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SEA OF TRICOLORS SWEEPS MADISON AVENUE AS FIA CELEBRATES INDIA AT 80, AMERICA AT 250



New York State Governor Kathy Hochul leads the FIA 44th India Day Parade in Manhattan on August 16, 2026. To her right is Vishal Jayeshbhai Harsh, Deputy Consul General of India in New York. FIA President Sreekanth Akkapalli is third from the left.

I.S. SALUJA
AUGUST 16, 2026
NEW YORK, NY (TIP)

Madison Avenue became a vibrant river of saffron, white and green on Sunday, August 16, as the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and New England staged its 44th Annual India Day Parade, bringing together, according to the organizers, an estimated 200,000 participants and spectators in one of the largest celebrations of India's Independence outside the country.

Held under the theme "Harmony in Heritage," this year's celebration carried special significance: it commemorated India's 80th Independence Day

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Iran's Pezeshkian Calls For End To US War, Says Tehran Is In 'Position Of Power'



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has urged an end to the US-Iran war, saying Tehran is seeking a resolution from a position of power and dignity as Oman works to revive diplomatic talks

AUGUST 22, 2026
TEHRAN (TIP)

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian

has called for an end to the months-long war with the United States, saying Tehran should seek to stop the conflict while it believes it holds a "position of power and dignity". His remarks come as Washington prepares additional economic pressure on Iran and diplomatic efforts to revive talks remain underway. "It is better that we bring the war to an end now as we are in a position of power and dignity," Pezeshkian said during a meeting with doctors on Friday, August 21. He also claimed that Iran had gained international support during the conflict and accused the United States of attacking civilian infrastructure. "The whole world acknowledges our victory and emphasizes that America has

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US IMPOSES 50% TARIFFS ON CANADA AS TRADE TALKS FAIL

AUGUST 21, 2026
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

Crucial trade talks between the United States and Canada to stave off punishing new tariffs by the Trump administration on Canadian goods collapsed late Friday, with Canada saying it would retaliate "dollar for dollar," according to a news report published in The New York Times.

United States trade representative Jamieson Greer told reporters that Canada had walked away from the negotiating table after days of talks had brought them close to an agreement that would avert 50 percent tariffs on more Canadian goods. President Trump had this week repeatedly said that the two countries, locked into a trade war since



Mark Carney suspended talks and will take out retaliatory tariffs against the United States after days of negotiations to stave off new levies by the Trump administration ended in an impasse.

last year, were very close to a "good deal." "Tonight, Canada declined to finalize the trade deal under the terms agreed

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Ahead of Bhagwat's visit, US religious freedom body seeks sanctions against RSS



RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat. File photo

AUGUST 20, 2026
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

Officials of a US advisory body on religious freedom have called for sanctions against the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and asked the US government not to extend diplomatic courtesies to its leaders or have high-level meetings with them.

US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) chair Asif Mahmood said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was a member of the RSS, which he described as an "umbrella organization whose sub-groups have perpetrated attacks on religious minorities".

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COMMENT

LOVE INDIA - BUT LOVE THE INDIAN TOO

For Indians abroad, patriotism should mean more than flags, parades and memories of Mother India

BY INDRAJIT
SALUJA



There was something deeply moving about watching Indians across the world celebrate India's 80th Independence Day.

In New York, the Tricolor flew in Times Square. Madison Avenue became a river of saffron, white and green. The Empire State Building wore India's colors. Elsewhere across America and around the world, Indian communities organized flag-hoistings, parades, cultural programs and elaborate celebrations.

One cannot but feel pleased.

Here are people who left India years, sometimes decades, ago. Many are now citizens of other countries. Their children and grandchildren may know India largely through family, occasional visits, food, music, language and stories.

And yet, when August 15 arrives, something stirs.

They bring out the Tricolor, sing Jana Gana Mana and remember the generations whose sacrifices gave India freedom.

There is beauty in that remembrance.

Indeed, one sometimes encounters larger community celebrations of India's Independence Day abroad than in many Indian cities and towns, outside official ceremonies.

There are understandable reasons.

The immigrant needs community. Away from home, national and cultural occasions become instruments of belonging. They bring scattered people together and help transmit identity to the next generation.

Prosperity plays its part too. Many overseas Indians have achieved financial comfort. They can organize magnificent parades, hire celebrated venues, invite movie stars and political leaders, build elaborate floats and illuminate famous landmarks.

There is nothing wrong with that.

Celebrate India. Celebrate magnificently. Be proud of where you came from.

But perhaps Independence Day should ask something more of us.

DO WE LOVE INDIA-OR ONLY OUR MEMORY OF INDIA?

For Indians abroad, there is a danger that India gradually becomes an abstraction-Mother India: ancient, spiritual, colorful, magnificent and remembered with affection.

But Mother India is made of people.

She is the mother outside a government hospital wondering whether her child will receive treatment.

She is the farmer uncertain whether another difficult season will push his family deeper into debt.

She is the educated young person carrying degrees but unable to find meaningful employment.

She is the worker whose labor keeps cities functioning while economic security remains distant.

She is also the citizen belonging to a minority who fears discrimination and looks to India's Constitution for its promise of equal citizenship.

If we love Mother India, can we remain indifferent to her children?

India's achievements are undeniable. Its economy has grown enormously. It has built formidable scientific and technological capabilities and produced extraordinary entrepreneurs, physicians, engineers, scientists and academics. Hundreds of millions have experienced material improvements unimaginable at Independence.

The diaspora is entitled to celebrate those achievements.

But patriotism should not permit only applause.

India continues to face poverty and inequality, unemployment and underemployment, agricultural distress, uneven access to quality education and healthcare, allegations of corruption and continuing concerns about minority rights and institutional fairness.

The anxieties expressed by India's young people deserve particular attention. A nation possessing one of the world's largest young populations has an extraordinary demographic opportunity-but only if education leads to skills, skills to employment, and hard work to reasonable hope of advancement.

A demographic dividend can become a source of frustration if millions of young people see no road ahead.

Surely their India deserves a place in our Independence Day conversations too.

PATRIOTISM MUST HAVE CONSCIENCE

This is not an invitation to Indians abroad to become permanent critics of India. Nor should someone living comfortably in New York, London, Toronto or Sydney presume to understand every

complexity confronting 1.4 billion people.

But there is a difference between criticism and concern.

Love that cannot tolerate a question is not patriotism. It is adulation.

If overseas Indians can mobilize enormous resources for parades and banquets, they can mobilize resources for scholarships.

If they can sponsor celebrity appearances, they can help a rural school.

If they can finance magnificent floats, they can help equip a clinic.

And if they can gather thousands to celebrate India for a day, they can devote some time to understanding the India that does not appear on the parade float.

Philanthropy cannot substitute for good government. India's political future must be determined by its citizens, and its institutions must solve the country's structural problems.

But the diaspora can care. It can listen. It can help.

And when conscience requires it, it can speak.

AND WHAT OF THE COUNTRY THAT GAVE US A NEW HOME?

There is another question Indians abroad should confront.

We display extraordinary enthusiasm for August 15. Do we show comparable enthusiasm for the national days of the countries we have chosen to make our homes?

For Indian Americans, July 4 is not somebody else's Independence Day. It is ours.

America educated many of us, employed us and gave us opportunities to establish businesses, buy homes and raise families. It allowed us to build temples, gurdwaras, mosques and cultural institutions; publish newspapers; enter public life; and rise to the highest levels of medicine, science, technology, academia and enterprise.

America did not ask us to stop loving India before allowing us to love America.

That generosity deserves reciprocity.

An American citizen of Indian origin does not diminish India by enthusiastically celebrating July 4. Nor does an Indian Canadian betray India by embracing Canada Day.

Gratitude to the country that gave you opportunity is not betrayal of the country that gave you birth.

One can love both.

Indeed, this year's coincidence carries special meaning: India at 80 and America at 250. What better moment for Indian Americans to acknowledge the two countries that have shaped their lives?

FROM DISPLAY TO RESPONSIBILITY

So let Madison Avenue fill with Tricolors.

Let Times Square celebrate India. Let children dance, bands play and families rejoice. Let Vande Mataram be sung proudly.

But when the music ends and the flags are folded away, remember the India beyond the celebration-the unemployed graduate, the indebted farmer, the poor mother struggling to educate her children, the marginalized citizen asking whether the Republic sees everyone equally.

They too are India.

And when July 4 comes, do not leave the Stars and Stripes to somebody else.

Bring out that flag too.

Tell your children about the country in which they are building their future. Teach them that preserving their Indian inheritance and embracing their American citizenship are not contradictory obligations.

Our identities need not compete.

We can honor the land of our ancestors while loving the land our children call home.

And we can love Mother India without turning our eyes away from the mothers of India who still struggle.

That is the patriotism worthy of Indians abroad:

Celebrate India's achievements. Care about India's shortcomings. Help India's people. And honor wholeheartedly the nation that welcomed you and gave you the opportunity to prosper.

The Tricolor should remind us not only where we came from, but also of those we left behind.

And the flag of our adopted country should remind us, with gratitude, where we now belong.

There is room in an honorable heart for both.

Long Live India! God Bless America!

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THOUSANDS CELEBRATE INDIA'S 80TH INDEPENDENCE DAY AT QUEENS INDIA DAY PARADE

MAYOR ZOHRAN MAMDANI JOINS COLORFUL HILLSIDE AVENUE PROCESSION AS FLORAL PARK-BELLEROSE COMMUNITY CELEBRATES INDIAN HERITAGE, CULTURE AND UNITY

I.S. SALUJA
AUGUST 16, 2026
QUEENS, NY (TIP)

Thousands of Indian Americans, elected officials, community leaders and families turned Hillside Avenue in eastern Queens into a colorful celebration of India's heritage on Saturday, August 15, as the Queens India Day Parade and Cultural Program commemorated India's 80th Independence Day.

Organized by the Floral Park-Bellerose Indian Merchant Association (FBIMA) Inc., the annual parade brought Indian flags, floats, music and dance to the Floral Park-Bellerose neighborhood, drawing more than 3,000 marchers and spectators in person and another 4,000-plus viewers through a live online broadcast, according to post-event reporting.

Among the most prominent participants was New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, whose presence carried particular significance this year. Mamdani, who took office in January, attended the celebration as New York



Dignitaries present on the occasion. L to R: NYC Council Speaker Adrienne Adams, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, Congressman Tom Suozzi, with Dr. Hari Shukla, Chairman of the organizing Committee, and Dr Nath

and Kashishh Rajput served as Grand Marshals.

The parade culminated near Little Neck Parkway, where a stage had been erected for speeches, music and cultural presentations. The program featured 12 dance performances, along with musical presentations reflecting both traditional and contemporary Indian culture.

MAYOR MAMDANI CELEBRATES HIS INDIAN AMERICAN ROOTS

Mayor Mamdani addressed the gathering near Little Neck Parkway, where photographs from the event showed him speaking before members of the Indian American community.

His participation gave this year's celebration an unusual historical dimension.

Born in Kampala, Uganda, to Indian-born parents-scholar Mahmood Mamdani and filmmaker Mira Nair-Mamdani came to New York as a child and was elected the city's first mayor of Indian origin last year.

At the Queens celebration, he invoked former Mayor David Dinkins'



Mayor Zohran Mamdani addressing the gathering at the Parade



Mrs. Kirti Shukla is singing the National Anthem

City's first mayor of Indian origin.

"Today, I was back in Floral Park for the Queens India Day Parade - this time as the first Indian American mayor of New York City," Mamdani said afterward. "It was an experience I will never forget."

PARADE MOVES ALONG HILLSIDE AVENUE

Participants assembled near Langdale Street and Hillside Avenue before proceeding along Hillside Avenue from 268th Street to Little Neck Parkway.

The procession included five floats and approximately 15 Indian community organizations from Queens and Long Island, along with dance and cultural groups. A police band, mounted police and a display of exotic cars added to the spectacle.

The event was organized under the leadership of FBIMA President Dincil George, Board Chairman Thomas Koshy and Parade Chairman Dr. Hari Shukla.

Bollywood actresses Sarnaya Anand



Board Chairman Thomas Koshy marching in the Parade

memorable description of New York as a "gorgeous mosaic," emphasizing the religious and cultural diversity of the Indian diaspora and its contribution to the city.

For a community celebrating the freedom of the country from which many of its members or their parents came, the presence of an Indian American at the helm of America's largest city gave the occasion additional symbolic resonance.

ELECTED OFFICIALS JOIN THE CELEBRATION

The parade drew a broad representation of public officials from New York City, New York State and the federal government.

Among those attending were Congressman Tom Suozzi, New York City Comptroller Mark Levine, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr., State Assemblyman Ed Braunstein, State Assemblywoman Michaelle

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CONTD FROM PAGE 3

THOUSANDS CELEBRATE INDIA'S 80TH INDEPENDENCE DAY AT QUEENS INDIA DAY PARADE

Solages, former City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams, Council Members Shekar Krishnan and Linda Lee, North Hempstead Supervisor Jennifer DeSena, and Town Clerk Ragini Srivastava, along with candidates for public office. The Indian Panorama Chief Editor Prof. Indrajit S Saluja was also among the guests.

Their participation reflected the political and civic prominence the Indian American community has acquired in Queens and neighboring Long Island.

The Floral Park-Bellerose area, situated near the Queens-Nassau border, has become home to a substantial South Asian population and a flourishing network of Indian-owned businesses, community organizations and houses of worship.

