation.

America's enduring strength lies not only in its commitment to liberty and democracy but also in its openness to the rich diversity of cultures brought here by people from every corner of the world. As an educator dedicated to teaching Indian classical music and dance to young generations, I have witnessed how the arts build bridges of understanding, respect, and friendship across communities.

Our children are fortunate to grow up in a country where they can cherish their ancestral heritage while embracing the opportunities and values of America. Through music, dance, and culture, we contribute to the vibrant mosaic that makes this nation unique.

On this historic milestone, let us reaffirm our commitment to promoting harmony, creativity, and mutual respect, and to helping build an even stronger and more compassionate America for generations to come.

(Purnima Desai)



Tirlok Malik
Emmy-Nominated Filmmaker,
Actor, Producer, Entrepreneur and
Wellness Advocate

MESSAGE

This July 4th, as America celebrates 250 years of freedom, Happy Life Yoga and Tirlok Malik invite you to discover freedom within yourself.

Choose to live happier, healthier, and lighter. And remember to laugh as you celebrate America, life, and yourself!

It is historic for The Indian Panorama and Prof Indrajit Saluja and team to publish a special Issue. Many congratulations and best wishes.

Happy Birthday America!
(Tirlok Malik)



**OVER 1,000 CELEBRATE
NATION'S 250TH
ANNIVERSARY AT SENATOR
JOHN LIU'S AMERICA
250 CELEBRATION**

**JUNE 30, 2026
FRESH MEADOWS, NY (TIP)**

Over 1,000 New Yorkers celebrated America's 250th anniversary yesterday at State Senator John Liu's America 250 Celebration at Francis Lewis High School. The free community event featured live music, food, games, historical reenactors, student performances, and a community time capsule that will be preserved for the next 50 years.

The celebration took place at Francis Lewis High School, the namesake of Francis Lewis, a Queens resident, Founding Father, and signer of the Declaration of Independence. The program included performances by local musicians, 2Complicated, the Queens Oratorio Society, New York Young Arts Foundation Chamber Ensemble, Sol Sharp Music Education, the Francis Lewis High School Band and the JROTC Color Guard. The event also featured a recitation of the Declaration of Independence read by 13 local students representing the original 13 colonies and a reading by the winning essayist from Senator Liu's America 250 Student Essay Contest.

Attendees enjoyed carnival games, took photos with historical reenactors, and contributed to a community time capsule that will be sealed and housed at the Main Street - Flushing branch of the Queens Public Library for the next 50 years, to be opened on the nation's tricentennial on July 4, 2076. Throughout the afternoon, attendees contributed messages of hope for the future along with mementos such as artwork, family photos, letters, newspaper clippings, and other signs of our times, including New York Knicks championship memorabilia. Of course, all enjoyed hot dogs and hamburgers, the requisite of any Fourth of July BBQ.

State Senator John Liu stated, "It was absolutely inspiring to see so many families, students, and neighbors of all ages celebrate the greatest nation in history together with some even moved to tears by the passionate performances and the chance to reflect on our shared past, present, and future. We all have a role to play in making sure our country lives up to the vision of our Founding Fathers, and it was clear by the enthusiasm, patriotism and sense of community that every single one of us, young and old, is up to the task. Whether contributing a family photo to our community time capsule or sharing a note for a child yet to be born, everyone who participated helped preserve a piece of our history and give the next generation hope for the future."

Queens Public Library President and CEO Dennis M. Walcott stated, "We thank Senator John Liu for bringing the public together for this meaningful commemoration of America's anniversary and for entrusting us to safeguard their messages of hope, reflection, and aspiration at Flushing Library. We are honored to preserve this important historic record for future generations and to contribute our Freedom to Read library card and QPL trading cards featuring branches throughout Queens to the time capsule, reflecting the values of access to information, intellectual freedom, and the diversity of our communities."

Queens Borough Historian Jason Antos delivered a historical account of the role of Francis Lewis, a resident of Whitestone, Queens, in the signing of the Declaration of Independence. He stated, "This was a historic event to celebrate our nation's milestone birthday and to also honor Francis Lewis of Whitestone. It is extraordinary to know that a signer of the Declaration of Independence lived here in 1776 and that his family and property paid the ultimate price at the hands of the British army."

Co-sponsors included State Senators Leroy Comrie and Kristen Gonzales, State Assembly Members Ed Braunstein, Alicia Hyndman, Nily Rozic, David Weprin, Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, and Queens Public Library President Dennis Walcott.

The installation of the community time capsule at the Main Street - Flushing branch of the Queens Public Library will be held in early July.

Democrats Need to Show Our Love for America

BY REP. TOM
SUOZZI



I love America. Unfortunately, as we celebrate our nation's 250th birthday, too many Americans associate those three words only with Republicans. Democrats need to change that.

Many in my party are unhappy with the nation's current trajectory. Under President Trump, we've fallen short on income inequality. We've seen masked agents go head-to-head with U.S. citizens. Our elections and voting rights have been attacked, while misinformation proliferates online amid bigotry, extremism and political violence.

Despite all this, we should remain fiercely proud of the American system. It has enabled the quest for "a more perfect union," making possible the abolition of slavery, the rights of women and black Americans to vote, the protection of civil rights, the confrontation of religious, ethnic and racial bigotry and so much more.

Patriotism doesn't ask us to whitewash the country's shortcomings. It requires us to confront them honestly while recognizing that our Constitution, our democratic institutions and generations of courageous citizens have given us the ability to correct our mistakes.

Democrats have long believed that America is great not because it is perfect, but because it has the capacity to become better. We must reclaim the language of patriotism because our history teaches us the most American thing any of us can do is help our great nation live up to the ideals charted by our Founders 250

years ago: liberty, equality, democracy and the rule of law.

Our authoritarian adversaries suppress dissent and erase uncomfortable truths. America has repeatedly expanded liberty, broadened opportunity, and moved closer to fulfilling the promise that all people are created equal.

That's why generations of Democrats have stood proudly at the helm of some of the most consequential struggles to shape American life. Democrats supported the rise of organized labor. Democrats gave us the 40-hour workweek and worker protections. Democrats created Social Security and Medicare. Democrats championed civil rights. Democrats pushed for major environmental protections. And it is Democrats who must now lead us patriotically into the future.

We must rebuild the American middle class. But we can't do this by abandoning capitalism. Only by improving capitalism can we reward hard work and expand opportunity for every American who seeks it.

Capitalism has helped make America the most innovative and prosperous nation in the world. It has lifted living standards, created opportunity and helped build the strongest middle class in history. It has powered breakthroughs from the lightbulb to the microchip and fueled the ingenuity that defines our nation.

But capitalism works only when it is

shaped by fair rules, open competition and a basic sense of responsibility. The answer to inequality isn't to tear capitalism down, but to make it work better for the men and women who go to work every day and want to live the American Dream of homeownership, educated children, affordable health insurance and a safe retirement.

Patriotism means recognizing that America has been a force for good. The American Revolution wasn't only a victory for the 13 colonies. It fueled struggles for independence, democracy and self-determination from Europe to Latin America. Across centuries, America's example and leadership have also shaped Japan, South Korea, Southeast Asia, Australia, Canada, and many other places.

Two and a half centuries later, America is still a beacon. We should take pride in the generations of Americans who fought tyranny, defeated Nazism and fascism, defended democracy, welcomed millions and answered the call to help nations facing war, disaster and oppression. Our country has made mistakes abroad, but few nations have done more to advance human freedom and democratic values.

None of this means Democrats must agree with every policy or action of every administration. Patriotism doesn't demand blind loyalty. It demands faith that our country is worth improving and confidence that our ideals are worth defending.

Riding Out Hormuz

When the Strait of Hormuz closed in February-end, GoI made it a priority that Indian citizens, especially the most vulnerable, be protected from unprecedented supply and price disruptions. That move was held through almost 4 months later.

A country importing more than 85% of its crude, the argument ran, could not survive closure of Hormuz through which more than 20-30% of the world's hydrocarbons move. Today, stocks are full, pumps are open, and the Indian consumer has paid less for energy through this crisis than any other consumer in the world.

Nearly 60% of India's LPG consumption used to be supplied from West Asia. Much of that supply, almost overnight, dropped to zero. On the supply side, LPG Control Order was passed on March 8, which mandated all refineries to divert all their C3-C4 carbon streams to maximize LPG production. Refineries that had never made cooking gas were reconfigured within a few days, and production was raised from 35 TMT a day to 54 TMT a day.

At the peak of war, when no vessel was moving out of Hormuz, over 12 Indian LPG vessels were quietly moved out of

the strait without any toll payment, the largest number for any country. Cargoes were secured and ship-to-ship transfers were done from Yanbu and Fujairah ports down the Red Sea route. Vessels were sent inside Hormuz to get new cargoes, and fresh supply lines were opened with several countries like Algeria, Japan and Canada. Every producer India had ever dealt with, within the Gulf and outside it, stood with it.

But demand also had to be prioritized. Digital authentication code was made mandatory to prevent diversion of cooking gas by black marketers. A 25-day and 45-day limit was imposed, so that every citizen got cylinders without anyone able to hoard them.

As commercial cylinders are not regulated and any one buyer could have bought entire supplies available at once, it was routed through industry associations and state civil supplies departments. Industry was moved onto piped natural gas, large kitchens and establishments encouraged to fall back on other fuels wherever possible, and household piped gas and CNG were kept in the 'no-cut' category.

GoI came together to enable a shift to

pipled gas connections through faster municipal permissions. Between February and June, international benchmark for cooking gas, Saudi CP, rose by nearly 50%. But a cylinder that would cost more than ₹1,600 at import-linked rate still reaches an Ujjwala home at ₹642. GoI absorbs roughly ₹900 loss on each Ujjwala cylinder, and close to ₹600 on every cylinder going to every other household. So, every Indian family today pays much less for their cooking gas than households in other countries.

A bold central excise cut of ₹10 a liter in March absorbed a substantial part of the price shock, as crude had nearly doubled and PSU oil companies absorbed daily losses running to over ₹5-10 billion through this quarter. Across those same months, petrol at US pumps rose by more than 40%, and in Britain by close to 20%, with double-digit increases across much of Europe. The rise in Indian pumps was held to around 7%.

India's foreign reserves stand at near \$690 billion, down only modestly from the all-time high of \$728.49 billion recorded in the very week the conflict began, with the economy growing at 7.8% last quarter.

BY HARDEEP
SINGH PURI



As for oil reserves, energy locked underground earns nothing and costs a great deal to hold. So, it's run through a system of import terminals, depots, pipelines, refineries and storages spread across the country. India today has 24 refineries, more than 47,000 km of oil and gas pipelines, and over 100,000 petrol pumps that serve nearly 80 million people every day.

Almost 4 months into the largest energy disruption of our times, India did not have to take any emergency rationing measures. This was possible only because the ground had been prepared in the years before. The widening of India's crude basket from 27 countries to 41, the doubling of import terminals, and pipelines and reserves built across a decade were not abstractions when Hormuz closed. They were the very reasons the lights stayed on.

(Hardeep Singh Puri is India's Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas)

(Mr. Suozzi, a Democrat, represents New York's Third Congressional District)

First published in the Wall Street Journal

Indian Americans at USA 250: A call for humility and Reciprocity

BY GEORGE
ABRAHAM



The story of America is, above all, a story of freedom, particularly the quest for religious freedom. The Pilgrims who arrived on American shores were English Separatists determined to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience. In 1620, a group of 102 men, women, and children set sail from Plymouth, England, aboard the Mayflower. Their transatlantic journey was marked by untold hardships, including rough seas, overcrowding, illness, and food and water shortages. After a perilous voyage, the ship reached Cape Cod in November 1620. Historical accounts indicate that Dorothy Bradford, the wife of the Pilgrims' leader, William Bradford, drowned stepping out of the boat upon arrival. During the harsh winter that followed, nearly half of the settlers perished from severe cold, disease, and deprivation.

Yet their story is one of extraordinary faith, perseverance, and an unwavering pursuit of freedom. These men and women braved the seas and conquered a new frontier in search of the liberty to live, worship, and pursue their dreams. Through hard work, sacrifice, and remarkable resilience, they laid the foundations of a nation that would become the envy of the world and a beacon of hope for billions. Their journey reminds us that America's greatness was built not merely on prosperity and power, but on the enduring ideals of faith, freedom, and human dignity.

America's founding was deeply influenced by Judeo-Christian values and traditions, and the nation has inherited a rich Christian heritage that many newer generations and immigrants often overlook. While the Founding Fathers embraced religious liberty and the separation of church and state, many of the moral principles that shaped the nation's institutions, human dignity, individual responsibility, compassion for the less fortunate, equality before God, and the rule of law were rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Many of the early immigrants who arrived from Europe shared these religious beliefs and common ideals, helping to forge a society characterized by faith, hard work, personal sacrifice, and a commitment to the common good. These values played an important role in shaping a nation whose citizens have consistently demonstrated remarkable generosity and compassion.

Few countries in history have matched the United States in responding to humanitarian crises worldwide. Whether in times of war, famine, natural disasters, or political upheaval, America has repeatedly extended a helping hand to those in need. Millions of refugees and immigrants fleeing persecution, poverty, and oppression have found safety and opportunity on its shores. Likewise, American citizens, churches, charities, and humanitarian organizations have been among the first to provide relief and assistance to victims of disasters and conflicts worldwide.

America has long been described as a melting pot, a nation where successive waves of immigrants assimilated and embraced a common American identity while preserving the best elements of their cultural heritage. One of the most compelling examples of this commitment to the adopted homeland is the story of Dwight D. Eisenhower. Although Eisenhower himself was born in Texas, his ancestors were German immigrants who had settled in America generations earlier. Yet when the world was engulfed in war, Eisenhower harbored no divided loyalty. As Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force during World War II, he led the D-Day invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, a campaign that marked the beginning of the end of Nazi Germany. Later, he served as the 34th President of the United States from 1953 to 1961.

America's history has never been perfect. Like all nations, it has made its share of mistakes and endured periods of division and injustice. Yet one of the enduring strengths of the American experiment has been its capacity for self-correction and renewal. Through visionary leadership, exemplified by figures such as Abraham Lincoln, and through constitutional and legislative reforms, the nation has repeatedly sought to



The writer with A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, Engineer and former President of India, much admired and loved for his humility.

address its shortcomings and move closer to its founding ideals. While the journey has often been imperfect and unfinished, America's ability to confront its failures and strive for a more just and inclusive society remains one of its most remarkable characteristics.

Like every nation, America continues to face its own challenges. Yet few would dispute that it remains that "shining city upon a hill," a place to which the poor, the oppressed, and the aspiring continue to look with hope. As Indian Americans, our journey may not have been one of political refugees fleeing persecution, but many of us came as economic migrants seeking opportunities to use our God-given talents not only to achieve personal success but also to contribute to the prosperity and advancement of our adopted homeland.

Our challenge today is different. At a time when the nation appears increasingly polarized along ethnic, racial, and ideological lines, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to become agents of healing and reconciliation. While we rightly take pride in our heritage, we should celebrate our identity as Americans even more. We need not diminish our cultural roots, but neither should we define ourselves solely by them. We can honor our traditions while embracing the customs, values, and institutions of the country that has welcomed us so generously. Loyalty to our adopted nation and pride in our heritage are not mutually exclusive; indeed, they can complement one another.

As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of this great nation, it is also an appropriate time for introspection within our own community. The remarkable success achieved by Indian Americans over the past several decades has earned us admiration and respect. Yet success also brings responsibilities. We must continually ask ourselves how we are perceived by our fellow Americans and whether our actions are strengthening our bonds with the larger society.

There is nothing wrong with taking pride in our heritage, culture, and traditions. Indeed, America's strength lies in its diversity, and every immigrant community has enriched the nation's social fabric. However, pride should always be tempered with humility and sensitivity. At times, excessive displays of cultural triumphalism and an "in-your-face" approach to promoting our identity may inadvertently create misunderstandings and even resentment. Rather than fostering appreciation, such attitudes can be perceived as expressions of cultural or religious superiority, undermining the goodwill that generations of immigrants have worked so hard to build.

Many of us enthusiastically celebrate every festival and holiday associated with our ancestral homeland, which is entirely understandable. Yet we often devote far less energy to celebrating the national holidays and traditions that have shaped our adopted country. The Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and other occasions that embody the American experience deserve equal recognition and appreciation from those of us who have benefited so greatly from this land.

Similarly, we sometimes passionately advocate for recognition of our own religious and cultural observances in public institutions, including school closings, while remaining largely silent when concerns are raised about the perilous status of Christmas, Easter, or other holidays

in India that are deeply meaningful to many Americans. Consistency and reciprocity are important virtues in a pluralistic society. Respect for diversity should not be a one-way street.

Likewise, public celebrations and religious processions are cherished traditions, but they should always be conducted with consideration for the broader community. Activities that inconvenience or disrupt others' daily lives can unintentionally alienate neighbors and reinforce negative stereotypes. Living in a diverse society requires balancing the right to celebrate one's heritage with a responsibility to be considerate of others.

Another area that deserves reflection is our response to human suffering. Indian Americans have demonstrated extraordinary generosity in responding to natural disasters and crises in India. That spirit of compassion is commendable and should continue. At the same time, we should be equally visible in responding to tragedies and disasters here in the United States. When hurricanes, floods, wildfires, or other emergencies strike our adopted homeland, our voices and our resources should be present as well. Compassion, after all, should know no geographical boundaries.

Recent generations of immigrants are among the greatest beneficiaries of the legacy of hard work, sacrifice, and perseverance built by those who came before them. Over the centuries, America became a magnet for millions of people from every culture, language, and faith, offering opportunities unmatched elsewhere in history. If this great experiment is to continue to succeed, however, we must follow in the footsteps of those who paved the way, embracing personal responsibility, hard work, and a commitment to the common good. It is a sad reality that 47% of all households headed by a foreign born depend on public assistance.

There are legitimate concerns about the long-term sustainability of social welfare programs and the need to encourage economic self-sufficiency and upward mobility among all segments of society. The vitality of any nation depends not only on opportunity but also on the willingness of its citizens and residents to contribute to the prosperity and well-being of the broader community.

Equally troubling is the tendency of some to disparage or seek to dismantle the very institutions and values that have enabled America to become the most prosperous economy in human history. Criticism and reform are essential elements of democracy, but they should be guided by a desire to strengthen rather than destroy. It is fair to ask why those who have benefited from the opportunities afforded by this country would seek to undermine the system that made those opportunities possible.

America's institutions were not built overnight. They are the product of generations of sacrifice, innovation, and civic responsibility. Those who inherit this remarkable legacy have a responsibility not merely to enjoy its benefits, but to preserve, improve, and pass them on to future generations.

Assimilation does not require abandoning one's roots, nor does patriotism demand forgetting one's heritage. The genius of America has always been its ability to allow people from different backgrounds to become fully American while preserving the best of their cultural traditions. As we commemorate America's 250th anniversary, perhaps the greatest tribute we can offer is to strive for a healthier balance, one that enables us to remain proud of our Indian heritage while embracing more deeply the values, traditions, and responsibilities that come with being Americans.

Eisenhower's life exemplifies the American ideal that loyalty to one's adopted country transcends ancestral origins. His story illustrates how immigrants and their descendants have embraced American values, contributed to the nation's greatness, and demonstrated that being proud of one's heritage and fully committed to America are not mutually exclusive but complementary.

(George Abraham is Vice-Chairman of IOC USA, and a former UN Chief Technology Officer. He can be reached at gta777@gmail.com)

Two Democracies. One Enduring Idea: Nations Are Built by Those Who Give

BY SEKHAR
VEMPARALA



"The greatest philanthropists did not seek monuments to themselves. They built institutions that would outlive them. Universities, laboratories, libraries, hospitals, and centers of innovation became their true memorials. Their giving was not episodic charity; it was patient capital invested in civilization itself. The dividends are measured not in financial returns but in discoveries made, lives improved, leaders educated, and opportunities created for people they would never meet.

Wealth is inherited by families. Institutions are inherited by civilizations. America's land-grant universities and India's great centers of learning stand as enduring proof that the highest purpose of wealth is not ownership but stewardship. Carnegie and Rockefeller, Tata and Birla, Sarabhai and countless others understood that while fortunes can build enterprises, institutions build nations. A library ignites curiosity. A university shapes leaders. A research laboratory fuels discovery. A hospital restores hope. Their impact is measured not in balance sheets but in the millions of lives they touch across generations. This year, the United States celebrates 250 years of independence. India, the world's largest democracy, approaches its 80th year as an independent nation. Born nearly two centuries apart, these two democracies are bound by more than shared political ideals. Both are vast, diverse, entrepreneurial societies that have repeatedly demonstrated a remarkable truth: nations become great not merely by creating wealth, but by investing that wealth in people."

America's story began with a revolutionary belief that free citizens could shape their own destiny. India's story was rooted in an ancient civilization that, after independence in 1947, embraced democracy amidst extraordinary diversity. Today, together they account for nearly one-quarter of humanity. Both are powered by enterprise, innovation, constitutional freedoms, and an abiding faith that education is the surest path to opportunity. While America remains the world's largest economy, India has emerged as one of the world's fastest-growing major economies and is widely expected to become one of the



Nations are built by those who give.

Photo / Unsplash

world's three largest economies in the coming decade. Their success has been built not merely on markets and governments, but on an extraordinary partnership between public purpose and private generosity.

WHAT EXPLAINS THIS ENDURING RESILIENCE? IN BOTH NATIONS, THE ANSWER LIES PARTLY IN A CULTURE OF GIVING.

In America, Alexis de Tocqueville observed in the 1830s that citizens instinctively formed voluntary associations to solve public problems. This civic spirit matured into one of history's greatest traditions of philanthropy. During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862, creating universities dedicated to agriculture, engineering, science, and practical education. These land-grant institutions democratized higher education and became engines of innovation, scientific discovery, agricultural productivity, and social mobility. Institutions such as Cornell, Purdue, Texas A&M, Wisconsin, Michigan State, and many others helped build America's intellectual backbone.

Private philanthropy magnified this vision. Andrew Carnegie built more than 2,500 public libraries because he believed knowledge should be accessible to every citizen. John D. Rockefeller transformed universities, medicine, and scientific research through unprecedented philanthropy. Later generations, including Henry Ford, Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, and many others continued the conviction that private wealth carries a public responsibility. Together, public policy and private philanthropy created an ecosystem in which education, innovation, and opportunity reinforced one another.

India reached the same destination through a different journey. For thousands of years, generosity has been woven into the fabric of Indian civilization. Hinduism teaches *dāna*-selfless giving without expectation of reward. Sikhism practices *dasvandh*, dedicating a portion of one's earnings to the community. Islam prescribes *zakat* and encourages *sadaqah* as acts of compassion. Christianity teaches stewardship and service. Jainism emphasizes generosity and non-possessiveness, while Buddhism places *dāna* among the highest virtues. Though expressed differently, each tradition shares a common belief: wealth is held in trust and finds its highest purpose in serving society.

Mahatma Gandhi transformed these ancient values into a modern philosophy of Trusteeship, arguing that

wealth creators should see themselves not merely as owners of capital but as trustees acting on behalf of society. Industry, commerce, education, and science, he believed, should all become instruments of national service. This philosophy profoundly influenced generations of Indian industrialists and institution builders.

Jamsetji Tata embodied this ideal. Long before India gained independence, he recognized that a nation's future would be determined not only by its industries but by its universities, laboratories, and scientific talent. His vision led to the creation of the Indian Institute of Science, one of India's foremost centers of research. Later, leaders such as G.D. Birla, Kasturbhai Lalbhai, and the Tata Trusts expanded this tradition by building schools, hospitals, universities, and research institutions. Vikram Sarabhai carried this vision into independent India by establishing the Physical Research Laboratory, laying the foundations of India's space programme, and co-founding the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad. Like America's land-grant universities, these institutions became investments in generations yet unborn.

The parallels are striking. Lincoln's Land-Grant Act and Gandhi's philosophy of Trusteeship emerged from different histories, yet both sought to democratize opportunity. Carnegie's libraries and Tata's scientific institutions reflected the same conviction that knowledge is society's greatest inheritance. Rockefeller's investments in higher education and medical research found their counterpart in Sarabhai's commitment to science, management education, and technological self-reliance. Each understood that the true purpose of wealth was not accumulation but transformation.

The greatest philanthropists did not seek monuments to themselves. They built institutions that would outlive them. Universities, laboratories, libraries, hospitals, and centers of innovation became their true memorials. Their giving was not episodic charity; it was patient capital invested in civilization itself. The dividends are measured not in financial returns but in discoveries made, lives improved, leaders educated, and opportunities created for people they would never meet.

Wealth is inherited by families. Institutions are inherited by civilizations. America's land-grant universities and India's great centers of learning stand as enduring proof that the highest purpose of wealth is not ownership but stewardship. Carnegie and Rockefeller, Tata and Birla, Sarabhai and countless others understood that while fortunes can build enterprises, institutions build nations. A library ignites curiosity. A university shapes leaders. A research laboratory fuels discovery. A hospital restores hope. Their impact is measured not in balance sheets but in the millions of lives they touch across generations.

At a time when the world often celebrates wealth creation as an end in itself, America at 250 and India at nearly 80 remind us of a more enduring truth: prosperity achieves its highest purpose only when it expands opportunity for others. Democracies flourish not simply because they create successful entrepreneurs, but because those entrepreneurs become builders of institutions and custodians of the common good.

That is the enduring lesson of these two great democracies. And that is the timeless meaning of being Born to Give.

(Sekhar Vempalara is the principal and founder and Wealth Planning Advisory Group and Wealth Planning Asset Management with offices in NJ, USA, Switzerland and India. He is an avid reader, world traveler, author and is a speaker on the subject of Charitable Giving to various non-profit boards and charitable organizations. Sekhar holds an MBA in Finance and has earned the marks of Certified Financial Planner CFP® Chartered Financial Consultant ChFC®, Certified Life Underwriter, CLU® Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy, CAP®. Sekhar is the author of *Born to Give*, a book that speaks to Planned Giving and highlights some examples of history of Global Philanthropic initiatives.

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Will You Come Home?

India has spent decades watching its best scientific minds build careers abroad. It now has a serious answer to the question of why they should come back

Think about the last time you explained your research to someone at a dinner party. The polite nods. The moment when they asked what it was for, really, in the end. And the pause before you gave the answer you have given a hundred times, about the long game, about how science

stipend that makes you feel appreciated but not compensated. The financial package is structured as a top-up to whatever researchers are currently receiving, with a competitive annual fee, a one-time research grant for project initiation that runs to several crores depending on seniority, residential and

Host institutions are the IITs, IISc, and national laboratories under DST, DBT, CSIR, and ICMR. Not every institution in the country, curated ones that have the infrastructure to absorb and support incoming researchers without the fellow having to spend the first year sorting out basics.

BY ADIL
ZAINULBHAI



Photo Courtesy: PMRC

before, visiting positions, advisory roles, one-semester teaching stints. They have produced goodwill and occasionally good research. They have not produced the kind of sustained institutional change that a real presence over real time can create. PMRC is trying to do the harder thing.

India invites Indian Researchers abroad



works, about patience.

Now think about what it would mean to work on a problem where the answer to that question was obvious. Where the scale was so large, and the need so visible, that you never had to explain the relevance. Where your work on clean energy fed directly into the world's largest renewable deployment. Where your research on AI ran on a digital public infrastructure used by hundreds of millions of people. Where your drug or your diagnostic reached a healthcare system that had no alternative.

That is what India offers right now. Not as aspiration. As fact.

The question Indian-origin researchers have always asked is not whether they want to contribute. It is whether the conditions exist to do it properly.

For a long time, the honest answer was: not quite. The funding was uneven. The bureaucracy was real. The gap between what was possible in a well-resourced Western university and what was available in India was wide enough that even researchers who deeply wanted to return did the math and stayed put. The pull of India was emotional. The friction was practical. Practical usually wins.

The Prime Minister Research Chair (PMRC) Scheme, launched this month by the Ministry of Education, is a serious attempt to change that arithmetic.

It is not another fellowship with a

medical allowance, and full relocation support. Fellows can return to their parent institution twice a year. The three-year engagement is designed to be a genuine commitment, not a sabbatical experiment.

There are 120 positions. Three tracks cover the full range of career stages. Young Research Fellows are early-career researchers within five years of their PhD, people at the moment when the habits and networks that define a scientific career are still being formed. Senior Fellows are mid-career scientists with five to ten years of post-PhD experience, researchers who have proven themselves and want their work to operate at a different scale. Research Chairs are the senior figures, ten-plus years out, with the standing to shape what an institution does rather than simply contribute to it.

The 13 priority sectors are the ones worth paying attention to. Semiconductors, quantum computing, AI, clean energy, biotechnology, healthcare and medical technology, space and defense, critical minerals. These are not invented priorities padded out to look comprehensive. They are the areas where India has national missions already running, with funding committed and institutions already in place. A researcher working in any of these fields will find not just a lab but a direct line into policy.

For early-career researchers, particularly those on postdoctoral contracts in the US or UK, the timing matters more than it might appear. The research funding environment in the US has contracted. Visa uncertainty for Indian nationals is real and has not gone away. Academic hiring in many fields is tight. The window between PhD completion and a permanent position is longer than it used to be, and the outcome is less certain. Against that backdrop, a funded research position in India, with a serious grant, world-class students, and the scale of problems that only India can offer, deserves a genuine look rather than a reflexive no.

For senior researchers, the calculation is different but equally worth making. At a certain point in a career, the question is not what the next paper will be but what the body of work adds up to. A Research Chair in PMRC is not being asked to deliver papers. They are being asked to shape an institution, to build something, to use what they know to create capacity that will outlast them. That is a different kind of opportunity from anything a tenured position in the West typically provides.

The scheme is also honest about what it asks. This is a three-year commitment, residential by design, with enough structure to ensure that fellows are actually embedded rather than just nominally affiliated. India has tried softer versions of diaspora engagement

For researchers with families, the practical questions are real and the scheme addresses them directly. IIT campuses and the cities around India's premier research institutions have good schools. Spouse employment support and OCI card facilitation are part of the package. Relocation support is not a vague promise. These are answers, not deflections.

India ranks third in global scientific publications and is the second fastest-growing research producer in the world. Patents granted have grown tenfold in a decade. The Anusandhan National Research Foundation is operational. The infrastructure is there.

What PMRC is asking is whether the people who trained in India, built careers abroad, and carried that question about contribution somewhere in the back of their minds are ready to do something about it. Not someday. Now, while the window is open and the positions are real.

Applications are open for 45 days from June 1, 2026. The portal, the eligibility criteria, and the application process are all at pmrc.education.gov.in. The contact for queries is contact.pmrc@gov.in.

The country that shaped you is asking a direct question. It would be worth taking seriously.

(The author is Prime Minister Research Chair (PMRC) Scheme | He can be reached at www.pmrc.education.gov.in)

America @250: The Enduring Spirit of Independence

From a Bold Declaration in 1776 to a Global Superpower-The Extraordinary Journey of the United States

“*Liberty, once planted, is difficult to uproot.*” These words, attributed to early American patriotism, capture the spirit that transformed a cluster of British colonies on North America's eastern seaboard into an independent nation whose influence would eventually extend across the globe.

On July 4, 2026, the United States celebrates an extraordinary milestone—250 years since the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Known as the Semiquincentennial, the anniversary marks far more than the birthday of a nation. It commemorates an audacious political experiment founded on the revolutionary belief that governments derive their power from the consent of the governed and that all people possess inherent rights that no monarch can take away.

Over the past two and a half centuries, the United States has experienced triumphs and tragedies, prosperity and hardship, unity and division. It has fought wars, abolished slavery, landed humans on the Moon, pioneered technological revolutions, and become one of the world's leading economic and military powers. Yet the story of America did not begin with fireworks and patriotic celebrations. It began with small settlements carved out of forests, uncertain colonies struggling to survive, and growing tensions with the most powerful empire of the eighteenth century.