CULTURE TAKES CENTER STAGE

Yet politics remained only one part of



Grand Marshal Bollywood actress Kashishh Rajput on the main float. Seen, among others are L to R: Dr. Hari Shukla and Prof. Indrajit S Saluja

journey of independent India and the continuing American story of immigration, opportunity and citizenship.

That reality could be seen on Hillside Avenue: Indian flags carried through a New York neighborhood; elected American officials joining an Indian Independence Day celebration; children born in America performing Indian dances; and, perhaps most strikingly, an Indian American mayor of New York City standing before the community.

The symbolism was difficult to miss.

India's Independence Day was being celebrated not by visitors temporarily carrying their culture abroad, but by Americans whose Indian inheritance has become one strand in New York's extraordinary civic fabric.

For Mayor Mamdani, the moment was particularly personal. He had attended South Asian community events before becoming mayor. On August 15, he



Grand Marshal Bollywood actresses Sarnaya Anand with FBIMA members. To her right is Mrs. Kirti Shukla

Saturday's celebration.

For families lining Hillside Avenue, the dominant sights and sounds were those of Indian culture: the Tricolor, colorful traditional clothing, floats, music and dancers representing the diversity of India's regions and communities.

The cultural program following the parade continued that theme, giving young Indian Americans in particular an opportunity to perform traditions inherited from parents and grandparents while celebrating them

openly as part of life in New York.

That intergenerational element has become one of the most important features of diaspora Independence Day celebrations.

For first-generation immigrants, August 15 often carries memories of the India they left behind. For their American-born children and grandchildren, celebrations such as the Queens parade offer a way of understanding an inheritance they did not experience firsthand.

India at 80, Indian America Coming of



Dr. Hari Shukla honoring Congressman Tom Suozzi



Town Clerk Ragini Srivastava presenting a Citation to Dr. Hari Shukla



Town Supervisor DeSena, Grand Marshal Ms Anand, Bobby Kumar Kalotee with FBIMA members

Age

This year's parade came at a remarkable historical conjunction.

India celebrated 80 years of Independence on August 15, while the United States is marking the 250th anniversary of American Independence.

For Indian Americans, the coincidence gives both anniversaries a special meaning.

Their story belongs increasingly to two national narratives: the remarkable

returned to Floral Park occupying a very different office.

And for the Indian American community gathered along Hillside Avenue, his presence offered its own measure of how far that community has traveled.

Eighty years after India became independent, its diaspora was celebrating on the streets of Queens-not merely as Indians remembering home, but as Indian Americans helping shape the city they now call home.

TOM SUOZZI

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SEA OF TRICOLORS SWEEPS MADISON AVENUE AS FIA CELEBRATES INDIA AT 80, AMERICA AT 250



A collage of a few scenes from the FIA Independence Day of India celebrations.

alongside the 250th anniversary of the United States, bringing together the milestones of the world's largest and oldest major democracies.

The Madison Avenue parade was the centerpiece of a multi-event FIA celebration that transformed some of New York City's most recognizable landmarks into stages for Indian American pride—from the hoisting of the Tricolor amid the giant screens of Times Square to the illumination of the Empire State Building in India's national colors and a concluding gala at historic Cipriani Wall Street. FIA's official program also included a food festival, community booths and cultural performances.

GOVERNOR HOCHUL LEADS THE PARADE

New York Governor Kathy Hochul led the Madison Avenue procession, joining elected officials, community leaders, celebrities and thousands of marchers as crowds lined the route through Midtown Manhattan.

Hochul said she was honored to celebrate the culture the Indian American community brings to New York. The State Legislature had earlier adopted a resolution memorializing the Governor to proclaim August 15, 2026, as Indian Independence Day in New York, recognizing Indian Americans' contributions to the arts, STEM, business, philanthropy, academia, defense and public life.

Among those joining the parade were New York State Senator Jeremy Cooney, U.S. Congressman Shri Thanedar, Deputy Consul General of India, Vishal Jayeshbhai Harsh, Assemblyman David Weprin and Saritha Komatireddy, Republican candidate for New York State Attorney General. FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya and President Sreekanth Akkapalli, together with other FIA leaders, welcomed dignitaries and helped lead the festivities.

Bollywood actress Pooja Hegde was a chief guest, while actor-director Adivi Sesh participated as chief guest and grand marshal, adding star appeal to a procession that combined civic celebration with the colors and sounds of India's diverse cultural traditions.

55 FLOATS BRING INDIA TO MANHATTAN

The procession traveled down Madison Avenue from East 38th Street toward East 27th Street, with 55 floats representing cultural organizations, businesses and regional associations. Marching bands, dance troupes, musicians and performers brought different Indian traditions onto the streets of Manhattan. The Consulate General of India in New York also fielded its own float.

One of the day's biggest crowd-pullers was the float devoted to the hugely popular Indian television comedy "Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah."

Producer Asit Kumarr Modi appeared with cast members including Dilip Joshi, Mandar Chandwadkar, Munmun Dutta, Sonalika Joshi, Balvinder Singh Suri and Nitish Bhaluni, drawing enthusiastic fans as the float moved along Madison Avenue.

The result was part parade, part street festival and part reunion with India for thousands of people along the route. NBC New York reported drums and gongs echoing along Madison Avenue as families watched the colorful floats pass, with participants repeatedly emphasizing the parade's sense of unity and connection between India and America.

FOOD, MUSIC AND DANCE EXTEND THE CELEBRATION

The festivities did not end with the procession.

FIA organized a food festival and community booths on East 26th Street between Madison and Park Avenues, providing visitors with Indian food as well as opportunities to meet participating organizations and community groups.

A cultural stage near Madison Avenue featured traditional music and dance during the afternoon, extending the celebration after the floats had passed. FIA's official program scheduled the food festival and booths from noon to 6 p.m. and cultural programming during the afternoon. Together, the floats, costumes, music, regional associations and cuisine gave practical expression to the year's theme—Harmony in Heritage—celebrating distinct traditions while presenting them as parts of a larger Indian and Indian American identity.

TRICOLOR FLIES ABOVE TIMES SQUARE

The Madison Avenue spectacle was preceded by another powerful image of Indian identity in the heart of New York.

On August 15, FIA hoisted the Indian Tricolor at Times Square, continuing a tradition the organization began there in 2020.

The ceremony brought together families, community members and visitors beneath Times Square's enormous digital screens, which displayed the Indian Tricolor and Independence Day messages.

Chief guests Pooja Hegde and Adivi Sesh joined Consul General of India in New York Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya and FIA President Sreekanth Akkapalli for the flag-hoisting. The ceremony included the American national anthem performed by Krisha Bhatt and the Indian national anthem rendered by Sunitha Upadrasta, followed by cultural performances by Bolly Factor and the Kalashri Dance Academy.

The juxtaposition was striking: the flag of India

rising amid one of America's most recognizable urban landscapes, with the two countries simultaneously marking their 80th and 250th milestones.

EMPIRE STATE BUILDING GLOWS IN INDIA'S COLORS

The Independence Day weekend also placed India's colors high above the Manhattan skyline.

FIA held its annual Empire State Building lighting ceremony, illuminating the landmark in saffron, white and green as part of the India Day observances.

The ceremony included a performance by the Kalashri School of Arts, choreographed by Bina Menon. FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya described the dual anniversary as bringing "double the joy," while Edison Mayor Sam Joshi spoke about the Indian American community's contributions in fields including healthcare, business, technology and entertainment.

In a crowd-pleasing moment, members of the Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah team participated in the ceremonial lighting of the tower.

For a community whose history in America stretches back generations, the illumination carried symbolism beyond spectacle: India's colors shining from one of the defining structures of the American skyline.

'BHARAT BEYOND BORDERS 2.0' BRINGS WEEKEND TO A GRAND FINALE

After Sunday's parade, FIA brought its Independence Day weekend to a formal conclusion with the "Bharat Beyond Borders 2.0" Grand Gala at Cipriani Wall Street.

The evening gathered diplomats, elected officials, celebrities, corporate sponsors and community leaders in celebration of the dual national milestones.

The program included the American and Indian national anthems, an instrumental performance based on Raga Kirwani, cultural and musical presentations, and video greetings from Governor Hochul, Indian diplomatic representatives and other public officials.

Pooja Hegde participated in a fireside chat, while Adivi Sesh, Avinash Tiwary and members of the Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah cast were among the featured personalities. The evening included Broadway-style performances, a youth musical ensemble and other entertainment before concluding with the presentation of an official proclamation by Dilip Chauhan from the New York City Mayor's Office.

TWO ANNIVERSARIES, ONE INDIAN AMERICAN STORY

The scale of FIA's 2026 celebration reflected how dramatically the Indian American presence in the United States has evolved.

What began decades ago as an immigrant community's commemoration of the independence of the country it had left behind has increasingly become something broader: an assertion of heritage by Americans of Indian origin who regard their Indian inheritance and American citizenship not as competing loyalties, but as parts of the same lived identity.

That made the coincidence of India at 80 and America at 250 especially resonant.

The Tricolor flying in Times Square, the Empire State Building illuminated in India's colors, Governor Hochul walking alongside Indian American community leaders on Madison Avenue, dozens of floats representing India's extraordinary diversity, and thousands of families celebrating on the streets of New York together told a story larger than any single parade.

It was a celebration of India, certainly.

But it was also a celebration of what generations of Indians have become in America—and of the cultural, civic and human bridge they continue to build between the two democracies.

For one Independence Day weekend, "Harmony in Heritage" was not merely the theme printed on an FIA program. On the streets and skyline of New York, it became visible.

(THE INDIAN PANORAMA WILL BRING OUT A PHOTO FEATURE OF INDIA'S 80TH INDEPENDENCE DAY IN THE NEXT EDITION. WATCH OUT.)

Queens Celebrates India's 80th Independence Day

BOROUGH PRESIDENT DONOVAN RICHARDS JR. HOSTS CELEBRATION AT QUEENS BOROUGH HALL; HARIDAS KOTAHWALA RECOGNIZED FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY

**I.S. SALUJA
AUGUST 21, 2026
QUEENS, NY (TIP)**

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr. hosted a celebration of India's 80th Independence Day at the Helen Marshall Cultural Center at Queens Borough Hall in Kew Gardens on Thursday, August 20, bringing together members of the Indian American community for an evening of patriotism, culture and recognition of community service.

The celebration, held from 6 to 8 p.m., featured live music, Indian food and honors for local community leaders. Five Indian Americans received Citations of Honor, with veteran community leader and businessman Haridas Kotahwala among those recognized.

Kotahwala was specifically honored for his service to the New York community, according to the official announcement for the event.

The recognition was particularly meaningful for a community whose presence in Queens has grown over generations from that of newly arrived immigrants to an integral part of the borough's economic, professional, cultural and civic life.

A CELEBRATION OF INDIA-AND OF SERVICE TO NEW YORK

The evening combined remembrance of India's long struggle for freedom with recognition of Indian Americans who have made contributions in their adopted homeland.

India became independent from British colonial rule on August 15, 1947. Eighty years later, celebrations across the New York metropolitan region have demonstrated the continuing emotional attachment of Indians abroad to the country of their origin.

The Queens Borough Hall celebration, however, added another dimension by honoring members of the community not simply for preserving Indian heritage, but for their contributions in New York.

That distinction was particularly appropriate in 2026, when India marks 80 years of Independence and the United States celebrates the 250th anniversary of its own Independence.

For Indian Americans, the coincidence of the two anniversaries has provided an unusual opportunity to celebrate two national journeys-the country from which they or their ancestors came and the country in which they have built their lives and raised succeeding generations.

HARIDAS KOTAHWALA RECOGNIZED

Among those honored, Haridas Kotahwala has been active in the Indian American community for decades.

A post-event report said the recognition acknowledged Kotahwala's more than five decades of community service.

Photographs from Thursday's ceremony show Kotahwala seated at the center of the five honorees, each displaying a Citation of Honor presented



Five Indian Americans display their Citations of Honor during the India Independence Day Celebration hosted by Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr. at the Helen Marshall Cultural Center at Queens Borough Hall on August 20, 2026. Veteran community leader Haridas Kotahwala, honored for his service to the New York community, is seated in the center.

Photo / The Indian Panorama

during the celebration.

For Kotahwala, the honor added another recognition to a long association with Indian American community life in the New York metropolitan area.

The other four recipients were also presented Citations of Honor during the ceremony. Their names were not listed in the official event flyer available to The Indian Panorama, and the newspaper is therefore refraining from identifying them without authoritative confirmation.

QUEENS: A NATURAL HOME FOR THE CELEBRATION

Few places could provide a more fitting setting for an Indian Independence Day celebration than Queens.

The borough has long been one of the great gateways for immigrants entering New York and has become home to communities representing virtually every part of the world. Indian Americans have established particularly visible communities in neighborhoods across Queens and have contributed extensively to medicine, healthcare, education, technology, small business, hospitality, professional services and public life.

The Borough President's office describes Queens' economy as being "as diverse as our people" and highlights the importance of its small businesses and immigrant communities to the borough's economic life.

Thursday's celebration was therefore more than a ceremonial recognition of an Independence Day thousands of miles away.

It reflected a larger immigrant story: people can preserve affection for the land of their birth and pride in their cultural inheritance while becoming active participants in the civic life of their new home.

captured that dual identity vividly: the Indian Tricolor and the Stars and Stripes appeared together, framed by images of the Taj Mahal, India Gate, the Statue of Liberty and the New York skyline.

It was an appropriate visual metaphor.

For generations of Indian Americans, India remains a source of memory, culture, family and emotional belonging. America, meanwhile, has become home-the country where families have prospered, children have grown up and communities have taken root.