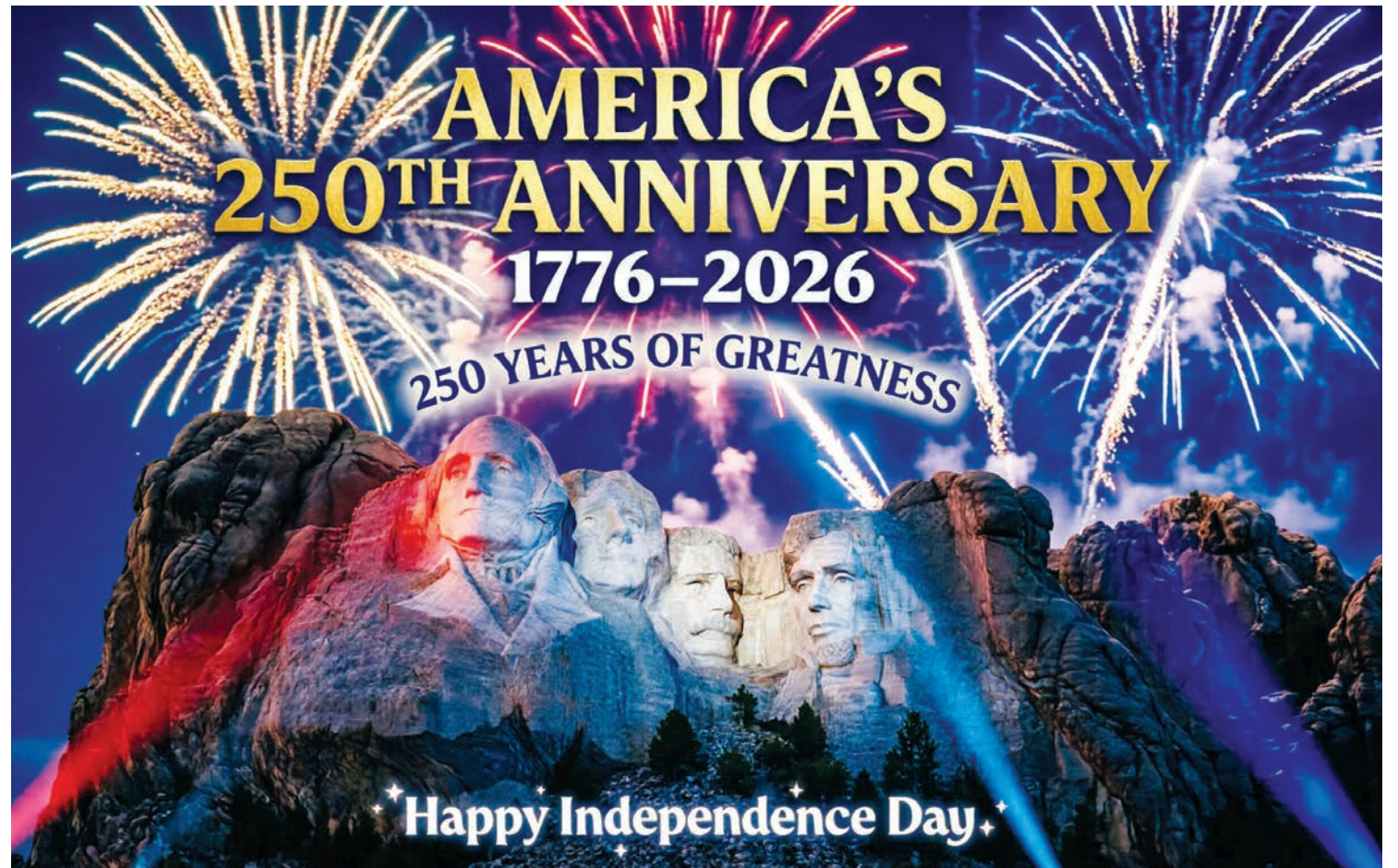
As America reaches its 250th year, looking back at its origins provides an opportunity to understand how the ideals of liberty, self-government, and democracy emerged from conflict and compromise—and why they continue to resonate around the world.

A New World of Opportunity

Long before the United States existed, North America was home to hundreds of Indigenous nations, each with distinct languages, cultures, governments, and trading networks. For thousands of years, Native American communities flourished across the continent, developing sophisticated societies adapted to diverse landscapes—from the woodlands of the East to the Great Plains and the deserts of the Southwest.

European exploration in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries dramatically changed this world. Motivated by trade, wealth, territorial expansion, and the spread of Christianity, European powers—including Spain, France, the Netherlands, and England—established colonies across the continent.

England's first permanent settlement in North America was Jamestown, founded



in Virginia in 1607. Although disease, famine, and conflict nearly destroyed the settlement, it eventually prospered through the cultivation of tobacco, creating the foundation for England's colonial ambitions.

In 1620, another group of settlers—the Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower—landed in present-day Massachusetts seeking religious freedom. Their settlement at Plymouth became one of the defining stories of early American history, symbolizing courage, perseverance, and the search for liberty.

During the following century, England established thirteen colonies stretching along the Atlantic coast. Though united under the British Crown, each colony developed its own economy, traditions, and local government.

New England colonies emphasized commerce, shipbuilding, fishing, and education. The middle colonies became centers of trade and agriculture, while the southern colonies relied heavily on plantation agriculture, producing tobacco, rice, and later cotton through the labor of enslaved Africans.

Despite their differences, the colonies gradually developed a shared identity rooted in local self-government, entrepreneurial spirit, and a growing sense of independence.

Life in the Thirteen Colonies

By the mid-eighteenth century,

Britain's American colonies had become prosperous and diverse. Their population had grown to nearly 2.5 million people, making them among the most dynamic regions in the British Empire.

Colonial assemblies exercised significant control over local affairs, allowing settlers to become accustomed to governing themselves. Town meetings, elected legislatures, and community participation fostered democratic habits uncommon in much of Europe.

Economic opportunity attracted immigrants from England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, France, and other parts of Europe. Religious diversity also flourished, with Anglicans, Puritans, Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, Catholics, and other communities coexisting—sometimes uneasily—within the colonies.

Yet prosperity was uneven. Enslaved Africans formed a substantial portion of the population, especially in the South, where plantation economies depended upon forced labor. Native American communities increasingly faced displacement as colonial settlements expanded westward.

The contradictions between ideals of liberty and the realities of slavery and Indigenous dispossession would become defining tensions in American history—issues that the new nation would struggle to confront long after independence.

The Thirteen Original Colonies

- Virginia
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- Maryland
- Connecticut
- Rhode Island
- Delaware
- New Jersey
- New York
- Pennsylvania
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Georgia

Together, these colonies formed the foundation of what would become the United States of America.

The Seeds of Revolution

For much of the early colonial period, Britain allowed the colonies considerable freedom in managing their own affairs. This informal arrangement, often described by historians as "salutary neglect," enabled colonial institutions to flourish.

Everything changed after the Seven Years' War (1756-1763)—known in North America as the French and Indian War. Although Britain emerged victorious, the conflict left the empire burdened with enormous debt.

British leaders believed that the American colonies, which had benefited from Britain's military protection, should contribute more toward imperial expenses. Parliament therefore

From Page 14

introduced a series of taxes and regulations designed to raise revenue.

These measures included:

- The Sugar Act (1764)
- The Stamp Act (1765)
- The Townshend Acts (1767)
- The Tea Act (1773)

While the taxes themselves were not exceptionally high, they touched a far deeper issue: political representation.

Colonists insisted that they could not be taxed by a Parliament in which they had no elected representatives. Their rallying cry—"No Taxation Without Representation"—became the defining slogan of colonial resistance.

To many Americans, the dispute was not merely about money. It was about constitutional rights, political equality, and the limits of governmental power.

Protest Becomes Resistance

Opposition spread rapidly through pamphlets, newspapers, public meetings, and organized boycotts of British goods.

Influential writers and political thinkers argued that arbitrary taxation threatened the liberties of every colonist. Organizations such as the Sons of Liberty mobilized merchants, craftsmen, and ordinary citizens in coordinated acts of resistance.

Women also played an important role. By producing homespun cloth and supporting non-importation campaigns, they helped reduce dependence on British goods and demonstrated that the struggle for liberty extended beyond the battlefield.

Public demonstrations became increasingly common. Tax collectors were harassed, British officials faced widespread opposition, and imported goods often remained unsold.

The conflict between Britain and its colonies was rapidly becoming a constitutional crisis.

The Boston Massacre

On March 5, 1770, tensions exploded in the streets of Boston.

British soldiers confronted an angry crowd that had gathered outside the Customs House. Amid confusion, shouting, and thrown objects, the soldiers opened fire.

Five colonists were killed.

Although the incident involved a relatively small number of casualties, colonial leaders portrayed it as evidence of British tyranny. Engravings, pamphlets, and newspaper accounts spread throughout the colonies, transforming the Boston Massacre into a powerful symbol of resistance.

Public opinion increasingly turned against British rule.

The Boston Tea Party

Perhaps no single event better symbolizes America's road to independence than the Boston Tea Party.

In December 1773, Parliament granted the British East India Company favorable terms for selling tea in the colonies. Many colonists viewed the measure as another attempt to force acceptance of parliamentary taxation.

On the night of December 16, 1773, a group of colonists, many disguised as Mohawk warriors, boarded three British

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



ships anchored in Boston Harbor.

Working quickly and methodically, they threw 342 chests of tea into the icy water below.

The destruction of the tea was dramatic, disciplined, and unmistakably political. It represented a direct challenge to British authority.

Across the Atlantic, British leaders reacted with outrage.

Britain's Harsh Response

Determined to restore order, Britain imposed a series of punitive laws known in the colonies as the Intolerable Acts.

The port of Boston was closed until the destroyed tea had been paid for. Massachusetts lost many of its powers of self-government, and additional British troops were stationed in the colony.

Rather than isolating Massachusetts, these measures united the colonies.

Many Americans who had previously favored compromise now feared that Britain intended to eliminate colonial self-government altogether.

In response, delegates from twelve colonies met in Philadelphia in September 1774 for the First Continental Congress. Though they stopped short of declaring independence, they coordinated economic resistance and affirmed the rights of the colonies.

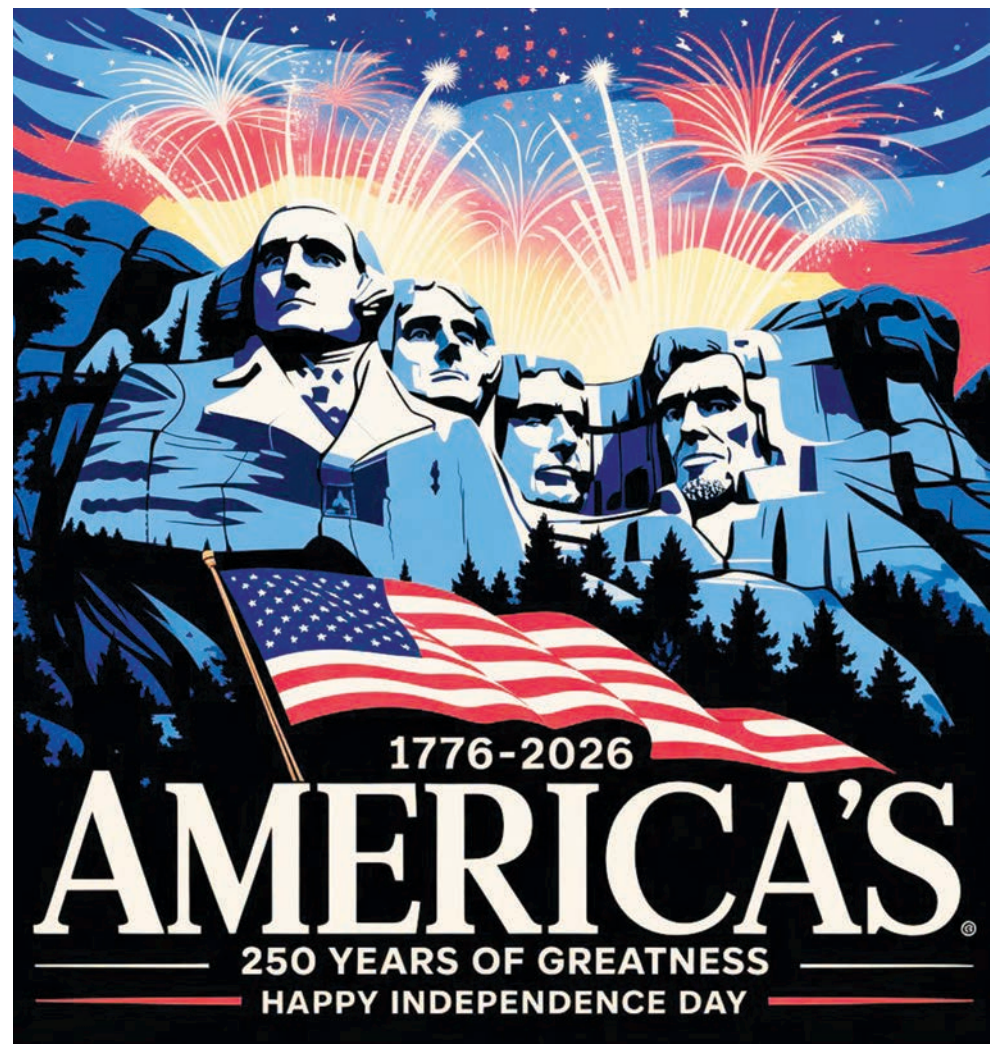
The gathering marked the first major step toward colonial unity.

The First Shots of the Revolution

By the spring of 1775, relations between Britain and the colonies had reached a breaking point.

British authorities learned that colonial militias were stockpiling weapons in the town of Concord, Massachusetts. Hoping to seize these supplies and arrest prominent patriot leaders, British troops marched from Boston on the night of April 18.

Their advance, however, did not go



unnoticed.

Messengers—including the legendary Paul Revere—rode through the countryside warning that British soldiers were on the move. At dawn on April 19, 1775, British troops encountered colonial militia at the village of Lexington.

A shot rang out.

No one knows who fired it, but it became immortalized as "the shot heard round the world."

The American Revolutionary War had begun. As British forces continued

toward Concord, colonial militias gathered in increasing numbers. By the time the British began their retreat to Boston, they faced relentless attacks from behind stone walls, trees, and farmhouses. The day's fighting demonstrated that ordinary farmers, tradesmen, and townspeople were prepared to challenge the greatest military power of the eighteenth century.

The struggle for independence was no longer a political dispute—it had become a revolution.

Forging the Republic (1783-1809)

From Revolution to Constitution: How the United States Built a Government That Endured for 250 Years

On July 4, 2026, the United States commemorates one of the most remarkable milestones in modern history—the 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Known as the Semiquincentennial, the occasion marks a quarter of a millennium since thirteen British colonies declared themselves free and independent states, embarking on an unprecedented experiment in democratic self-government.

The anniversary is far more than a birthday celebration. It is a moment to reflect upon a journey that transformed a narrow strip of settlements along North America's Atlantic coast into one of the world's most influential nations. During these 250 years, America has experienced revolution, civil war, territorial expansion, industrialization, economic prosperity, social upheaval, scientific discovery, and technological innovation. It has inspired democratic movements across continents while continually striving to fulfil the ideals proclaimed in 1776—liberty, equality, justice, and government by the consent of the governed.

As fireworks illuminate the skies over Washington, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and thousands of communities across the country, Americans are celebrating not only their nation's birth but also the resilience of institutions and values that have endured through triumphs and trials alike.

The Road to Revolution

The American Revolution did not begin overnight. It was the culmination of decades of political tension, economic grievances, and philosophical debate between Great Britain and its North American colonies.

By the mid-eighteenth century, Britain possessed thirteen prosperous colonies stretching from New Hampshire in the north to Georgia in the south. These colonies enjoyed relative autonomy. Colonial assemblies managed local affairs, merchants prospered through Atlantic trade, and farmers cultivated fertile lands. Many colonists considered themselves loyal British subjects.

However, the conclusion of the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), known in North America as the French and Indian War, dramatically altered relations between Britain and its colonies. Although Britain emerged victorious and gained vast new territories, the war left the British government burdened with enormous debt.

Seeking additional revenue, Parliament introduced a series of taxes directly affecting the colonies. Among the most controversial were:

- The Sugar Act (1764)
- The Stamp Act (1765)
- The Townshend Acts (1767)
- The Tea Act (1773)



Colonists argued that Parliament had no authority to tax them because they had no elected representatives in London. Their famous slogan—*"No Taxation Without Representation"*—became the defining principle of colonial resistance.

Political organizations such as the Sons of Liberty organized protests, distributed pamphlets, and encouraged boycotts of British goods. Newspapers became powerful tools for spreading revolutionary ideas, while taverns, churches, and town meetings served as centres of political discussion.

The Boston Massacre and Rising Tensions

Relations deteriorated further in March 1770 when British soldiers stationed in Boston fired upon a crowd of protesting colonists.

Five civilians were killed in what became known as the Boston Massacre.

Although relatively small in scale, the incident became a powerful symbol of British oppression. Colonial leaders, including Samuel Adams and Paul Revere, used pamphlets and engravings to rally public opinion against British rule.

The event intensified anti-British sentiment throughout the colonies.

The Boston Tea Party

One of the Revolution's defining moments occurred on the evening of December 16, 1773.

Disguised as Native Americans, members of the Sons of Liberty boarded three British East India Company ships anchored in Boston Harbor. They dumped 342 chests of tea into the icy waters, protesting taxation and the Tea Act.

The dramatic act of civil disobedience shocked Britain.

King George III responded with severe punitive laws known as the Intolerable Acts, which closed Boston Harbor, restricted self-government in Massachusetts, and expanded British

military authority.

Instead of intimidating the colonies, these measures united them.

Many colonists now believed reconciliation with Britain had become impossible.

The First Continental Congress

Representatives from twelve colonies met in Philadelphia in September 1774 for the First Continental Congress.

Although they still hoped to avoid war, delegates agreed to coordinate resistance against British policies.

They organized economic boycotts, petitioned the king for redress, and declared that colonial rights must be respected.

For the first time, the colonies began acting collectively.

The Shot Heard Around the World

On April 19, 1775, British troops marched toward Concord, Massachusetts, intending to seize colonial military supplies.

Instead, they encountered armed colonial militia at Lexington.

The first shots fired that morning marked the beginning of the American Revolutionary War.

Poet Ralph Waldo Emerson later immortalized the opening gunfire as "the shot heard round the world"

because its consequences extended far beyond America, inspiring later democratic revolutions across Europe and Latin America.

The Battles of Lexington and Concord demonstrated that many colonists were prepared to fight rather than surrender their rights.

The road to independence had become irreversible.

The Second Continental Congress

Only weeks after fighting began, colonial representatives reconvened in Philadelphia.

The Second Continental Congress assumed the responsibilities of a

national government.

Among its most important decisions was appointing George Washington of Virginia as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army.

Washington possessed extensive military experience from the French and Indian War and enjoyed broad respect across the colonies.

His leadership would prove indispensable during the difficult years ahead.

The Declaration That Changed History

By the summer of 1776, hopes of reconciliation with Britain had faded.

The colonies required a formal declaration explaining why independence had become necessary.

A committee consisting of:

- Thomas Jefferson
- John Adams
- Benjamin Franklin
- Roger Sherman
- Robert R. Livingston

was appointed to draft the document.

The principal author was the young Virginian Thomas Jefferson.

Drawing upon Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke, Jefferson argued that all individuals possess natural rights which governments exist to protect.

Governments derive their legitimacy from the consent of the governed—not from kings or inherited privilege.

When governments become destructive of these rights, the people possess the authority to replace them.

On July 4, 1776, delegates gathered inside Philadelphia's Independence Hall formally adopted the Declaration of Independence.

Among history's most famous political statements were Jefferson's immortal words:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..."

The Declaration proclaimed rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Although these ideals were imperfectly applied at the time—particularly regarding enslaved people, women, and Native Americans—they established principles that future generations would invoke in expanding freedom.

The Declaration fundamentally transformed political philosophy by asserting that legitimate governments derive their authority from ordinary citizens rather than monarchs.

Its influence spread far beyond America, inspiring democratic revolutions in France, Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

George Washington: The Reluctant Revolutionary

Among America's founders, no figure occupies a more revered position than George Washington.

Born into a Virginia plantation family

From page 16

in 1732, Washington gained military experience during the French and Indian War before emerging as leader of the Continental Army.

Washington faced extraordinary challenges.

His army often lacked:

- adequate food
- proper uniforms
- ammunition
- medicine
- shelter
- reliable funding

Many soldiers enlisted for short terms and frequently deserted.

Yet Washington's greatest strength lay in perseverance.

Rather than seeking dramatic battlefield victories, he focused on preserving the army until circumstances favoured the American cause.

His calm leadership, integrity, and willingness to share hardships with ordinary soldiers inspired immense loyalty.

Washington later became the first President of the United States, establishing traditions that continue to shape the American presidency today.

Winning Independence

Declaring independence did not guarantee freedom.

Britain remained determined to suppress the rebellion.

The Revolutionary War continued for another seven difficult years.

The Continental Army was significantly smaller than Britain's professional military.

British forces possessed superior equipment, experienced officers, and the world's strongest navy.

Despite these disadvantages, the Americans benefited from:

- local knowledge
- widespread popular support
- effective guerrilla tactics
- determined political leadership
- growing international assistance

Several battles proved decisive.

The Battle of Trenton (1776)

After suffering repeated defeats, Washington launched a daring surprise attack by crossing the icy Delaware River on Christmas night.

The victory at Trenton dramatically boosted American morale and convinced many soldiers to remain in the army.

The Battle of Saratoga (1777)

Often called the turning point of the Revolution, Saratoga ended in a major American victory over British General John Burgoyne.

The triumph persuaded France that the American cause had genuine prospects of success.

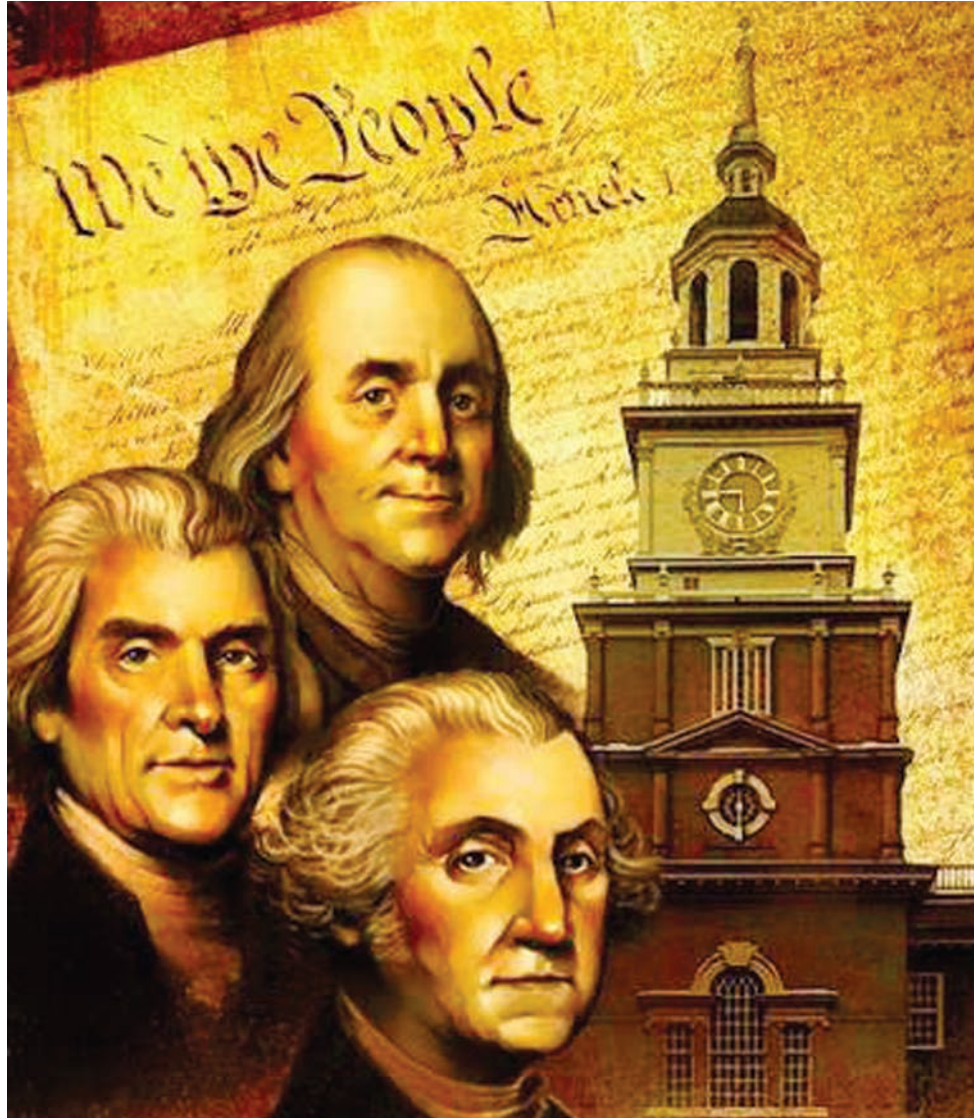
France Enters the War

France had long sought revenge against Britain following its defeat in the Seven Years' War.

After Saratoga, King Louis XVI agreed to provide extensive military assistance.

French contributions included:

- troops
- naval power
- artillery
- military advisers
- financial support



Without French intervention, historians widely believe American independence would have been far more difficult to achieve.

Spanish and Dutch assistance also strengthened the revolutionary cause.

Valley Forge: The Winter of Endurance

One of the Revolution's defining episodes occurred during the harsh winter of 1777-78 at Valley Forge.

Thousands of soldiers endured freezing temperatures, inadequate clothing, hunger, and disease.

Nearly 2,000 soldiers died.

Yet the army emerged stronger.

Prussian military officer Baron Friedrich von Steuben introduced rigorous training that transformed inexperienced volunteers into disciplined soldiers.

Valley Forge became a lasting symbol of sacrifice, perseverance, and national unity.

The Siege of Yorktown

The decisive campaign unfolded in Virginia during 1781.

Washington coordinated American and French forces to trap British General Charles Cornwallis at Yorktown.

Meanwhile, the French navy prevented British reinforcements from arriving by sea. Surrounded and heavily outnumbered, Cornwallis surrendered on October 19, 1781.

Although isolated fighting continued, Yorktown effectively ended major military operations.

The Treaty of Paris

Two years later, the Treaty of Paris formally recognized the independence of the United States.

Britain acknowledged the sovereignty of the new nation and granted generous territorial boundaries extending westward to the Mississippi River.

America had achieved what many considered impossible—the successful overthrow of one of history's greatest empires.

Building a New Republic

Winning independence created a new challenge.

How could thirteen former colonies unite under one stable government while preserving liberty?

Initially, the Articles of Confederation created only a weak national government.

Congress lacked authority to levy taxes, regulate interstate commerce, or enforce national laws effectively.

Economic instability and political disputes soon revealed the system's weaknesses.

Recognizing the need for reform, delegates assembled once again in Philadelphia during 1787.

Rather than merely revising the Articles, they drafted an entirely new Constitution.

The Constitutional Convention became one of history's most significant political gatherings.

Delegates debated representation, executive authority, federal powers, slavery, and individual liberties.

Their compromise produced a framework that has remained the world's oldest written national constitution still in continuous use.

The United States Constitution

The Constitution introduced several revolutionary principles that continue to

influence governments worldwide.

These included:

- Separation of powers
- Federalism
- Checks and balances
- An independent judiciary
- An elected executive
- Representative democracy

Power was deliberately divided among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches so that no individual or institution could dominate government.

The Constitution also balanced authority between the federal government and individual states.

This system created stability while allowing regional diversity.

The Bill of Rights

Many Americans feared that the Constitution did not sufficiently protect individual freedoms.

To address these concerns, the first ten amendments—known collectively as the Bill of Rights—were adopted in 1791.

They guaranteed fundamental liberties including:

- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of the press
- Peaceful assembly
- The right to petition government
- Protection against unreasonable searches
- Due process of law
- Fair trials

These constitutional protections have become among the most influential guarantees of civil liberty in modern democratic history.

A Republic Begins Its Journey

When George Washington took the presidential oath in 1789, the United States was a fragile republic of fewer than four million people. Many observers doubted that such an ambitious democratic experiment could survive. Monarchies still dominated Europe, and republican governments were widely viewed as unstable.

Yet Washington's administration laid the foundations of a durable constitutional order. He formed the first Cabinet, supported the establishment of a national financial system under Alexander Hamilton, and voluntarily stepped down after two terms, setting a precedent for the peaceful transfer of power that became one of the hallmarks of American democracy.

Although political disagreements soon emerged between the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans, the young republic demonstrated that fierce debate could coexist with constitutional governance. This peaceful balancing of competing ideas would become one of the defining features of the American political system.

From a loose alliance of thirteen colonies, the United States had become an independent constitutional republic built upon revolutionary ideals. Yet its greatest tests—including westward expansion, sectional conflict, slavery, and the struggle to define equality—still lay ahead. Those challenges would shape the nation's destiny in the nineteenth century and ultimately determine whether the promise of 1776 could endure.

Yoga Is the Science of Human Transformation

Meditation Guru Dr. H.R. Nagendra in Conversation with The Indian Panorama Editor Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja



Dr. H.R. Nagendra conducted a Meditation session at the Indian Consulate in New York on June 22, 2026. Here he is seen in conversation with Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, and diplomats from friendly countries. -TIP Photo

INDRAJIT SALUJA
JUNE 23, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)

A day after the International Day of Yoga, celebrated on June 21, Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja, Chief Editor of The Indian Panorama, met internationally acclaimed Yoga and Meditation Guru Dr. H.R. Nagendra at the Consulate General of India in New York. Fresh from leading thousands of yoga enthusiasts at Times Square, Dr. Nagendra spoke about his lifelong mission to establish Yoga as a scientific discipline, his plans to expand Yoga education internationally, and why he believes yoga is much more than physical exercise-it is a complete science of human evolution.

ABOUT DR. H.R. NAGENDRA

Dr. H.R. Nagendra is one of the world's foremost authorities on Yoga, meditation, and yogic research. Trained initially as a mechanical engineer, he later devoted his life to the scientific study and teaching of yoga. He is the Chancellor of S-VYASA (Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana), a Deemed-to-be University in Bengaluru, India, internationally recognized for its pioneering research in yoga therapy and holistic health.

For more than five decades, Dr. Nagendra has worked to integrate the ancient wisdom of Yoga with modern scientific research. Under his leadership, S-VYASA has produced over 1,500 research papers, trained thousands of yoga professionals, and established itself as a global center for yoga education, research, and healthcare. His life's mission is to spread Yoga as a means of promoting physical health, mental well-being, social harmony, and spiritual growth across the world.

THE INTERVIEW: A VISION FOR TAKING YOGA FROM THE MAT TO THE MIND-AND TO THE UNIVERSITIES OF THE WORLD

HERE ARE SOME EXCERPTS.



Dr. H.R. Nagendra in conversation with The Indian Panorama Editor Prof. Indrajit S Saluja on June 22, 2026 at the Indian Consulate in New York

PROF. INDRAJIT S. SALUJA: Dr. Nagendra, we are truly blessed to have you with us today. I had heard so much about you and read extensively about your work. But meeting you in person is a privilege. After listening to your inspiring address at Times Square yesterday, I believe everyone present felt enriched.

You were trained as a mechanical engineer and had a successful engineering career. What inspired you to

dedicate your life to yoga?

DR. H.R. NAGENDRA: I would not say I left engineering. Rather, I moved from mechanical engineering to human engineering.

To me, yoga is an expansion of science. Modern science has explored the physical world remarkably well. But yoga goes much further. It studies not only the body but also prana (life energy), the mind, emotions, intellect, consciousness, and the deeper causal dimensions of existence.

The ancient sages of India understood that creation is not merely physical. There are subtle and causal dimensions that modern science is only now beginning to appreciate. This profound knowledge is preserved in our yogic texts.

As someone interested in scientific inquiry, I found yoga to be a natural continuation of my journey. I simply expanded my field of research-from machines to human consciousness.

PROF. SALUJA: Your institution, S-VYASA University, offers degree programs in yoga, and yesterday you spoke about introducing yoga into universities. You also expressed the hope that yoga should become part of higher education in the United States.

However, I wonder whether the foundation should begin even earlier. Shouldn't yoga become an integral part of school education?

DR. NAGENDRA: That process has already begun.

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated the International Day of Yoga, he emphasized that yoga should not remain a one-day annual event but become part of everyday life. Our team was asked to develop a structured curriculum for schools.

We designed comprehensive modules-not merely teaching a few postures-but focusing on the holistic development of children.

Our curriculum includes the development of eyesight, hearing, voice culture, memory, creativity, emotional balance, physical stamina, stress management, intelligence, and overall personality development.

We began implementing these programs as early as 1978. Over the years, we trained nearly 65,000 teachers, and yoga has now been incorporated into educational policy in India. Similar curricula have also been developed for undergraduate and postgraduate education.

PROF. SALUJA: While policy has evolved, implementation still varies from state to state. During my recent visit to Punjab, I noticed that yoga has not yet become an everyday part of school life.

Would it not be beneficial if Yoga replaced or supplemented conventional physical education?

DR. NAGENDRA: Education is primarily a state subject in India, so implementation differs.

We have consistently advocated allocating even one or two periods each week exclusively for Yoga because its benefits extend far beyond physical fitness. Yoga transforms the individual-physically, mentally, emotionally, and intellectually.

The Government of India has made yoga compulsory in institutions receiving central assistance, and progress continues. Some states have adopted it enthusiastically, while others are still moving in that direction.

PROF. SALUJA: Turning now to your work in America, what do you expect from the Indian-American community in helping spread Yoga across the United States?

DR. NAGENDRA: In India, we built a nationwide network through VYASA with nearly 300 centers.

Now we are establishing VYASA USA, beginning in Dallas, and expanding to New York, New Jersey, Los Angeles, and other cities.

Our immediate goal is to train qualified Yoga teachers through structured certification programs.

The scientific evidence supporting yoga is now overwhelming. More than 1,500 research papers demonstrate its effectiveness in managing diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, epilepsy, migraine, stress-

related disorders, and many other non-communicable diseases.

America already has thousands of Yoga studios. Our objective is to take yoga beyond exercise classes-to the level of academic study, scientific research, and professional education.

Eventually, we hope to establish a VYASA International University in the United States.

PROF. SALUJA: So, your plan is to begin with affiliated centers and eventually establish an independent university offering internationally recognized qualifications?

DR. NAGENDRA: Exactly.

We already have an academic collaboration with Parker University in Dallas, where Yoga programs have begun successfully.

Our long-term vision is to establish an independent international university. Modern technology also enables us to deliver high-quality online undergraduate and postgraduate programs across the world.

We are currently working with the Government of India to obtain approval for our online degree programs, after which they can be offered globally.

PROF. SALUJA: How important is media support in achieving this mission?

DR. NAGENDRA: It is absolutely essential.

Scientific research alone cannot reach society unless it is communicated effectively. We need newspapers, television, digital media, and social platforms to spread awareness.

At S-VYASA, our greatest strength is scientific validation. Inspired by Swami Vivekananda's vision of combining "the best of the East with the best of the West," we have spent fifty years producing rigorous scientific research that has earned worldwide recognition.

Our university today includes a 600-bed specialty hospital and world-class research laboratories dedicated to yoga and integrative medicine.

PROF. SALUJA: I would be happy to contribute in whatever way possible. Please include The Indian Panorama among your regular media contacts so that we may continue informing our readers about your work.

I also believe temples and community centers across America can become important centers for yoga education.

DR. NAGENDRA: Absolutely.

Temple priests themselves should receive proper training. We have already developed specialized programs that combine traditional knowledge with scientific inquiry.

Our researchers are also studying the scientific foundations of ancient practices such as yajnas, homas, and other Vedic rituals. Our objective is to demonstrate that these are not merely matters of faith but have measurable scientific dimensions.

With hundreds of doctoral researchers and thousands of postgraduate students engaged in this work, we expect significant advances in the coming years.

PROF. SALUJA: Since the United Nations adopted the International Day of Yoga, Yoga has become enormously popular worldwide. It has truly transformed global awareness.

DR. NAGENDRA: Much of the credit goes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for bringing yoga onto the global stage.

His vision is that Yoga should reach every village and every community because yoga has the power to transform individuals, families, societies, and ultimately the world.

Yoga is not merely about physical health. It is a pathway to peace, harmony, and human evolution.

PROF. SALUJA: Dr. Nagendra, thank you very much for sharing your inspiring vision with the readers of The Indian Panorama. We wish you every success in your mission of taking the timeless wisdom of Yoga to the world.

DR. NAGENDRA: Thank you very much.



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Before Its 250th Anniversary, America Is at a Turning Point

BY MANOJ
JOSHI



Photo credit / Unsplash

Tomorrow (July 4), America will celebrate its 250th Independence Day. It should have been a moment of national celebration, but instead it has become a time of self-reflection and concern.

For the world, the United States has long represented a prosperous and powerful nation. Yet, many Americans themselves are worried about the country's current condition.

According to a Pew Research Center survey, around 55% of Americans in 2000 believed that future generations would be better off than their parents. Today, that number has dropped sharply to only about 19%. This reflects a significant decline in confidence about America's future.

At first glance, many people may blame former President Donald Trump for the political upheaval. However, the situation is much more complex. Trump is only one symptom of deeper divisions within American society.

The country is increasingly divided between nationalist ("America First") and socialist/progressive political forces.

Trump's supporters include many people who once

backed mainstream Republican leaders but now strongly support his policies. Even figures who previously supported aid to Ukraine and criticized Russia have shifted positions and now oppose those policies. Prominent Republican leaders who opposed Trump in the past, such as former Vice President Mike Pence and Senator Ted Cruz, have either reconciled with him or now support many of his policies.

On the other side, the Democratic Party faces growing pressure from progressive and socialist groups. The recent victory of Zohran Mamdani in New York City's Democratic mayoral primary is seen as evidence of this shift. His campaign proposed measures such as freezing rents and imposing higher taxes on wealthy residents. Polls also suggest that younger Americans increasingly favor democratic socialism, with support especially high among people under 30.

TECHNOLOGY AND ECONOMIC ANXIETY

Another factor behind the growing political divisions is rapid technological change.

For decades, Silicon Valley supported both Democratic and Republican candidates. But things are

changing. Around 60% of Americans believe that artificial intelligence (AI), which is replacing nearly 80% of entry-level IT jobs, is creating new social and economic divisions.

The debate over regulating AI has also become politically polarized. Technology companies and venture capitalists are increasingly aligning with Trump because they view AI as a key driver of productivity and economic growth. Meanwhile, many labor unions and environmental organizations oppose the rapid expansion of AI, data centers, and new power plants. People fear that these developments will increase electricity costs and environmental damage.

These divisions have created an atmosphere of uncertainty, weakening public trust. For decades, Americans believed their country was the world's leading power and that each generation would enjoy a better standard of living than the previous one. That belief is now fading.

Although wages have increased, they have not kept pace with the rising cost of housing and healthcare. Many young people are burdened with student debt, making it difficult to build wealth.

AMERICA AT 250

The America that reaches its 250th anniversary is neither in irreversible decline nor entirely healthy.

It is passing through a period of intense political and social upheaval, while the rest of the world watches with concern.

Those who possess wealth and assets have become even richer, while the middle class—the traditional backbone of American democracy—has continued to shrink. An entire generation is weighed down by student loans, rising healthcare costs, and soaring housing prices.

What we are witnessing today is the result of a disruptive political process that Trump helped unleash. He strengthened populist forces, which are now challenging both Democratic and Republican establishments.

Thus, at the age of 250, America stands at an uncertain crossroads—not facing certain collapse, but clearly undergoing profound political, economic, and social transformation as the world looks on with interest and concern.

(Manoj Joshi is an Indian journalist who specializes in Foreign Affairs. This is an opinion column ("Nazariya") published in the Indian Hindi Daily Dainik Bhaskar. It reflects the author's analysis rather than an objective news report)



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IMBCO Celebrated the 12th IDY 2026 and Indian cultural outreach program in Chisinau

**JUNE 28, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)**

The Embassy of India, Bucharest, and concurrently accredited to Moldova, in association with the India-Moldova Business & Cultural Organisation (IMBCO) and the Municipality of Chisinau, Moldova, successfully organized the 12th International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2026 along with a vibrant Indian Cultural Outreach Programme at Dendrariu Park, Chisinau, on Sunday, 28 June 2026, from 0900 hrs onwards.

The program formed part of a series of cultural and public diplomacy initiatives being undertaken in the Republic of Moldova to further strengthen the longstanding friendship between India and Moldova, promote India's rich cultural heritage and enhance people-to-people ties in the run-up to the State Visit of the Hon'ble President of India.

The celebrations witnessed enthusiastic participation from a large number of members of the Indian community, Moldovan citizens, yoga practitioners, students, diplomats, and friends of India. The event highlighted India's timeless philosophy of holistic health, harmony, and well-being through the practice of Yoga and showcased the country's rich cultural traditions.

The programme was graced by Ms. Irina Gutnic, Vice Primar of the Municipality of Chisinau, who addressed the gathering and appreciated the efforts of the Embassy of India and IMBCO in promoting Yoga and Indian culture in Moldova. She highlighted the importance of such initiatives in strengthening cultural exchanges and fostering closer ties between the people of the two countries.

Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra inaugurated the celebrations



Welcome Address by Ambassador of India

noted that Yoga inspires individuals to lead healthier, balanced and more mindful lives. He further underlined the growing cultural partnership between India and Moldova and expressed appreciation for the enthusiastic participation and warm response of the Moldovan people towards Yoga and India's rich cultural heritage.

As part of the larger cultural outreach programme, participants experienced a diverse range of Indian cultural activities, including Ayurveda awareness, Mehendi demonstrations, Indian cultural performances, traditional dance presentations, and exhibitions showcasing India's rich civilizational heritage. The integration of these activities with the celebration of the International Day of Yoga provided visitors with a comprehensive experience of India's culture, traditions, and wellness practices.

The programme also served as an important platform for promoting India's flagship global initiatives and enhancing awareness of India's cultural diplomacy in Moldova. Held during the summer season, the event attracted significant public participation and generated considerable interest among the local community.

The Embassy of India expressed its sincere appreciation to the India-Moldova Business & Cultural Organisation (IMBCO), the Municipality of Chisinau, yoga organisations, volunteers, members of the Indian community and all participants for their valuable support in making the celebrations a grand success.

The Embassy remains committed to further strengthening the warm and friendly relations between India and the Republic of Moldova through regular



Large number of Yoga participants - Indian and Moldovan and in the cultural events - Ayurveda, Dance performance, and Mehendi

and addressed the gathering. In his remarks, the Ambassador underscored the universal appeal of Yoga as one of India's most precious gifts to humanity,

promoting physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Referring to the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, he highlighted that Yoga has evolved into a global movement

for health, harmony and sustainable living, transcending national boundaries, cultures, and religions. The Ambassador also emphasized this year's theme, "Yoga for Healthy Ageing," and

cultural exchanges and public diplomacy initiatives.

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

Ambassador of India Holds High-Level Engagements in the Republic of Moldova

JULY 1, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)

Ambassador of India to Romania and concurrently accredited to the Republic of Moldova, Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, undertook a series of engagements in the Republic of Moldova aimed at further strengthening bilateral cooperation across political, economic and cultural sectors. The engagements included meetings with members of the Moldova-India Parliamentary Friendship Group of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova and local authorities in B?l?i, Orhei and Soroca. The visit underscored India's commitment to deepening its partnership with the Republic of Moldova through sustained political dialogue and enhanced cooperation at both the national and local levels.

MEETING WITH THE MOLDOVA-INDIA PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Ambassador Mohapatra met members of the Moldova-India Parliamentary Friendship Group at the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Igor Dodon, Chairman of the Friendship Group, and was attended by H.E. Mrs. Inga Ionesii, Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Moldova to India.

The two sides reviewed the current state of India-Moldova bilateral relations and discussed avenues for further strengthening political dialogue and inter-parliamentary cooperation. They exchanged views on enhancing parliamentary exchanges and agreed to work towards expanding engagement between the legislatures of the two countries.

As the world's largest democracy, India attaches great importance to parliamentary diplomacy as an important pillar of its foreign policy. Enhanced engagement between the legislatures of India and the Republic of Moldova is expected to foster greater mutual understanding, facilitate exchanges of legislative best practices and reinforce the broader bilateral partnership through stronger political dialogue and institutional cooperation.

MEETING WITH THE MAYOR OF B?L?I

During his visit to B?l?i, Ambassador Mohapatra met Mr. Alexandr Petkov, Mayor of B?l?i. The discussions focused on opportunities for cooperation in local economic development, investment, cultural exchanges and municipal-level partnerships. Both sides explored prospects for greater engagement between Indian businesses and the northern region of Moldova.

Recognizing the growing importance of sub-national diplomacy, the discussions highlighted the role of municipalities in promoting trade, investment, innovation and cultural exchanges. Stronger cooperation between Indian stakeholders and the Municipality of B?l?i is expected to contribute to expanding the economic dimension of India-Moldova relations while creating new opportunities for collaboration at the local level.

MEETING WITH THE MAYOR OF ORHEI

In Orhei, Ambassador Mohapatra met Mr. Ramiz Ansarov, Mayor of Orhei. They discussed ongoing development initiatives, investment opportunities and avenues for strengthening cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Both sides expressed interest in promoting practical cooperation between Indian and Moldovan municipalities.

The discussions underscored the value of city-to-city partnerships in complementing bilateral relations by fostering direct collaboration in urban development, business engagement, cultural cooperation and capacity-building, thereby broadening the scope of India-Moldova cooperation beyond the national level.

MEETING WITH THE MAYOR OF SOROCA

Ambassador Mohapatra also visited Soroca, where he met Mrs. Lilia Pilipe?chi, Mayor of Soroca. Discussions



Ambassador met with Mr. Igor Dodon and Ms. Inga Ionesii, along with members of the Moldovan-Indian Parliamentary Friendship Group



Ambassador met H.E. Mr. Alexandr Petkov Mayor of Balti to discuss investment opportunities.



Ambassador met H.E. Mr. Ramiz Ansarov Mayor of Orhei



Ambassador met H.E. Mrs. Lilia Pilipetchi Mayor of Soroca

focused on cooperation in local infrastructure development, investment, tourism and cultural exchanges. The visit provided an opportunity to explore areas of mutual interest and promote greater engagement at the local level.

The interaction reaffirmed the importance of local-level partnerships in strengthening bilateral ties through greater people-to-people contacts, promotion of tourism and cultural heritage, and exploration of new avenues for economic cooperation.

The Ambassador's engagements reflected the shared commitment of India and the Republic of Moldova to further deepen bilateral relations through strengthened political dialogue, enhanced parliamentary cooperation, expanded economic engagement and greater collaboration between local governments. The visit demonstrated that parliamentary exchanges and sub-national partnerships can serve as important drivers for advancing the India-Moldova partnership and creating new avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation.

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

Embassy of India Organizes Media Interaction with Romanian Media Representatives



Remarks by the Ambassador of India to the Press & Media



**JULY 1, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)**

The Embassy of India in Bucharest, in association with Indigo Hub KPTV, organized an interaction with

and Romania. The occasion also served to introduce Indigo Hub KPTV to Indian companies and Romanian businesses engaged with India.

Addressing the gathering, the

The Ambassador also highlighted India's remarkable transformation over the past decade under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He spoke about India's progress in

opportunities, renewable energy, defence cooperation, and regional and global developments. Responding to the queries, the Ambassador highlighted India's growing role as a trusted partner, a leading innovation-driven economy, and a responsible stakeholder in addressing global challenges.

A cultural presentation featuring a vibrant Bollywood dance performance was organized alongside the interaction, offering participants an opportunity to experience the richness and diversity of Indian culture. The programme formed part of the Embassy's ongoing cultural diplomacy initiatives aimed at strengthening people-to-people ties and promoting greater appreciation of India's cultural heritage in Romania.

The interaction witnessed active participation from representatives of

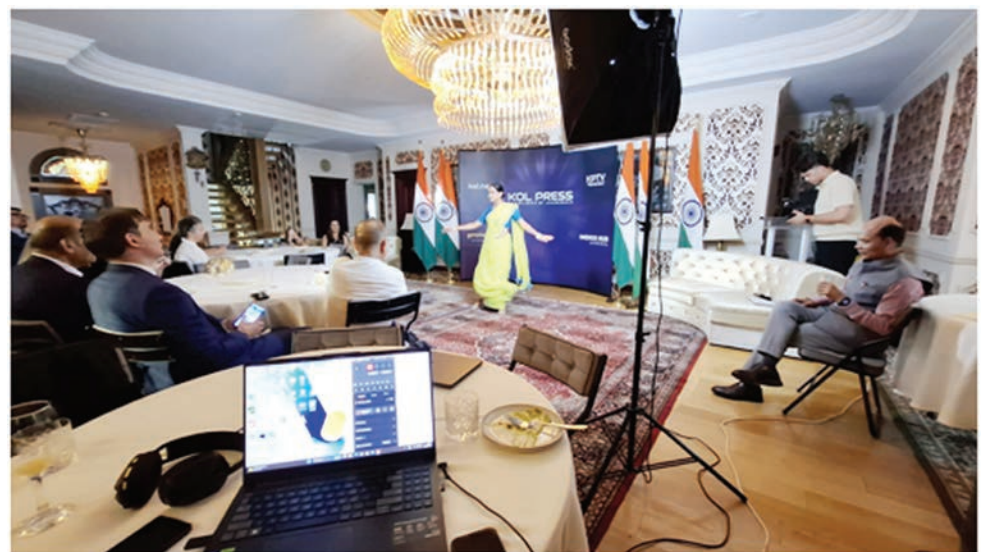


Question & Answer Session with the Press & Media

representatives of leading Romanian media organizations on 1 July 2026 as part of its regular media outreach programme. The interaction provided an opportunity to brief the media on the current state of India-Romania bilateral relations, India's development priorities, and the Embassy's programme of activities for the coming months.

The event was coordinated and hosted by Mrs. Mina Cristiana Radu, Host and Co-Producer, Indigo Hub KPTV, and Business Development Manager, KOL News & KPTV. Welcoming the participants, she underlined the important role of the media in fostering greater public awareness and promoting stronger understanding between India

Ambassador of India to Romania and concurrently accredited to the Republic of Moldova, Shri Manoj Mohapatra, highlighted the positive trajectory of India-Romania relations and the expanding scope of bilateral cooperation. He noted that the partnership has continued to grow across a broad spectrum of areas, including trade and investment, education, science and technology, digital innovation, renewable energy, defence, culture, tourism and people-to-people exchanges. He emphasized that India and Romania, as democratic partners, share common values and a mutual commitment to peace, prosperity and sustainable development.



Cultural outreach programme featuring an energetic Bollywood dance performance



A group photo with Indigo Hub Team

infrastructure development, digital public infrastructure, manufacturing, innovation, renewable energy, social welfare and economic reforms, which have positioned the country among the world's fastest-growing major economies. Referring to the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, he underlined India's commitment to inclusive, sustainable and innovation-driven growth as it advances towards becoming a developed nation by the centenary of its independence.

An interactive question-and-answer session followed the presentation. Journalists sought the Ambassador's views on a range of issues, including India-Romania relations, India's economic growth, foreign policy, digital public infrastructure, investment

leading Romanian print, television, radio and digital media organizations. It provided a useful platform for dialogue and exchange of views, while further strengthening the Embassy's engagement with the Romanian media and enhancing awareness of the growing India-Romania partnership.

The Embassy of India remains committed to further strengthening India-Romania relations through sustained engagement with the media, academia, business, cultural institutions and civil society, thereby fostering deeper mutual understanding and expanding the multifaceted partnership between the two countries.

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

Canada's Journey to Independence: From British Colony to Sovereign Nation

How a Peaceful Constitutional Evolution Created One of the World's Most Diverse Democracies

Every year on July 1, Canada bursts into a sea of red and white as millions of people celebrate Canada Day, commemorating the birth of the nation through Confederation in 1867. Fireworks illuminate city skylines, maple leaf flags flutter from homes and public buildings, military bands perform patriotic music, and communities gather for parades, concerts, cultural festivals, citizenship ceremonies, and family celebrations.

For millions of people around the world, Canada Day is not merely a national holiday-it is a celebration of a country that has become synonymous with opportunity, diversity, democracy, and hope.

Few countries have stronger people-to-people connections with Canada than India. Over the past several decades, Canada has emerged as one of the most preferred destinations for Indian migrants, students, professionals, entrepreneurs, and families seeking new opportunities abroad. Among Indian communities, the Punjabi diaspora has played an especially prominent role in shaping modern Canada. From the fertile farmlands of Punjab to thriving Canadian cities such as Brampton, Surrey, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Winnipeg, generations of Punjabi Canadians have contributed significantly to agriculture, transportation, construction, healthcare, education, business, politics, sports, and public service.

Today, Canada is home to one of the largest overseas Indian communities, with people of Indian origin numbering well over a million. Sikhs represent one of the country's most visible and influential immigrant communities, and Punjabi is among the most widely spoken non-official languages in Canada. Gurdwaras, Indian cultural centres, Punjabi festivals, Vaisakhi parades, and South Asian businesses have become an integral part of Canada's multicultural landscape.

Consequently, Canada Day is celebrated not only by native-born Canadians but also with great enthusiasm by the Indian diaspora, particularly Punjabi families who proudly display the Maple Leaf alongside their cultural heritage. Across the country, communities organize cultural performances, bhangra and giddha dances, music concerts, community langars, multicultural food festivals, and citizenship ceremonies that welcome thousands of new Canadians each year. For many first-generation immigrants, Canada Day represents gratitude toward the country that offered them education, employment, security, and a better future, while for second- and third-



generation Canadians of Indian origin, it symbolizes their dual identity-proud of their ancestral roots and equally proud of their Canadian citizenship.

The celebrations carry special meaning in 2026. Although Canada Day 2026 marks the country's 159th anniversary of Confederation, it comes at a time when Canada continues to reflect on its evolving identity amid changing global realities. Communities across the country are expected to commemorate the occasion with renewed emphasis on national unity, reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, multiculturalism, civic participation, and the contributions of immigrants who have helped shape modern Canada. From the iconic festivities on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to celebrations in every province and territory, Canada Day 2026 is expected to bring together millions of people from diverse backgrounds in a shared expression of national pride.

Yet Canada's path to nationhood differs remarkably from that of many other countries. Unlike the United States, whose independence was forged through a revolutionary war, or many former colonies that achieved freedom after prolonged struggles, Canada's independence unfolded gradually through constitutional negotiations, political compromise, and democratic reform. There was no single declaration of independence or decisive battle that severed ties with Britain. Instead,

Canada steadily gained control over its own affairs over more than a century, culminating in full constitutional sovereignty in 1982 with the patriation of its Constitution.

This peaceful evolution has often been described as one of history's most successful examples of constitutional nation-building. From a collection of British colonies spread across a vast northern frontier, Canada evolved into a prosperous federal parliamentary democracy, a constitutional monarchy, and one of the world's most respected middle powers.

Today, Canada ranks among the global leaders in quality of life, education, innovation, healthcare, environmental stewardship, and multicultural inclusion. Its cities consistently feature in international rankings for livability, while its universities attract students from every continent. The country's economy is supported by advanced manufacturing, natural resources, agriculture, artificial intelligence, clean energy, aerospace, financial services, and technological innovation.

At the heart of Canada's success lies an enduring commitment to democratic institutions, the rule of law, peaceful coexistence, and cultural diversity. More than 250 ethnic origins are represented across the country, and immigrants continue to shape every aspect of Canadian society. The country's official policy of multiculturalism-among the

first of its kind in the world-encourages people to preserve their cultural heritage while participating fully in Canadian civic life.

Canada's story, therefore, is not simply the story of independence from Britain. It is the story of how Indigenous civilizations, French and British colonial traditions, successive waves of immigration, and constitutional evolution combined to create a modern nation defined not by ethnicity or language alone, but by shared democratic values and mutual respect.

As Canada celebrates Canada Day 2026, it also celebrates more than four centuries of history-from the ancient cultures of the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples to the arrival of European explorers, the birth of Confederation in 1867, the achievement of full constitutional independence in 1982, and its continuing evolution as one of the world's most inclusive democracies. For Canadians by birth and by choice-including the vibrant Indian and Punjabi diaspora-the day serves as a reminder that Canada's greatest strength has always been its ability to unite people from different backgrounds under a common vision of freedom, opportunity, equality, and democratic governance.

**The Historical Roots of Canada:
From Ancient Indigenous
Civilizations to a Modern Nation**

From Page 25

Canada's history stretches back thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans. Long before the country became one of the world's most prosperous democracies, its vast forests, rivers, mountains, and Arctic tundra were home to thriving Indigenous civilizations that developed sophisticated societies, extensive trade networks, and rich cultural traditions.

Archaeological evidence suggests that the first people arrived in present-day Canada at least 15,000 years ago, crossing the Bering Land Bridge that once connected Siberia and Alaska during the last Ice Age. Over thousands of years, these early inhabitants spread across the continent, adapting to dramatically different environments ranging from the frozen Arctic to the Atlantic coastline, the fertile Great Lakes region, the Prairie grasslands, and the rugged Pacific coast.

Today, Canada recognizes three constitutionally protected Indigenous groups:

- First Nations
- Inuit
- Métis

Each developed unique languages, political systems, spiritual beliefs, artistic traditions, and methods of governance. The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy, for example, established one of North America's most sophisticated systems of representative governance centuries before European colonization. On the Pacific Coast, the Haida, Tlingit, and Kwakwaka'wakw peoples became renowned for their impressive cedar longhouses, elaborate totem poles, and maritime trading networks. In the Arctic, Inuit communities mastered survival in one of the harshest climates on Earth through extraordinary knowledge of hunting, navigation, and environmental stewardship.

For thousands of years, these Indigenous nations managed the land sustainably, maintained diplomatic alliances, and traded goods over vast distances. Their enduring cultural legacy continues to shape Canada's identity, while reconciliation with Indigenous peoples remains one of the country's most important national priorities.

The Vikings: Europe's First Visitors

Centuries before Christopher Columbus reached the Americas, Norse explorers from Scandinavia briefly established settlements in North America.

Around AD 1000, the Viking explorer Leif Erikson is believed to have reached the eastern shores of present-day Newfoundland. Archaeological discoveries at L'Anse aux Meadows, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, provide compelling evidence of the earliest known European settlement in North America.

Although the Viking settlement lasted only a short time, it demonstrated that Europeans had reached the continent nearly five centuries before Columbus.

The Age of European Exploration

The modern history of Canada began



during the Age of Exploration.

In 1497, John Cabot, sailing under the English flag for King Henry VII, explored parts of Newfoundland and the Atlantic coast. His voyage laid the foundation for England's territorial claims in North America.

France soon followed. In 1534, Jacques Cartier entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence and claimed the surrounding territory for the French Crown. Although Cartier's attempts at permanent settlement were unsuccessful, his voyages opened the way for French colonization.

Permanent European settlement began in 1608, when Samuel de Champlain founded Quebec City. Champlain forged alliances with several

Indigenous nations and helped establish the lucrative fur trade that became the economic backbone of New France.

Over the following century, French settlers built communities along the St. Lawrence River, introducing European agriculture, architecture, education, and Christianity while maintaining close economic relationships with Indigenous trading partners.

Britain and France Compete for North America

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Britain and France competed intensely for control of North America. Their rivalry culminated in the Seven Years' War, often described as the first global conflict.

The decisive engagement occurred on September 13, 1759, during the Battle of the Plains of Abraham outside Quebec City. British forces commanded by General James Wolfe defeated the French army led by General Louis-Joseph de Montcalm. Both commanders died from wounds sustained during the battle, but Britain's victory fundamentally altered the future of North America.

The Treaty of Paris formally transferred New France to British control.

Recognizing the importance of maintaining peace among the French-speaking population, Britain adopted a remarkably pragmatic approach. The Quebec Act of 1774 allowed French Canadians to retain their language, Catholic faith, and civil legal system. This decision laid the foundations for Canada's bilingual and bicultural character, distinguishing it from many other British colonies.

The American Revolution and Canada's Distinct Identity

The American Revolution profoundly influenced Canada's development.

While the thirteen colonies to the south rebelled against British rule, most of Britain's northern colonies remained loyal to the Crown. After American independence, approximately 40,000 United Empire Loyalists migrated north, settling in present-day Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Quebec.

These Loyalists brought British political traditions, legal institutions, and cultural values that further strengthened Canada's connection to Britain while creating a society distinct from the newly independent United States.

This divergence would shape Canada's future. Whereas the United States embraced republicanism and revolutionary ideals, Canada gradually evolved toward self-government within the British constitutional tradition.

The Road to Confederation

During the nineteenth century, Canada's colonies experienced rapid economic growth, population expansion, and increasing political maturity.

Calls for democratic reform intensified following the Rebellions of 1837-38, leading Britain to introduce responsible government, whereby executive authority became accountable to elected legislatures rather than appointed colonial governors.

Meanwhile, the construction of railways, fears of American expansion following the Civil War, economic cooperation, and the desire for stronger political institutions encouraged colonial leaders to unite.

These developments culminated in the historic Canadian Confederation on July 1, 1867, marking the birth of modern Canada and beginning the country's long constitutional journey toward complete sovereignty. This milestone is commemorated every year as Canada Day, a celebration of the nation's origins, democratic values, and continuing evolution into one of the world's most diverse and inclusive societies.



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TOGETHER, LET'S BUILD A WORLD WITHOUT CHILDHOOD BLINDNESS.**



MHA designates 23 Pakistan-based Jaish, Lashkar operatives as 'terrorists' under UAPA

JULY 4, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Union Home Ministry has designated 23 individuals based in Pakistan and associated with Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and other outfits as "terrorists" under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Chief among those designated are close aides of LeT founder Hafiz Saeed, who is accused of orchestrating multiple attacks on Indian soil.

According to a notification issued on Saturday, June 4, the designated individuals include three close aides of Hafiz Saeed — Abdul Rauf, a senior member of LeT and Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD); Hafiz Khalid Waleed, another senior LeT and JuD leader; and Rana Iftikhar, who coordinates militant activities and motivates youths to engage in terrorist operations.

Other key individuals named by the MHA include Masood Ilyas Kashmiri, a senior JeM functionary operating from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. He was involved in the April 22, 2022 attack by JeM terrorists on security forces in Sunjwan, Jammu.

"Masood Ilyas Kashmiri is a senior Jaish-e-Mohammed functionary and is involved in carrying out a wide range of terrorist activities against the country, including recruiting youth into the terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed, imparting training to them and then facilitating the infiltration of terrorists into the country," the MHA notification stated.

Mohammad Mussadiq alias Doctor, identified as the main handler of JeM infiltration operations, has also been included in the list. He was also involved in the Sunjwan attack.