The celebration at Queens Borough Hall demonstrated that these attachments need not compete.

Honoring India's Independence while recognizing Indians for their service to New York joined heritage with citizenship, memory with contribution.

As India celebrates its 80th year of freedom and America marks 250 years of its own national journey, the message from Queens was therefore larger than the ceremony itself:

One can cherish the country from which one came while serving wholeheartedly the country one now calls home.

And in Queens-perhaps America's most extraordinary mosaic of immigrant communities-that message found an especially appropriate home.

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India's institutions are failing the people

THE CONSTITUTIONAL DOCTRINE OF SEPARATION OF POWERS IS NOW IN TATTERS

BY MANISH TEWARI



"However, disruptions and sloganeering have been the norm and not the exception since the mid-1980s in legislative institutions. Political parties across the board take pride in wiping out entire sessions of Parliament rather than debating laws and issues premised on rational arguments. Parliamentarians and legislators are adjudged on the basis of their ability to scream and shout in the Well of the House or outside rather than the strength of cogent submissions they should be making.

Parliament and legislative assemblies have therefore become virtually irrelevant to the national discourse. These institutions are now nothing more than gladiatorial arenas rather than hallowed chambers of calm and meditative deliberations."

The washout of the recent monsoon session of Parliament has again drawn attention to the institutional crisis that stares India in the face today, for any democracy is only as strong or weak as the institutions that uphold it.

In the summer of 1787, when the founding fathers of the United States of America met in Philadelphia, they were obsessed with transforming the loose alliance of twelve states into a nation and creating a governing architecture that would be the antithesis of monarchy, which was the template across practically the entire known and discovered world at that time.

They resuscitated the doctrine of separation of powers conceptualized by Aristotle and John Locke and refined by Montesquieu to ensure that power does not get concentrated in a single person or an institution, for they were mortified by the tyranny of power. This led to the institutionalization of three separate branches of the government - the executive, the legislature and the judiciary - to ensure that they checked and balanced one other.

The paranoia against an overbearing 'State' was of such an order in the newly created nation that in 1791, when the Bill of Rights was incorporated into the American Constitution, its 2nd Amendment said: "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." This amendment, designed to protect the liberty of the individual, holds the field even today, despite all the school shootings across the US.

Every Constitution written

subsequently across the world has the doctrine of separation of powers hard-coded into its very structure. This was also the model that India adopted when wise men and women conceptualized the Constitution between December 1946 and January 1950.

This model, however, has collapsed in India. The biggest casualty has been the legislature. The first Lok Sabha (1952-57) met on average for 135 days every year. The 17th (2019-24) averaged only 55 sitting days annually. The 18th Lok Sabha is all set to outdo its predecessor in terms of dysfunctionality.

State assemblies have fared no better. For instance, the Punjab Vidhan Sabha met for only 17 days in 2022, 12 days each in 2023 and 2024, 15 days in 2025 and only 15 days this year so far. Between 2017 and 2022, the Vidhan Sabha met for a mere 85 days out of its 1,825-day term.



Dismal: Political parties across the board take pride in wiping out entire sessions of Parliament rather than debating laws and issues premised on rational arguments. -Photo / PTI

Parliamentarians and legislators have been reduced to mere intercessors between the people and the executive. This is not their job, notwithstanding the fact that they are elected by the popular will of the masses. Their primary responsibility is to make good laws for the nation or their respective states and deliberate on the grave challenges that fall within their respective remits.

However, disruptions and sloganeering have been the norm and not the exception since the mid-1980s in legislative institutions. Political parties across the board take pride in wiping out entire sessions of Parliament rather than debating laws and issues premised on rational arguments. Parliamentarians and legislators are adjudged on the basis of their ability to scream and shout in the Well of the House or outside rather than the strength of cogent submissions they should be making.

Parliament and legislative assemblies have therefore become virtually

irrelevant to the national discourse. These institutions are now nothing more than gladiatorial arenas rather than hallowed chambers of calm and meditative deliberations.

As far as the judiciary is concerned, India is perhaps the only country where judges of constitutional courts appoint other judges, notwithstanding the Memorandum of Procedure.

The attempts made by the UPA government and its successor, the NDA, to enforce judicial accountability and create a 'say' for the executive in judicial appointments, respectively, came to nought. The Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill that was passed in the Lok Sabha on March 29, 2012, failed to get through the Rajya Sabha and subsequently lapsed. The National Judicial Appointments Commission Bill, introduced in conjunction with the

tehsildar. In the criminal/penal sphere, it's through a havildar or an assistant sub-inspector (ASI), who is the police chowki in-charge. In urban areas, the interface is through a municipal officer in the civil arena and at best a havildar/ASI in the legal domain.

The citizen's experience is never pleasant. The State and its instrumentalities invariably come across as exploitative, extractive and oppressive. The situation is far worse in militancy-prone areas, where the State apparatus is usually clad in olive green.

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments that were supposed to bring governance closer to the grassroots have not really taken off even three decades later. They might have widened the representational pool at the local level, but states have been extremely chary of devolving powers or

121st Constitution Amendment Bill, was near-unanimously passed by the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on August 13 and 14, 2014. It was ratified by 16 states and notified as law on December 31, 2014. The Supreme Court struck it down on October 16, 2015.

As of August 1, 2026, out of a sanctioned strength of 1,122 judges in the High Courts, 341 posts (30.39%) were vacant. There are 4.98 crore cases pending in district courts, 64.61 lakh in High Courts and 95,469 in the Supreme Court. Out of the 5.3 lakh people in prisons across India, 3.9 lakh (about 73%) are undertrials; 49% are in the age group of 18-30 years; 31% belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and 10-15% are from Other Backward Classes.

The executive's performance has been no better. Out of a population of 140 crore, around 94 crore people live in rural India. For the bulk of these residents, the interface with the State regarding civil matters takes place through a patwari, kanungo or at best a

providing financial autonomy to the Panchayati Raj institutions, thereby effectively crippling their efficacy and functioning.

A section of the mainstream media has earned the sobriquet 'Godi media', seriously undermining the collective credibility of the Fourth Estate.

About the Election Commission of India, the less said the better. What was once an autonomous institution is now perceived as another government department. It has lost the confidence of an overwhelming majority of the Opposition.

In the 80th year of Independence, the doctrine of separation of powers, the institutional balance of power and the confidence that people have in the institutions of governance are in tatters.

Is anyone even thinking where we are headed as a nation?

(Manish Tewari is Lok Sabha MP and former I&B Minister)

(Source: The Tribune)

The U.S. Is Learning the Wrong Lessons in Iran

TACTICAL EXCELLENCE CAN NEVER SALVAGE STRATEGIC INCOMPETENCE

BY BRET
DEVEREAUX



Although the conflict in Iran and the Strait of Hormuz is far from over, analysts are already rushing to declare what lessons should be learned from it. An emerging genre of security policy articles highlights the various logistical and tactical shortcomings of the U.S. operation against Iran: a lack of preparation for disruptions in oil and fertilizer shipping, insufficient magazine depth in precision munitions and interceptors, a general failure to prepare effectively to counter cheap one-way attack drones, insufficient minesweepers, and so on.

These are useful lessons that may help the United States prepare for future conflicts, but they are not the fundamental cause of the country's failure in the Strait of Hormuz. Even if some or all of these concerns had been addressed long before the conflict, it is hard to see how they might alter the Trump administration's failure to achieve its initial war aims of regime change, the destruction of Iran's long-range strike capability, or major alterations in Iranian policy toward nuclear weapons and regional proxies.

While greater magazine depth and preparedness for oil shortages might have enabled a longer bombing campaign or a greater degree of economic pressure, that is no reason to suppose that seven months of bombing or blockade might achieve what nearly six months thus far have not. Strategic failure, leaving Iran with a freer hand to pursue nuclear ambitions, a far greater degree of control over the Strait of Hormuz, and consequently a greater degree of influence over the Gulf states now seems the most likely outcome of this military debacle.

The U.S. military remains remarkably capable, demonstrating even in this poorly conceived war technical capabilities that no other military can currently match, projecting military force more than 7,000 miles from American shores, and seizing control of Iran's skies with the apparent casual ease the world has become accustomed to in America's wars.

The resulting damage has been remarkably lopsided, with the United States suffering at least 18 dead and more than 600 wounded against Iranian losses that almost certainly number well into the thousands, though a precise total is not known. In short, even with failures of planning and logistics, the U.S. military has shown that it remains remarkably dangerous.

No amount of technical excellence, however, can make up for the strategic incompetence of demanding that the military accomplish the impossible. U.S. President Donald Trump has demanded of the military not one impossible task, but three, and then reacted with shocked anger when it has failed.

The first of these impossible tasks was the administration's stated aim of achieving regime change without any ground operations. Achieving a strategic victory entirely through airpower has been the coveted aim of

independent air forces around the world ever since Italian theorist Giulio Douhet predicted in 1921 that future wars could be won with bombers alone, even going so far as to suggest in 1928 that just 300 tons of bombs dropped on a mid-sized country could end a war in a month.

The thesis that wars can be won entirely from the air is now one of the most thoroughly tested in all of modern industrial war, and 40,000 tons of German bombs dropped on London during the Blitz merely hardened the British will to resist. The 2.5 million tons of bombs the allies dropped on Germany during World War II in return inflicted serious damage and imposed stark choices on Adolf Hitler's regime, but they likewise did not force it to collapse and indeed seem to have reinforced public commitment to the war. The 8 million tons of bombs that

codenamed Operation Crossbow, but they could not stop the launches. It was simply too easy to harden or conceal production and launch sites.

The advent of precision munitions has not changed this calculus, being offset by the emergence of mobile launch systems. Infamously, efforts to take out Iraqi Scud launchers from the air during the Gulf War were unable to produce even a single confirmed destruction. Israel likewise has spent two decades running extensive air operations over Gaza and southern Lebanon to prevent Hamas and Hezbollah rockets from being fired at Israeli territory, but only ground operations in both areas were able to silence the rockets.

Multiple coalitions of countries have attempted to silence Houthi missiles and drones fired from Yemen, yet the



The aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, left, the air-defense destroyer HMS Defender and the guided-missile destroyer USS Farragut transit the Strait of Hormuz in this Nov. 19, 2019, photo made available by U.S. Navy.

the United States dropped during the Vietnam War likewise accomplished little and may even have been broadly counterproductive, serving to secure the civilian populace's support for communist war aims while alienating the American public.

It may be impossible at any level of bombing short of nuclear use to collapse a regime from the air. The closest that any operation has ever come was the NATO campaign against Serbia under Slobodan Milosevic, but even there the bombs stopped dropping in June 1999, while Milosevic's regime fell to mass demonstrations in October 2000.

The chances of the Iranian regime collapsing entirely through the application of airpower were slim to none, so the next impossible thing demanded of the U.S. military was to neutralize Iran's ballistic missile and drone capacity, also entirely from the air. But this mission-disabling mobile launch capability with minimal ground forces has also been tried repeatedly before and has also never succeeded.

In WWII, both American and British air forces made substantial efforts to shut down V-1 flying bomb and V-2 rocket production and launches through an extensive bombing campaign,

launches continue even now. Even with precision munitions, it does not seem possible, from the air alone, to destroy enough mobile launch systems, which can fire from concealment and then swiftly move into new locations, to end a drone or rocket campaign. As with regime collapse, stopping the rockets appears to require ground troops.

The Trump administration's final fallback appears to be simply running nearly perfect missile defense over much of the Persian Gulf region to prevent Iran from damaging the infrastructure of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, upon whose hospitality the U.S. military effort relies. Greater investment into cost-effective interception methods, such as those in use in Ukraine, and the deployment of more short-range air defense might well have enabled the U.S. military to intercept a greater percentage of Iranian attacks. Yet in an environment where drones and ballistic missiles remain much cheaper and quicker to produce than the means to intercept them, it was always likely that Iran would eventually saturate defense capacity in the region. One more impossible task could not rescue the failure of two others.

NO AMOUNT OF TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE, HOWEVER, CAN MAKE UP FOR THE STRATEGIC INCOMPETENCE OF DEMANDING THAT THE MILITARY ACCOMPLISH THE IMPOSSIBLE. U.S. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP HAS DEMANDED OF THE MILITARY NOT ONE IMPOSSIBLE TASK, BUT THREE, AND THEN REACTED WITH SHOCKED ANGER WHEN IT HAS FAILED.

If the U.S. military required a wake-up call to the dangers and opportunities posed by drones, as well long-standing procurement problems for things like frigates, minesweepers, and hardened aircraft facilities, that call has been delivered. But this was not a war lost in the halls of the U.S. Defense Department; it was lost in the halls of the White House.

If Trump was unable to see the peril in demanding the U.S. military accomplish the impossible, it was the duty of his defense secretary to make him aware. Of course, Trump did not select an experienced and capable defense secretary, but a loyal toady, made only the more loyal by his manifest incompetence, in the form of Pete Hegseth.

Hegseth, in turn, has gone to great lengths to purge the senior ranks of anyone likely to offer a contrary opinion. The U.S. officer corps has never excelled at delivering unwelcome news to political decision-makers, but Hegseth's approach meant the Pentagon was never going to push back against presidential ineptitude. Reporting suggests that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Dan Caine, made a token effort to signal the difficulty before being drowned out by Hegseth's boosterism.

All of this was predictable and indeed much of it was predicted. Thus, while the immediate blame for the debacle in Iran attaches to Trump and his incompetent advisors, the ultimate blame must lie where no politician will admit it: with the voters. It was the choice of a plurality of American voters to return Trump, a man manifestly incompetent, manifestly incapable of absorbing unwelcome or contrary information, manifestly interested in surrounding himself with loyal yes-men, to the White House.

It turns out that electing the leader of the most powerful military on the planet is not the same as selecting the most entertaining host of a reality show. Reports about lessons learned are doubtless already being penned within the Pentagon. Yet as the strategic fallout, from elevated oil prices to depleted U.S. resources, of this predictable and disgraceful failure continue to mount, the question is whether the American voters have realized that no amount of military excellence is sufficient to insulate them from their own poor choices at the ballot box.

(Bret Devereaux is a historian specializing in the Roman economy and military)

(Source: Foreign Policy)

BJP rejig: all bark and no bite

THE BJP HOPES ITS ORGANISATIONAL REVAMP WILL HELP COUNTER THE MULTIPLE CHALLENGES POSED BY STUDENTS, THE CJP, AND GEN Z, BUT ITS CHANGES ARE NEITHER RADICAL NOR IMAGINATIVE.

BY MANISH ANAND



The recent unveiling of a new team of national office-bearers by the BJP president Nitin Nabin is as clear an indication of the growing unease within the party's ranks as any open statement about it.

It has been almost eight months since Nabin's appointment as the BJP president, but it is the student protests and the reel onslaught that seem to have finally pushed the top bosses to unveil a new team in Nabin's name. The changes took place after extensive deliberations not only among the party's top brass but also with its ideological mentor, the RSS. The 64-strong new team includes 13 vice presidents, 8 general secretaries, and 16 secretaries, and is the core team that will carry forward the BJP's election management strategies in the crucial years ahead.

The key members have been inducted keeping in mind the elections slated in 2027 and 2028 in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Gujarat. In the next few days, Nabin is likely to allocate the new office-bearers crucial poll-related work.

The Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav has already given a liberal interpretation of his PDA (Pichhda, Dalit, Alpasankhyak/Backward, Dalit, and Minority) social engineering slogan, which brought him a rich haul in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, by stating that the "P" also stands for Pandits.

The six others in Nabin's team from Adityanath's State represent a careful caste balance, as they are drawn from OBC, Yadav, Muslim (Pasmanda), and extremely backward castes (EBCs). As the party faces the heat of public ire over the Ram Mandir donation theft scam, the clean chit given to the powerful Vishwa Hindu Parishad leaders Champat Rai and Anil Mishra in charge of the temple might not be enough to save it, and so it clearly hopes to brazen out by playing the caste card.

Irani, dropped from the Modi Cabinet, has been rehabilitated. Her claim to fame came in the wake of defeating Rahul Gandhi in the Amethi Lok Sabha seat in 2019. But her defeat in 2024 at the hands of an unknown Gandhi loyalist, Kishori Lal Sharma, sent the former Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi star into political oblivion. Her induction into the team now may be read as the BJP's desperate measure to find a loud voice against a likely alliance between Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav, but it also reveals that the BJP faces a clear talent crunch to handle the critical State of Uttar Pradesh.

The BJP general secretary Vinod Tawde has been appointed as the party in-charge for the State. Tawde is the BJP's rising star after he delivered a mammoth victory in Bihar where the saffron party for the first time grabbed the Chief Minister's chair by persuading Nitish Kumar to opt for a Rajya Sabha seat.

How seriously worried the BJP is can also be gauged from the fact that Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Adityanath is

coming to New Delhi almost every week.

The 2027 Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh, say observers, will be seen as a semi-final in national politics and also set the tone for the 2029 Lok Sabha election. If the BJP were to lose the State election, panic may set into the saffron camp.

RSS ENTERS THE FRAME



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju and BJP national president Nitin Nabin leave after the "Mangal Milan" meeting at G.M.C. Balayogi Auditorium in the Parliament Library Building, in New Delhi, on July 21, 2026.

Photo Credit: Shahbaz Khan/PTI

Ram Madhav has been named as party vice president, marking his formal return to the party fold after six years. Madhav's earlier stint in the BJP was as national general secretary, with his status almost rivalling that of the then party president Amit Shah. Madhav would regularly attend meetings at 7, Race Course Road, now named Lok Kalyan Marg, the residence of the Prime Minister.

His return must be seen in the context of the evolving relations between the BJP and the RSS. Known for his outspokenness, Madhav as BJP vice president might be the route through which the RSS is likely to communicate with the BJP's top brass. The RSS might also position Madhav as a check on the BJP's bid to assert functional autonomy.

By recalling Smriti Irani as a general secretary and accommodating seven others from Uttar Pradesh, the BJP has dropped the first signal that the party is aware of the mounting challenge in its hitherto stronghold of the Hindi heartland and cow-belt. With Ram Madhav inside the party in an official position, the RSS has clearly taken a firm stand that the BJP must remain aligned with its Nagpur parent.

With the coming years likely to see a power tussle between the powerful groups in the BJP, especially as Modi gets older, Madhav is also likely to keep the RSS posted of the moves in play in the BJP on a real-time basis. With Madhav inside the party in an official position, the RSS has clearly taken a firm stand that the BJP must remain aligned with its Nagpur parent.

THE HEAVY SHADOW OF SHAH

Even after joining the Modi Cabinet as Union Minister for Home Affairs in 2019, Shah has been known as the de-facto BJP president. His successor J.P. Nadda spent all of his six years leaving the impression that he had failed to assert any autonomy in the party's functioning, since Shah commanded unprecedented

influence on all the national office-bearers.

In Nabin's new team too, Shah's signature is bold. The core team consisting of general secretary (organization) B.L. Santhosh and his two deputies, Saudan Singh and Sriprakash (both joint general secretaries), powerful general secretaries Sunil Bansal and Vinod Tawde, and the office in-charge, Tarun Chugh, stays intact. Shah has brought his trusted lieutenants from other States as national secretaries into Nabin's team. Shah's key confidante Biplab Kumar Deb, who was in charge of Haryana, also joins Nabin's team as national general secretary.

Despite coming with Nabin's signature, the BJP leadership is now largely known as the Modi-Shah duo, and the Home Minister's imprints in the affairs of the BJP are not at all likely to diminish. In his eight months in office, Nabin has failed to suggest that he will assert any independence in functioning, and within the BJP too, the buzz grows stronger every day that Nabin simply takes instructions from Shah.

Shah has further cemented his hold on the BJP by deputing his trusted lieutenant and Union Minister for Commerce Piyush Goyal as party treasurer. Goyal is known to be a key member of Shah's inner circle, which includes the party's media head Anil Baluni, who also retained his position in Nabin's new team.

THE CJP CHALLENGE

The Cockroach Janta Party took the scalp of one of Shah's powerful allies, the former Union Minister Dharmendra

Pradhan. The CJP can claim to have struck again by indirectly accounting for the ouster of BJP's influential IT cell head Amit Malviya. Like Pradhan, Malviya too was a key asset for Shah, leading the BJP's digital army through Nadda's tenure even though the latter was reportedly not sanguine about Malviya's performance.

But by dropping Malviya, the BJP is not signaling a course correction in its digital outlook. Successor Deepak Mhaskey and his co-convenors in the social media team-Priti Gandhi, Shivanand Dwivedi, Alok Bhatt, and Arun Yadav-have already been exposed on the Internet for their former vile and hate-filled posts. Even as they rapidly made their X accounts private or deleted posts, their older messages were dug out, revealing that they belong firmly to the Malviya school of trolls, attacking rivals with abuse and diatribes.

The new social media team, therefore, does not portray a course correction in the face of the CJP challenge but reveals that the BJP hopes to brazen out the Gen Z crisis with an even more aggressive deployment of its old social media toolkits.

Simultaneously, however, the BJP has sought to curry favor with Gen Z by bringing in as national secretaries new faces who are mostly in their 40s and 50s. Nabin himself is 47 and may be at ease with his new team of 16 national secretaries.

BJP STRATEGY AGAINST GEN Z

The CJP's success is now fueling a Gen Alpha movement against the dismal conditions of schools as children unleash an avalanche of reels showing the sad state of affairs in government schools across States. The campaign has already unnerved the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and West Bengal.

If the Jantar Mantar protest arguably knocked out the claims of good governance made by Modi at the Centre, the governance void in States ruled by the BJP is being laid bare by Gen Alpha through these videos. The BJP's governance model built around freebies is now facing the challenge of heavy lapses in the field of education and health.

Within the BJP, the view is that the CJP is not a one-issue movement but a challenge that will confront the party on a regular basis. Governance reforms cannot be unleashed quickly enough to stop the short videos that are regularly ridiculing the BJP.

To meet this challenge, the BJP seems to be falling back on its core strength-unleashing its organizational might to focus on election management and electoral victories. Party leaders assert that they can bank on their cadre and on the RSS backbone to continue winning elections.

Whether the party can continue to prioritize electoral victories at the cost of governance and real reform will be severely tested in the coming days.

(Manish Anand is a Delhi-based journalist who has been covering the BJP for over two decades.)

(Source: Frontline)

FIA NY-NJ-CT-NE, Consulate General of India, New York & Zoho Set Guinness World Record for "Largest Flagpole Number" in New Jersey

HISTORIC DISPLAY FEATURING 1,383 AMERICAN FLAGS CELEBRATES DUAL MILESTONES: INDIA@80 AND AMERICA@250



**AUGUST 17, 2026
PARSIPPANY, NJ (TIP)**

The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA NY-NJ-CT-NE), in partnership with the Consulate General of India in New York and corporate supporter Zoho Corporation, officially set a new Guinness World Records title for the "Largest Flagpole Number." The historic gathering took place on Saturday evening, August 15, at Veterans Memorial Park in Parsippany, New Jersey.

The record-breaking display featured 1,383 U.S. flags arranged on flagpoles to form a massive number "250," encircled by Indian tricolors. The arrangement commemorated a unique dual anniversary: India's 80th Independence Day (India@80) and the United States' upcoming Semiquincentennial (America@250). Following meticulous verification on-site, the official Guinness World Records Adjudicator presented the framed certificate to organization leaders and dignitaries.

Chairman Mr. Ankur Vaidya said, "Achieving this Guinness World Record is a testament to our community's unwavering dedication and deep pride in our heritage. This historic milestone honors our roots and demonstrates the incredible impact we can create when we unite with a shared vision."

"This milestone is a vibrant expression of the enduring India-U.S. strategic friendship and a tribute to the Indian-American diaspora that binds our two democracies together," said Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, Consul General of India in New York.

Addressing the audience, Parsippany Mayor Pulkit Desai

highlighted the deep alignment of values between the two nations: "India and the United States share a fundamental, common goal to decide our own fate and build our own future."

Recognizing the massive effort behind the setup, New Jersey Lieutenant Governor Dr. Dale G. Caldwell commended the civic spirit on display, strongly encouraging continued volunteerism across community and cultural initiatives.

President Mr. Sreekant Akkapalli added, "This record belongs to every volunteer, partner, and supporter who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make history. This record-breaking display of flagpoles stands as a symbol of our collective strength, patriotism, and global unity."

FIA President Sreekant Akkapalli and Zoho Corporation Chief Evangelist, Raju Vegesna also joined the stage alongside guest speaker U.S. Congresswoman Analilia Mejia. Speakers collectively praised the Indian-American community's expanding contributions across technology, public service, and local commerce.

Immediate Past President Mr. Saurin Parikh remarked, "Reaching a world-record benchmark reflects years of building strong foundations, teamwork, and continuity. It is deeply gratifying to watch our organizational legacy grow and set global records that inspire future generations."

Reflecting on the organization's legacy, FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya also noted FIA's history of ambitious endeavors: "Over the years, FIA has undertaken several Guinness World Record attempts. While each brought

its own set of challenges, seeing the final outcome bring our community together makes every bit of the

struggle entirely worth it."

The event concluded with cultural performances and a public viewing of the record-setting installation.

About Federation of Indian Associations (FIA NY-NJ-CT-NE): Founded in 1970, the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) is one of the largest non-profit grassroots umbrella organizations in the United States. Representing the Indian-American community across eight northeastern states, FIA promotes cultural heritage, civic advocacy, and strong U.S.-India bilateral relations through landmark events like the annual NYC India Day Parade.

About Zoho Corporation: Zoho Corporation is a leading global technology company providing a comprehensive suite of cloud-based business software and productivity applications. Headquartered in Chennai, India, with U.S. operations based in Austin, Texas, Zoho serves millions of users worldwide while prioritizing user privacy and sustainable rural development.

(Based on a Press Release issued by Falguni Padhiar for FIA)

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US judge strikes down Trump immigrant visa ban affecting 75 countries

AUGUST 21, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)

A United States judge has struck down a policy introduced by the administration of President Donald Trump suspending the issuance of immigrant visas to applicants from 75 countries, saying the policy exceeded Secretary of State Marco Rubio's statutory authority.

Judge Jeannette Vargas of Manhattan said in her ruling on Friday in the Southern District of New York that the policy was "patently unlawful" and conflicted with federal immigration law, which explicitly stripped the secretary of state of authority over consular officers' adjudication of immigrant visas.

"The Policy, which categorically prohibits the issuance of immigrant visas based upon the nationality of the applicant, represents a direct abrogation

of this statutory scheme," she wrote.

Vargas, an appointee of Democratic former President Joe Biden, issued the ruling in a lawsuit filed by immigrant rights groups Catholic Legal Immigration Network and African Communities Together, along with applicants for immigrant visas and US citizens sponsoring family members from the designated countries.

The suspension, which took effect in January of this year, affected applicants from Latin American countries including Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay; Balkan nations such as Bosnia and Albania; South Asian countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh; and many nations in Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean.