"Mussadiq is involved in carrying out a wide range of terrorist activities against the country, including supplying arms and ammunition through drones across the border, planning terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir and, to further widen the scope of terror activities, is also involved in handling a team of Jaish-e-Mohammed cyber operatives who use various social media platforms to recruit youth into the terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed," the MHA said.

A third senior JeM functionary, Mufti Muhammad Asghar Khan alias Abu Saad, a launching commander of JeM terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir, was also designated. He is described as "one of the masterminds" of the 2016 attack on the Indian Army camp at Nagrota, Jammu.

These individuals have been named for their involvement in infiltration, recruitment, arms supply and planning attacks in Jammu and Kashmir.

PAN, voter card not citizenship proof: HC declares man a foreigner despite 15 documents

JULY 4, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): A Guwahati resident reportedly failed to prove his nationality despite submitting 15 documents, including National Register of Citizens (NRC) records, electoral rolls, land papers, PAN card and voter ID.

Aminul Hoque did not meet the legal burden of proving his citizenship under Section 9 of the Foreigners Act, which requires a person to prove they are not a foreigner, the Gauhati high court said, as per Bar and Bench.

A division bench of Justice Kalyan Rai Surana and Justice Shamima Jahan dismissed his petition. He had challenged a 2019 Foreigners Tribunal order that declared him a foreigner.

Hoque said he was an Indian citizen by birth and submitted documents to show his family's presence in Assam before the March 24, 1971 cut-off date, as per the outlet.

These included 1951 NRC extracts, electoral rolls from 1966 onwards, a 1973 land sale deed, PAN card, voter ID and school records. After reviewing the records, the high court said Hoque failed to prove he was a citizen of India.

"Though the petitioner had exhibited 15 (fifteen) documents as exhibits, the same does not appear to help the petitioner to establish that he has been able to discharge his burden as required under Section 9 of the Foreigners Act, 1964 to prove that he is not a foreigner but an Indian Citizen," the Court observed, as per Bar and Bench.

Hoque's father also appeared before the court and identified him as his son. The court held that oral testimony alone, without admissible and relevant documentary evidence supporting the relationship, was not enough to establish the link between the two, ET reported.

The high court said that government-issued identity documents alone could not establish a person's citizenship.

"It is well settled that PAN Card and EPIC are not proof of citizenship," the court said.



The Court also rejected Hoque's reliance on computer-generated extracts of the 1951 NRC, saying they were not proved as required under the law for electronic records.

The high court said Hoque failed to show a documented link between himself and the ancestors he claimed.

The man explained that clerical mistakes caused the spelling differences in his parents' and grandparents' records. He also said that his family had to move between villages because the Brahmaputra river eroded their land, which is why their names showed up on voter lists in different areas.

The Court noted that it did not care about minor spelling mistakes. It ruled that the man failed to prove that the families listed in the different villages were actually the same family.

The Court also pointed out that the records contained unexplained differences in ages, family details and addresses. The HC said that the man provided no independent documents to back up his claim that the family moved because of river erosion.

Indonesia looks to expand BrahMos deal with India

JULY 4, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): India and Indonesia are expected to discuss the possible sale of additional BrahMos supersonic cruise missile systems during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's three-day visit to Indonesia beginning July 6, with Jakarta reportedly keen to expand its planned acquisition beyond the initial battery agreed earlier this year.

Sources said Indonesia has conveyed its interest in procuring more than the single BrahMos missile battery envisaged under a preliminary procurement framework finalised in March. A BrahMos battery comprises launchers, radars and missiles.

The proposed expansion is expected to figure prominently during discussions aimed at strengthening defence cooperation between the two countries.

India and Indonesia first discussed the potential sale during the Defence Cooperation Dialogue held in New Delhi in November last year, when Defence Minister Rajnath Singh hosted his Indonesian counterpart, Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin. Following the preliminary



agreement in March, Indonesian Defence Ministry spokesperson Rico Ricardo Sirait said the acquisition formed part of the country's military modernisation programme, particularly to enhance its maritime defence capabilities. According to sources, both sides are working on a phased procurement plan involving the BrahMos missile, which has a range of 290 km under Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) export restrictions. New Delhi has also proposed establishing a Joint Defence Industry Cooperation Committee to promote collaboration in technology transfer, joint research and development, while Indonesia is exploring financing options through one of its banks for the purchase.

DAC clears Rs 52,000 cr defence acquisitions to strengthen Army, Navy And Air Force

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, on Friday granted Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for capital acquisition proposals worth about Rs 52,000 crore to strengthen the combat readiness and operational capabilities of the Indian Armed Forces.

The approvals cover a wide range of advanced military platforms and systems for the Army, Navy and Air Force. For the Indian Army, the DAC cleared the procurement of the AKASH TARANG anti-Unmanned Aerial Vehicle electronic warfare system, Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM) systems, Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile weapon system, Very Short Range Air Defence System, Active Protection System for tanks and jet-based kamikaze drone systems.

The Ministry of Defence said AKASH TARANG will provide effective protection against hostile drones for Army formations.

Centre to summon Meta over 'child abuse ads' on Instagram

JULY 4, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has directed officials in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to summon Meta over Instagram advertisements promoting child sexual abuse material, sources said on Friday, July 3.

The ministry would seek an explanation from Meta regarding the issue, the sources added.

Separately, a team from Meta met ministry officials following the notice summoning them on the rollout of the 'username' feature on WhatsApp in India, the sources said. Ministry officials sensitised them about the government's concern regarding the feature. As the timeline for furnishing the explanation on the username feature is three days, they would submit their final reply as per the schedule, officials said.

This is the second time in a week when the government has turned up the heat on Meta. On Wednesday, the Centre served the company with a notice over WhatsApp's proposed usernames feature, warning that it could significantly heighten the risk of online fraud, phishing, impersonation and so-called "digital arrest" scams.

It has also directed the platform to pause the feature until consultations on the issue are completed "to the satisfaction of the government". The Centre had also directed Meta to explain why regulatory action under the IT Act ought not to be initiated against it for launching a feature that may increase cybercrime.

The government also reminded Meta that WhatsApp, as a significant social media intermediary, was bound by due diligence obligations under the IT Act and rules.

Notably, after the government's notice, Meta-owned WhatsApp on Thursday had released a set of frequently asked questions on its upcoming username feature, outlining the safeguards it plans to implement to prevent impersonation, scams and unwanted contact as people begin reserving usernames ahead of the feature's rollout later this year.



PM Modi to begin Indonesia, Aus, New Zealand visit from July 6

JULY 4, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Trade and economic cooperation, defence and security, secure supply chains for commodities such as critical minerals and people-to-people ties are set to top the agenda for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's nearly week-long visit to Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand next week, officials said on Friday, July 3.

Modi will begin the three-nation tour by travelling to Indonesia, which has emerged as a key security and economic partner in the Asean region, during July 6-8. He will visit Australia during July 8-10, before travelling to New Zealand during July 10-11. Besides holding talks with the leadership of the three countries, Modi will participate in events with the Indian diaspora.

The PM is visiting Indonesia at the invitation of President Prabowo Subianto, who was the chief guest at India's Republic Day in January 2025. Modi will hold talks with Prabowo to review progress in bilateral ties and address a gathering of the Indian diaspora in Jakarta. He will also visit the Prambanan Temple complex at Yogyakarta, a UNESCO world heritage site where India and Indonesia are set to collaborate on a conservation project.

In Australia, Modi will hold talks with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Melbourne and participate in the India-Australia CEOs Forum. Modi and Albanese will participate along with sports personalities from both countries in a sports event at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. He will also address a gathering of the Indian diaspora.

Modi will travel to Auckland on the final leg of the tour for talks with New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon. This will be the first visit by an Indian premier to New Zealand in four decades. Bilateral ties have witnessed significant growth in the past two years, including the signing of a free trade agreement and enhanced defence cooperation. Modi will interact with business and sports personalities and address a gathering of the Indian diaspora.

Rudrendra Tandon, secretary (East) in the external affairs ministry, told a media briefing that the visit marks a focus on



the eastern Indian Ocean in line with India's Act East policy. "Indonesia has always played an important role for the security and stability of the Malacca Strait. This is a very important maritime zone for India, as it represents one of the most important sea lanes of communication for India [and] the global economy," he said.

Indonesia is also a key country within the Asean bloc that plays an important role in strengthening the rules-based order, and Modi and Prabowo will move forward ties, particularly in maritime cooperation, defence and enhancing trade, he said.

Responding to a question on the ongoing review of the Asean-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA), Tandon pointed to the complexities involved as this is a multilateral agreement that requires bringing all Asean member states on board. "We [have] discussed with all our Asean partners the importance of upgrading and reviewing the AITIGA, which is a very old agreement and probably does not reflect the structures of the economies either in India or in Asean," he said.

Vishwesh Negi, joint secretary (Oceania and Indo-Pacific) in the external affairs ministry, said the visit will give a push to negotiations underway with Australia for a comprehensive economic cooperation agreement (CECA).

Rebel faction takes control of TMC headquarters, locks gates

JULY 4, 2026

KOLKATA (TIP): The battle for control of the TMC escalated on Friday, July 3, when the rebel faction, led by Leader of the Opposition Ritabrata Banerjee, took charge of the party's metropolitan headquarters in Kolkata, changed the locks, put up fresh posters and declared it would henceforth operate from the premises.

The new posters identified senior MLA Arup Roy as the party's chairperson. Ritabrata said the faction would formally begin functioning from the office from Saturday.

The move came barely 24 hours after the dissident camp appeared before the full bench of the Election Commission in New Delhi to stake its claim over the party's name, symbol and organisational structure.

Accompanied by senior leaders Firhad Hakim, Javed Khan, Sandipan Saha and party treasurer Akhruzzaman, Ritabrata arrived at the office on the EM Bypass and held a meeting inside the premises, asserting that his camp represented the "real" TMC.



TMC MLA Kunal Ghosh, a member of the Mamata Banerjee-led faction, outside the Trinamool Bhavan in Kolkata on Friday. PTI

Senior leader Kunal Ghosh reached the office after learning of the developments but was unable to enter as the gates had been locked.

Describing the episode as "unfortunate", Ghosh accused the dissidents of attempting to create confusion within the party.

Speaker set to rule on TMC, Sena rebel MPs before monsoon session

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birkha is expected to take a call on the politically sensitive defection cases involving rebel MPs from the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Shiv Sena (UBT) before the monsoon session of Parliament, sources familiar with the matter said. The Speaker has already held meetings with delegations from both the parent parties and the breakaway groups, as demands for the disqualification of the rebel MPs under the anti-defection law continue to gather momentum. Sources said consultations are underway with legal and constitutional experts attached to Parliament. Previous rulings in similar cases are also being examined to ensure that any decision is constitutionally sound and legally sustainable. The issue has significant implications for the composition of the Lok Sabha ahead of the monsoon session, expected to commence in the third week of July. The Lok Sabha Secretariat is also understood to be examining possible seating arrangements for various groups in the House.

India in history this Week

JULY 3 TO JULY 9

July 3, 1757 - Mir Jafar Installed as Nawab of Bengal

Just days after the decisive Battle of Plassey (June 23, 1757), the British East India Company formally installed Mir Jafar as the Nawab of Bengal. His accession marked the beginning of British political control over Bengal and laid the foundation for nearly two centuries of colonial rule in India. The event transformed the East India Company from a trading corporation into a political power.

July 3, 1908 - Bal Gangadhar Tilak Sentenced for Sedition



Nationalist leader Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was sentenced to six years' transportation to Mandalay Jail in Burma by the British government after being convicted of sedition for articles published in his newspaper Kesari. His famous declaration, "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it," became a rallying cry for the Indian freedom movement.

July 3, 1999 - Operation Vijay Intensifies

Indian armed forces made substantial gains in the Drass and Batalik sectors during the Kargil War. These victories paved the way for the capture of Tiger Hill two days later.

July 4, 1902 - Swami Vivekananda Attains Mahasamadhi



At just 39 years of age, Swami Vivekananda attained Mahasamadhi at Belur Math near Kolkata. Founder of the Ramakrishna Mission and the monk who introduced Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago (1893), Vivekananda remains one of India's greatest spiritual icons.

July 4, 1947 - Partition Preparations Accelerate

Following acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan, administrative machinery in British India accelerated preparations for the Partition of India and Pakistan. Boundary commissions, refugee arrangements and provincial administrations intensified their work.

July 4, 1999 - Battle of Tiger Hill Nears Victory

Indian soldiers launched the final assault on Tiger Hill, one of the most strategic peaks occupied by Pakistani intruders during the Kargil conflict.

July 4, 1898 - Birth anniversary of Gulzarilal Nanda

Born in Sialkot (now in Pakistan), Gulzarilal Nanda served as India's Acting Prime Minister twice, following the deaths of Jawaharlal Nehru (1964) and Lal Bahadur Shastri (1966). He was also a noted labour leader and freedom fighter.

July 5, 1831 - Birth of Rani Avantibai Lodhi

Born in Seoni district of present-day Madhya Pradesh, Rani Avantibai became one of the leading women warriors during the Revolt of 1857. Refusing to submit to British authority, she organised armed resistance and fought bravely until her martyrdom in 1858.

July 5, 1905 - Swadeshi Movement Gains Strength

As opposition to Lord Curzon's Partition of Bengal intensified, nationalist leaders organised meetings and encouraged Indians to boycott British goods. This movement became the beginning of India's first mass economic protest against colonial rule.

July 5, 1999 - Tiger Hill Recaptured

After days of fierce fighting at altitudes exceeding 16,000 feet, Indian Army soldiers successfully recaptured Tiger Hill. The victory became one of the defining achievements of Operation Vijay and significantly weakened Pakistani positions.

July 6, 1892 - Dadabhai Naoroji Enters British Parliament

Dadabhai Naoroji became the first Indian elected to the British House of Commons, representing Central Finsbury as a Liberal Party candidate. Known as the Grand Old Man of India, he exposed Britain's economic exploitation of India through his famous Drain Theory.

July 6, 1944 - Netaji's Historic Broadcast



From Radio Rangoon, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose addressed Mahatma Gandhi as the "Father of the Nation" and sought his blessings for the Indian National Army's campaign to liberate India from British rule.

July 6, 1999 - Operation Vijay Advances

Following the capture of Tiger Hill, Indian troops continued eliminating remaining enemy positions across the Kargil sector.

July 7, 1896 - First Public Film Screening in India

The Lumière Brothers presented moving pictures at Watson's Hotel in Bombay, marking the birth of cinema in India. This historic screening eventually led to the rise of the Indian film industry, now one of the world's largest.

July 7, 2008 - Chandrayaan-I Preparations Completed

ISRO completed critical testing phases of Chandrayaan-1, India's first lunar mission, before its successful launch in October 2008.

July 8, 1910 - Savarkar's Escape Attempt at Marseilles

Freedom fighter Vinayak Damodar Savarkar escaped from the British ship SS Morea by swimming ashore at Marseilles, France. Although recaptured within minutes, the daring escape became legendary in India's revolutionary history.

July 8, 1972 - Simla Agreement Signed



Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistan President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto signed the Simla Agreement following the 1971 Indo-Pak War. Both nations agreed to resolve disputes peacefully and respect the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir.

July 8, 2012 - Western Ghats Declared UNESCO World Heritage Site

UNESCO recognised 39 sites across the Western Ghats for their exceptional biodiversity and ecological significance, highlighting one of the world's richest biodiversity hotspots.

July 8, 1914 - Birth Anniversary of Jyoti Basu

Veteran communist leader who served as Chief Minister of West Bengal for over 23 years, making him one of India's longest-serving chief ministers.

July 9, 1856 - Widow Remarriage Reform Movement

Public campaigns led by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar reached their climax before the passage of the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act later that month. The movement marked a milestone in India's social reform history.

July 9, 1925 - Revolutionary Preparations for Kakori

Members of the Hindustan Republican Association, including Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqulla Khan, finalised plans for the Kakori Train Action, which took place on August 9, 1925.

July 9, 2015 - Digital India Programme Launched

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Digital India Mission, aiming to transform India into a digitally empowered society through improved internet connectivity, e-governance and digital services.

July 9, 1925 - Birth anniversary of Guru Dutt

One of India's greatest filmmakers, Guru Dutt directed timeless classics including Pyaasa, Kaagaz Ke Phool, Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam and Chaudhvin Ka Chand.





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FILMS TO WATCH

BY MABEL PAIS

SHAKTI



LUIS VALDEZ reading script

Director: Nani Sahra Walker; 2026; Nepal/USA; Drama; 1h 35m

Directed by Nani Sahra Walker, "Shakti" follows a single mother searching for answers after her young daughter begins behaving in increasingly strange and unsettling ways, leading her on a journey through Nepal's intersecting worlds of medicine, spirituality, and social injustice.

"One of the most rewarding parts of this journey has been seeing how audiences connect with the film," Walker said. "While "Shakti" is deeply rooted in Nepal, the conversations it sparks about family, power, healing, and justice have resonated across cultures. Making the film available for free on streaming platforms allows those conversations to reach even more people."

Set against the backdrop of a rapidly changing Nepal, "Shakti" explores themes of caste discrimination, gender violence, corruption, and resilience. The film seeks to spark dialogue around Nepal's statute of limitations on sexual violence, among the most restrictive globally, while creating space for conversations that are often pushed to the margins.

Following its digital debut on Amazon Prime Video in the United States and United Kingdom, the award-winning Nepal-set drama "SHAKTI" expanded its global reach through a free streaming release on Tubi, Plex, and Fawesome beginning June 26, with additional platforms to follow.

The worldwide release marks the next chapter in the film's growing rollout. Last month, Variety announced the film's Amazon Prime Video debut, bringing the acclaimed feature to audiences in the U.S. and U.K.

Since premiering on the international festival circuit, "Shakti" has earned multiple honors, including the Best Narrative Premiere Award and Richard D. Propes Narrative Social Impact Award at the Heartland International Film Festival. The film has also screened at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, CAAMFest, and the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) Goa. Ahead of its streaming release, "Shakti" will screen as the Closing Night Film of the Nepal America International Film Festival.

Release date: Distributed by Buffalo 8, "Shakti" will be available to stream free beginning June 26 on Tubi, Plex, and Fawesome, with additional streaming platforms to be announced.



Director Bao Nguyen, Code for the People.

Credit: Courtesy, <https://automatic.com>.

Release date: The film premieres globally on July 9. Learn more at codeforthepeople.com.

CODE FOR THE PEOPLE

Director: Bao Nguyen; 2026; USA; Doc Short; 22m

The open web is the most vital invisible utility we have, and it's under siege.

We've traded a free internet for a collection of walled gardens. A handful of digital landlords use algorithms to dictate our reality, and closed AI is poised to reshape how we connect. We're at a breaking point. We can let gatekeepers keep consolidating power, or we can reclaim the open source spirit that built the web in the first place.

The future of the internet is being decided right now, and it needs our help.

From director Bao Nguyen ("BTS: The Return," "Be Water," "The Greatest Night in Pop"), "Code for the People" is a documentary short about the past, present, and contested future of the open web. This film is an exploration of what the internet is actually for, who gets to own it, and what it takes to keep it free.

AMERICAN PACHUCO: THE LEGEND OF LUIS VALDEZ



Shakti.

Credit: Courtesy, <https://filminddependent.org>.**Director/Writer: David Alvarado; 2026; USA; English/Spanish; Doc; 1h 32m**

"AMERICAN PACHUCO: THE LEGEND OF LUIS VALDEZ" chronicles how writer/playwright/director Luis Valdez illuminated the Mexican American experience on stage and screen and transformed the American cultural landscape. Born in Delano, California in 1940, Valdez wrote his first plays in grammar school, had his first play produced when he was a student at San Jose State University, and created El Teatro Campesino alongside the United Farm Workers, helping to inspire a broader Chicano theater movement.

An auteur emerges from America's underclass: from migrant farmworker to revolutionary artist, Luis Valdez changed American culture. In the 1960s, his El Teatro Campesino performed on flatbed trucks and helped mobilize workers to win the first farmworker union contract. His "Zoot Suit" was the first Chicano play on Broadway. Despite critical rejection that killed the show, he persevered, creating "La Bamba" — a breakout blockbuster that authentically depicted Mexican-American life to the world. Now in its 60th year, El Teatro continues to be a beacon for Latino/a creators. This is the story of an artist who gave voice to the overlooked and opened pathways for generations.

Following a sold-out run of his landmark play "ZOOT SUIT" in Los Angeles (1978), Valdez became the first Chicano director to have a play presented on Broadway when it made its New York premiere in 1979. The hit film "La Bamba" (1987), written and directed by Valdez, was also a cultural phenomenon and the first Hollywood blockbuster to focus on a Hispanic family's experience. The film adaptations of "ZOOT SUIT" and "LA BAMBA" were both selected by the Library of Congress for preservation in the National Film Registry.

"I was 21 when I heard Luis Valdez speak, and it rearranged what I thought was possible for my life," said director Alvarado. "Twenty years later, putting his story on the big screen is the best way I know to pay that forward. This film is about who gets to be American, and a movie theater is one of the last rooms in this country where strangers still sit together in a room and experience something new and something wonderful. Everybody in that room belongs."

"Luis Valdez built El Teatro Campesino on the back of a flatbed truck, performing for farmworkers in the towns where this film will now play," Alvarado said. "Booking theaters in Salinas, Fresno, and Bakersfield mattered to us as much as booking the Film Forum in New York City. Luis has spent 60 years proving that Chicanos aren't on the margins of the American story. We are the American story."

Release date: Originally released in January 2026 by PBS and at the Sundance Film Festival, the film will be re-released in theaters on July 17, 2026.

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

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NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY CHOOSES 2026-2027 COLTON FELLOWS

BY MABEL PAIS

The New Jersey Symphony has decided Ricardo Ferro as the Colton Conducting Fellow and cellist Rahel Lulseged and violist Rosa Ortega Iannelli as Orchestral Fellows for the 2026–27 season.

After a national search and competitive auditions the decision was made to choose the conducting fellow and the orchestral fellows. The New Jersey Symphony Colton Conducting and Orchestral Fellowship is an excellence-based program that provides opportunities for early-career orchestral conductors and musicians from underrepresented backgrounds to gain valuable professional experience as a foundation to propel their careers and be successful in the music industry. This initiative continues New Jersey Symphony's commitment to diversity,



(From left to right) - Ricardo Ferro, Rahel Lulseged, and Rosa Ortega Iannelli.

Credit: Courtesy, <https://symphony.org>.

Rosa Ortega Iannelli

A violist, educator, and juggler, Rosa Ortega Iannelli hails from San Juan, Puerto Rico. An avid orchestral musician, Rosa enjoys performing regularly with Symphony of the Americas and numerous other ensembles in South Florida including the New World Symphony and NuDeco Ensemble. Rosa has toured with Bad Bunny as a member of the Philharmonic Orchestra Project, performing for over 700,000 people nationwide. Rosa received their Bachelor of Music in Viola Performance from Temple University, and both their Master of Music and Professional Performance Certificate from the Lynn Conservatory.

New Jersey Symphony



NJ Symphony violinists performing. Credit: <https://njsymphony.org>.

equity, and inclusion.

The program, a generous gift from Stewart and Judith Colton, they share "Talent is everywhere — opportunity is not. We are pleased with how the Colton Fellowships help close that gap and ensure the Symphony reflects the diversity and richness of the communities we serve. It has been our pleasure to create this fund that opens doors so that gifted musicians and conductors from underrepresented backgrounds can thrive, lead, and inspire the next generation."

Ferro will work closely with the Symphony's Music Director Xian Zhang, the orchestra's Artistic Advisory Committee, Vice President of Artistic Planning, and artistic staff. With responsibilities that include rehearsing and conducting select performances, Ferro will also serve as cover conductor for Classical season programs, preparing scores to replace the scheduled conductor if needed. The role also includes conducting off-stage ensembles, serving as score reader for supertitles, listening to rehearsals and performances, and consulting on other artistic elements.

"Ricardo won us over from the moment he stepped on the podium with his strong technique, exceptional communication skills, and his infectious love of music,"

says Interim Vice President of Artistic Planning Patrick Chamberlain.

Ferro will also participate in planning meetings, media events, fundraising activities, administrative meetings, and educational and community engagement opportunities. Musician Fellows, Lulseged and Ortega Iannelli, will participate in New Jersey Symphony performances, receive mentorship, and engage with the community.

Ricardo Ferro

Ricardo Ferro is a Venezuelan conductor, composer, and pianist based in New York City. His recent performance engagements include conducting appearances with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the Tonkünstler Orchestra at the Grafenegg Festival in Vienna, and a conducting fellowship at the Aspen Music Festival, where he was named recipient of the Robert Spano Conducting Prize. A versatile artist, dedicated advocate of contemporary music, and vibrant musical personality, his additional composing engagements include premieres with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and the Canadian League of Composers.

Ricardo began his musical studies in Caracas as a pianist but was captivated early on by the world of orchestral music

while attending rehearsals of Venezuela's El Sistema program. Early in his musical upbringing, he also developed a passion for composition and improvisation, insights which inform his freedom and creativity on the podium. Learn more at <https://ricardoferromusic.com>.

Rahel Lulseged

Born in Dallas, Texas with origins from Ethiopia, Rahel Lulseged started on cello at age 12 in the 6th grade, truthfully to visit Six Flags at the end of the year but instead found a real passion for music. She attended Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, after applying in secret from her parents. She later received her bachelor's degree from the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University, under the tutelage of Alan Stepansky with the Rose and Leon J. Neiburger scholarship, as well as the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Performing Arts Scholarship. She received a master's degree in Orchestral Performance at the Manhattan School of Music on a full tuition scholarship. Rahel toured Australia performing with Ms. Solange Knowles. She also performs on Broadway, most recently in "Schmigadoon!" and "Hamilton."

New Jersey Symphony is a GRAMMY and Emmy Award-winning orchestra. Under the direction of Music Director Xian Zhang, the Symphony performs more than 55 mainstage concerts across the state at venues in Newark, Princeton, New Brunswick, Red Bank, and Morristown, as well as at schools and public spaces statewide.

Programming at the Symphony reflects an unwavering commitment to diverse communities throughout the state, while providing students unparalleled opportunities to achieve musical excellence through its Youth Orchestra and other education programs.

In 2024, the Symphony announced it would continue to deliver its statewide activities from a new, permanent office, rehearsal, and concert space in Jersey City, set to open in 2027. For more information about the New Jersey Symphony, visit the website at njsymphony.org.

Connect with NJ Symphony

Follow NJ Symphony on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, X, and YouTube.

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

NJPAC'S REDESIGNED CHAMBERS PLAZA OFFERS FREE SUMMER CONCERTS

BY MABEL PAIS

Newark's cherished free concert series "Horizon Sounds of the City" which started on June 25, 2026 continues in summer 2026, when the beautifully redesigned and expanded outdoor space Chambers Plaza comes alive as music fans and community members gather for this much-loved Jersey summer tradition.

This year, the series began earlier in the season when Horizon Sounds of the City joined "North to Shore Festival Welcomes the World," a month-long celebration of New Jersey's love of the arts, and the global passion for soccer.

On June 25 at 5:00 pm, "Horizon Sounds of the City" began with the legendary WBGO DJ Felix Hernandez, who launched the festivities with his Rhythm Revue Dance Party, spinning classic soul, R&B, and dance grooves. Hernandez has launched the series for more than a decade, and his appearance – which annually packs the plaza with dancers of all ages – sets the stage for a vibrant summer, featuring an exciting lineup of world-class performers and on-site activations.

This year's spectacular lineup features a diverse array of world-renowned artists, including:

6/25: DJ Felix Hernandez

6/26: DJ Wallah with Nice &

Smooth

7/9: A Tribute to Mtume featuring R&B Hall of Famer Kenny Lattimore, Ms. Lisa Fischer, Tawatha Agee and Ray Chew

7/16: SPINALL

7/23: Kurtis Blow

7/30: CimaFunk

8/6: Vivian Green

"Horizon Sounds of the City is more than just music; it's a celebration of Newark's spirit and a commitment to uplifting our neighbors," said Jonathan R. Pearson, Executive Director of Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey."

Each event will feature an array of food trucks serving local favorites just beyond the dance floor, as well as sponsor giveaways and community resource tables offering information and support from city nonprofits and other organizations.

In addition to headline acts, each evening will showcase opening performances by artists. Events in July and August will also feature readings by spoken word poets through NJPAC's ongoing Dodge Poetry initiative (<https://njpac.org/series/dodgepoetry>).

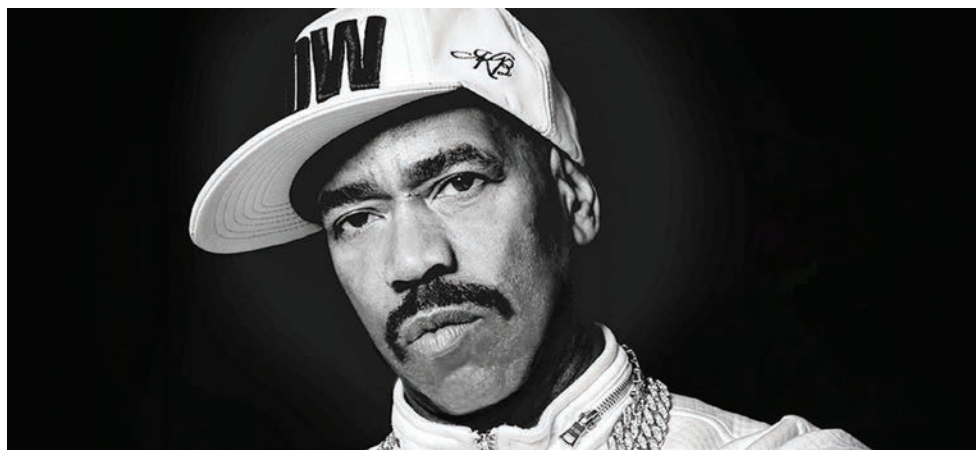
Students from NJPAC's renowned Arts Education training programs (<https://njpac.org/arts-education>) will perform as one of the opening acts of the final performance, offering audiences a glimpse of Newark's next generation of stars.

Everyone in the community is invited to experience the "Horizon Sounds of the City" concert series. Be advised to bring a lawn chair,



Mtume Tribute, performers.

Credit : <https://njpac.org>.



Kurtis Blow.

Credit : <https://njpac.org>.

sunblock and your best dance moves to Newark's most fun summer-long party!

To learn more about "Horizon Sounds of the City" visit (<https://njpac.org/arts-education>) or (<https://njpac.org/soundsofthecity>)

**A TRIBUTE TO MTUME
KENNY LATTIMORE, MS. LISA FISCHER, TAWATHA AGEE AND RAY CHEW!**

**Horizon Sounds of the City
Thursday, July 9, 2026 @ 5PM
Chambers Plaza
FREE**

A Tribute to Mtume featuring R&B Hall of Famer Kenny Lattimore, Ms. Lisa Fischer, Tawatha Agee and Ray Chew! Celebrating the legacy of '80s hitmaker and activist James Mtume, founder of the band Mtume and creator of iconic R&B jams like "Juicy Fruit," "You, Me and He," "Would You Like to Fool Around," and "Breathless." Alongside songwriting partner Reggie Lucas, Mtume produced for legends such as Roberta Flack, Donny Hathaway, Stephanie Mills, and Phyllis Hyman. Musical director Ray Chew leads this tribute, featuring R&B Hall of Famer Kenny Lattimore, Ms. Lisa Fischer and Mtume's lead vocalist Tawatha Agee.

**SPINALL
Horizon Sounds of the City
Thursday, July 16, 2026 @ 5PM
Chambers Plaza
FREE**

It's a party on the plaza, with the world-famous SPINALL spinning Afropop, EDM and hip hop. Born in Lagos, he's the first Nigerian DJ to play Coachella, SXSW and

Glastonbury. Along with six studio albums, he's also spun for Bruno Mars and Jay-Z.

**KURTIS BLOW
Horizon Sounds of the City
Thursday, July 23, 2026 @ 5PM
Chambers Plaza
FREE**

Back on the NJPAC mic — it's legendary MC Kurtis Blow! One of the founding fathers of hip hop, he gave us huge hits like "The Breaks," "Basketball" and "If I Ruled the World." For those who love old-school hip hop, this party is gonna be off the hook.

**CIMAFUNK
Horizon Sounds of the City
Thursday, July 30, 2025 @ 5PM
Chambers Plaza
FREE**

GRAMMY® nominee CimaFunk! The euphoric, funkadelic Afro-Cuban band celebrates Blackness across borders. With Latin flavor and unstoppable energy, CimaFunk brings the party each and every time. Special guest Sally Baby's Silver Dollars — a gem of the New Orleans music scene, will be present with a funky Creole-Calypso sound.

**VIVIAN GREEN
Horizon Sounds of the City
Thursday, Aug 6, 2026 @ 5PM
Chambers Plaza
FREE**

Celebrated vocalist Vivian Green captivates audiences with her rich, unforgettable R&B anthems like "Emotional Rollercoaster" and "Get Right Back to My Baby." Renowned for her mesmerizing vocals, Vivian has released multiple acclaimed albums,

earned chart-topping hits, and collaborated with industry icons. Her passionate artistry continues to inspire fans and redefine modern soul. Fans will fall in love with her extraordinary voice all over again.

New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC)

NJPAC, located in downtown Newark, New Jersey, is among the largest performing arts centers in the United States. It is the artistic, cultural, educational and civic center of New Jersey — where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day.

As New Jersey's anchor cultural institution, NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the state's and the world's best artists while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city.

Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has attracted more than 12 million visitors (including more than two million children) since opening its doors in 1997 and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. Visit <https://njpac.org> for more information.

NJPAC

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Youtube: Standing in Solidarity playlist

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

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Kriti Sanon shares cozy photo with Kabir Bahia, shuts down breakup rumors

Kriti Sanon has long been rumoured to be dating businessman Kabir Bahia. Recently, speculation about their alleged breakup started doing the rounds after a photo of Kabir with another woman went viral on social media. However, Kriti was quick to shut down all such rumours by sharing a cozy picture with her rumored boyfriend. Meanwhile, the actor also spoke about her much-discussed relationship in a recent interview.

Recently, Kriti dropped a carousel of unseen moments from the past six months. The photos captured little glimpses of her life, including selfies, travels with her dog, a warm hug with her *Cocktail 2* co-star Rashmika Mandanna, and a snowy vacation with sister Nupur Sanon. Among all the pictures, one photo that grabbed fans' attention showed Kriti watching a live performance with Kabir Bahia, with the two wrapping their arms around each other. While Kabir was dressed in an embroidered ivory sherwani, Kriti kept it casual in a black hoodie with the words, "Emotionally Invested, Financially Broke," printed on the back.

Last week, a photo of Kabir with another woman at a wedding surfaced on Reddit. The image sparked speculation that Kabir and Kriti had parted ways. However, Kriti appears to have quickly dismissed these claims through her latest post.

Meanwhile, a source close to Kabir told *The Times of India* that the viral image had been completely misunderstood. "The image being circulated online of Kabir with a girl has been completely misconstrued. She's his family friend whom he considers like a sister. It's unfortunate how quickly people jump to conclusions and spread false narratives," the source said.

During a recent interaction with *Times Now*, Kriti was asked about her rumored relationship and Kabir's noticeable presence at her sister Nupur Sanon's wedding with singer Stebin Ben. While Kriti avoided giving a direct update on her personal life, she did hint that she prefers to keep such matters private.

She said, "I would not want to talk about my personal life at least till I am married. The day I get married. I will talk about it. There are some things that are just for me and my close people and between us, I say everything."

Alpha X review: Alia Bhatt and Sharvari impress, but the story divides audiences

As the first female-led instalment in the YRF Spy Universe, *Alpha* arrived with immense expectations following months of buzz around its trailer, songs and promotional campaign. Early reactions suggest audiences have been impressed by the action and performances, but opinions remain divided over whether the story lives up to the franchise's reputation.

The first wave of audience reactions has highlighted the film's slick action sequences and performances, particularly Sharvari's, with several users calling her one of the film's biggest strengths.

However, not everyone was convinced by the screenplay. One user wrote, "Very boring Start, can't believe this is Yrf film." Another posted, "Alpha is a film that has some strong moments, but an average story holds it back."

A third viewer commented, "The story is the weakest part of the film. It is predictable from the beginning, and there are very few twists that actually surprise you."

While many appreciated the film's scale and presentation, several reactions suggested that the narrative lacked the unpredictability audiences have come to expect from the YRF Spy Universe.

Alpha follows two elite agents who embark on a high-stakes mission centred on national security, betrayal and survival. The story blends large-



scale action with emotional moments as the protagonists navigate dangerous situations while attempting to protect the country.

The film also expands the larger YRF Spy Universe, making it a significant addition for fans invested in the franchise's interconnected storylines.

Directed by Shiv Rawail and produced by Yash Raj Films, *Alpha* stars Alia Bhatt, Sharvari, Bobby Deol and Anil Kapoor. The film marks a

milestone as the first female-led chapter in the studio's successful spy franchise.

Although the initial social media response has been mixed, discussions around *Alpha* continue to gain momentum online. Whether the positive word around the action and performances outweighs criticism of the story is likely to become clearer as the film's opening-day box office figures emerge.

'Ramayana deliberately had bad VFX in Rama glimpse for publicity', says creator

A content creator who visited the sets of Nitesh Tiwari's upcoming epic *Ramayana* has now made an explosive claim, purportedly after speaking to crew members. Dhruv Parikshit, who makes videos on films and cinema, recently visited the *Ramayana* sets, and later claimed that the film's makers released a 'nerfed' version of Ranbir Kapoor's Lord Rama glimpse to start discussions and debates for 'free marketing'.

Earlier this week, the makers of *Ramayana* held a creators' day on the film's sets. A number of content creators visited the sets and met the director Nitesh Tiwari, producer Namit Malhotra, and actors Yash and Ranbir Kapoor. Dhruv, who was one of the attendees, first shared a bunch of pictures on his Instagram and then videos of his experience on Wednesday. In the comments section of one of the



videos, he was asked about the VFX work and whether it was incomplete. He replied, "Yes, it was incomplete. But the vision they have, I genuinely can't put it into words. The scenes I witnessed there were on the level of *Avatar*. I'm not exaggerating, they're truly cooking something wonderful. The character designs and the world of *Ramayana* feel incredibly immersive."

The creator then added, "I also got a chance to talk to one of their VFX artists. He told me that the creators deliberately uploaded a nerfed version of the Rama glimpse. They had better versions of those scenes, yet they intentionally chose to release the incomplete one. Why? Because discussions and criticism across the internet translate into free marketing."

However, by Thursday, Dhruv had deleted his reply to the original comment and added another in its place.

Spider-Man Tom Holland takes Lionel Messi web-swinging in new video

Actor Tom Holland's Spider-Man is back in action, this time alongside football superstar Lionel Messi. Sony Pictures has unveiled a new promotional video for Spider-Man: Brand New Day, bringing together the beloved web-slinger and the Argentine icon in a surprise crossover tied to the FIFA World Cup 2026.

The fun clip features Holland's Peter Parker sharing the screen with Messi in a light-hearted encounter that blends superhero thrills with football fever.

The short promo opens with Peter Parker speaking to a friend on the phone while sitting in a cafe. Moments later, Messi walks in carrying a Spidey-Tracker as he searches for the friendly neighbourhood superhero.

Peter quickly slips away to change into his Spider-Man suit before returning to take the football star on a web-swing across the city. The playful sequence ends with the pair soaring above the skyline, offering fans a fun crossover between the Marvel universe and the FIFA World Cup.

The crossover comes ahead of Argentina's FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 32 clash against Cape Verde, with Lionel Scaloni's side aiming to defend its world title. The timing is significant as Messi heads into the knockout stage as the tournament's leading goalscorer with six goals. Alongside the teaser, a fresh report from entertainment insider Alex Perez of The Cosmic Circus claims that Tom Holland is now playing a bigger role in the creative process of the Spider-Man franchise. According to the report, Holland's involvement is said to be similar to the creative input Tom Hiddleston had during the development of Loki.

Taylor Swift, Travis Kelce tie the knot in star-studded Madison Square Garden wedding

Pop music megastar Taylor Swift and football player Travis Kelce are married, the singer's publicist announced on Friday as guests attended a star-studded celebration at Madison Square Garden in New York that capped a three-year love story.

"JUST&T MARRIED", flashed on giant screens on the exterior of the Manhattan sports arena. Swift's publicist confirmed via email that the Grammy-winning musician had wed the Kansas City Chiefs star.

Comedian Adam Sandler officiated the ceremony, said the publicist's statement under the headline "Taylor Swift & Travis Kelce Are Married!" The statement described Sandler as a friend of the couple.

Swift's brother, Austin Swift, served as "man of honor" and Kelce's brother, retired football star Jason Kelce, was best man, the statement said.

The bride and groom wore looks created by Christian Dior, according to the statement.

Stars including Jennifer Lopez, Ed Sheeran, Ethan Hawke, Jimmy Fallon and Abby Wambach were spotted entering the Garden on a sweltering day when temperatures topped 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius).

Onlookers including the singer's "Swifties" fans strained to catch a glimpse of the celebrity crowd at the event dubbed "America's royal wedding" and held amid heavy security at a site that sits atop one of New York's



major transit hubs. One fan showed off a pink-and-white friendship bracelet that read "Team Bride". Another held a handmade sign that put a spin on a Swift lyric. "Karma is the guy on the Chiefs, coming straight to MSG," it said.

Fourteen-year-old Jenntry Vaughn from Michigan and her mother Danielle stopped to look at the "JUST&T

MARRIED" sign.

"We follow her because we love her so much," Jenntry said. "That's pretty cool."

Earlier, Jane Lowry, a 15-year-old high school student from Texas who came to New York on vacation, climbed scaffolding across the street from the Garden to catch a glimpse of arriving celebrities.

Angelina Jolie hasn't dated since divorce from Brad Pitt

Nearly a decade after her divorce from her actor husband Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie has shared a rare glimpse into her personal life, revealing that she hasn't dated anyone since the split. The Oscar-winning actor said her focus has remained firmly on raising her six children, though she now feels she's beginning to rediscover parts of herself.

Jolie made the remarks while promoting her upcoming film *Couture*, in which she plays Maxine Walker, an American filmmaker diagnosed with breast cancer who unexpectedly finds love. Speaking to Yahoo Entertainment, Jolie said, "To be candid, I haven't dated since I divorced a decade ago. So I kind of get in my head that that aspect of me is not centred in my life if I'm focusing on my children, my family."

She added that, for the first time in years, she feels she is beginning to

embrace a new chapter.

"So yes, things are changing, but in a way I didn't expect. It doesn't feel like I'm 51 and starting to think of being older. I'm thinking I have to live again. Be free again. In a way that maybe life has broken me a little bit. I've come around to being a little bit more the person I used to be," she said. Jolie also spoke about the role her daughters have played in that journey. She said they have encouraged her to reconnect with the person she was before life became centred on motherhood, helping her reflect on the values she hopes to pass on to them, including strength, kindness, confidence and courage.

According to Jolie, her daughters now want to see her not only as their mother but also as a woman with her own identity, dreams and interests. Their support, she said, has prompted her to revisit parts of herself that she had set aside over the years.



Pakistan Deputy PM Ishaq Dar's grandson arrested for rape & kidnapping

Pakistani politics has been hit by a bombshell with the arrest of Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar's grandson for alleged abduction and rape of two foreign nationals. Pakistanis are livid over the state of affairs under Asim Munir, with many social media users saying this is what they get in a military-ruled state.

The allegations against Raza Dar occupied much of Pakistani social media space on Friday, with what is believed to be a copy of the First Information Report (FIR) circulating on various platforms. A barrage of critiques, complaints, and conspiracy theories followed.

According to the FIR, five individuals, including Raza Dar, have been booked in connection with the alleged offences. However, it also named a 'boss' who allegedly kidnapped the foreign nationals.

Dutch national Stephanie Adriana Mau-Arun and Venezuelan Astrid Robinson Bracho filed a case alleging they were kidnapped, gang-raped, and extorted. They claimed they met Raza in Singapore in October 2025. He invited them to Pakistan, arranged visas, and they were abducted on 29 June in Lahore by Raza, his "boss" and three others, reports stated. Police allege that the women were lured to Lahore under false pretences before being abducted. Investigators said the alleged abduction had taken place on 29 June, BBC Urdu reported.

40 Dead As Bus Plunges Into Ravine In Pakistan's Balochistan

A speeding, overcrowded passenger bus plunged from a highway into a rocky ravine in southwestern Pakistan early Friday, July 3, killing 40 people and injuring eight others in one of the deadliest road accidents in recent years, officials said.

The bus went out of control and fell into the ravine in Dana Sar, a remote area near the border of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, Shahid Rind, a spokesperson for the Balochistan government, said.

He said the bus was carrying not only its own passengers but also passengers from another bus that had broken down, leaving the vehicle overcrowded. Rind said rescuers were working to identify those killed in the crash.

Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari expressed sorrow over the passenger bus crash, offered condolences to the families of those killed and wished the injured a speedy recovery.

He directed the relevant authorities to ensure the injured receive the best possible medical care.

Why Pakistan, not India, is to blame for its own water crisis

JULY 4, 2026

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI (TIP): Pakistan, a state sponsor of terror, seems to have found a new way to deflect attention from its record on terrorism. It has turned to a new rallying cry - water, or Indus water to be precise. As a punishing heatwave grips the country, leading to fears of a water shortage, a desperate Pakistan hosted an "international conference". The centrepiece of this campaign was Pakistan's claim that India was "stopping water" by suspending the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). However, in reality, Pakistan's growing water crisis is of its own making.

Pakistan's water crisis did not begin with India's decision on the Indus Treaty, which was taken following the 2025 Pahalgam attack. The roots, in fact, lie in decades of neglect, a lack of storage capacity, poor water management, and internal disputes among its provinces. In short, Pakistan has never worked towards securing its own water future.

Instead of tackling it, Pakistan, being Pakistan, has chosen to do what it has been doing for decades: build a warped narrative blaming India. Over the past year, Pakistan sent its ministers to Western countries to put pressure on India to restore the Indus Treaty.

Interestingly, the country founded on the two-nation theory also started to tom-tom its pre-Islamic Indus Valley Civilisation heritage to push forward its case. It has also sought to shape its narrative through think-tanks such as London's Chatham House.

However, the efforts have fallen flat. Even the World Bank, which helped broker the IWT, has declined to intervene.



Pushed into a corner, Pakistan came up with an "international conference", which featured no major prominent foreign leaders. People like a Chinese academic Victor Gao or some unknown US official didn't really add much.

What, however, was unmistakable was the empty rhetoric coming from some Pakistani leaders, including threats of nuclear Armageddon by Bilawal Bhutto. Pakistan's climate change minister Musadik Malik also threatened to "cut off those hands" that seek to control the Indus water.

India, however, has made it amply clear that the Indus treaty won't be back unless Pakistan reined in terror organisations. "Blood and water cannot flow together," Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said repeatedly.

The Pahalgam carnage, which left 25 tourists dead, was the tipping point for India suspending the IWT. For more than six decades, India honoured the treaty through wars and terror attacks like the 26/11 Mumbai carnage or the Pulwama tragedy.

As per the 1960 treaty, the three eastern rivers - Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas - were allocated entirely to India. Pakistan received exclusive rights over the western rivers - Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab.

India, however, was permitted to build "run-of-the-river" hydroelectric projects on the western rivers.

Over the years, India has built substantial storage infrastructure on the eastern rivers. This has prevented flooding in downstream Pakistan, especially in areas like Lahore. Thus, if India had to "weaponise" water, as Pakistan has claimed, it could have done so long ago.

In fact, a substantial amount of water allocated to India under the IWT continues to flow into Pakistan because of a lack of storage facilities and canal networks on the Indian side to divert it to irrigation fields in Jammu and Kashmir. For decades, Pakistan continued to benefit from it.

However, India has now accelerated efforts to utilise this untapped water. The long-delayed Shahpur Kandi Dam project on the Punjab-J&K border is nearing completion. This will end the routine flow of surplus water from the Ravi to Pakistan, and divert it to drought-hit Kathua and Samba districts.

Projects linked to the Chenab basin and the proposed Chenab-Beas canal system. The Rs 2,532 crore project will help divert surplus Chenab water to the Beas river system.

But all these projects are not designed to divert Pakistan's share of water, but to make greater use of water previously unused by India. As to Pakistan's allegation of India stopping the flow of western Indus rivers, Delhi presently doesn't have the infrastructure to turn off the tap or divert a substantial amount of water. Most are run-of-the-river hydropower projects on the tributaries and have capacities of less than 5 MW. *Source: India Today*

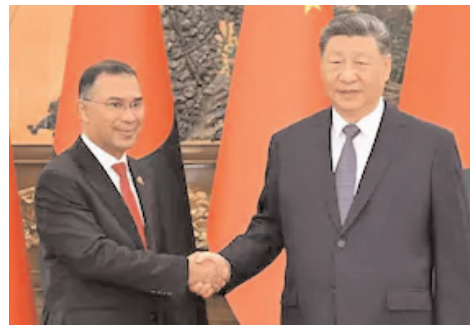
After Pak, it's Bangladesh, Myanmar: China plans new corridor bordering India

JULY 4, 2026

DHAKA (TIP): China has revived a decade-old connectivity dream which may have major implications for India as well. The China-Myanmar-Bangladesh Economic Corridor (CMBC) promises Beijing a new route to the Bay of Bengal. But it runs straight through one of the world's most active war zones.

The China-Myanmar-Bangladesh Economic Corridor came up during Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's four-day visit to Beijing, which began June 22. Meeting Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People, the two sides discussed advancing the corridor "for greater regional connectivity", according to China's foreign ministry.

"We proposed the Bangladesh-China-



India-Myanmar Economic Corridor about 15 years ago and achieved some progress. But due to various reasons, we have not achieved the results China had expected," Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen said on Thursday, July 2. When asked whether India could join the corridor, he said that it is open to other countries "if they are willing to join". The ambassador

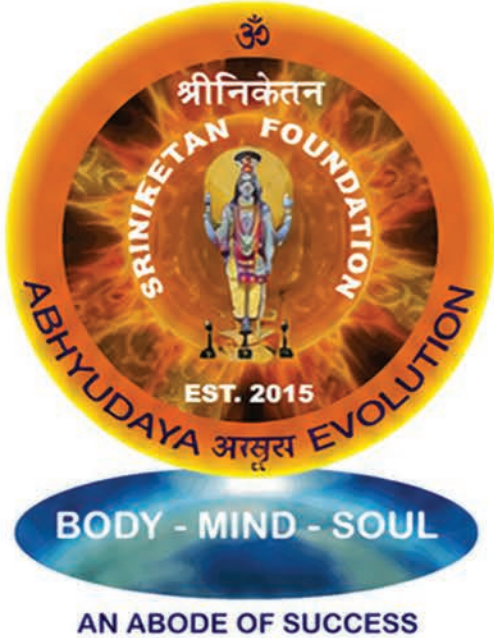
said that the only idea of the corridor is connectivity and regional economic cooperation.

The proposed corridor would start in Kunming, capital of China's Yunnan province, and run to Mandalay in Myanmar. From there it splits, one branch heading to Yangon and another to the Kyaukphyu deep-sea port in Rakhine State. China wants to extend this further into Bangladesh via Rakhine, linking up with Chattogram and Cox's Bazar, giving Beijing a direct road to the Chattogram and Mongla ports on the Bay of Bengal.

The CMBC is a rebrand of an older, more ambitious plan. In the 1990s, the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) corridor was proposed to connect Kunming to Kolkata via Mandalay and Dhaka.

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Trump claims US gave Iran 'week off' for Khamenei's funeral, touts military might

JULY 4, 2026

SOUTH DAKOTA (TIP): US President Donald Trump on Friday (local time) punctuated his address with a sharp, provocative swipe at Iran, claiming to have given the nation a "week off" for the funeral ceremony of slain Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iran is holding a delayed, six-day state funeral from July 3 to July 9 for former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in a joint US-Israeli war on February 28, 2026. Millions are participating in the ceremonies and processions.

Touching on the ongoing tensions in the Middle East during his address marking America's 250th Independence Day at Mount Rushmore, the President claimed that US pressure had "broken the spirit" of the Iranian leadership, leaving them "dying to settle." Trump asserted that the US had granted a temporary suspension of hostilities for humanitarian reasons, stating that "we are nice people."

"We knocked the hell out of Iran. They're dying to settle. We gave them a week off for a funeral because we're nice people," the President told the crowd.

The President also pointed to successes in Venezuela, stating that his administration's swift actions saw victory over rivals in the Latin American nation.

"We beat Venezuela in one day," he



Women react near the coffins of Iran's late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and his family members, on the day international delegates participate in a farewell ceremony, at the Imam Khomeini Grand Mosalla, Tehran, Iran, July 3, 2026. (Reuters Photo)

added, framing these instances as evidence of the US having "created the strongest and most powerful military" in history. Beyond the theatre of foreign policy, the President touted what he described as an unprecedented economic turnaround.

"We built the biggest and most dynamic economy and by the way, our country today is doing better than it's ever done before. Never had anything like it. With as of last week 19.2 trillion dollars pouring into the United States right now from all over the world. That's the investments being made and the record was three. Four years and four years, the

last administration did much less than one and we did 19.2 in 12 months," he stated. He further claimed that tariffs and a favourable business climate have triggered a manufacturing boom, with new plants and factories being built at "a number we've never, ever seen before," effectively stating that the nation is currently "the hottest country anywhere in the world."

"Thanks to our great election win November 5th and the tariffs, plants and factories are being built all over the United States right now and they're being built at a number that we've never, ever seen before. So much more there's we're

breaking records by double, triple, quadruple. We created the strongest and most powerful military. We won two world wars, the Cold War and left America's enemies in the depths of history," Trump said.

Contrasting the nation's trajectory with the state of affairs two years ago during former President Joe Biden's tenure, which he characterised as a time when America was "mocked" and "in decline," President Trump pointed to a staggering surge in foreign investment.

"Two years ago, we were laughed at, mocked, and a nation in decline... and today, we are the hottest country anywhere in the world," he said, adding, "We're respected like no nation in the world is respected... and I want to tell you: the best is yet to come!" he stated.

Trump's remarks were made against the backdrop of ongoing funeral rites for former Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

According to Press TV, the tribute ceremony marked one of the largest international gatherings in Iran since Khamenei's death. Iranian officials estimate the multi-day funeral will draw between 15 and 20 million mourners.

Ceremonies will continue through the weekend with the body lying in state at Tehran's Grand Mosalla before a funeral procession through Tehran on Monday. Further rites are scheduled in Qom and later in Baghdad, Karbala and Najaf before burial in Mashhad on July 9.

Saudi supertankers exit Hormuz

Saudi Arabia is exporting the most crude from inside the Persian Gulf since the the Iran war blocked the Strait of Hormuz, as producers across the region boost shipments following an interim peace deal between Washington and Tehran.

Four supertankers hauling crude loaded at Saudi Arabia's main export hub appeared in the Gulf of Oman on Thursday, ship-tracking shows. That's the largest number of exits since the peace pact came into effect about two weeks ago. The ships, all owned by Saudi tanker giant Bahri, are part of a flotilla of vessels over 300 meters (1,000 feet) long that made their way into the Persian Gulf late last month. Together, they're carrying about 8 million barrels loaded at the port of Ras Tanura, one of the world's biggest crude-export facilities, the vessel-tracking data compiled by Bloomberg show.

It's the latest evidence that OPEC's top producer is ramping up oil exports since traffic began crossing the Hormuz in earnest after the US and Iran agreed to reopen the waterway while they negotiate an end to the war.

China urges 'unimpeded passage' of Hormuz as fee chatter mounts

JULY 4, 2026

BEIJING (TIP): China called for the unhindered flow of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, comments that come as leading European powers are apparently accepting that vessels will have to pay fees to Iran and Oman.

"Resuming safe and unimpeded passage in the strait at an early date serves the interests of all parties," Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said at a regular press briefing in Beijing on Friday, July 3.

"A proper settlement is needed to address disruption at the Strait of Hormuz, and the shared concerns in the international community need a proper response," Guo added.

Bloomberg News reported earlier that people familiar with the thinking in Europe described the prospect of some sort of service fee in the aftermath of the US and Israeli war with Iran as a given.

Privately, some Gulf Arab officials hold the same view, though this is not necessarily the formal position of their



governments, said the people, who asked not to be identified discussing private deliberations.

It is unclear what type or amount of fees any nation would be willing to accept. The US and Gulf Arab countries continue to insist Iran and Oman cannot impose charges of any kind for Hormuz. Their concerns include the risk it creates a precedent for other countries to impose fees on different waterways.

In March, Beijing called on parties to the fighting to ensure the safe passage of ships through the Strait of Hormuz.

As the world's largest oil and gas importer, China is among the countries most exposed to tensions in the Middle East. The Asian nation depends on the wider Persian Gulf region for both oil and gas supplies, and cargoes of both require transit through the narrow Hormuz waterway.

Europe Heatwave Turns Deadly: Over 3,700 Excess Deaths Reported in France, Belgium and Netherlands

A record-breaking heatwave that swept across Europe in late June has claimed at least 3,700 excess lives in France, Belgium and the Netherlands, with authorities warning that the toll is expected to rise as more data becomes available.

France has been the worst affected, recording 2,025 excess deaths during the week of June 22 to 28, according to Public Health France. The figure represents a 29.1 per cent increase over the previous week, when 6,948 deaths were recorded. The health agency has so far counted 8,973 deaths for the peak week of the heatwave but said the tally remains incomplete.

The latest figures double an earlier preliminary estimate of about 1,000 additional deaths released last week, underscoring the severity of what meteorologists described as France's hottest June since records began in 1947.

Temperatures exceeded 40 degrees Celsius across more than 40 per cent of the country during the June 17-30 heatwave, overwhelming emergency services, disrupting transport and forcing schools to close.

Health authorities reported a particularly sharp rise in deaths occurring at private homes, which increased by 91 per cent compared with the previous week. Deaths in nursing homes rose by 37 per cent, while hospital fatalities increased by nearly 20 per cent. The Paris region recorded the steepest increase, with deaths rising by almost 63 per cent over the same period. Funeral homes in the capital reported running out of storage space, forcing some mortuaries to turn bodies away.

Although people aged 65 years and above accounted for the largest share of fatalities, Public Health France also noted a significant rise in deaths among people aged between 45 and 64 years. Young people were not spared, with four children dying after being left in overheated parked vehicles during the heatwave. Doctors across France reported treating a surge of patients suffering from dehydration, heatstroke, heart attacks and kidney failure as temperatures reached unprecedented levels. The extreme weather has also triggered political fallout. Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu's government faces a possible no-confidence vote amid criticism that France was inadequately prepared for the prolonged spell of extreme heat.

Neighbouring Belgium reported 1,222 excess deaths between June 18 and June 29, about 39 per cent above normal mortality levels. Belgian health authorities described the increase as "unprecedented".

Russia, Ukraine exchange deadly strikes after devastating Kyiv assault

JULY 4, 2026

KYIV (TIP): At least 15 people were killed in fresh Russian and Ukrainian attacks on Friday, July 3, according to officials from both countries, as hostilities intensified a day after Moscow carried out one of its deadliest air assaults on Kyiv since the start of the war.

Authorities installed by Russia in the occupied part of Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region said a Ukrainian strike on a local market killed five civilians. Kremlin-appointed governor Yevgeny Balitsky accused Kyiv of targeting civilians, saying the victims had been shopping when the attack occurred.

Balitsky also reported three additional deaths in separate strikes elsewhere in the occupied region.

In Russia, regional authorities said one person was killed in the Belgorod region and another in neighbouring Bryansk, both of which border Ukraine and have frequently come under cross-border attacks.

Ukraine, meanwhile, reported civilian casualties from overnight Russian strikes in multiple regions.

In the northeastern Sumy region, officials said a Russian attack hit a residential area, igniting a house and killing four people, including a girl who was less than two years old. Three others were injured in the strike.

Regional governor Oleh Hryhorov said the victims included the child's mother, another woman and an elderly man.

Another Russian strike in the Dnipropetrovsk region killed one person and injured five others, according to regional authorities. Ukraine's Air Force said Russia launched two missiles and 105 drones overnight in the latest wave of aerial attacks. Russia's Defence Ministry, meanwhile, said its air defence systems intercepted and destroyed 155 Ukrainian drones over Russian territory and the annexed Crimea peninsula during the same period.

The latest violence came less than 24 hours after Russia



A woman holding a child cries next to a residential building damaged following a Russian air attack on the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv on July 2, 2026, amid the Russian invasion in Ukraine.- AFP

launched a massive missile and drone barrage on Kyiv that killed at least 30 people, making it one of the deadliest attacks on the Ukrainian capital since Moscow's full-scale invasion began in February 2022. The renewed exchange of strikes underscored the continuing intensity of the conflict, with both sides reporting civilian casualties and large-scale aerial attacks despite repeated international calls for de-escalation.

JULY 3, 2026

WASHINGTON (TIP): A man holding a Tibetan flag has died after setting himself on fire outside the United Nations headquarters in New York on Thursday, July 2, in an apparent protest against Chinese rule over Tibet.

Law enforcement responded to a 911 call at around 6:30 p.m. and observed a 52-year-old male with severe burns across his body, a New York City Police Department spokesperson told CNN.

The man was taken to hospital and later pronounced dead, the spokesperson said.

The government-in-exile of Tibet - and an activist in New York who knew him - named the man as Lobga Rangzen (also known as Lobsang Palden).

A video live-streamed from a Facebook account under that name shows a man holding a Tibetan flag stopping along First Avenue opposite the UN headquarters and then being engulfed in flames. He collapses to the ground as cars pass by, with flames eventually put out by two men with fire extinguishers.

A separate video posted to the same Facebook account around the same time as the live stream shows the man calling for Tibetans to work together for "the independence of Tibet" and to "never forget" their heritage and identity.

He also accused the Chinese government of creating policies "aimed

Tibetan man dies after setting himself on fire near UN headquarters



at destroying the Tibetan identity, culture and language."

The rare incident comes just days after China enacted an ethnic unity law that expands mandates over the use of Chinese language in schools and governments in ethnic minority regions and calls for the further "Sinicization" of religion.

Tibetan and human rights activists have voiced alarm over the sweeping new law, which they fear will further deepen the cultural erasure of ethnic

minorities across China. Beijing says the law protects the rights of "all ethnic groups."

China's ruling Communist Party has governed Tibet since 1951, with Beijing insisting Tibet has been part of Chinese territory for centuries. The Tibetan flag is banned in China and viewed as a symbol of Tibetan independence.

Dozens of self-immolations have been connected with protests against China's rule over Tibet in recent decades, according to the government-in-exile of Tibet.

However, it is highly unusual for a Tibetan activist to self-immolate in the US.

In a statement released Friday, July 3, the head of Tibet's government-in-exile Penpa Tsering said he was "deeply saddened" by the self-immolation and urged Tibetans to "cherish" their lives.

"While we honor his devotion, human life is precious and must be preserved to serve the long-term struggle for Tibet," Tsering said.

A crowd of supporters and protestors gathered outside the UN headquarters on Thursday night after the incident, video posted to social media showed.