The Department of State said applicants from those countries were "at a high risk for becoming a public charge

and recourse to local, state and federal government resources in the United States".

President Donald Trump has pursued an aggressive immigration crackdown during his presidency that he argues is aimed at improving domestic security. According to the Center for Constitutional Rights, the freeze was one of several restrictions the administration has imposed in rapid succession, following a broader travel ban covering 39 countries that took effect January 1, and a pause on diversity visa issuance in late December.

Rights groups have suggested that the crackdown violates free speech and due process rights, particularly for minorities, who have raised concerns about racial profiling.

The State Department has not yet commented on the ruling.



Secretary of State Marco Rubio

AAPI Leadership Retreat in New York Highlights Vision, Collaboration, and Unity

AUGUST 15, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)

The American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) convened its national leadership in midtown Manhattan for a meaningful and energizing Leadership Retreat, marking the beginning of a special Independence Day weekend of fellowship, service, and celebration. Held at Utsav Restaurant on August 15th, the retreat brought together AAPI's senior leadership, distinguished speakers, and members from across the country for an afternoon dedicated to collaboration, strategic vision, and strengthening organizational unity.

Hosted by AAPI President Dr. Meher Medavaram, the retreat underscored AAPI's commitment to advancing physician leadership, enhancing community engagement, and shaping the future of Indo U.S. healthcare collaboration.

In her address, Dr. Medavaram said, "As physicians, we are trained to diagnose, treat, and heal. But our responsibility-and our potential-extends far beyond the walls of our clinics and hospitals. Clinical excellence gives physicians credibility. Leadership gives us the opportunity to transform that knowledge into broader impact."

Setting the tone for the Retreat as a way to encourage the young physicians of Indian origin to come forward and take on leadership roles, Dr. Medavaram said, "One of our greatest opportunities today is to develop the next generation of physician leaders-not only in medicine, but in every field where decisions affecting healthcare and our communities are made. We need young physicians to step forward in healthcare policy, advocacy, research, technology and artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship, public health, education, media, and civic leadership."

She called upon AAPI members and leaders to "open the doors, create mentorship opportunities, and give younger physicians a seat at the table. We should encourage them to serve on hospital boards, professional



organizations, government advisory committees, research institutions, and community organizations."

Pointing to the younger physicians, Dr. Medavaram said, "Do not wait until you feel completely ready. Step forward. Speak up. Get involved. Leadership is developed through experience, mentorship, and the courage to accept responsibility. Because when we develop young physicians as leaders beyond medicine, we are not just building the future of our profession-we are building the future of healthcare and our communities."

Together we celebrate, together we serve, and together we represent," Dr. Medavaram said in her address, setting the tone for a weekend centered on collective purpose. "From the bedside to the boardroom-physicians must lead. Don't just prepare young physicians for the future-prepare them to lead it."

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS SHARE EXPERTISE AND INSPIRATION

The retreat featured an impressive lineup of speakers whose work spans cardiology, pain medicine, global health, and public policy. Their insights reflected the breadth of AAPI's influence and the depth of expertise within the Indian American medical community.

Dr. Samin K. Sharma, Director of Interventional Cardiology at Mount Sinai,



spoke on innovation, clinical excellence, and the evolving landscape of cardiovascular care. His remarks highlighted the critical role Indian American physicians play in advancing medical science.

Dr. Anil Sharma, Interventional Pain Physician, offered perspectives on multidisciplinary care and the importance of leadership in shaping patient-centered practice models. A very successful physician and running a successful Hedge Fund, Dr. Sharma spoke about how physicians can diversify in other areas and shine.

Dr. Padmini Murthy, Global Health leader and Professor Emeritus of Public Health, emphasized the importance of physician advocacy that enhances effective public health policies, global engagement, and the need for uplifting humanity.

"Healthcare leadership today requires not only clinical expertise but a commitment to global responsibility," she noted, underscoring AAPI's longstanding role in international health initiatives.

The retreat was chaired by Dr. Sunita Polelalle, with AAPI Past President Dr. Dayan Naik serving as Co-Chair. Their stewardship ensured a program that balanced strategic dialogue with fellowship and community building.

AAPI LEADERSHIP CHARTS THE PATH FORWARD

Throughout the afternoon, AAPI leaders discussed organizational priorities, upcoming initiatives, and the association's expanding national footprint. With over 125,000 physicians of Indian origin represented across the United States, AAPI continues to serve as a powerful voice in healthcare policy, medical education, and community service.

The retreat also highlighted AAPI's partnerships, including support from Mount Sinai and Ameriprise, reflecting the organization's strong institutional relationships.

Lunch was served as members engaged in informal discussions, strengthening bonds that span specialties, generations, and regions.

AAPI AT THE INDIA DAY PARADE

The Leadership Retreat served as the prelude to AAPI's participation in the India Day Parade on August 16, celebrating India's 80th Independence Day.

AAPI members and leadership led the AAPI float on Madison Avenue on the following day, dressed in traditional attire and representing the unity, heritage, and pride of the Indian American physician community. Later that evening, AAPI leadership was in attendance at the FIA's elegant gala dinner at the famous Cipriani.

AAPI: LEADERSHIP ROOTED IN SERVICE

As AAPI President Dr. Medavaram emphasized in her message, the retreat was not merely a meeting - it was a reaffirmation of AAPI's mission.

"Leadership, fellowship, and celebration define who we are as AAPI," she wrote. "We look forward to continuing our work together as we serve our communities and represent the best of Indian American physicians."

The August 15 retreat showcased AAPI at its strongest: united, forward-looking, and deeply committed to excellence in healthcare and service to society. For more details, please visit: www.aapiusa.org

(Based on a Press Release issued by Ajay Ghosh, Media Coordinator, AAPI)

Indian-American Pia Dandiya wins Democratic nomination for Florida 22 District

DANDIYA IS 1ST-GENERATION AMERICAN WHO HAS DEDICATED HER CAREER TO STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES AS HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, POLICY LEADER

AUGUST 19, 2026
TAMPA, FLA (TIP)

Indian-American former school principal Pia Dandiya won the Democratic primary for Florida's 22nd congressional district, setting up a contest with Republican Casey Askar, a veteran Marine, in the November elections.

Dandiya bagged 68.6 per cent of the votes to defeat Kaysia Earley, a lawyer, who managed to gather 31.4 per cent.

"Thank you, FL-22, for believing in this campaign. I got into this race for my students, my son, and every kid growing up in this district who deserves a better future," Dandiya said in a message on X.

"Together, we will keep building a movement to lower costs, end corruption, and make Washington work for us again. I'm grateful to do it with you all," she said.

The Democratic National Committee congratulated Dandiya on her victory in the primary election.

"As an educator and longtime leader in her community, Pia has dedicated herself to expanding opportunity and fighting for working families. She is ready to fight in Congress to lower the costs of groceries, healthcare, and housing for South Florida families, the Committee said in a statement.

"The DNC is ready to help elect Pia, flip this seat, and



"I got into this race for my students, my son, and every kid growing up in this district who deserves a better future," Dandiya said in a message on X. -Image credit/Instagram/@piaforcongress

take back the House majority in November," the statement said.

Born to parents who migrated to the US from India, Dandiya had earlier sought to challenge Republican Brian Mast, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, from Florida's 21st district.

The former high school principal later shifted to South Florida's 22nd district that was carved out in redistricting and where no incumbent was in the fray.

Dandiya is a first-generation American who has dedicated her career to strengthening communities as a high school principal, policy leader and technology innovator, according to her campaign website.

Born and raised in Palm Beach County in Florida, Dandiya started her career as a teacher and was a high school principal in Harlem.

She founded a high school with the goal of changing life trajectories for low-income students by putting them on a path to economic freedom.

Every single graduate of her high school earned admission to college, despite 86 per cent of them living in low-income households.

She was the founding principal of her school at the age of 28, making her one of the youngest high school principals in the country, according to the campaign website.

Bridging military record and community memory: How Sikh diaspora in Italy is keeping World War heroes alive



Members of the World Sikh Martyrs Military Memorial Committee and Italian government officials pay homage to martyrs at a memorial in Italy.

AUGUST 18, 2026
FORLI, ITALY (TIP)

For decades, the contribution of Sikh soldiers to the World Wars has largely remained confined to the broader British and Commonwealth military records. In Italy, however, a small group of members of the Sikh diaspora has been working to ensure that their distinct identity and sacrifices are not forgotten.

The World Sikh Shaheed Military Memorial Committee (WSSMMC), an Italy-based voluntary organization, has been leading this effort since 2016, identifying and commemorating the Sikh soldiers, who fought and died on Italian fronts during the World Wars.

The committee, led by members of the Sikh diaspora, including its president Prithipal Singh and executive member

Manjinder Singh, has so far identified and memorialized more than 2,000 Sikh soldiers martyred during the conflicts with the help of the Italian government.

Earlier this month, members of the organization invited the mayors of nearly 20 Italian communes to participate in commemorative events and installed a memorial wall bearing the Sikh symbol of the Khanda at Forli, near Bologna. The stone memorial carries the names and photographs of Sikh soldiers who lost their lives on Italian soil.

"Since 2016, we have been searching, locating and documenting the places where Sikh soldiers were martyred fighting during the World Wars," said Manjinder Singh, a WSSMMC member, who is currently visiting Punjab.

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

Indian woman fined \$1,000 after viral videos show her dumping garbage in Canada

AUGUST 20, 2026
ABBOTSFORD, CA (TIP)

The videos began circulating widely on August 17, 2026, although the Abbotsford Police Department (AbbyPD) said the incidents shown in the footage actually occurred in late July.

According to reports, the footage showed a woman dumping items into the water at Mill Lake and in the area of Blue Jay Elementary School. Police launched an investigation after being alerted to the videos and worked with the people who originally posted the footage to identify the individual.

POLICE THANK PUBLIC FOR HELPING IDENTIFY WOMAN

Abbotsford police credited members of the public and the original video posters for helping investigators identify the woman.

At the same time, police urged residents to report incidents directly rather than relying solely on social-media posts.

"This is what effective community policing looks like: citizens and police working together in a measured, thoughtful, and respectful way," Sgt. Paul Walker said, according to reports. Police did not release the woman's identity, citing privacy legislation. The department's public-information policy notes that privacy laws can limit the release of personal details involving individuals.

Viral videos spark debate over littering
<https://twitter.com/i/status/2090502877>
165101391



An Abbotsford woman has been fined \$1,000 after two videos showing her allegedly dumping waste in Abbotsford, B.C., went viral online, prompting a police investigation.

The incident has also triggered discussion online about littering and illegal dumping in British Columbia communities.

One social-media user criticized irresponsible dumping and argued that repeated public appeals against littering have not always changed behavior. The post also raised concerns about similar littering problems in other communities, including Surrey.

However, the comments made on social media are opinions and should not be treated as statements from police or evidence of broader community behavior.

The Abbotsford case has nevertheless renewed attention on the importance of protecting waterways, parks and other public spaces from dumping and litter.

POLICE ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO REPORT INCIDENTS

The Abbotsford Police Department says people who have information about incidents involving suspects or video evidence should contact police rather than simply posting the material online. Its official contact information lists 604-859-5225 for non-emergency reports and 222973 (ABBYPD) for non-emergency text messages.

The case demonstrates how publicly shared footage, combined with direct cooperation between residents and police, can help investigators identify people allegedly involved in offences involving public spaces.

Grandeur and patriotic fervour mark the 80th Independence Day Celebrations organized by Indian Embassy in Romania and Moldova

BUCHAREST, BRASOV, CLUJ-NAPOCA AND CHISINAU (MOLDOVA) WITNESS A RIOT OF TRICOLOR AND ENTHUSIASTIC CROWDS



Singing of the National Song by local Indian community and Friends of India in Romania

**AUGUST 15, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)**

The Embassy of India, Bucharest celebrated the 80th Independence Day of India with great enthusiasm, patriotic fervour and grandeur at the Embassy premises on 15th August 2026. The celebrations were attended by over 400 people, including members of the Indian community, Friends of India, Romanian nationals, students, academicians, professionals and other well-wishers of India.

The celebrations commenced with the singing of the National Song by a group of participants in a befitting and patriotic manner, followed by the flag-hoisting of the National Flag by Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra. The flag-hoisting ceremony was followed by the singing of the National Anthem. The ceremony paid tribute to the sacrifices of India's freedom fighters and commemorated the country's remarkable journey as a sovereign, democratic and progressive nation.

Following the flag-hoisting ceremony, the Ambassador read out the Address to the Nation by the Hon'ble President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, and

rich cultural diversity and artistic traditions was organised as part of the celebrations. Children and members of the Indian community presented patriotic songs and colourful dance performances representing different regions and traditions of India.

The performances were warmly appreciated by the audience and provided an engaging platform for the younger generation to connect with India's cultural heritage. They also offered Romanian friends and other guests an opportunity to experience the diversity and richness of Indian performing arts.

DRAWING AND QUIZ COMPETITIONS

The Embassy also organised Drawing and Quiz Competitions to encourage children and members of the community to engage with India's history, culture, heritage and achievements in a creative and interactive manner.

The Drawing Competition witnessed enthusiastic participation from children, who expressed their



Ambassador read out the Hon'ble President's Speech

understanding of India through vibrant and imaginative artworks depicting themes related to India's heritage, traditions, national identity and



Flag-Hoisting by Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Ambassador of India

The top three winners of both competitions were felicitated during the Independence Day celebrations in recognition of their outstanding performance and



participation.