Sikh History This Week

JULY 3 TO JULY 9

July 3, 1578 - Guru Ram Das Ji Continues the Development of Ramdasapur



Guru Ram Das Ji continued developing Ramdasapur (present-day Amritsar), encouraging traders, artisans and devotees to settle around the sacred sarovar. The city would later become the spiritual capital of Sikhism and the home of Sri Harmandir Sahib.

July 3, 1927 - Restoration of Historic Gurdwaras

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) continued restoration and management work at several historic Sikh shrines following the success of the Gurdwara Reform Movement.

July 4, 1866 - Birth Anniversary of Sant Attar Singh Ji Mastuana Wale



One of the most revered Sikh saints of the modern era, Sant Attar Singh Ji Mastuana Wale was born at Cheema village in present-day Sangrur district of Punjab. He dedicated his life to spreading Gurbani, encouraging Amrit Sanchar, promoting Sikh discipline and establishing educational institutions. His teachings inspired thousands of Sikhs to lead spiritually disciplined lives, and the institutions founded under his guidance continue to serve society.

July 4, 1955 - Punjabi Suba Agitation Intensifies



Peaceful demonstrations demanding a Punjabi-speaking state gained momentum as Akali volunteers courted arrest during the Punjabi Suba movement, which ultimately resulted in the reorganisation of Punjab in 1966.

July 5, 1921 - Akali Volunteers Expand the Gurdwara Reform Movement

Following the Nankana Sahib tragedy earlier that year, Akali jathas travelled across Punjab to mobilise public support for freeing historic Sikh gurdwaras from corrupt mahants and restoring them to the Sikh community.

July 5, 1984 - Aftermath of Operation Bluestar



Religious ceremonies gradually resumed at Sri Harmandir Sahib while the Sikh community mourned the heavy loss of life and damage caused during Operation Blue Star.

July 6, 1606 - Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji Strengthens the Doctrine of Miri-Piri



After succeeding Guru Arjan Dev Ji, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji further established the Sikh doctrine of Miri-Piri by combining spiritual authority with temporal responsibility. This period also marked preparations for the construction of Akal Takht Sahib.

July 6, 1947 - Sikh Leaders Discuss Partition



With the Partition of India approaching, Sikh leaders met to discuss the protection of Sikh shrines, refugee rehabilitation and the future of the Sikh community in Punjab.

July 7, 1975 - Conservation of Historic Sikh Shrines

The SGPC continued restoration work at several historic gurdwaras across Punjab to preserve Sikh heritage for future generations.

July 7 - Gurmat Education and Summer Camps

Many gurdwaras begin organising Gurmat camps during the summer holidays, teaching children Gurbani, Sikh history, Punjabi, Kirtan and Gatka.

July 8, 1922 - Preparations for Guru Ka Bagh Morcha

Akali volunteers intensified preparations for the historic Guru Ka Bagh Morcha, which later became one of the most remarkable non-violent protests in Sikh history against British interference in Sikh religious affairs.

July 8, 1999 - Sikh Regiment's Heroic Role in the Kargil War



Units of the Sikh Regiment and Sikh Light Infantry participated in fierce battles during Operation Vijay, contributing significantly to India's victory in the Kargil War.

July 9, 1923 - Preparations for the Jaito Morcha



Akali leaders intensified preparations for the Jaito Morcha, launched in protest against British interference in Sikh religious affairs at Gurdwara Gangsar Sahib, Jaito. The movement became a landmark chapter in the Gurdwara Reform Movement.

July 9, 1982 - Preparatory Meetings for Dharam Yudh Morcha

Consultations among Sikh leaders continued ahead of the launch of the Dharam Yudh Morcha in August 1982, focusing on political, religious and constitutional issues concerning Punjab.



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Create a romantic home retreat: Décor ideas to set the mood

Romance isn't just about candlelit dinners or grand gestures—it can also be found in the comfort of your own home. With a few thoughtful touches, every room can become a cosy, inviting space that encourages relaxation, togetherness and meaningful moments. From soft textures and ambient lighting to elegant table settings and spa-inspired bathrooms, here's how to transform your home into the perfect romantic retreat.

The Bedroom: Layer on Luxury

While shades of red have long been associated with romance, creating a warm and intimate bedroom is about much more than colour. One of the biggest interior trends is using rich textures to make a space feel cosy and luxurious.

Start with crisp, white bed linens made from high-quality cotton for a hotel-like feel. Layer the bed with plush cushions, knitted throws or a soft quilt to add warmth and depth. Neutral tones paired with tactile fabrics create a calming atmosphere that's both elegant and inviting. Complete the look with soft bedside lighting, scented candles and fresh flowers to turn your bedroom into a peaceful sanctuary.

The Dining Area: Set the Table with Style

They say the way to someone's heart is through good food—but presentation matters just as much as the menu. A beautifully laid table instantly elevates a home-cooked meal. Replace everyday table settings with a quality tablecloth or elegant runner, and swap paper napkins for crisp linen ones to create a sophisticated dining experience. Add candles, fresh blooms and your favourite dinnerware to create a warm ambience that encourages lingering conversations long after the meal is over.

The Living Room: Embrace Comfort

Romance isn't always about dressing up. Sometimes, the most memorable evenings are spent curled up on the sofa together. Layer your favourite corner of the couch with soft throws, cosy blankets and plenty of cushions to create the ultimate relaxation spot. Whether you're watching a movie, reading a good book or simply chatting over mugs of hot chocolate, a warm and inviting living room sets the stage for quality time.

For an extra touch of comfort, place a plush rug underfoot, slip into cosy pyjamas and warm socks, and enjoy your favourite takeaway while spending an



unhurried evening together.

The Bathroom: Create a Spa-Like Escape

Turn an ordinary bath into a luxurious spa experience with a few simple additions.

Dim the lights, light a few scented candles and fill the room with soothing aromas using essential oils or bath salts. After a long soak, wrap yourself in thick, fluffy towels and slip into a soft bathrobe for the ultimate feeling of comfort. Adding small touches such as wooden bath trays, fresh flowers or relaxing music can transform your bathroom into a peaceful retreat that helps you unwind and recharge.

Lighting Makes All the Difference

No romantic setting is complete without the right lighting.

Instead of harsh overhead lights, opt for warm table lamps, fairy lights or candles to create a soft glow throughout your home. Gentle lighting instantly makes any room feel more intimate and relaxing.

FOOD CORNER

Chikar chole

Ingredients

1 Cup Chickpeas (Soaked overnight), 1 Boiled Potato, 1 Onion Paste, 1 tsp Ginger Paste, 1 tsp Garlic Paste, 1 cup Curd, 1 Stick Cinnamon, 5-6 Black Peppercorns, 1 Black Cardamom, 1 tsp Red Chilli Powder, 1 tsp Coriander Powder, 1 tsp Cumin Powder, 1/2 tsp Turmeric, 1 tsp Black Pepper Powder to taste Salt, 1 tsp Dry mango powder, 1 tsp Kasoori methi, 2-3 Green Chillies chopped 4 tbsp Oil.

Method

In a pressure cooker, add water to the chickpeas and cook till it gets completely dissolved.

Now sieve the chickpeas, keep the water aside. Separate a little bit from the boiled chickpeas.

Take boiled potatoes and chickpeas and make a smooth paste by adding some water in a blender.

Heat four tablespoons of oil in a pan. Add ginger garlic paste and all the whole spices and fry for two minutes.

Add onion paste and fry it till it turns light golden in color. Simultaneously, add the prepared paste of potatoes and chickpeas and fry them.

Now add red pepper, coriander, turmeric, salt and cumin powder and fry it while mixing the spices.

Add curd and mix it well with spices. After a while, add boiled chickpeas to this mixture and cook for 2 minutes. Add the remaining water of chickpeas to it and cover and cook for five minutes. Add amchur, black pepper and kasoori methi and mix. Mix finely chopped green chillies and green coriander and take it out in a serving dish and serve it with naan or rice.



Use amla for dull, dandruff-prone scalp and weak hair



For centuries, amla (Indian gooseberry) has been a trusted ingredient in traditional Ayurvedic hair care. Packed with vitamin C, antioxidants and essential nutrients, this humble fruit is known for promoting a healthy scalp, strengthening hair from the roots and restoring natural shine. If you're dealing with dull locks, dandruff or frequent hair breakage, incorporating amla into your hair care routine may offer noticeable benefits.

Revives Dull Hair

Environmental pollution, heat styling and chemical treatments can leave hair looking lifeless. Amla helps nourish the hair shaft, adding a natural sheen and improving texture. Regular use of amla oil or hair masks can make hair appear smoother, softer and more manageable.

Supports a Healthy Scalp

A healthy scalp is the foundation of healthy hair. Amla

possesses natural antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties that may help soothe an itchy, flaky scalp. It can help reduce excess oil and create a cleaner scalp environment, making it a popular remedy for dandruff-prone hair.

Strengthens Hair Roots

Rich in antioxidants and nutrients, amla helps nourish hair follicles and strengthen the roots. This may reduce hair breakage and support healthier, stronger strands over time. While amla cannot prevent hair loss caused by medical conditions or genetics, it can improve the overall condition of the hair and scalp.

Promotes Hair Growth

Although scientific evidence is still evolving, some studies suggest that compounds in amla may support hair follicle health, which could contribute to healthier hair growth when combined with a balanced diet and proper hair care.

When food and medicine don't mix: Common combinations to avoid

Some foods can prevent prescription medication from working. They also have dangerous side-effects. Here's what to watch out for:

COFFEE

Avoid if you take -Bronchodilators for asthma

These help patients to breathe more easily by relaxing the muscles in the lungs and widening airways. Common side effects of these include palpitations, nervousness and excitability. When mixed with caffeine these risks are increased. Too much caffeine can also limit their effectiveness in an emergency, so speak to your GP if you are taking them but need caffeine too.

BANANAS

Avoid if you take blood pressure medicines

Bananas are high in potassium, a good thing, but for those taking medication like Captopril, ACE inhibitors or Angiotensin receptor blockers, avoid large quantities of potassium-rich food like leafy greens and oranges too. Mixed with these drugs, these foods can cause high potassium levels. When consumed in excess, it can also cause irregular heartbeats and palpitations. It's best to inform your GP if you're taking potassium or diuretics alongside blood pressure medication.

ALCOHOL

Avoid if you take antihistamines, diabetes medicines or painkillers

Medicines often come with a warning to avoid alcohol. This is due to the pressure booze puts on your liver. Alcohol, paracetamol and codeine are metabolised by the liver and it will have to work harder to break down alcohol and medications at the same time. This can increase the risk of side effects from the medications, including drowsiness. Also, overworking your liver can eventually increase your risk of liver damage.

LEAFY GREENS

Avoid if you take -Anticoagulants

Leafy greens are part of a healthy diet but when you're taking antiblood-clotting medicines, like Warfarin, you need to be careful not to suddenly up your leafy green intake. They are high in vitamin K and as a result, help blood to clot. Warfarin is designed to prevent the production of vitamin K so if you suddenly eat more greens, this will interfere with the medicine.



BLACK LIQUORICE

Avoid if you take -Heart medications

Liquorice lowers potassium in your body, which can be dangerous for those with certain heart conditions. Low levels of potassium can increase side effects associated with digoxin, used to treat congestive heart failure and abnormal heart rhythms.

Diuretics to treat high blood pressure, glaucoma, heart failure and liver and kidney problems, also lower potassium, so taken with liquorice they cause levels to fall. This causes weakness, cramps and irregular heart rhythms.

GRAPEFRUIT

Avoid if you take -Statins

If you are taking statins to lower blood pressure, then grapefruit, or its juice, won't provide a healthy breakfast. Grapefruit contains a chemical that stops the body breaking down statins. This will lead to raised levels in your body which means you will be at risk of side-effects. Patients might experience muscle aches and pains as a result.

MILK

Avoid if you take -Antibiotics

Ciprofloxacin and tetracycline should be taken with a glass of water one hour before a meal or two hours after you have eaten. Food will interfere with the way these medications are absorbed by your body and dairy products, such as milk, will have the same effect. So while it might be tempting to take antibiotics with a glass of milk, don't.

Late-night lifestyle may be quietly damaging your liver

In fast-paced cities, staying awake well past midnight has become the new normal. Office deadlines stretch into the night, global work schedules demand odd hours, and binge-watching a favourite web series often feels impossible to stop after just one episode. Add a packet of chips, sugary snacks, caffeine, or even a late-night drink, and what seems like an ordinary evening may actually be placing extra stress on your liver.

According to Dr Shruthi H.S. Reddy, Consultant – HPB & Liver and Pancreatic Transplant Surgery and Robotic Surgery at Manipal Hospital, Old Airport Road, these modern lifestyle habits are quietly affecting liver health. While many people focus on diet and exercise, they often overlook one major factor—sleep. Experts say the relationship between sleep and liver health is closely connected, with poor sleep affecting liver function and liver problems, in turn, disturbing sleep quality.

The human body follows a natural 24-hour cycle known as the circadian rhythm, which regulates sleep, digestion, hormone production and metabolism. When people stay awake late regularly, this internal clock becomes disrupted.

This disruption can affect the body's ability to process food efficiently and regulate blood sugar and fat metabolism. Over time, it may increase the risk of Metabolically Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD), commonly known as fatty liver disease. Studies suggest that poor sleep quality plays a significant role in this condition.

Many people believe they can make up for lost sleep by sleeping the next morning. However, experts say daytime naps do not completely reverse the effects of repeated sleep deprivation. Weekend catch-up sleep may help partially reset the body's clock, but it should not become a substitute for consistent, good-quality sleep. Doctors recommend getting around seven to eight hours of quality sleep every night. Regular exercise and spending time in natural sunlight can also help restore the body's internal rhythm.

Sleep is only part of the problem. What people eat during late-night hours also matters.

Stress, long work shifts and entertainment often encourage people to reach for calorie-rich snacks, fast food, sugary treats or caffeinated drinks. These foods are typically high in fat and sugar, making them harder to digest when the body is preparing for rest.

Poor sleep can also increase cravings for unhealthy foods, creating a cycle where lack of sleep leads to overeating, and unhealthy eating further affects sleep quality. Over time, this combination can contribute to fatty liver disease, which may progress to liver inflammation, scarring and even cirrhosis if left unmanaged.

Source: India Today

Obesity drug may burn calories by activating brown fat

A blockbuster obesity drug may be helping people lose weight in a way scientists had not fully understood before. New research has found that tirzepatide, a medicine already known for reducing appetite and body weight, can also activate the body's calorie-burning "brown fat", opening a new front in the fight against obesity.

The findings were presented at ENDO 2026 recently, the annual meeting of the Endocrine Society, and are being seen as an important step towards understanding how modern anti-obesity medicines work beyond simply reducing food intake. Tirzepatide, under the brand name Mounjaro was launched in India in March last year by US-based pharma giant Eli Lilly and has been the country's top-selling medicine brand by value since October 2025. Last month, the drug also became the highest selling medicine brand globally.

The molecule belongs to a comparatively new class of medicine called GLP-1 based therapy, like semaglutide, which was first developed against type 2 diabetes but

has gained immense popularity due to rapid weight-loss effect.

These drugs work by mimicking gut hormones, slowing digestion and reducing appetite and are now being studied for a number of conditions including cardiovascular and metabolic conditions, kidney and brain diseases and even cancers.

The latest evidence shows that unlike white fat, which stores excess calories in the body, brown adipose tissue, commonly called brown fat, helps burn calories to generate heat. Scientists have long known that brown fat plays a role in energy expenditure, but its activity is usually reduced in people living with obesity.

Researchers conducted a randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trial involving premenopausal women with obesity. Participants received tirzepatide treatment for 24 weeks, while a separate group received a placebo. Advanced imaging techniques, including PET/CT scans and MRI scans, were used to measure brown fat activity before and after treatment.

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Flipkart is making LLMs, AI now writes 40 percent code for company

As AI becomes an increasingly important tool across industries, e-commerce giant Flipkart is doubling down on building specialised large language models (LLMs). As per Flipkart's chief product and technology officer Balaji Thiagarajan, AI is now writing just about 40 per cent of the company's code on its own.

Thiagarajan says that Flipkart is building an "agentic e-commerce platform" powered by a mix of frontier AI models and proprietary models. To do this, the company is creating its building specialised e-commerce LLMs for specific tasks. He told Moneycontrol, "We have deployed over 250 models across our ecosystem."

According to the Flipkart executive, using only "general-purpose models won't be enough." Rather, companies will need their own models to get the most out of AI. He added, "To specialise for those tasks, you have to build your own models. That's the secret sauce."

Flipkart is using AI models across various areas – product discovery, conversational shopping, seller operations and internal productivity. And this includes writing code. Balaji Thiagarajan added, "Around 35-40 per cent of our code is already generated by AI tools."

This is in line with many other tech platforms. For context, another e-commerce player, Meesho, reportedly has over 70 per cent of its code now generated by AI. Previously, OpenAI President Greg Brockman had claimed



that AI was writing around 80 per cent of all code at the AI startup.

So far, AI agents have seen massive adoption globally, particularly when it comes to tools like Claude Code or Codex. However, Balaji Thiagarajan believes that companies will likely use different AI models for different activities.

That is, Flipkart will likely use external tools like Claude Code along with its own models. He explained, "The future of AI will be a mixture of experts... many of the other experts will be models we build ourselves. That's where our differentiation comes from – our data, our engineering capabilities and our ability to develop specialised e-commerce LLMs for specific tasks."

At a time when companies like Uber and Flipkart's parent company Walmart,

have started to cut back on AI usage for employees due to rising costs, Thiagarajan says that the e-commerce giant is not worried about return on investment (ROI), at least for now. He explained, "We're not overly concerned about the ROI of AI right now because we're still in investment mode." The Flipkart executive added, "Where we spend much more time today is on AI governance – content moderation, response fidelity, human-in-the-loop systems and reinforcement learning."

As Flipkart increases focus on AI, its rival Amazon plans to further invest in its India operations. The company recently announced a \$13 billion investment in India through 2030 to expand its cloud and AI infrastructure, taking its total planned investment in the country to \$48 billion.



Samsung working on smart glasses to take on Meta Ray-Ban, hints leaked video

Samsung's long-rumoured AI smart glasses appear to be inching closer to launch. A newly leaked video has offered what could be the clearest look yet at the upcoming Galaxy Glasses, suggesting Samsung is preparing a direct rival to Meta's Ray-Ban smart glasses. Although the company has not officially announced the wearable, a string of recent leaks has revealed key details about its design, hardware and AI capabilities.

The latest leak comes from SamMobile, which shared what appears to be an official-looking 27-second promotional video showing the Galaxy Glasses from multiple angles. The clip suggests Samsung is opting for a subtle, everyday design rather than a futuristic headset, with the glasses resembling a standard pair of sunglasses. If the final product looks and works anything like the leaked video suggests, Samsung could be taking direct aim at Meta, whose Ray-Ban smart glasses have gained popularity by combining AI features with a familiar eyewear design.

According to the leaked footage, the Galaxy Glasses feature square-shaped lenses with thick temples that are expected to house the internal electronics. The video also highlights several hardware elements, including a touch-sensitive area on the right temple, a power button, an outward-facing LED indicator and a camera positioned on the opposite side of the frame. These details closely match earlier leaked CAD renders, which showed a clean, understated design with small camera cut-outs and minimal branding.

One animation also reportedly shows touch gestures on the right arm, allowing users to adjust the volume, control media playback and navigate the interface using one- or two-finger swipes. This control scheme is said to be similar to Meta's Ray-Ban smart glasses. The leaked videos also hint at camera controls. A shutter button located on the top of the right temple is reportedly used to capture photos with a single press, while a longer press starts video recording. During image or video capture, an external LED is expected to light up to indicate recording, while an inward-facing LED alerts the wearer. Another animation reportedly shows captured photos and videos instantly appearing on a paired Galaxy smartphone through Samsung's Now Bar interface.

A giant planet located about 81 light-years from Earth has given astronomers a rare glimpse into the distant future of planetary systems, including our own.

Using the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), scientists have studied a planet called WD 1856 b, which somehow survived the death of its parent star and continues to orbit its stellar remnant billions of years later.

The discovery is significant because it offers one of the clearest examples yet of what may happen to planets when stars like our Sun reach the end of their lives.

WD 1856 b is a gas giant several times more massive than Jupiter.

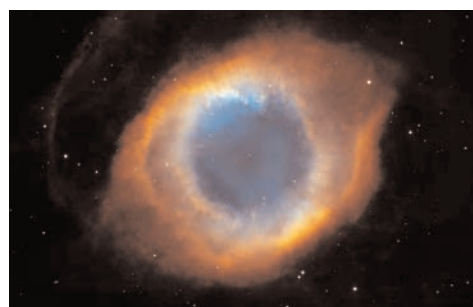
It orbits a white dwarf, the dense, Earth-sized remnant left behind after a Sun-like star exhausts its fuel, expands into a red giant, and sheds its outer layers.

The star that became this white dwarf is believed to have died around 5 billion years ago.

Scientists had long wondered how the planet survived such a violent transformation.

Normally, when a star swells into a red giant, it can engulf nearby planets. Webb's observations suggest that WD

Webb finds brave planet that survived the death of its sun



1856 b likely formed farther away and migrated inward long after its star had become a white dwarf.

Using Webb's powerful infrared instruments, researchers examined starlight passing through the planet's atmosphere as it crossed in front of its white dwarf host.

The observations detected methane and signs of atmospheric hazes, helping scientists estimate the planet's temperature and better understand its composition. The findings provide the first detailed look at the atmosphere of a giant planet orbiting a white dwarf,

opening a new chapter in the study of planetary survival after stellar death.

The research may also offer clues about the far future of our own cosmic neighbourhood.

Astronomers expect the Sun to expand dramatically into a red giant in roughly 5 billion years, likely consuming Mercury and Venus and potentially Earth.

What happens to the outer planets remains uncertain.

By studying WD 1856 b, scientists are effectively looking ahead in time.

As lead researchers noted, the planet provides a unique opportunity to understand how worlds can endure the death of their stars and continue orbiting the stellar remnants left behind.

The Webb telescope's latest findings show that, under the right conditions, some planets may survive events once thought certain to destroy them, offering a fascinating preview of the fate that could await parts of our Solar System billions of years from now.

India's services PMI falls to 17-month low in June amid weaker demand

JULY 4, 2026

MUMBAI (TIP): Growth in India's services sector slowed to a 17-month low in June as challenging market conditions weighed on sales, output and hiring, a monthly private survey showed on Friday, July 3.

The HSBC India Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), which tracks monthly changes in services activity, fell to 57.4 in June from 59.8 in May. The June reading was the lowest since January 2025, when the index stood at 56.5.

"Behind the softer increase in services output was the slowest expansion in new order intakes in over two-and-a-half years. Several firms indicated that challenging market conditions and reduced client interest in their services dampened sales," the survey said.

The June reading remained above the 50-mark, which separates expansion from contraction. The index has now stayed in expansionary territory for 59 consecutive months.

The loss of momentum points to more challenging market conditions and weaker demand, particularly at home, said Pranjal Bhandari, chief India economist at HSBC.

"Even so, external demand held up well as overseas sales remained robust, with growth reaching a three-month high," Bhandari added.

Exports, however, remained resilient, with services firms reporting the fastest rise in overseas business in three months. According to the survey, demand improved from clients in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Malaysia, Nepal, Oman, Qatar, Singapore, the UAE and the US.

Input costs continued to rise in June, driven by higher electricity, food, fuel and transportation prices. However, the pace of input cost inflation eased to a five-month low.

As a result, the increase in prices charged by services firms also moderated, with output price inflation easing to its weakest level since November 2025. Hiring slowed after solid job creation in April and May.

Among the four broad segments tracked by the survey — consumer services, finance & insurance, real estate & business services, and transport, information & communication — consumer services recorded the highest



input cost and output price inflation, although both measures softened from May.

"Price pressures also continued to cool, with both input cost and output charge inflation moderating as geopolitical disruptions in the Middle East began to subside. Reflecting the broader slowdown, India's composite PMI fell slightly to 57.1 in June from 59.3 in May, alongside softer sales volumes, slower job creation and more subdued pricing," Bhandari added.

The moderation in services activity came alongside a slowdown in manufacturing. The manufacturing PMI eased to a three-month low of 54.2 in June from 55 in May.

The HSBC India Composite PMI Output Index, a weighted average of the Manufacturing Output Index and the Services Business Activity Index, also slipped to a three-month low of 57.1 in June from 59.3 in May.

Rupee rises 14 paise to close at 95.21 against US dollar

The rupee appreciated 14 paise to close at 95.21 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, July 3, as the dollar index retreated from its recent 15-month high levels and mirrored positive domestic equities.

Forex traders said despite a weaker dollar index and lower crude oil prices, the rupee is facing pressure from robust dollar demand from importers and corporate hedgers.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.20 against the American currency and traded in a range of 95.16-95.35 during the session.

The rupee finally closed at 95.21 (provisional), registering a rise of 14 paise from its previous close.

On Thursday, the rupee pared initial gains and settled for the day on a negative note, lower by 19 paise at 95.35 against the US dollar.

According to experts, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is actively purchasing dollars to rebuild its foreign exchange reserves, which have dropped to roughly USD 672.6 billion from a February peak of USD 728.49 billion.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 100.75, lower than its recent 15-month high of 101.6.

Meanwhile, Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading higher by 0.22 per cent at USD 71.96 per barrel in futures trade.

Record EU-US trade masks growing tariff pain for key industries

JULY 4, 2026

WASHINGTON (TIP): Trade in goods between the European Union (EU) and the United States reached a record euro 875 billion (\$1 trillion) in 2025 despite escalating tariff tensions, though the gains masked growing pressure on key sectors, particularly automobiles, according to a study by the German Economic Institute (IW).

The study found that EU exports to the United States rose 7.7 per cent to euro 580 billion, while U.S. exports to the EU increased 2.2 per cent to euro 295 billion, widening the bloc's trade surplus to nearly euro 285 billion.

At face value, the record trade volumes suggest that tariffs introduced under U.S. President Donald Trump and broader political tensions have done little to disrupt transatlantic trade. However, the IW cautioned that the aggregate figures hide significant sector-specific weakness.

"The first impression is misleading," said Samina Sultan, an economist at the German Economic Institute. "Certain sectors are already suffering significantly, particularly the automotive sector."



The study showed that EU exports of cars and auto parts to the United States fell 20.4 per cent in 2025. Germany, which accounts for nearly two-thirds of the bloc's automotive exports to the U.S.,

recorded an 18.9 per cent decline, underscoring the growing impact of tariff-related pressures on Europe's largest manufacturing economy.

Ireland emerged as the exception to the

trend, with exports to the United States jumping 52.7 per cent, driven by robust shipments of tariff-exempt pharmaceutical and chemical products.

Beyond goods, transatlantic services trade also continued to expand. Services trade between the EU and the United States climbed to a record euro 865 billion, although the EU posted a euro 178 billion deficit in this category.

The report noted that payments for intellectual property, including software licences, patents and trademarks, accounted for more than 40 per cent of the EU's services imports from the United States. Spending in this category rose 13.7 per cent, highlighting the continued dominance of U.S. technology and innovation companies in cross-border services.

The findings suggest that while overall EU-U.S. trade remains resilient and continues to hit new highs, the benefits are unevenly distributed. Key manufacturing industries, especially automobiles, are facing mounting headwinds as tariff pressures and geopolitical uncertainties reshape global trade patterns.



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

ARIES



Ganesha says this week, you will emerge as a very popular leader in political and social life inside and outside the country. At the same time, there will be opportunities for desired growth in the fields of management, arts, medicine, research, and interesting careers. If you are an employee and officer associated with the government and administration. So will be engaged in the redressal of public grievances. In the context of capital investment and abroad, there will be an increase in the initial days of this week. However, again in the middle of the week, the movement of stars will give auspicious and positive results. That is, you can firmly present the outline of the expansion of work and business. There are chances of promotion in job sectors. That is, this week's stars will carry a lot of good news in themselves. Love relations will be exciting again. If there was any disease and pain in the past. So you will be able to remove them. This week's stars are pointing toward child happiness.

TAURUS



Ganesha says this week, there will be a need to intensify efforts in the areas of livelihood. Whether it is the talk of competitive fields or the field of production and sales, this week's stars will be going to give a long run. Whether it is a political platform or aspects related to social life, there will be a need to run continuously for progress. There will be opportunities for profit in capital investment. In the beginning and middle part of this week, you will be expected to make sudden monetary gains. This means the business you are irrigating. Or the company you are setting up. There will be a need to be more active in that direction. In a love relationship, there can be deep tensions between the partners on some issues. Health will be weak this week. In the last days of this week, you can get involved in the works of any religion and charity.

GEMINI



Ganesha says this week, the movement of the stars will be largely pleasant and wonderful for you. As a result, there will be opportunities for continuous progress in related fields. If you are a politician and a social worker, then the movement of stars will help you reach a platform. That means your efforts will make you

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - JULY 6, 2026 TO JULY 12, 2026

BY ASTROLOGER CHIRAG DARUWALLA

proud. If you are associated with any production and sales areas. So the movement of the stars will continue to give pleasant and wonderful results. This week, we are engaged in pursuing a career in the fields related to film, art, music, and sports. So this week you will be able to achieve a special status. There will be opportunities for capital investment profit. But there will be a need to avoid carelessness in health. The dedication of the partner in love relations will be somewhat weak towards you. So don't weaken your understanding. That means the movement of the stars will continue to give you comfort and facilities.

CANCER



Ganesha says this week will be engaged in completing the work related to livelihood. There will be opportunities for significant growth in political and social life. Very possible, this week you can participate in any special and important religious programs. On the other hand, from an economic point of view, the movement of the stars will be pleasant and spectacular. As a result, this week there will be opportunities for success in related fields more than expected. There are signs of child happiness in married life. This week's stars will be very important and pleasant for the students. However, in the second part of the week, you may have to move in a special relationship. If there are any cases. So your side will be stronger in them. In the courtyard of married life, tension can deepen in some matters. But again in the last days of this week, the movement of stars will give auspicious and positive results in relationships.

LEO



Ganesha says this week, there will be moments of laughter and happiness in the courtyard of married life. If you are a participant in sports, management, medical research, and sports. If you and I are engaged in achieving a special milestone in your career, then the movement of the stars will give important results this week. This month will be very pleasant and wonderful for the students. There will be moments of love between the partners in love relations. But in the middle of the week, the movement of the stars will send you somewhere to travel and migrate. At the same time, there will be opportunities for significant progress in dealing with the economic context. However, there will be chances of some softening in terms of health. In such a situation, there will be chances of weakening of the immunity capabilities. Therefore, pay full attention to food and drink. If there are any court cases. So suddenly they may have to run around. That is, the movement of the stars will give mixed results in the respective areas this week.



VIRGO

Ganesha says this week's stars will be giving pleasant dialogues in the context of related land and buildings. As a result, significant progress will be expected in the aspects related to livelihood. If you are engaged in upgrading material comforts. So the movement of the stars will continue to give pleasant and wonderful results. At the same time, there will be opportunities for continuous progress in completing the work related to studies and teaching. Therefore, avoid laziness in continuing the efforts at your level. If you are looking to make a capital investment, then the movement of stars will give pleasant results. Therefore, do not be lazy in continuing the efforts at your level. There will be good news from son and daughter in the middle of the week. However, there may be some difficulties in earning and raising money this week. But there will be a beginning of partial success. But will have to travel and stay in far-flung areas in related areas.

LIBRA



Ganesha says the stars of this week will be the ones who will increase their physical strength and abilities. If there is any disease and pain in the past, then we will be able to remove it. There will be a pleasant feeling of a pleasant and luxurious atmosphere in the family. So don't hesitate to continue the efforts. Although you will be able to give the final touches to any historical and religious work. Very possible, can participate in any political and religious programs. Dividends will remain increased in capital investment. There will be moments of love between siblings. Will be able to buy a building and vehicle in the middle of this week. As a result, try to be positive. However, there may be some opposite environment in the areas of this work and business.