BHARAT KO JANIYE QUIZ

The Embassy also promoted the "Bharat Ko Janiye (BKJ) Quiz - Independence Day Special Edition", an interactive online initiative aimed at encouraging participants to explore India's history, heritage, culture and achievements.

The initiative received significant interest from the Indian community and Friends of India. It particularly encouraged young participants to deepen their understanding of India's diverse cultural traditions, historical journey and contemporary achievements.

The top four performers of the BKJ Quiz were felicitated with Certificates of Merit during the Independence Day celebrations. The initiative served as an effective outreach activity, combining learning with an engaging and competitive format and further strengthening participants' connection with India.

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP ON PHAD ART

As part of its cultural outreach initiatives around Independence Day, the Embassy of India, Bucharest, in coordination with the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, also organised a Virtual Workshop on Phad Art.

The workshop introduced participants to the vibrant



Large number of participants on the occasion of Independence Day

thereafter addressed the gathering, extending warm greetings on the occasion of India's 80th Independence Day.

VIBRANT CULTURAL PROGRAM

A vibrant cultural programme showcasing India's

cultural diversity.

The Quiz Competition generated considerable interest and provided participants with an opportunity to test their knowledge of India's history, geography, culture, traditions, achievements and contemporary development.



Cultural performances

CONTD ON PAGE 15

CONTD FROM PAGE 14



Quiz Competition - Sunday, August 9, 2026



Ambassador with Indian Community members

traditional Phad painting tradition of Rajasthan, a distinctive form of Indian folk and scroll art known for its vivid colours, intricate visual storytelling and

session with an Indian artist. The Embassy provided the required art materials, enabling participants to actively engage in the practical aspects of the



Phad Art Virtual Workshop on August 12, 2026

platform for promoting India's traditional art forms and rich intangible cultural heritage.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS IN BRASOV

Independence Day was also celebrated in Brasov, bringing together members of the Indian community and Romanian friends. The programme provided an opportunity to commemorate India's 80th Independence Day and showcase India's cultural heritage through appropriate cultural activities.

The participation of the local Indian community and Friends of India in reflected the growing cultural engagement and people-to-people connections between India and the region.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS IN CLUJ-NAPOCA

The Indian community and Friends of India in Cluj-Napoca also came together to celebrate India's 80th Independence Day. The celebrations provided an occasion for the community to commemorate India's



All painting of the painted pictures

depiction of traditional narratives and legends.

Participants had the opportunity to learn about the origins, characteristics and artistic techniques associated with Phad painting through an interactive



Group photograph of the participants

workshop.

The workshop received an encouraging response from the Indian community, Friends of India and Romanian participants, and provided an effective



Ambassador Mohapatra lighting the Lamp at Cluj



Ambassador addresses the gathering at Cluj



Announcing the Voice of India in Romania while addressing the gathering on the occasion in Cluj

CONTD FROM PAGE 16

CONTD FROM PAGE 15



Picture of the participants on the Independence Day occasion at Cluj



Mr. Abhay Kumar, Pravasi Bharatiya Awardee, addressing the gathering in Chisinau (Moldova) on the Independence Day



Participants on the occasion of Independence Day in Chisinau



Dance performances on the occasion of Independence Day in Chisinau



independence and celebrate India's rich cultural heritage.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from members of the community and Romanian friends, further strengthening the Embassy's outreach and engagement with communities beyond Bucharest.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS IN CHISINAU, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

The Embassy also facilitated Independence Day celebrations in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, bringing together members of the Indian community, Friends of India in Moldovan.

The celebrations provided an opportunity to commemorate India's 80th Independence Day and promote greater awareness of India's culture, heritage and achievements among the Moldovan public. The participation of the Indian community and local friends of India further contributed to strengthening the growing India-Moldova people-to-people ties.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE TIES



Dance performances on the occasion of Independence Day in Brasov

The Independence Day celebrations brought together members of the Indian community, Friends of India

reflected the strong interest in India's culture and heritage among both Indian and Romanian



Group photo with the dance performers, the Indian Community and the Friends of India at Brasov

and Romanian friends in a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere. The enthusiastic participation in the cultural programme, competitions and other activities

communities.

The celebrations across Bucharest, Braşov, Cluj-Napoca and Chisinau provided diverse platforms for the Indian community and Friends of India to come together and celebrate India's Independence Day.

The programmes also highlighted the Embassy's continued efforts to promote India's rich cultural heritage and strengthen people-to-people relations with Romania and the Republic of Moldova. The enthusiastic participation of local communities, Romanian and Moldovan friends, students and other well-wishers demonstrated the growing interest in India's culture, traditions and contemporary achievements.

The celebrations reaffirmed the Embassy's commitment to strengthening India-Romania cultural and people-to-people relations and to providing meaningful opportunities for the Indian community and Friends of India to celebrate and connect with India's rich heritage and its continuing journey of progress. Promoting India's cultural heritage and fostering meaningful engagement with the Indian diaspora and Friends of India in Romania and Moldova.



Ambassador addressing the gathering at Brasov on the occasion of Independence Day in Brasov

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

2 vessels with 22 Indians hijacked; MEA says all safe

AUGUST 22, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Two foreign-flagged commercial vessels carrying 22 Indian seafarers have been hijacked by armed pirates in separate incidents off Somalia and Yemen this week. Meanwhile, the Ministry of External Affairs on Friday asserted that all Indian nationals were safe.

The incidents have renewed concerns over a resurgence of Somali piracy in the western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said 16 Indian seafarers were aboard one vessel and six on the other. "From what we have gathered so far, these 22 Indian citizens — our seafarers — are safe. We are in touch with the relevant officials regarding this matter to ensure the safety and well-being of our people," Jaiswal said.

The Indian Embassy in Kenya said it had taken up the matter with the authorities concerned in Somalia and confirmed the presence of 16 Indians aboard the Eritrea-flagged MT Sibu 1 and six aboard the Cameroon-flagged MV Lutuf. According to reports, the latest incident involved Sibu 1, an oil-products tanker hijacked on Thursday in the Gulf of Aden, about 30 nautical miles off Yemen. Six armed men reportedly boarded the vessel and took control of it before it was diverted towards Somalia.

The second vessel, Lutuf, a Cameroon-flagged general cargo ship, was hijacked on August 17, about four nautical miles off Mareeyo on Somalia's Puntland coast. Eight armed men reportedly boarded the vessel and took control of it.

FIR filed in pellet gun case after Rahul's sit-in at police station

AUGUST 22, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Police on , Aug 21, lodged a first information report (FIR) against unknown people on a complaint by a Delhi University student with pellet injuries during the July 20 protests, after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accompanied the 19-year-old and sat in protest outside a police station for more than six hours.

Gandhi's dramatic stir outside the Parliament Street Police Station turned into a major political controversy with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) attacking him for what it called "attention-seeking politics".

"Sahil's FIR has been registered. This is the first step towards justice. But think about it - even permission to file an FIR had to come from the home ministry. Now it's clear who has been holding the reins on justice," Gandhi said outside the station after the FIR was filed at 7pm.

Sahil Lochab, a Delhi University's school of open learning student, said that for the past eight days, he visited the Connaught Place, Sansad Marg and Mandir Marg police station and the crime branch office to register an FIR, but everyone rejected him. "I was then helped by Gandhi ...I hoped that if he comes, my case will be heard. I'm the eldest son and these injuries have affected my future career goals and my studies."

This is the first FIR filed in connection with allegations of pellet gun use during the sprawling student protests on July 20 - more than a month after the incident. It was registered under sections 118 and 125 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023. Section 118 relates to voluntarily causing hurt or grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means, while section 125 deals with acts endangering the life or personal safety of others.

Five people - Sheikh Irshad Mansuri, a 25-year-old employee with a private firm, Nootan Toppo, a 32-year-old woman from Gurugram, a 28-year-old reporter, Prashant Singh, a 25-year-old Bihar resident, and 19-year-old Sahil Lochab, a student aspiring to join the police force - have alleged that they were hit with pellets on July 20. Mansuri, Singh and former IPS officer Yashovardhan Azad have also approached the Supreme Court, which on Thursday announced a five-member committee to look into allegations of police excesses and violence on July 20, and



Rahul Gandhi with pellet gun victim outside a police station in New Delhi on August 21.

whether pellet guns should be used in crowd control, among other issues.

The issue also roiled the monsoon session of Parliament with the Opposition demanding a response from Union home minister Amit Shah over police violence and pellet injuries. At least two rounds of pellets were used on July 20 on the orders of a deputy commissioner of the Delhi Police, according to the statement of a RAF deputy commander recorded in a general diary entry at the Parliament Street police station. The diary entry - filed at 1.24am on July 22 by a Delhi Police sub-inspector and seen by HT - was the first document that showed the usage of pellets on July 20.

"It has been a month since he was hit by that bullet. Pellets are still lodged in his body; three are in his eye, and he cannot see out of it. Three or four are near his heart. A grave injustice has been done to this young man," Gandhi said. Union health minister JP Nadda said Gandhi's protest was not about students or justice at all. "It is a symbol of the Congress party's political desperation and Rahul Gandhi's hunger for media attention," he said.

The drama began at 11am when Gandhi, Lochab and his mother reached the Mandir Marg police station. He then went to Connaught Place, and finally at Parliament Street to meet deputy commissioner of police Sachin Sharma.

Source: HT

AUGUST 21, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): India on Thursday, Aug 20, said membership of the UN Security Council must not be used to "legitimise" terrorists, as a range of diplomatic and political developments unfolded across forums involving India, its neighbours and other countries.

From talks in Singapore, Washington and the United Nations to political updates in Bangladesh, and developments in Israel, Pakistan, China and the UK, the day saw movement across several international stories with relevance for India and the wider region.

At the United Nations, India said membership of the Security Council must not be used as a tool to "legitimise" terrorists by seeking their removal from the sanctions regime or to blacklist entities solely on "political considerations". It said the 15-nation body must not become a platform for pursuing narrow interests.

In Singapore, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong met visiting Indian ministers ahead of the fourth India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable and discussed ways to build on progress in bilateral ties, especially in advanced manufacturing, digitalisation, sustainability and connectivity.

In Bangladesh, Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir said the possibility of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's visit to India next month for the BRICS Summit "remains slim" unless an appropriate environment based on "mutual trust" is created, along

India tells UN Security Council not to legitimise terrorists amid global shifts



with a "dignified invitation" from New Delhi.

Bangladesh also began its presidential election on Thursday, with lawmakers voting to elect the country's 23rd president in the first contested poll for the post in 35 years. BNP's Mirza Alamgir is the frontrunner.

In Washington, India's Ambassador to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, met US Assistant Secretary of State S Paul Kapur and discussed developments across various pillars of the bilateral partnership.

At the UN, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed is due to visit India later this month to discuss the world body's cooperation with New Delhi as

well as India's engagement in advancing sustainable development. Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy arrived in London on Thursday at the start of a 10-day tour of the UK and the US.

In the US, officials of an advisory body on religious freedom called for sanctions against the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and asked the American government not to extend diplomatic courtesies to its leaders or hold high-level meetings with them.

In Israel, an Indian national died, with officials saying a suspect has been arrested in connection with the incident. An investigation is underway to establish the full facts and circumstances.

In China, a court sentenced Xu Jiayin, former boss of property giant Evergrande Group, to life in prison for multiple crimes and ordered confiscation of all his personal property.

In Pakistan, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said the country has sought a USD 10 billion facility from the US to strengthen its foreign exchange position and reassure international investors, as it looks to reduce dependence on repeated emergency financing from friendly countries.

Indian Army raises 'Baaz battalion' for drone operations along Pakistan front

AUGUST 22, 2026

New Delhi (TIP): As part of its post-Operation Sindoor transformation, the Indian Army on Friday announced the raising of a dedicated battalion for drone operations along the western front with Pakistan.

The newly raised unit will operate under the command of the Army's 11 Corps, headquartered in Jalandhar, Punjab.

The Army has named these dedicated drone-operating units 'Baaz battalions' — Baaz means hawk, a bird of prey.

The initiative to raise such dedicated drone-operating battalions was announced earlier this year and is part of the transformation being carried out post-Operation Sindoor.

Sources said the raising had begun over the past couple of months, and the unit at Jalandhar is the first such unit in the state facing Pakistan.

These units will provide frontline Army units with advanced aerial surveillance and situational-awareness tools.

A Baaz battalion could be equipped to operate a range of drones and armed drones.

These include long-range UAVs such as the MQ-9B, being sourced from US company General Atomics; the Heron and Hermes from Israel; the locally produced Ghatak UAV developed by the DRDO; as well as UAVs manufactured by companies such as ideaForge, SMPP and NewSpace Research.

These drones have capabilities for deep-penetration surveillance, targeting and prolonged border monitoring.

The 'Baaz' battalions would act as a centralised 'brain' to standardise training, manage the high-density technical data streaming from these mixed fleets, and rapidly handle software updates and replenishment cycles required in high-intensity drone warfare.

Centre stops Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy from flying to US over 'Mamdani meet'

AUGUST 22, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Telangana chief minister A Revanth Reddy on Friday, Aug 21, cancelled the United States (US) leg of his two-nation visit after the Union government denied him clearance, even as he underlined that issues concerning nation-building and the future of the youth should be kept above political considerations. His office said Reddy, who is in the United Kingdom (UK), will cut it short and return to Hyderabad from London on Sunday.

Reddy said the objective of the US visit was to bring some of the world's leading educational institutions to Congress-ruled Telangana and create opportunities for young people to access high-quality education, skills and training. "I have always believed we should all think beyond politics and elections when it comes to nation-building and the future of the youth," he said. He said the Telangana Rising initiative would continue to focus on building the state's economic and human resource capabilities irrespective of political hurdles.

The denial of political clearance for Reddy's US visit is the latest in a series of such denials. In 2019, the external affairs ministry denied the then-Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal permission to visit Denmark. The ministry refused the go-ahead for his party colleague and Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann to attend the Paris Olympics. In 2018, the then-Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government for refusing clearances to state ministers to travel abroad to raise funds after floods.

There is a grey area regarding



clearance for foreign visits, which are unlikely to be cleared if applications are made without the requisite approvals and formalities. Requests for overseas visits of chief ministers are first sent to the external affairs ministry for political clearance, and the Union home ministry and the Cabinet Secretariat.

The external affairs ministry cleared the UK leg of Reddy's visit, but permission for the US visit was denied while he led a delegation in London.

Reddy's office said the ministry cited the lack of clearance "from a political angle" while communicating its decision. It added the US visit was aimed primarily at exploring partnerships with leading global educational and skills institutions and attracting them to Telangana.

Reddy was scheduled to visit Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University and Virginia Tech.

Reddy directed officials in his delegation to proceed with the proposed US programme and conclude the planned Memoranda of Understanding

and partnership agreements with educational institutions. The state government intends to pursue collaborations with premier universities and educational institutions despite Reddy's absence.

Reddy said the Telangana government's broader objective was to transform Hyderabad into a global knowledge and education hub. He highlighted the role of institutions such as Osmania University, the University of Hyderabad and Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University in developing Hyderabad as a major centre for human resources and higher education.

Reddy cited Hyderabad Public School as an example of how an educational institution in the city had produced prominent technology and business leaders who achieved global recognition.

He said the establishment of institutions such as the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad, the Indian School of Business, the International Institute of Information Technology Hyderabad and NALSAR University of Law had strengthened the city's reputation as an education and talent hub and helped attract major global corporations and their Global Capability Centres. "Now, we will make Hyderabad the home for the world's greatest education and skills institutions to power our 21st century journey," Reddy said.

Reddy will continue his engagements in the UK over the next two days, including at Oxford, Cambridge, the London School of Economics, London Business School and the University of London. He is scheduled to meet representatives of sports institutions and organisations involved in skills development and explore partnerships.

Bangladesh, India to explore fresh dates for Prime Minister Rahman's visit

AUGUST 22, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Plans for a visit to India by Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman early next week have fallen through, though the two sides continue to be in touch to explore the possibility of a trip within the month of August, people familiar with the matter said on Friday, Aug 21.

Preparations had begun for a possible visit by Rahman during August 23-24, including a ceremonial welcome and banquet at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and official meetings on the second day, but the people familiar with planning for the trip said it was not going ahead. The people, who spoke on condition of anonymity, did not give any reasons for

the change in plans.

Back channel contacts between the two sides, involving Humayun Kabir, the foreign affairs adviser to the Bangladesh PM, are continuing to explore the possibility of arranging Rahman's visit later this month, one of the people said.

The Indian side has extended an invitation for Rahman's bilateral visit and taken all steps to welcome him and to prepare an agenda to take bilateral relations forward, and it is up to the Bangladesh side to take a call on the matter, a second person said.

When external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal was asked at a regular media briefing about

the confusion surrounding Rahman's possible visit, he replied: "I have nothing to say on this matter. If there is an update, I will share it with you."

"No decision has yet been made on the visit," Rahman's Press Secretary A A M Saleh told Reuters.

On Friday afternoon, the Rashtrapati Bhavan put out a press release that said the formal "Change of Guard Ceremony" at the forecourt of the presidential palace would not be held on August 22 "due to the full rehearsal for the ceremonial welcome of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh". A subsequent statement from the Rashtrapati Bhavan said the press release had been withdrawn.

The people acknowledged that this was part of the preparations that were being put in place for a possible visit by Rahman. Invitations had also been issued for the official banquet to be held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on August 23 before being rescinded, they said.

Kabir, who is expected to be elevated to the status of minister of state for foreign affairs as part of a reshuffle, told state-run BSS news agency on Thursday that the chances of Rahman visiting India ahead of the Brics Summit during September 12-13 "remains slim unless an appropriate environment is created based on consensus between the two countries on specific issues and a dignified invitation".

India in history this Week

AUGUST 21 TO AUGUST 27

AUGUST 21 - THE LEGACY OF USTAD BISMILLAH KHAN

2006 - Ustad Bismillah Khan passes away



The sound of the shehnai became synonymous with Ustad Bismillah Khan, one of India's greatest classical musicians. He died on August 21, 2006, in Varanasi at the age of 90. Bismillah Khan transformed the shehnai from an instrument traditionally associated with weddings, temples and ceremonial occasions into a respected instrument of the classical concert stage. His performance from the Red Fort on India's first Independence Day in 1947 became part of the country's cultural memory. A recipient of the Bharat Ratna, he remained deeply attached to Varanasi and the Ganga. His life represented India's composite cultural tradition, with music serving as a bridge between communities.

August 22 - The Beginnings of Madras

1639 - The foundations of modern Chennai

August 22 is traditionally observed as Madras Day, marking the 1639 agreement through which the East India Company acquired land on the Coromandel Coast. The settlement eventually developed into Madras and later Chennai. From a colonial trading post, the city grew into one of India's major centres of commerce, education, culture and industry. Its history reflects several centuries of interaction between maritime trade, colonial expansion and indigenous traditions. The city would eventually become a major centre of the South Indian cultural renaissance and an important hub of India's automobile, technology and manufacturing sectors.

August 23 - Patel and the Task of Integration



1947 - Sardar Patel takes charge of the Home Ministry

In the early days of independence, India faced an enormous challenge: bringing together hundreds of princely states and creating a functioning Union.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, independent India's first Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, became the central figure in this effort. Working closely with V.P. Menon, Patel negotiated with rulers across the subcontinent and helped bring most princely states into the Indian Union. The integration of territories such as

Hyderabad, Junagadh and others was among the most consequential tasks undertaken by the new government. Patel's role in this process earned him the enduring description of the Iron Man of India.

August 24 - Remembering Rajguru

1908 - Shivaram Hari Rajguru is born



Revolutionary Shivaram Hari Rajguru was born on August 24, 1908, at Khed in present-day Maharashtra.

As a young revolutionary, Rajguru became associated with the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association and worked alongside Bhagat Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad. He participated in revolutionary activities aimed at challenging British rule. Rajguru became particularly associated with the killing of British police officer J.P. Saunders in Lahore in 1928, an act carried out in response to the death of nationalist leader Lala Lajpat Rai following a police lathi charge. Rajguru, Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev were executed on March 23, 1931. Their sacrifice became one of the most powerful symbols of revolutionary nationalism among India's youth.

AUGUST 25 - A STEP TOWARDS INDIANISING THE ARMY

1917 - Indian officers receive King's Commissions

The British Indian Army was overwhelmingly commanded by British officers during the colonial period. The gradual admission of Indians into the officer ranks therefore represented an important institutional change. On August 25, 1917, a group of Indian soldiers received King's Commissions, marking a step towards the Indianisation of the army's officer corps. The process remained slow and limited under colonial rule, but it eventually helped create a professional Indian officer class that would become the foundation of the armed forces of independent India.

AUGUST 26 - REMEMBERING MOTHER TERESA

1910 - Mother Teresa is born



Mother Teresa, born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, was born on August 26, 1910. She arrived in India as a young nun and eventually made Kolkata the centre of her life's work. In 1950, she established the Missionaries of

Charity, which went on to operate homes and institutions serving the poor, sick, abandoned and dying. Her humanitarian work attracted international recognition. She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 and the Bharat Ratna in 1980. Her legacy remains both influential and debated, but her place in the history of humanitarian service in India and around the world is undeniable.

AUGUST 27 - THE TATA VISION TAKES SHAPE

1859 - Dorabji Tata is born



The development of modern Indian industry owes much to Sir Dorabji Tata, who was born on August 27, 1859. The eldest son of Jamsetji Tata, Dorabji helped turn his father's ambitious industrial ideas into reality. He played an important role in the development of the Tata industrial group and supported enterprises that contributed to India's emerging industrial economy.

His interests extended beyond business. He supported education, scientific research and sport, and was an important patron of India's early participation in the Olympic movement. His life illustrated a distinctive tradition of Indian enterprise in which industrial development was closely linked with philanthropy and institution-building.

AUGUST 27 - THE CINEMA OF EVERYDAY INDIA

2006 - Hrishikesh Mukherjee dies

Hindi cinema lost one of its most admired filmmakers when Hrishikesh Mukherjee died on August 27, 2006. Known for films such as Anand, Abhimaan, Chupke Chupke, Gol Maal and Khubsoorat, Mukherjee created a distinctive kind of cinema centred on ordinary people and everyday relationships. His films often combined humour with emotional depth, exploring friendship, family, work, love and middle-class aspirations. At a time when mainstream Hindi cinema was increasingly associated with larger-than-life heroes, Mukherjee demonstrated that simple stories could have enormous emotional power. His contribution was recognised with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award and the Padma Vibhushan.





Horror series 'It: Welcome to Derry' renewed for season two at HBO

Los Angeles, "It: Welcome to Derry", a prequel series based in the world of popular horror franchise "IT", has been renewed for a second season at American network HBO.

The horror show, based on celebrated author Stephen King's "IT" novel, premiered in October 2025 and received positive response from both fans and the critics. Set in 1962 in the fictional town of Derry, Maine, the first season detailed the experiences of the town's residents with the evil shape-shifting clown, Pennywise, a role that actor Bill Skarsgard reprised from the films.

According to the official logline, season two will go back in time to 1935 and take place during the Great Depression.

The story centres on the bloody massacre of the Bradley Gang, a group of bank robbers who stop in Derry to buy ammo and end up facing unimaginable horror, it added. "It: Welcome to Derry" is developed by filmmaker Andy Muschietti, who kickstarted the franchise with the 2017 film "IT" and then directed "IT: Chapter Two", along with his sister Barbara and Jason Fuchs, who also served as the co-showrunner alongside Brad Caleb Kane.

Ekta Kapoor announces Naagin franchise to move beyond television after ruling it for 11 years

The Naagin franchise is finally making the leap from television. Ekta Kapoor has announced that the hugely popular supernatural series is moving beyond the television screens, giving fans of the shape-shifting serpent saga a reason to look forward to a new chapter. The announcement was made on the occasion of Nag Panchami and Shravan Somvar, though details about the film are still being kept under wraps.

Ekta Kapoor shared the news on Instagram with a video looking back at the different actors who played the role of Naagins and have been a part of the TV franchise. The video offered a glimpse of the show's evolution while teasing fans about what could be next. She wrote, "Something exciting is coming! #WaitForIt Happy Nag Panchami!"

The announcement came as a surprise to many viewers, who were expecting another television update from the long-running franchise. Instead, the video teases, "For 11 years, Naagin has ruled the small screen. Now Balaji Telefilms Ltd is ready to take the iconic franchise beyond TV."

Naagin, originally aired in 2015, starring Mouni Roy as the central shapeshifting female serpent and Arjun Bijlani as the leading man. Within a short while, the supernatural drama became the most successful franchise on Indian television, being a blend of mythology, fantasy, romance and family dramas.

In second season, Mouni reprised the role of the central character while



Surbhi Jyoti played the lead in the third season. Season four starred Nia Sharma but ended abruptly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, Surbhi Chandna took up the mantle of the franchise in season five. In season six, Ekta Kapoor enrolled Tejaswi Prakash for the lead role, who had recently won Bigg Boss 15. Season seven of Naagin aired in 2025, featuring Priyanka Chahar Choudhary, Eisha Singh, Namik Paul, Kanika Mann, among others. The season concluded on June 14, 2026.

The biggest question surrounding the

film is its casting. While Ekta Kapoor has not revealed who will headline the project, speculation around the lead role is already building. The makers could potentially opt for a major Bollywood actress or bring a popular television face to the cinematic universe.

Back in 2020, separately, an array of naagin films were announced and a trilogy was to be made with Shraddha Kapoor in the lead role. The film was to be helmed by Vishal Furia and produced by Nikhil Dwivedi. But, there has been no update regarding the project going on floors.

From 'Nashville' to 'Remember the Titans,' Hayden Panettiere's notable roles

Hayden Panettiere spent most of her life in front of a camera. The actor, who died Sunday at age 36, made her debut in a toy commercial when she was just 11 months old. From her soap opera beginnings and early breakout roles holding her own opposite acting legends, Panettiere had an undeniable presence that would lead to starring roles on the small and big screens.

Here are some of her most memorable films and television shows, and where to stream them.

Remember the Titans (2000)

One of Panettiere's early appearances came in the popular sports drama Remember the Titans. Set against the backdrop of racial integration in American high school football in the early 1970s, the film starred Denzel Washington as coach Herman Boone. Panettiere played Sheryl Yoast, the spirited daughter



of assistant coach Bill Yoast. Though it was a supporting role, her performance helped establish her as one of Hollywood's promising young actors. The film went on to become a widely remembered sports drama and remains an important title from the early stage of her career.

Heroes (2006-2010)

Panettiere achieved international recognition through the science-fiction television series Heroes. She played Claire Bennet, a seemingly ordinary high school student who discovers that she possesses an extraordinary ability: her body can rapidly heal itself from almost any injury.

Nashville (2012-2018)

Perhaps Panettiere's most celebrated role came with the musical drama Nashville. She played Juliette Barnes, a talented but troubled country music star whose professional ambition and personal struggles formed one of the show's major storylines.