SCORPIO



Ganesha says he will be able to buy the desired and valuable clothes and ornaments this week. This week, you will be ready to travel somewhere with your close and trustworthy person. On the other hand, this week will be very important for business life. If you are looking to make capital investments, then the movement of the stars will be favorable and give great results. There will be opportunities for dividends in capital investment. But this week's stars will remain somewhat weak in terms of health. Therefore, if you do not deviate from the routine, then it will be good. In the middle of this week, there will be moments of love among the relatives. Therefore, do not hesitate to continue the efforts. In the last days of this week, there will be an emphasis on upgrading material

comforts. But the opposition parties will be involved in creating an atmosphere against you. Overall, this week will mostly give good results.

SAGITTARIUS



Ganesha says this week there will be opportunities to make household life pleasant and luxurious. As a result, there will be moments of love between wife and children. As a result, there will be moments of laughter and happiness in the courtyard of household life. If you are eligible for marriage. So the favorable life partner will be the one to indicate to join you. In the middle of the week, you will be able to purchase immovable property and collect documents related to it. Therefore, do not hesitate to continue the efforts. Although there will be a need to be more ready for dividends in capital investment. In terms of health, this week's stars will be weak in the middle part. But again in the last days of the week, the movement of stars will give pleasant and wonderful results. Therefore, do not hesitate to continue the efforts at your level. So it will be good.

CAPRICORN



Ganesha says this week, in connection with work and business, you will have to travel and migrate to far-flung areas. If you are associated with the areas of production and sales. So the movement of the stars will continue to give important results. There will be chances of profit in capital investment. Therefore, do not weaken your understanding at your level. From the beginning of this week, the opposition parties will try to trouble you. However, this week's stars will give moderate results in terms of health. However, in the second part of the week, the movement of stars will increase physical strength and help in removing diseases and pains. In the last days of the week, again there will be opportunities for extensive progress in terms of real estate. If you are preparing for any competitive exams, then you will get success. But do not weaken the hard efforts.

AQUARIUS



Ganesha says this week, there will be opportunities for progress in social and political life. As a result, the level of your respect and prestige will remain increased in the related fields. If you are engaged in earning an edge in the fields of music, art, medicine, and the film industry, then the movement of stars will give pleasant results. This week there will be moments of love between siblings. In personal relations, there will be sweetness with the life partner. However, in the middle of the week, the movement of stars will give

**BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : JULY 6 TO JULY 12
BY ASTROLOGER CHIRAG DARUWALLA**



JULY 6

Ganesha says you can see that you are a little too excited today. Your outgoing behavior and jovial nature are highly appreciated in the social circle. Your strong leadership qualities can make you so confident that you will be able to do all the work very well. If you work hard, then success can kiss your feet. Today may bring some good fortune as the planets are in your favor.

JULY 7

Ganesha says, may your day be very kind today. Today, you may be able to complete the remaining tasks in the projects. You can complete your work quickly so that you will be able to enjoy your time with your family. You can plan to go somewhere with your partner. Your business can do well today. Today, things can go according to your wish because you are

getting a lot of luck. A new opportunity can come your way, which can come today itself and can bring you a lot of profit. The stars are in your favor, which can help you to easily solve any problem regarding this new opportunity.

JULY 8

Ganesha says you can see that things are working for you without much effort. Small auspicious works can continue to happen throughout the day. It is great that everything may go well for you today, but do not be lazy and focus on the things that you need to do today. You are very lucky today because you can get what you want. Make sure you use today's luck for your benefit and not for others, because only then can it remain a positive thing for you.

JULY 9

Ganesha says meditate first thing in the morning; This can be beneficial for your personal and professional life. You can make a good profit in your business, so today can be a good day for you. Looking at the spiritual awakening in your zodiac today, you can lean more toward charity. Make sure that you do not stray away from your dreams and ambitions, as you may face some distractions today. Make sure that you are ethical in both your personal and professional life.

JULY 10

Ganesha says you may feel lots of love and care from family friends as well as from your partner. You may have a tough day today, but you may feel supported and cared for all the way. At the end of the day, you may feel very satisfied with where you are currently in your

life. Your partner's loving and caring nature can make you fall in love with your partner a lot today. You can experience for yourself how beautiful it is to be loved and cared for by someone you trust and love with all your heart.

JULY 11

Ganesha says your love life has been full of ups and downs, but today you can experience stability. Try saying what you're thinking. Expressing your feelings can help you improve your love life. Venus may bring love today, and the Moon may bring luck to your face today. You are entering a new phase that marks the beginning of a lane called success. Along with your old commitments, you may also take up additional responsibilities today, but it will not seem like a tough or daunting task, as you may enjoy

completing it.

JULY 12

Ganesha says you are very lucky today because you can get what you want. Make sure that you use the luck that you have today for your benefit and not for others, because only then can it remain a positive thing for you. You may focus more on your financial issues; hence your love life may take a back seat. A spouse's full support can surprise you a bit. Try to be patient and understanding. You are very close to finding that one person who can support you in everything, don't make that person angry.

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expenditure in terms of money. That is, there will be pleasant opportunities to make capital investment easy and make it worthwhile. Therefore, do not hesitate to continue the efforts at your level. So it will be good. In the last days of this week, the movement of stars will increase physical strength. On the other hand, there will be moments of laughter and happiness in household life. But the opposition will keep trying to trouble you.



PISCES

Ganesha says this week, there will be opportunities for desired growth in the related job profession. That is, you can be nominated for promotion by the concerned department. If you are looking for employment. So you will be successful. But review your preparations at your level. If you are an entrepreneur. So the movement of the stars will be very helpful in establishing necessary dialogues with a special and reached person. In the middle of this week, sweetness will start in love relationships. If there are any previous disputes. So you will be able to remove them. This week's stars will be pleasant and wonderful for

students. As a result, you will be able to prepare subjects. There will be chances of significant progress in earning and raising money in the

middle part of this week. So avoid laziness in continuing the efforts. So it will be good. However, on the last days of the week, some will be worried due

to the increasing expenditure in terms of money. Therefore, do not weaken your understanding at your level.

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History This Week

JULY 03 - JULY 09

JULY 3

July 3, 1775 - During the American Revolution, George Washington took command of the Continental Army at Cambridge, Massachusetts.

July 3, 1976 - The raid on Entebbe airport in Uganda occurred as an Israeli commando unit rescued 103 hostages on a hijacked Air France airliner. The jet had been en route from Tel Aviv to Paris when it was hijacked by pro-Palestinian



guerrillas. Three hostages, seven hijackers and twenty Ugandan soldiers were killed during the rescue.

July 3, 1988 - Iran Air Flight 655 was destroyed while flying over the Persian Gulf after the U.S. Navy Warship Vincennes fired two surface-to-air missiles, killing all 290 passengers aboard. A subsequent U.S. military inquiry cited stress related human failure for the mistaken identification of



the civilian airbus as an enemy F-14 fighter jet.

JULY 4

July 4, 1776 - The Declaration of Independence was approved by the Continental Congress.

July 4, 1863- Vicksburg, the last Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River, surrendered to General Grant and the Army of the West after a six week siege. With the Union in control of the Mississippi, the Confederacy was effectively split in two, cut off from its western allies.

July 4, 1882 - The "Last Great Buffalo Hunt" began on Indian reservation lands near Hettinger, North Dakota as 2,000 Teton Sioux Indians in full hunting regalia killed about 5,000 buffalo. By this time, most of the estimated 60-75 million buffalo in America had been killed by white hunters who usually took the hides and left the meat to rot. By 1883, the last of the free-ranging buffalo were gone.

Birthdays - Novelist and short-story writer Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)

was born in Salem, Massachusetts. His works included; The Scarlet Letter, The House of the Seven Gables and The Blithedale Romance.



Birthdays - Song writer Stephen Foster (1826-1864) was born in Lawrenceville, Pennsylvania. Among his nearly 200 songs were; Oh! Susanna, Camptown Races, Swanee River, Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair, and Beautiful Dreamer. He died in poverty at Bellevue Hospital in New York.

Birthdays - Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933) the 30th U.S. President was born in Plymouth, Vermont. He became President on August 3, 1923, after the death of Warren G. Harding. In 1924, Coolidge was elected President but did not run for re-election in 1928.

JULY 5

July 5, 1775- The Continental Congress adopted the Olive Branch Petition expressing hope for a reconciliation with Britain. However, King George III refused even to look at the petition and instead issued a proclamation declaring the colonists to be in a state of open rebellion.



Birthdays - Civil War Admiral David Farragut (1801-1870) was born near Knoxville, Tennessee. He is best remembered for his yelling "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" during an attack on his fleet by the Confederates.

Birthdays - Promoter and showman P.T. Barnum (1810-1891) was born in Bethel, Connecticut. His American Museum opened in 1842, exhibiting unusual acts such as the Feejee Mermaid, Siamese Twins Chang and Eng, and General Tom Thumb. In 1871, Barnum opened "The Greatest Show on Earth" in Brooklyn, New York. He later merged with rival J.A. Bailey to form the Barnum and Bailey Circus.



Birthdays - Cecil J. Rhodes (1853-1902) was born at Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, England. As a South African millionaire and politician, he was said to have once controlled 90 percent of the world's diamond production. His will established the Rhodes Scholarships at Oxford University for young scholars aged 18-25. Rhodesia was also named for him.

JULY 6

July 6, 1885 - Louis Pasteur gave the first successful anti-rabies inoculation to a boy who had been bitten by an infected dog.



Birthdays - Revolutionary War Naval Officer John Paul Jones (1747-1792) was born in Kirkbean, Scotland. He is best remembered for responding "I have not yet begun to fight!" to British opponents seeking his surrender during a naval battle.

JULY 7

July 7, 1898 - President William McKinley signed a resolution annexing Hawaii. In 1900, Congress made Hawaii an incorporated territory of the U.S., which it remained until becoming a state in 1959.



Birthdays - Baseball pitcher Leroy R.

(Satchel) Paige (1906-1982) was born in Mobile, Alabama. Following a career in the Negro Leagues, he became, at age 42, the first African American pitcher in the American League. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1971.

JULY 8



July 8, 1776 - The first public reading of the Declaration of Independence occurred as Colonel John Nixon read it to an assembled crowd in Philadelphia.

July 8, 1943 - During the Nazi occupation of France, Resistance leader Jean Moulin died following his arrest and subsequent torture by the Gestapo. He had been sent by the Allies into France in 1942 to unite the fledgling Underground movement. In June of 1943, he was arrested in Lyon, tortured for eleven days but betrayed no one. He died aboard a train while being transferred to a concentration camp.



Birthdays - Nelson Rockefeller (1908-1979) was born in Bar Harbor, Maine. He served as Governor of New York from 1958 to 1973. He became vice-president under Gerald Ford in 1974, serving until January 20, 1977.

JULY 9

July 9, 1868 - The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified. The Amendment defined U.S. citizenship and prohibited individual States from abridging the rights of any American citizen without due process and equal protection under the law. The Amendment also barred individuals involved in rebellion against the U.S. from holding public office.

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CONTD FROM PAGE 1**Trump kicks off July Fourth festivities at...**

I urge all Americans to proudly observe this day with all due ceremony to honor the glorious heritage, history, and accomplishments of our beloved Republic."

The proclamation celebrated the nation's founding, its historical milestones and outlined Trump's vision for what he described as a "new American Golden Age."

"We will continue to adventure into the cosmos, returning Americans to the lunar surface for all time to come and charging ahead to plant the Stars and Stripes among the red dunes of Mars. We will seize the new frontiers of artificial intelligence and quantum discovery, unleash the boundless energy beneath our soil, and expand the wealth and abundance of the American People," the proclamation said.

It added, "Today, as one American People, we celebrate and carry forward the spirit our Founders kindled in Philadelphia and enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and with God's help, we will prevail in making our beloved Nation stronger, prouder, richer, and greater than ever before."

Trump also announced that he had pardoned six individuals, who he said were prosecuted under the Biden Administration.

In a post on Truth Social, he said, "It is my Great Honor to have just signed Pardons for six people who were persecuted by the Biden Administration, and were in, or being sent to, prison, for 'fixing their car.' While I know this sounds ridiculous, it is nevertheless a fact, and part of the Weaponization and Stupidity that our Country had to endure during four long years of Sleepy Joe Biden. I am setting them all free, right now!"

According to CNN, Trump did not identify the six individuals or provide further details about the allegations they faced. CNN, citing a senior White House official, reported that Trump met senior officials earlier on Friday (local time) to discuss the pardons, which relate to people convicted of violating the Clean Air Act, a federal law aimed at reducing emissions and improving air quality.

The clemency falls under the "250 pardons for 250 years" initiative, serving as a focal point of the nation's milestone birthday festivities.

It took the stage at Mount Rushmore just after 11 p.m. ET.

"Tonight we gather on the eve of one of the most extraordinary days in the history of the world. Tomorrow, we mark 250 years of glorious independence and 250 years of majestic American freedom. Nothing like it," he said.

As forecast by press secretary Karoline Leavitt, Trump began by focusing on America's strength, calling the U.S. the "most powerful country on Earth."

"By the grace of God, the United States of America is the most successful, most accomplished, most exceptional nation ever to exist in human history, and it is great to be your president," he said.

Communism came in for a lot of derision in Trump's 30-minute speech.

Echoing a point he's made a lot recently, Trump brought up communists, a label he's applied to multiple Democrats running for election in 2026.

"There is now a resurgence of the communist menace in our land, including from newcomers to our country, who embrace ideas totally opposed to our way of life and our great success," Trump said.

He called Communism "a mortal threat to American liberty," akin to 9/11; "the enemy of the Constitution"; "the enemy of July 4, 1776"; and "the enemy," in general.

"So, on the eve of this 250th anniversary of American heritage, we resolve and swear for all to hear, that the citizens of the United States of America will vanquish Communism quickly," Trump said, adding to the audience: "Don't let them take too much of your time."

The president then pivoted to this November's elections, saying Republicans could lose only "if we allow ourselves to lose the midterms" by failing to overturn the Senate filibuster and pass the SAVE America Act, a major election bill that got a big round of applause from tonight's audience. If Congress does those two things, Trump said, "then we will not lose an election for 100 years."

Trump has repeatedly invoked America's unique identity and culture, saying, "There has never been anything like this."

"We can never forget that American liberty has not endured for 250 years merely because of words on paper. Liberty has prevailed here because of the culture and character of the people who declared it, defended it and preserved it," he said.

Passing on that character, he said, is "the core of patriotic duty of every American."

But in recent years, he said, there has "been an undeniable attempt to change this exceptional character to beat the

American spirit out of us, alienate us from our history, and to make it impossible to even answer the question, 'What does it mean to be an American?'"

"So, tonight, let us say clearly and proudly, what makes Americans so unique and extraordinary, we're going to give our country its identity back," Trump said. "Above all, Americans love freedom."

Later, he added: "You do not have to be born here, but you do have to love what we have built, you must love our country."

The president concluded his remarks with hope and optimism for America's golden age to come.

"Tomorrow, we reach a milestone like no other and celebrate with hearts and soaring spirits," Trump said, "because after two and a half centuries, we know that this is not an ending, this is only the beginning of the golden age of America."

Just before ending his speech, Trump made brief mention of the war with Iran, saying, "They're dying to settle. They want to settle so badly. We gave him a week off for a funeral because we're nice."

The America 250 celebration at Mt. Rushmore ended with a fireworks show after President Donald Trump's remarks. (Source: Agencies)

"Deeply Hurt by Ram Temple Donation..."

restraint during this difficult moment and thwart the conspiracies of anti-Hindu and anti-national forces seeking to malign the Hindu dharma and society by exploiting this unfortunate incident," Hosabale said.

He said the grand temple constructed at Shri Ram Janmabhoomi had become a center of reverence, faith and devotion for the entire Hindu society, owing to the struggles of generations and the dedication, sacrifice and martyrdom of crores of Rambhakt (devotees).

"The unfortunate incident of theft from the donation boxes kept at the Shri Ram Lalla temple in Ayodhya has deeply hurt the sentiments and faith of the entire society and devotees; we are all extremely pained and angered by this event," said the RSS general secretary.

The statement comes ahead of the Ram Mandir Trust's July 6 meeting where the fate of Trust general secretary Champat Rai and his aide Anil Mishra will be sealed.

The Sangh, in its first official remarks on the matter, has signaled to the Trust to do whatever it takes in order that the faith of Hindus is restored.

"It is natural for the entire Hindu society, including the RSS, to expect the Trust to treat this highly condemnable incident as an extraordinary matter and take effective steps to rectify all shortcomings in the temple management and operations. This is crucial to ensure that the faith and reverence of crores of Ram devotees in the Ayodhya temple remain unbroken and steadfast," Hosabale said.

He told the Trust - dominated by its affiliate VHP which was at the forefront of the Temple movement - to end the current state of confusion and uncertainty.

"In this regard, we expect the temple management and the government-appointed SIT to take all necessary initiatives. We are confident that through proper financial management, flawless and transparent operational systems, and an atmosphere imbued with purity, sanctity and true dharmikta, the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust will continue to strengthen the faith and trust of the Hindu society," Hosabale said.

The top RSS functionary said it was at the request of the Trust that the UP Government constituted the SIT and initiated legal proceedings based on its recommendations.

"It is essential to ensure that anyone found guilty after the investigation faces severe punishment," Hosabale said as the SIT probe revealed several luxury properties in the name of the eight persons named as accused in the FIR registered on June 25 and arrested.

The real issue at hand is what the Trust will do with Rai and Mishra, who put in their resignations recently. The RSS, for its part, has indicated to the Trust today that the guilty should not go unpunished.

Rai, VHP's international vice-president, who oversaw the temple affairs, remains in the eye of the storm.

RSS sources said the law would take its course in the matter of removal or continuation of the Trust members.

Under the Trust bylaws, a member of the Trust can be removed if a two-thirds of the Trust votes for the move. Currently two of the 14 trustees have resigned. The bylaws further provide for acceptance of the resignation of Trust members and their removal from the position they held. However, the bylaws say all members will continue to be trustees for life.

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

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Amarnath Yatra: A sacred journey to the abode of Lord Shiva

The Amarnath Yatra is one of the most revered pilgrimages in Hinduism, drawing hundreds of thousands of devotees every year to the sacred Amarnath Cave nestled high in the Himalayas of Jammu and Kashmir. More than a physical journey, it is regarded as a profound spiritual quest that symbolizes faith, devotion, endurance, and the eternal search for divine truth. The naturally formed ice Shivling inside the cave is believed to be a manifestation of Lord Shiva, making the pilgrimage one of the holiest experiences for Shaivites and spiritual seekers alike.

This year, the Amarnath Yatra is scheduled from July 3 to August 28, 2026.

The chanting of "Har Har Mahadev" reverberates through snow-clad mountains as thousands of pilgrims undertake one of India's most challenging and spiritually uplifting pilgrimages—the Amarnath Yatra. Every step taken on the rugged Himalayan trails is considered an act of devotion, while every hardship endured is believed to bring devotees closer to Lord Shiva.

The pilgrimage is not merely about reaching a destination; it is about inner transformation. It is a journey where faith triumphs over physical limitations, where the grandeur of nature evokes humility, and where the presence of the divine is felt amidst towering peaks, icy winds, and tranquil silence.

The Sacred Cave of Amarnath

Situated at an altitude of nearly 3,888 metres (12,756 feet) in the Himalayas of Jammu and Kashmir, the Amarnath Cave is among Hinduism's most sacred shrines. Deep inside the cave stands the naturally occurring ice Shivling, formed by the freezing of water droplets that fall from the cave's roof.

Unlike man-made idols, this ice formation is regarded as a self-manifested (Swayambhu) representation of Lord Shiva. Its waxing and waning are traditionally associated with the phases of the moon, adding to the cave's mystical significance.

For millions of devotees, merely catching a glimpse (darshan) of the holy Shivling is believed to wash away sins, bestow divine blessings, and aid in attaining liberation (moksha).

The Legend of the Cave

The spiritual significance of Amarnath is deeply rooted in Hindu mythology. According to ancient tradition, Lord Shiva chose this remote cave to reveal the secret of immortality—known as the Amar Katha—to Goddess Parvati. Before narrating the sacred knowledge, Shiva wanted complete isolation to ensure that no living being overheard the divine discourse.

To achieve this, he left behind everything associated with worldly existence along the route.

According to legend:

- He left Nandi, his sacred bull, at Pahalgam.
- Released the moon from his matted hair at Chandanwari.
- Allowed his snakes to remain at Sheshnag.
- Left Lord Ganesha at Mahagunas.



- Abandoned the five elements (Panchtatva) at Panchtarni.
- Finally entered the cave with Parvati alone.

Inside the cave, Shiva lit a sacred fire to eliminate every form of life present before revealing the eternal secret.

The Story of the Immortal Pigeons

One of the most beloved legends associated with Amarnath tells of two pigeon eggs that survived Shiva's divine fire. As Lord Shiva narrated the secret of immortality, the unborn pigeons unknowingly heard the sacred discourse. Upon hatching, they became immortal.

Even today, pilgrims occasionally report seeing a pair of pigeons near the cave despite the harsh climatic conditions. Their presence is regarded as a divine blessing and a reminder of the eternal truth revealed by Lord Shiva.

Discovery of the Holy Cave

Although references to Amarnath appear in ancient scriptures, local folklore credits a Muslim shepherd named Buta Malik with rediscovering the cave several centuries ago.

According to tradition, a saint gifted Malik a bag of coal. Upon reaching home, he found that the coal had transformed into gold. When he returned to thank the saint, he instead discovered the sacred cave housing the ice Shivling.

The legend beautifully reflects India's rich tradition of communal harmony, as descendants of Buta Malik have historically remained associated with the pilgrimage.

Routes of the Amarnath Yatra

Pilgrims generally undertake the Yatra through two routes.

Pahalgam Route

The traditional route begins from Pahalgam and passes through:

- Chandanwari
- Pissu Top
- Sheshnag
- Mahagunas Pass
- Panchtarni
- Amarnath Cave

Although longer, this route allows gradual acclimatization and is spiritually associated with the path Lord Shiva is believed to have followed.

Baltal Route

The Baltal route is much shorter but considerably steeper and physically demanding. Many pilgrims prefer it for quicker access to the shrine.

Both routes offer breathtaking views of glaciers, alpine meadows, waterfalls, and snow-covered mountains.

Spiritual Symbolism of the Journey

- Every stage of the Amarnath Yatra carries profound spiritual symbolism.
- The arduous climb represents the struggles of human life.
- The thinning air reminds devotees of the impermanence of the physical body.
- The silence of the mountains encourages introspection.
- The icy cave symbolizes the stillness of meditation, while the naturally formed Shivling represents the eternal, formless consciousness that transcends birth and death.

Pilgrims often describe the Yatra as a process of leaving behind ego, attachment, and worldly distractions.

Why the Yatra Is Spiritually

Transformative

Unlike ordinary travel, the Amarnath pilgrimage demands physical discipline, mental determination, and unwavering faith. Long walks across difficult terrain, unpredictable weather, freezing temperatures, and high altitude test the devotee's endurance.

Yet these very hardships become spiritual practices.

The pilgrimage teaches:

- Patience
- Humility
- Self-control
- Compassion
- Gratitude
- Faith in divine grace

Many devotees believe that Lord Shiva himself calls those destined to undertake the Yatra.

The Sacred Chant: "Har Har Mahadev" Throughout the pilgrimage, the air echoes with devotional chants.

"Har Har Mahadev"
"Bam Bam Bhole"

These chants uplift tired pilgrims, unite strangers into a spiritual family, and reinforce the belief that Lord Shiva walks alongside every devotee.

The Ice Shivling: A Symbol Beyond Form

The ice Shivling is more than a sacred formation.

It represents:

- The infinite nature of consciousness.
- Creation, preservation, and dissolution.
- The union of Shiva and Shakti.
- The eternal cycle of life and death.

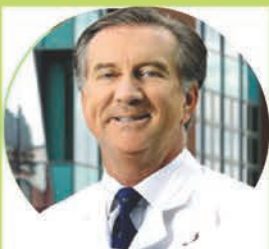
Its annual formation and gradual melting remind devotees that while the material world is temporary, the divine remains eternal.



An Eye Institute in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh combating avoidable blindness in children.

On behalf of all my colleagues of the Wilmer Eye Institute in Baltimore, MD. I send my best wishes and congratulations to our friends in Goutami on this extremely important occasion. This beautifully facility will match the wonderful world class work of your doctos, nurses, and staff in preserving and restoring the vision of so many patients. We in the United States are inspired by your dedication and admire your tireless efforts to serve so many who need your skills and compassion.

Best Wishes, Peter



Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



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Chasing the rain: Mesmerising monsoon destinations in India you must visit

From misty mountains and roaring waterfalls to emerald tea gardens and tranquil backwaters, discover the magic of travelling during India's most romantic season.

For many travellers, the monsoon is synonymous with cancelled plans, slippery roads and unpredictable weather. But those who have experienced India in the rains know that the season tells an entirely different story.

As the first showers kiss the earth, the landscape transforms into a spectacular canvas of lush greenery, cascading waterfalls, mist-covered hills and sparkling lakes. The air turns crisp, the aroma of wet soil fills every corner, and nature comes alive in its most vibrant avatar. It's a season that invites you to slow down, breathe deeply and reconnect with the outdoors.

Whether you're looking for a romantic getaway, an adventurous trek, a wellness retreat or simply a peaceful escape from city life, these destinations offer some of the most unforgettable monsoon experiences in India.

Coorg, Karnataka: Where Coffee Meets the Clouds

Often called the Scotland of India, Coorg becomes even more enchanting once the rains arrive. Endless coffee plantations glisten under raindrops, mist drifts lazily across rolling hills, and the entire region is wrapped in shades of emerald green.

Monsoon breathes new life into the region's waterfalls, with Abbey Falls roaring through dense forests while nearby streams swell with crystal-clear water. Adventure lovers can trek to Tadiandamol, Karnataka's highest peak, where panoramic views reward every climb.

Nature walks through coffee estates, visits to ancient forts, Tibetan monasteries and wildlife spotting at Nagarhole National Park make Coorg an ideal destination for every kind of traveller.

Don't miss:

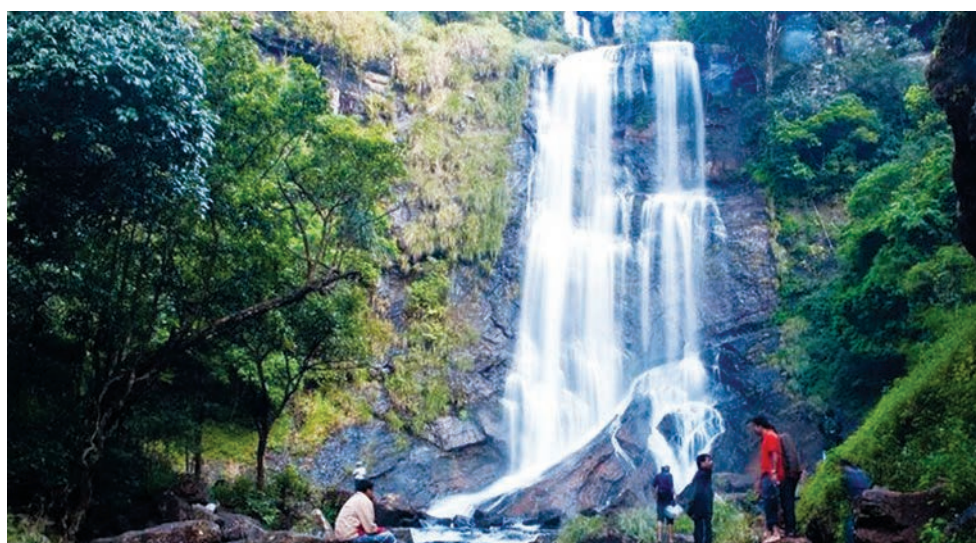
- Abbey Falls
- Raja's Seat
- Madikeri Fort
- Kaveri River
- Golden Temple at Bylakuppe
- Nagarhole National Park

Ideal monsoon temperature: 23°C-26°C

Shillong, Meghalaya: The Rain Capital's Hidden Paradise

Few places celebrate rain quite like Shillong. Nestled amid the Khasi Hills, the capital of Meghalaya transforms into a dreamy destination during the monsoon, where clouds descend to street level and waterfalls gush with unmatched intensity.

The rhythmic drizzle, cool breeze and emerald landscapes create a postcard-perfect setting. Elephant Falls and



Spread Eagle Falls are at their majestic best, while Umiam Lake reflects the changing shades of the monsoon sky.

The city's cosy cafés, vibrant local markets and delicious Khasi cuisine add warmth to the cool weather, making Shillong an irresistible rainy-season retreat.

Top attractions:

- Elephant Falls
- Shillong Peak
- Umiam Lake
- Don Bosco Museum
- Mawlynnong Village
- Mawsynram

- Ideal monsoon temperature: 12°C-23°C

Munnar, Kerala: Romance in the Tea Hills

Few destinations rival Munnar when it comes to monsoon romance.

As rain showers blanket Kerala's famed hill station, rolling tea plantations become greener than ever, mist embraces mountain peaks and countless seasonal waterfalls tumble down rocky cliffs.

Monsoon also brings a quieter side to Munnar. With fewer tourists around, visitors can enjoy peaceful walks through tea estates, scenic drives and

discounted stays at luxury resorts.

The aroma of freshly brewed tea, authentic Kerala cuisine and refreshing mountain air make every moment memorable.

Top attractions:

- Echo Point
- Tea Museum
- Attukad Waterfalls
- Eravikulam National Park
- Kundala Lake
- Tea Gardens
- Ideal monsoon temperature: 23°C-29°C

Valley of Flowers, Uttarakhand: Nature's Grand Floral Festival

Hidden high in the Garhwal Himalayas lies one of India's most spectacular natural wonders.

The Valley of Flowers comes alive only during the monsoon, when more than 400 species of alpine flowers bloom simultaneously across the meadows. Shades of pink, purple, yellow, blue and white blanket the valley, creating a breathtaking spectacle that seems almost unreal.

The moderate trek leading to this UNESCO World Heritage Site is equally rewarding, offering stunning mountain vistas, streams and pristine Himalayan landscapes.

For photographers, trekkers and nature lovers, there are few experiences more magical.

Highlights:

- Valley of Flowers National Park
- Himalayan wildflowers
- Scenic trekking trails
- Snow-capped mountain views
- Ideal monsoon temperature: 13°C-20°C

Udaipur, Rajasthan: Romance Amid Gentle Showers

While Rajasthan isn't usually associated with monsoons, Udaipur tells a different story.

Receiving gentle rainfall rather than heavy downpours, the City of Lakes becomes incredibly pleasant during the rainy season. Hills surrounding the city turn green, lakes brim with water and palaces reflect beautifully against cloudy skies. Boat rides across Lake Pichola become even more romantic, while Sajjangarh Monsoon Palace offers panoramic views of rain-washed landscapes stretching across the Aravalli hills. Monsoon is also one of the best times to experience Udaipur's regal hospitality and rich cultural heritage.

Top attractions:

- Lake Pichola
- City Palace
- Fateh Sagar Lake
- Sajjangarh Monsoon Palace
- Bagore Ki Haveli
- Sajjangarh Wildlife Sanctuary
- Ideal monsoon temperature: 25°C-35°C



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MY FIFA DIARY

Nature shadows heat generated by FIFA World Cup



BY
PRABHJOT SINGH

JULY 2, 2026

TORONTO (TIP): Nature has reiterated its supremacy, forcing the host city of Toronto to cancel some of the fan parties organized in different parts of the city to enable the soccer enthusiasts who could not buy tickets to watch the FIFA World Cup matches. The City of Toronto and Soccer Canada have organized big screens for the soccer enthusiasts to watch these games at these select centers.

However, the official advent of summer season last Sunday has made it harder for the soccer fans to gather in huge numbers at these fan centers to watch the ongoing games. Hot weather has led to World Cup viewing parties axed outside Toronto City Hall, a popular public center that serves as a venue for major social and cultural events. While cancelling the "view parties" outside the City Hall, authorities cited 'extreme heat forecast and the demand on resources to ensure the safety of all' for the cancellation.

The impact of the "extreme heat conditions" could be gauged from the fact



Kylian Mbappe cools off during a hydration break in the World Cup match between France and Sweden at the New York-New Jersey Stadium on June 30 [Dan Mullan/Getty Images/AFP]

that for the first time the Media Centre at Toronto Stadium has provided drinking water to scribes covering the World Cup.

On social media late Wednesday night, the city cited an "extreme heat forecast" and the demand on resources to ensure the safety of all" for the sudden cancellation of Thursday's watch parties at Nathan Phillip Square.

While Environment Canada has forecast a high of 35C in Toronto for Thursday, things will cool off by the evening. It's expected to be closer to 31C when action

kicks off at 7 p.m. between Portugal and Croatia. The game that was played at Toronto Stadium had some sobering impact as the weather started cooling down by several degrees than it was in the forenoon. Late evening viewing parties, however, were held as scheduled at Fan Fest and throughout the city, including Harbourfront. It is not heat alone that the authorities are trying to control. Another major concern has been the security not only at view centers but also in and around both Toronto Stadium and Centennial

Park, the training ground for the teams.

Yesterday, when Christian Ronaldo Portugal team went for its training, crowds, especially the Portuguese population of Toronto, wanted to have a close glimpse of Ronaldo and their other stars. The Police, ably assisted by private security agencies, have been doing a great job by keeping players, officials, spectators and local citizens safe.

In an email sent to some media houses, the Toronto Police Service (TPS) maintained it was "well positioned to support FIFA-related events ... while maintaining policing operations across the city.

"In addition to tournament-related activity, Toronto is also experiencing extreme heat, which can increase demand across a range of city services," the statement said.

Because of the high demand for the FIFA World Cup, the police have been bearing the brunt as security resources come after a staffing crunch at the private security contractor the city hired to handle the World Cup.

The agency had its own problems as some of the workers hired by it failed to show up.

(Prabhjot Singh is a Toronto-based senior journalist who writes on Sports, politics and community. He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)

Congo, Senegal fans disappointed at their teams exit

BY PRABHJOT SINGH

JULY 2, 2026, TORONTO (TIP): Africans were all smiles at the start of the FIFA World Cup 2026 as 10 of their teams have made the final round. The teams - Algeria, Cape Verde, Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa and Tunisia raised hopes of creating a dent in the European-South America dominance in the sport.

They continued to smile even until the end of the Group matches as for the exception of Tunisia, the remaining nine teams made it to the round of 32. Among the African teams that continued their march forward was debutant and one of the smallest nations, Cape Verde. With its winless and lossless record in the group matches, it not only made the round of 32 but also earned the right to challenge the defending champions, Argentina. The game is scheduled for Saturday.

Morocco also put up a commendable performance when it beat the Netherlands in the penalty shootout to move to the round of 16 where it will take on one of the three co-hosts, Canada, at Houston on Saturday.

However, big heartbreak for Africans came on Wednesday when two of its fancied teams - Congo and Senegal - made an unceremonious departure from the tournament after taking the lead against

their European opponents.

Congo had taken a 1-0 lead against England before Harry Kane blew up that lead to score twice in the second half to carry his team to the pre-quarterfinals.

Senegal's agony was much more distressing as it had taken a comfortable match winning 2-0 lead against Belgium. But it squandered it away and lost the match in extra time through a controversial "penalty" at the fag end of the match.

As the gloom cast its spell in African camp in general and the Senegal camp in particular, one of its midfielders, Pape Gueye, took to the social media handles and made a startling statement.

Pape Gueye, who was left frustrated by the coach's tactics, has threatened to stop playing for his nation should head coach Pape Thiaw remain in charge.

In its Round of 32 match on Wednesday, the Senegalese suffered a devastating loss after giving up a two-goal advantage to lose 3-2 to Belgium.

Midfielder Gueye reacted emotionally to the loss, saying he would quit his international career unless there were changes to the coaching staff of the national squad.

The 26-year-old wrote in an Instagram post following the game: "I will come back later to discuss the causes for the elimination". But today I am declaring

that I will stop participating for the national team as long as this coaching staff stays.

Gueye's remarks come following one of Senegal's most agonizing World Cup losses, when the West Africans seemed to have one foot in the last 16 before having a spectacular collapse.

Senegal could not have asked for a better start. It got the much-needed lead when Habib Diarra scored from the rebound after Ismaila Sarr's header hit the post. With his fourth goal of the competition, a strike that also brought him at par with Roger Milla's record for the most goals scored by an African player at a single men's World Cup, Sarr then extended the Teranga Lions' lead. (2-0 to Senegal). At that stage Senegal looked set for a place in the round of 16, given a two-goal advantage. But Belgium staged a massive comeback, scoring three late goals to close the gap and complete an amazing turnaround that killed Senegal's chances of advancing in the competition.

When it looked certain that Belgium was on the verge of elimination, Romelu Lukaku scored from a Thomas Meunier cross to raise its hopes of a fightback.

Spurred by the first goal, the Belgians' attack became more penetrating and incisive as Yuri Tielemans headed Belgium back into contention. He scored to send the game into overtime, holding off

two Senegal defenders and the goalkeeper, Mory Diaw.

Following a challenge on Tielemans by Camera for a potential penalty for Belgium, Yuri Tielemans converted the penalty given to send Belgium into the last sixteen of the World Cup.

The second match the Africans would love to put behind as quickly as they can was between Congo and England. It was Harry Kane's brace that rescued Thomas Tuchel's side as it was trailing 0-1 against a spirited Congo.

Harry Kane scored a header in the 75th minute, assisted by Anthony Gordon, to equalize for England after DR Congo had taken the lead with a goal from Brian Cipenga in the 7th minute.

DR Congo defended well and controlled the game until Kane's equalizer. However, Kane struck again with another perfect shot, giving England a 2-1 lead. This goal marks Kane's 13th in World Cup finals and his fifth in this North American campaign.

It is for the first time England came from behind to win a World Cup game after trailing at halftime since the 1966 final against West Germany.

The remaining African teams Algeria plays Switzerland, Egypt takes on Australia, Ghana faces Columbia, and Morocco challenges co-host Canada in the round of 16 games.

MY FIFA DIARY

Canada Day: Soccer team steals the limelight



BY
PRABHJOT SINGH

JULY 1, 2026

TORONTO (TIP): Giant killers Canada has become national hero on this Canada Day. While the celebrations have been from coast to coast to coast, people in general are excited about the team's excellent showing in the ongoing FIFA World Cup. Every Canadian is looking forward to the round of 16 game against Morocco at Houston on Saturday.

"Our team has already done enough to make us proud," was the comment made by most of the Canadians this correspondent talked to, saying "we want them to continue with redoubled vigor against Morocco and set new standards."

For an average Canadian, the celebrations were more than a holiday, a break from the routine work. After attending to household chores, they moved out to join their near and dear ones in picnics on beaches or walk downs to hot spots, including Harbourfront in Toronto, while many joined special celebrations held at different venues, including dance and music programs. Late in the evening, Harbourfront in Toronto, Parliament Hill in Ottawa and many other places were star attractions for fireworks.

People sporting Canadian jerseys and flags swarmed all public places.

Interestingly, Toronto Stadium, venue of the FIFA World Cup matches, did not figure on the choice list of the locals. Both the Fan Festival and Toronto Stadium had a few soccer enthusiasts.

Some were a little skeptical of the growing bitterness with the next-door big brother hoping that things would normalize soon. They said they wanted to go and follow their soccer team for its knockout round games but because of "uncertainty" in the relations, they decided to put their plans on hold.

Meanwhile, several federal ministers and leaders of various political parties, various organizations and groups greeted people on Canada's Day. This time, they generally opined, was a special day needing Canadians to reiterate their commitment to make their country strong as the entire world was experiencing some of the worst conflicts.

Lena Metlege Diab, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, issued the following statement on Canada Day, said that "how fortunate we are to call this country home—a place where diversity is celebrated, our values unite us, and our collective identity comes to life through our official languages and the experiences we share. The occasion is a time to celebrate what brings us together; take pride in our communities and look to the future with confidence as we build an even better Canada for the generations that will follow us. "As part of this year's festivities, I am



honored to be attending citizenship ceremonies in Canada's capital. These ceremonies are part of a large celebration taking place in every corner of our country where newcomers are taking the oath of citizenship. This is an emotional and meaningful moment as they officially join the Canadian family. These ceremonies happen year-round across Canada and reflect the hope and determination of those who choose to build their lives here.

"Generations of newcomers and their descendants have contributed to Canada's success. Today, we are a proud, welcoming, dynamic country precisely because we know how to find common cause and get big things done. Whether your family has been here for generations or you are taking the oath of citizenship for the first time today, you are part of Canada's story—one of unity, opportunity and progress for all Canadians," the Minister added.

David J. McGuinty, Minister of National Defense, joined Canadians from coast to coast in celebrating Canada Day and all that it represents, saying "It is an opportunity to reflect with pride on our nation, our history, our values, and the freedoms we are privileged to enjoy.

"On this day, I also extend my deepest gratitude to the generations of Canadians who have served our country in uniform. Past and present members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Canadian Coast Guard have answered the call to protect Canada's sovereignty, safeguard our security, support Canadians in times of hardship and crisis, and serve with distinction at home and abroad. They exemplify dedication, courage, and selfless service. I am profoundly proud of their contributions and of the vital role they play in keeping Canada strong, secure, and resilient," he added.

Marc Miller, Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister



responsible for Official Languages, in a statement said that "from the shores of British Columbia to the vast Prairies, to the rugged beauty of the North and to the Atlantic coast, communities across the country proudly carry their stories—their legacies, their cultures, their languages and their connections to the land.

"And despite the vastness of our country and the diversity of our communities, today we celebrate what unites us and the values

that make us proud to be Canadians.

Once again, this year, we have seen this unity in action. Across the country, Canadians have rallied behind our athletes, our sports teams, our artists, our creators, our scientists and our leaders. Through their individual achievements—like those of so many other Canadians—these outpourings of pride and solidarity lift us up as a country and demonstrate the strength of what unites us," he said.

MY FIFA DIARY



BY
PRABHJOT SINGH

JULY 1, 2026

LONDON (TIP): All the three co-hosts - USA, Mexico and Canada - completed their first hurdle of the knockout round on a victorious note to enter pre-quarterfinals of the FIFA World Cup 2026.

USA, the major host, was the last to clear the round of 32 hurdle defeating Bosnia Herzegovina 2-0 as Mexico and Canada had already made the round of 16.

For the USA, the win against Bosnia Herzegovina was reiteration that its earlier triumphs in the tournament were a legitimate recognition of the hard work its players had put in while preparing themselves for the big event on their home soil.

Bosnia Herzegovina, who made the knockout round after its hard-fought win over Qatar in the last group match, had drawn its opening game against co-host Canada 1-1 and lost against Switzerland also.

Bosnia was the third team from the Group after Switzerland and Canada to make the knockout round.

USA after losing its last game to bottom placed Turkey in the last group game had to put its best foot forward against

USA defeats Bosnia Herzegovina to enter pre-quarterfinals

spirited Bosnians who entered the field with nothing to lose. They tried to match their opponents in every department of the game but were unlucky not to grab their chances.

Instead, they conceded the lead just on the verge of half time when Folarun Balgun scored. Late in the second half, Tillman scored from a free kick, perhaps the only second goal of the tournament from free kicks after Canadian Nathan Saliba who came as a substitute for injured Ismael Kone scored from a similar free kick. With two goals to its tally, the Americans still had to keep its defense on alert with Bosnians continuing with their efforts to reduce the margin.

USA will now play Belgium in the round of 16.

Earlier, England overcame a 0-1 deficit to defeat Congo to earn the right to challenge Mexico in the round of 16. Belgium scored from a penalty in the dying moments of the extra time to snub Senegal 3-2 in another round of 32 match.



SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA - JULY 01: Malik Tillman #17 of the United States celebrates scoring his team's second goal during the FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 32 match between USA and Bosnia and Herzegovina at San Francisco Bay Area Stadium on July 01, 2026 in Santa Clara, California. (Photo by Charlotte Wilson/Getty Images)

BY PRABHJOT SINGH

JULY 1, 2026, TORONTO (TIP): Led by illustrious Kylian Mbappe, pre-tournament favorites France has been a record setting spree in the FIFA World Cup 2026. Kylian Mbappe has not only broken the record for most goals in World Cup knockout matches but also helped France set a new mark in recording the biggest win for France in the knockout round of the World. France defeated Sweden 3-0.

Mexico also joined co-host Canada, in the round of 16. Mexico defeated Ecuador 2-0 in a game that had the home crowds cheering every good move of its team. Mexico, like France, has also maintained a winning streak in the tournament so far by winning against South Africa (2-0), South Korea (1-0) and Czechia (3-0). So far, the Mexicans have not conceded even a single goal in four games, a record of sorts.

Norway, too, made the round of 16 with a convincing 2-1 win over Ivory Coast. Norway will now play Brazil on July 4 in its round of 16 match.

Incidentally, it is also a record that France has won all its four matches in this World Cup so far by scoring at least three goals in each game.

France defeated Senegal 3-1, beat Iraq 3-0, humbled Norway 4-1 before winning the round of 32 game against Sweden 3-0.

Hero of France's triumphant march has been Kylian Mbappe. He is now within one goal of Lionel Messi's overall tournament mark, as his two goals led France to a dominant 3-0 win over Sweden.

France is on record setting spree, defeats Sweden 3-0 for a place in the round of 16



Kylian Mbappe #10 of France celebrates scoring his team's third goal during the FIFA World Cup 2026 Round Of 32 match between France and Sweden at New York New Jersey Stadium on June 30, 2026 in East Rutherford, New Jersey.--GETTY IMAGES VIA AFP

The victory, France's biggest in a World Cup knockout match since their 3-0 win over Brazil in the 1998 final, sets up a round-of-16 matchup against Paraguay. Paraguay had conquered Germany on its way to the round of 16.

"I'm very aware of who I am, how I play, what I shall do, but it's not just

about me," Mbappé said through a translator. "The entire team is aware of what should be done. It is a new competition that has started today. We did play well, but we were timid. We could have done better at the beginning."

Playing against Sweden, Mbappé scored a terrific individual effort in the

45th minute, following a brilliant crossover step. That was ninth goal in the knockout stage of the World Cup, breaking a tie with Brazilian greats Leonidas and Ronaldo for the most in the tournament's history.

The 27-year-old Mbappé ran immediately to coach Didier Deschamps after scoring. This was Deschamps' first game back on the sideline after missing the group stage finale against Norway to fly back to Europe for his mother's funeral.

The game was still not over for Mbappé. After Bradley Barcola scored France's second goal early in the second half, Mbappé added a classy third in the 74th minute, latching onto a perfectly weighted pass from Michael Olise and finishing expertly into the far side of the net. Mbappé's sixth goal of this year's tournament tied him with captain of Argentina Messi in the race for the Golden Boot.

With 18 goals in 18 World Cup games, he moved one behind Messi on the all-time scoring list. Messi has played in 29 World Cup games in his career.

(Prabhjot Singh is a Toronto-based senior journalist who writes on Sports, politics and community. He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)

Widespread applause for Dr. Samin K. Sharma's appointment as Chief of Clinical Cardiology at Mount Sinai

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

His remarkable achievements continue to inspire the global medical community and serve as a source of immense pride for the Indian diaspora."

Dr. Purnima Voria also congratulated Dr. Sharma on his recent appointment as Vice President, Rajasthan Foundation USA Inc. - New York Chapter, under the Department of Domestic & Overseas Rajasthani Affairs (DORA) and Rajasthan Foundation, Government of Rajasthan, under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Bhajan Lal Sharma and the guidance of Commissioner Dr. Manisha Arora. This appointment is a testament to his distinguished accomplishments, his unwavering commitment to public service, and his dedication to strengthening the connection between Rajasthan and the global Rajasthani diaspora.

A part of Dr. Voria's message to Dr. Samin Sharma reads: "On behalf of the National U.S.-India Chamber of Commerce (NUICC) and Rajasthan Foundation USA Inc. - New York Chapter, we extend you our warmest congratulations and best wishes. We are honored to celebrate these remarkable milestones and look forward to your continued leadership in advancing healthcare, fostering innovation, promoting philanthropy, and strengthening the enduring partnership between India and the United States.



Dr. Purnima Voria with Dr. Samin Sharma
File photo

"Wishing you continued success and many more accomplishments in these distinguished roles."

Many other well-known organizations, including The Rajasthan Association of North America (RANA), New York, Jaipur Foot USA, and BRUHUD NY Seniors have extended their heartiest congratulations to world-renowned interventional cardiologist Dr. Samin K. Sharma on his appointment as Chief of Clinical Cardiology at Mount Sinai, New York.

RANA President Prem Bhandari said that Dr. Sharma's appointment is a matter of immense pride not only for Rajasthan, but also for India and the United States.



Prem Bhandari with Dr. Samin Sharma
Photo provided by Prem Bhandari

"Dr. Samin Sharma is not only the pride of Rajasthan, but also the pride of India and the United States. His extraordinary contributions to interventional cardiology, patient care, innovation, and medical leadership over more than three decades have earned him worldwide respect. This appointment is a fitting recognition of his exceptional service and dedication," Bhandari said.

Dr. Sharma is a Patron Member of the Rajasthan Association of North America (RANA), New York, an elite global organization of Rajasthanis across the world. RANA has held four International Rajasthani Conventions in New York, which were attended twice by former



Haridas Kotahwala speaking with The Indian Panorama in his office in Manhattan.
Photo / The Indian Panorama

Rajasthan Chief Minister Shri Ashok Gehlot along with his Cabinet members, and once by former Chief Minister Smt. Vasundhara Raje along with her Cabinet members. Bhandari said that the 5th International Rajasthani Convention will be held in New York next year.

Recalling Dr. Sharma's longstanding association with RANA, Bhandari said that Dr. Sharma has been one of the organization's strongest supporters since its inception and has also been a great supporter of Jaipur Foot USA and its humanitarian initiatives.

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news

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Sriniketan Foundation Presents a Divine Musical Evening Celebrating the Spirit of Indian Music

**JUNE 26, 2026
FLUSHING, NY (TIP)**

Sriniketan Foundation proudly presented a memorable and spiritually uplifting musical evening that celebrated the beauty of Indian classical and Bollywood music. The event drew an enthusiastic audience and concluded with overwhelming appreciation for the artists and organizers.



Purnima Ji seeking the blessings of her Sadguru Yogiraj Gurunath Siddhnath Ji, an Enlightened Master

The evening featured internationally acclaimed vocalists Dr. Vasundhara Raturi and Anusha Manjunath, whose enchanting renditions of classical-based Bollywood songs mesmerized the audience. Their soulful voices, artistic excellence, and emotional expressions created a magical atmosphere, earning prolonged applause and admiration. Providing exceptional musical accompaniment were the talented



Vocalists Vasundhara Raturi and Anusha Manjunath with accompanying musicians Pranav, Ashok, David, and Badesab.

musicians Pranav, David, Ashok, and Badesab, whose outstanding performances perfectly complemented the vocalists and elevated the concert to an unforgettable musical experience. A special highlight of the evening was the performance by guest artist Sparsh, who captivated the audience with his melodious voice. His presentations of a devotional hymn to Lord Ganesh, a patriotic song, and sacred shlokas deeply touched the



Purnima Ji with the star vocalists Vasundhara Raturi and Anusha Manjunath



Purnima Ji welcoming the gathering



Purnima Ji blessing the talented and gifted musician and vocalist Sparsh Shah



Lamp lighting (Deep Prajvalan) Ceremony with distinguished guests



A view of the audience in the full room which holds close to 1000 guests

hearts of everyone present. His inspiring performance received a standing ovation.

The program began with a warm and graceful introduction of Purnima Desai, Founder and President of Sriniketan Foundation, by Ujwala and Rohit Pandya, who acknowledged her decades of dedicated service in promoting Indian music, culture, education, and humanitarian values.

As the emcee, Purnima Desai conducted the program with remarkable grace, confidence, and warmth. Her thoughtful narration, seamless coordination, and heartfelt connection with the audience added a special charm to the evening and were appreciated with

enthusiastic applause.

The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks to the artists, musicians, volunteers, sponsors, and supporters whose collective efforts made the evening a resounding success. More than a musical concert, the program became a celebration of India's rich cultural heritage, devotion, patriotism, and the universal language of music.

Sriniketan Foundation remains committed to preserving and promoting Indian culture while providing a platform for exceptional artists and inspiring future generations through music, education, and community service.

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

10 Indian-origin CEOs leading America's biggest companies as US turns 250

As the United States approaches the 250th anniversary of its independence in 2026, another story stands out in its economic journey: the rise of Indian-origin executives to the top of Corporate America.

Over the past two decades, leaders born or educated in India have taken charge of some of America's most influential companies, including Microsoft, Google, Adobe, IBM, Mastercard, Palo Alto Networks, Micron Technology, Google Cloud and Novartis. Their rise has coincided with some of the biggest shifts in the global economy, from cloud computing and artificial intelligence to digital payments, cybersecurity and advanced healthcare technologies.

While they operate in different industries, their careers reflect a broader transformation in Corporate America, where global talent increasingly leads companies that shape how billions of people work, communicate, innovate and consume.

From Microsoft to Mastercard: Indian-origin leaders run some of the world's largest companies. Here are ten of the best.

SATYA NADELLA:
CEO MICROSOFT

SUNDAR PICHAI:
CEO GOOGLE -> ALPHABET

SHANTANU NARAYEN:
CEO ADOBE

INDRA NOOYI:
FORMER CEO, PEPSICO

AJAY BANGA:
PRESIDENT, WORLD BANK

ARVIND KRISHNA:
CEO IBM

NIKESH ARORA:
CEO PALO ALTO NETWORKS

THOMAS KURIAN:
CEO GOOGLE CLOUD

SANJAY MEHROTRA:
CEO MICRON

VASANT NARASIMHAN:
CEO NOVARTIS

The rise of Indian-origin executives at some of America's largest corporations reflects more than individual success. It is also a story about immigration, education and the increasingly global nature of business leadership.

Many of these executives began their academic journeys in India before building careers abroad, highlighting the country's growing contribution to global management and technology leadership.

(Source: Express Global Desk)

Center for Pluralism Announces National Pluralism Awards to Recognize Bridge Builders Across America



Mike Ghose, Director, Center for Pluralism

For generations, America has led the world through innovation, entrepreneurship, scientific discovery, medicine, technology, and an unwavering belief that tomorrow can be better than today. It is this spirit of possibility that has attracted people from every corner of the world and enabled generations of Americans to transform ideas into progress that has benefited humanity.

Today, as the nation confronts new social, cultural, and ideological challenges, the Center for Pluralism believes America's next great frontier is no longer defined solely by technological advancement or economic achievement. The next bold frontier is pluralism-building a society where people of every faith, race, ethnicity, culture, nationality, political belief, sexual orientation, and all unique backgrounds can live with dignity, mutual respect, and a shared sense of belonging. Pluralism is about inclusion.

This year, we are celebrating 250 years of America's greatness as a global leader. It is this vision that has inspired the launch of the National Pluralism Awards, an initiative created to recognize individuals whose lives and work embody the principles of bridge-building, understanding, and community leadership. Rather than celebrating prominence or position, the awards honor those who have quietly dedicated themselves to bringing people together across religious, cultural, and social differences, strengthening the very fabric of American society.

Building upon more than three decades of public engagement, interfaith dialogue, and civic leadership, the Center for Pluralism views these awards not simply as an annual recognition program, but as part of a broader national movement. By celebrating individuals who foster trust, encourage dialogue, and inspire cooperation, the organization hopes to

elevate pluralism as one of America's defining strengths for generations to come.

THREE DECADES OF ADVANCING PLURALISM

The National Pluralism Awards are the latest chapter in a vision that has been evolving for more than three decades. Throughout that time, the Center for Pluralism has worked to encourage dialogue, strengthen relationships across differences, and promote the idea that a cohesive society is built not by eliminating diversity, but by embracing it with understanding and respect.

While much of the organization's early work focused on fostering interfaith understanding, its mission has steadily expanded to reflect the realities of modern society. Today, the Center views pluralism as a universal civic principle-one that extends beyond religion to include every aspect of public life, encouraging mutual respect across cultures, ethnicities, races, nationalities, political perspectives, and communities.

As the initiative enters its next phase, the Center for Pluralism is expanding its engagement in both Washington, D.C., and Dallas, Texas, two communities expected to play an important role in advancing its national vision. The expansion reflects the organization's belief that meaningful change begins through local engagement while contributing to a broader national conversation about unity, civic responsibility, and social cohesion.

Central to the Center's philosophy is a simple but enduring belief: a stronger America is built when every individual feels secure in their identity while respecting the identities of others. Rather than asking people to set aside their differences, the organization encourages communities to see diversity as a shared strength and to cultivate relationships founded on dignity, equality, and mutual respect.

The National Pluralism Awards embody that philosophy by recognizing individuals whose lives demonstrate these values in action. Through community leadership, public service, education, journalism, interfaith engagement, and civic participation, the honorees reflect the very principles the Center has championed for more than 30 years-showing that lasting progress is achieved not only through institutions but also through ordinary people whose commitment to understanding creates extraordinary impact.

RECOGNIZING AMERICA'S BRIDGE BUILDERS

At the heart of the National Pluralism Awards is a simple yet profound belief: societies become stronger when individuals choose to build bridges rather than barriers. Across America, countless leaders, educators, journalists, community advocates, faith leaders, and public servants dedicate themselves to fostering understanding among people of different backgrounds. While many of their contributions take place outside the national spotlight, their impact is felt in stronger communities, meaningful dialogue, and relationships built on trust and mutual respect.

The National Pluralism Awards were

established to recognize these often-unsung Heroes -those who have gone beyond the boundaries of their own faith traditions, cultures, and communities to encourage cooperation, understanding, and civic engagement. Their work reflects the values of pluralism by demonstrating that diversity is not an obstacle to overcome, but a strength that can unite people around shared human values while respecting their unique identities.

FOR THE INAUGURAL RECOGNITION, THE CENTER FOR PLURALISM HAS ANNOUNCED THE FOLLOWING HONOREES:

- Andra Baylus
- Sunitha Vishwanath
- Victor Ghalib Beggs
- John Prahbudas
- Indrajit Saluja
- Gerry Serrota
- Kirit Daftary
- Sayyid Syeed
- Karen Hollie
- Ani Zonneveld
- Peggy Larney

Collectively, these distinguished individuals represent decades of service dedicated to strengthening understanding among all Americans. Their work serves as a reminder that meaningful leadership is often measured not by titles or recognition, but by the lives touched, the conversations inspired, and the bridges built between people who may never have found common ground.

The inaugural Recognition of Pluralists ceremony is expected to take place in September, with Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., considered as the preferred venue. The event is envisioned to receive bipartisan support from Republican and Democratic Members of Congress and Senators, underscoring the belief that pluralism is a shared national value that transcends political affiliation. Award recipients are expected to be honored by a surprise guest, while the keynote speaker will be announced at a later date. A Pluralist is someone who appreciates the otherness of the others and respects their given uniqueness.

A VISION BEYOND THE AWARDS

While the National Pluralism Awards recognize outstanding individuals, the initiative represents something far greater than an annual awards program. According to the Center for Pluralism, the awards are intended to serve as a catalyst for a broader national conversation about what the future of America can look like when respect, inclusion, and civic engagement become shared priorities.

The organization's long-term vision is rooted in a simple yet ambitious idea: America's next frontier is pluralism. Just as previous generations expanded the nation's influence through innovation, scientific discovery, entrepreneurship, medicine, technology, and democratic ideals, the Center believes the next defining chapter of American leadership will be its ability to build a society where every individual-regardless of faith, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, political beliefs, or sexual orientation-feels secure, respected, and valued.

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As we celebrate 250 years of American Independence, we honor the values that unite us and strengthen the bond between the United States and India. Together, we continue to build a better tomorrow through friendship, collaboration and shared prosperity.



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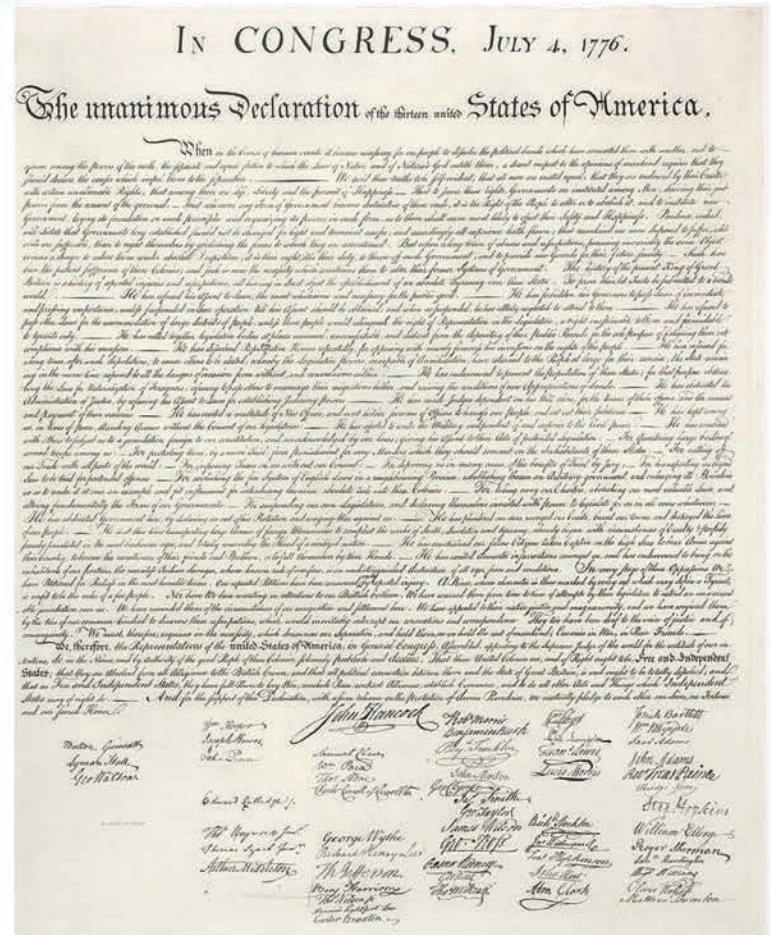
A Grand Commemorative Publication on America's Journey: 1776-2026

The Indian Panorama proudly announces a landmark 250-page Special Commemorative Edition to celebrate the historic 250th Anniversary of the Independence of the United States in 2026.

The prestigious publication, titled "The Making of America," will present a comprehensive account of America's extraordinary journey from the pre-Independence era to the present day, highlighting its history, democracy, economy, scientific and technological achievements, military strength, cultural diversity, and global leadership.

A special section of this historic commemorative edition will be devoted to the evolving and increasingly significant relationship between India and United States—two great democracies bound together by shared democratic values, strategic cooperation, economic engagement, educational exchange, technological innovation, and deep people-to-people ties.

The section will also highlight the remarkable contribution of the Indian American community to the growth and progress of America in diverse fields including science, technology, medicine, business, academia, public service, arts, media, entrepreneurship, and philanthropy. It will celebrate the role played by Indian Americans in strengthening the bonds of friendship and understanding between the two nations and in enriching the multicultural fabric of American society.



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