Bring It On: All or Nothing (2006)

In this teen comedy, Panettiere took on the role of Hayden. Actually, she played Britney Allen, a confident and

competitive cheerleader who finds herself adjusting to a new environment after moving to a different neighbourhood.

I Love You, Beth Cooper (2009)

Panettiere starred as Beth Cooper, the popular high school student who unexpectedly becomes the focus of a graduation speech delivered by a classmate. The romantic comedy gave her a leading role and allowed her to explore a lighter, more playful character.

A Bug's Life and Voice Acting

Panettiere also found success as a voice actor. She voiced Dot, the young princess ant, in Pixar's animated film A Bug's Life. The role introduced her voice to a generation of young viewers and demonstrated the range of her early work. She later continued voice work in other projects, including animated productions and video games.



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Priyanka Chopra Co-Executive Produces “The Cycle of Love” Film

BY MABEL PAIS

THE CYCLE OF LOVE

Director: Orlando Von Einsiedel; **2025; USA; 1h 38m**

“Delicate and heartwarming...the kind of film whose sweet subject transcends time and borders” – RogerEbert

THE CYCLE OF LOVE, co-executive produced by Priyanka Chopra Jonas and directed by Oscar-winning director Orlando Von Einsiedel, is an inspiring and epic true-life adventure about believing in love against all odds, and risking everything for what you know in your heart is your destiny and the power of human connection.

Watch the trailer - <https://youtu.be/biXpA5aJPug>

In 1977, PK, a 23-year-old Delhi street artist from a poor, ‘untouchable’ family, picked up a handful of paintbrushes and a second-hand bicycle and set off across 6000 miles and nearly a dozen countries. His mission: to find Lotta, the woman who had captured his heart on a visit to India.

PK knew their meeting was fate. When he was still a baby, an astrologer left his parents with a prophecy: “You will marry a girl who is not from the village, not even from this country, she will be musical, own a jungle and be born under the sign of the ox.” Lotta was born in May and she played the recorder and piano. When PK asked her if she owned a jungle, she replied, “not a jungle, but a forest.” He knew this was his



(left) Lotta Von Schedvin and P.K. Mahanandia -Credit: Alex Spence

destiny. Charmed by his smile, charisma and gentleness, Lotta accepted his offer to show her around India and, over her two-month visit, they fell hopelessly in love, despite caste, nationality, and

everything else.

Release date: August 28, 2026 in New York theatres

September 4 in Los Angeles

Film: “You Had To Be There” Recounts How “Godspell” Ignited the Comedy Revolution

BY MABEL PAIS

YOU HAD TO BE THERE

Director: Nick Davis; **Writers:** Nick Davis, Jane Mendelsohn;

Co-Producers: Nick Davis, Produced by Nick Davis, Bonnie Comley, Stewart F. Lane, Tom Powers, Sue Turley; **Cinematography:** Phil Cooper, Wolfgang Held. **Editing:** Doug Abel. **Music:** Timo Elliston, Brian Jones; **Featuring** Martin Short, Eugene Levy, Andrea Martin, Victor Garber, Jayne Eastwood, Paul Shaffer, Dave Thomas, Stephen Schwartz, Avril Chown, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Mike Myers, Heidi Gardner; **2025; 98m**

Nick Davis’ “You Had To Be There” will have its theatrical premiere in New York. It features how the Toronto “Godspell” ignited the Comedy Revolution, Spread Love & Overalls, and Created a Community that Changed the World (in a Canadian Kind of Way).

Watch the trailer - <https://youtu.be/nSLE8Ywgt7w>

The 1972 Toronto production of the musical “Godspell” featured an eye-popping cast of future comedy titans: Martin Short, Eugene Levy, Andrea Martin, Gilda Radner, Dave Thomas — with Victor Garber as a hippie Jesus and Paul Shaffer as musical director. The production itself was supposed to play for only a handful of weeks, but was such a smash hit that it was extended and ran for over a year and a half, during which time Martin and Levy became original members of “Second City Television,” and Garber left to star in the feature film of “Godspell.” When Toronto native Lorne Michaels was hired a couple years later to create a new late night comedy show on NBC, the first person he cast was an actress he’d first seen in “Godspell”: Radner. The comedy revolution was on.

“You Had To Be There:” How the Toronto Godspell Ignited the Comedy Revolution... features interviews with all surviving members, as well as composer Stephen Schwartz, Musical Director Paul Shaffer, Dan Aykroyd, Mike Myers, and Lin-Manuel Miranda, hilariously recounting a production that changed the



You Had To Be There, cast. -Credit: Courtesy, <https://filmforum.org>

course of comedy in North America.

“An exuberant and essential doc for comedy heads... The comedy revolution referred to by the title of Nick Davis’s sharp and effusive documentary is the one that took place on television in the ’70s: the creation of Saturday Night Live and SCTV and everything that grew out of them “YOU HAD TO BE THERE”: How the Toronto “Godspell” Ignited the Comedy Revolution... makes the case that the Petri dish from which the DNA of those shows was sprung was the 1972 Toronto production of “Godspell,” the Jesus-and-his-followers-as-hippie-clowns musical that had rocked the world when it premiered on Broadway the year before... “YOU

HAD TO BE THERE”: How the Toronto “Godspell” Ignited the Comedy Revolution... shows you that something was in the air up there, and that it spread like the world’s happiest virus.” – Owen Gleiberman, Variety

The film had its world premiere in the Special Presentations lineup at the 2025 Toronto International Film Festival and went on to screen at festivals nationally.

Release date: In NYC theatres on Friday, September 18, 2026

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

Award-Winning Choreographer barkha patel presents “Iccha”

BY MABEL PAIS

“ICCHA” (desires) is the new solo choreographic work of award-winning artist, barkha patel. barkha patel’s work is sponsored by the CUNY Dance Initiative (CDI), an expansive program that provides New York City choreographers and dance companies with creative residencies on CUNY college campuses. “Iccha” will be presented at the BMCC Tribeca Performing Arts Center (199 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007) on Friday, September 25 and Saturday, September 26, 2026, each night at 7:30 PM.

PROGRAM

“iccha” is a 60-minute solo dance work that explores the body as a vessel for ancestral memory and inherited longing. Often, the things we desire are not entirely our own. Matrilineal histories are frequently unnamed or absorbed into patriarchal narratives;

“iccha” asks: who do we carry within us?

Drawing on the Hindu concept of “vasanas” — unfulfilled longings that survive physical death and are passed through bloodlines as living “iccha,” or desires — the work centers on barkha, who is visited in a dream by her maternal ancestors. They choose her to give form to the desires they were unable to express or fulfill: desires shaped by survival, loss,

intimacy, violence, and the denial of dance and embodied selfhood.

Weaving original music and set design with traditional and contemporary kathak and the Gujarati folk form garba, “iccha” imagines movement as a means of remembrance, release, and return.

“iccha” is choreographed and performed by barkha patel, with original music composed by Sushma Soma and Samiullah Khan.

TICKETS

There are general admission tickets; student tickets are available at a discounted price. Tickets can be purchased at <https://tickets.tribecapac.org/barkha-patel-dance-company-presents-iccha>

barkha patel

barkha patel is a kathak artist, choreographer, educator and Artistic Director of barkha dance company. She has trained in kathak with Guru Rachna Sarang and continues her training with Swati Sinha and Dheerendra Tiwari.

barkha’s work has been presented at venues such as Jacob’s Pillow Inside/Out, Little Island, 92Y, and Chelsea Factory among others. She received the 2023 Juried Bessie Award through which she received support from the New York State Dance Force in 2024 to tour a full-evening work “ahaM | Maha” to the Reg Lenna

Center, 171 Cedar Arts, and University of Rochester.

barkha has been recognized with a Princess Grace Dance Award (2024), selected as a finalist for NEFA’s (New England Foundation for the Arts) NDP (National Dance Project) grant (2024), and was a Harlem Stage WaterWorks Fellow (2024). She has received residencies with Movement Research, NYS Choreographic Institute, and Topaz Arts.

She completed her first India tour in ‘25 in collaboration with Canadian based kathak artist Tanveer Alam, presenting at venues such as Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Center (Mumbai), India Habitat Centre (Delhi), Medai (Blr), Hyderabad Literature Festival and Aadhyam Textiles (Hyderabad). barkha and Tanveer premiered a new work for Toronto’s Fall For Dance North in 2025.

THE CUNY DANCE INITIATIVE (CDI)

The CUNY Dance Initiative (CDI) was developed in response to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s 2010 report, “We Make Do,” (<https://artstrategies.org/we-make-do-more-time-is-better-but-budget-is-king>)

which cited how destabilizing the shortage of affordable rehearsal space in New York City is to the dance sector. A successful pilot supporting residencies on four CUNY campuses in 2013 led to CDI’s formal launch in 2014. Learn more at <https://1.cuny.edu/sites/dance-initiative>



barkha patel. -Credit: apap_jimmychen3

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TribecaPAC (<https://tribecapac.org>) is located at 199 Chambers Street on the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) campus, and is accessible via the 1/2/3, A/C/E, R, and PATH trains. For more information and added events, visit <https://tribecapac.org>.

“Mulan” Dance Drama Makes NYC Debut

BY MABEL PAIS

“MULAN,” the award-winning dance drama will make its New York debut in September. The performance is presented by the China Arts and Entertainment Group (CAEG), produced and performed by China Ningbo: the Performance & Arts Group. There will be four performances, September 18-20, 2026 at the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, 20 Lincoln Center Plaza, NYC.

Performance Schedule

Sept 18 & 19 - Friday & Saturday at 7:30pm

Sept 19 & 20 - Saturday at 1:30pm, Sunday at 2:30pm.

Tickets

For tickets, visit <https://davidhkochotheater.com/tickets-and-events/mulan>

MULAN

Winner of the China Dance Lotus Award, the highest honor in Chinese dance, “MULAN” is a sweeping, visually resplendent dance drama that reimagines one of China’s most enduring legends for global audiences. In that legend shaped by filial piety, bravery, and the yearning for peace, a young Chinese heroine disguises herself as a man to take her father’s place on the battlefield — and rises to eternal renown. Beyond depicting a warrior’s journey, it unfolds a profound narrative of self-identity, inner growth, and human compassion — the story of a woman who stands firm for her family, her homeland, and her true self.

Created by award-winning choreographers Zhou Liya and Han Zhen, the production masterfully merges classical Chinese dance, martial arts, and epic theatrical aesthetics into a powerful movement language. Where traditional retellings focus solely on Mulan’s heroism, this interpretation reveals her grace, vulnerability, and unwavering longing for peace.

Central to the production is a monumental 15-meter revolving stage, which acts as a quiet yet expressive presence: heightening the intensity of battle scenes, framing intimate emotional moments, and symbolizing



Mulan: Liu Zekun, Li Tao, Jiang An, Hao Ruqi, Kong Lingjie.

-Credit: Courtesy, CAEG

the cycle of life, war, and remembrance. Evocative original music weaves traditional Chinese folk instruments with dramatic symphonic orchestration. Transcending linguistic and cultural boundaries, it resonates with universal values: loyalty, sacrifice, self-discovery, and the eternal pursuit of peace.

A flagship production of CAEG’s Image China initiative, “MULAN” makes its New York debut at the David H. Koch Theater this fall - a timeless human story crafted for the world stage.

Leading Roles (Casting Subject to Change)

Mulan: Tang Xinyi

General Wei: Xia Tian, Wang Zheng

Rou’er: Wu Wei

Mulan’s Father: Wang Zheng, Jiang An

Little Mulan: Liu Siyu

Eunuch: Du Boyan

Artist Bios

Zhou Liya (Chief Director / Choreographer)

A graduate of the Choreography Department at Beijing Dance Academy, Zhou Liya is a resident choreographer and stage director with the China Oriental Song and Dance Troupe. Her signature dance

dramas include The Journey of a Legendary Landscape, Wing Chun, The Eternal Waves, Mulan, Dragon Boat Racing and Du Fu.

Han Zhen (Chief Director / Choreographer)

Han Zhen joined the China Oriental Song and Dance Troupe in 2019 and currently works as a graduate advisor at Beijing Dance Academy. Two of her pieces were selected for the National Program for Excellent Stage Art. Her stage works have toured globally to the Sydney Opera House, EU Headquarters, United Nations Headquarters, Lincoln Center and the Kennedy Center. Her well-known choreographed productions are The Journey of a Legendary Landscape, Wing Chun, The Eternal Waves, Mulan, Dragon Boat Racing and Du Fu.

China Arts and Entertainment Group (<https://en.caeg.cn>)

China Arts and Entertainment Group (CAEG) was established in April 2004, with its major subsidiaries, China Performing Arts Agency (CPAA) and China International Exhibition Agency (CIEA), tracing their origins back to 1957 and 1950, respectively. As the exclusive central state-owned cultural enterprise in China with a global footprint in performance and exhibition businesses, CAEG has cultivated a nationwide market network encompassing international performing arts, art exhibitions, cultural tourism, and theater operations.

Since 2009, CAEG has presented a series of productions in the U.S. Learn more at <https://en.caeg.cn>.

China Ningbo Performance & Arts Group

China Ningbo Performance & Arts Group is the sole municipal state-owned performing arts troupe in Ningbo. It has created nearly 90 large-scale stage productions, among which 56 are original works. Its most internationally renowned pieces feature dance dramas Mulan, Xian Xinghai, Harbor of the Orient and opera Tu Youyou. Learn more at <https://icm.gov.mo/en>

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

The Search for the World's Next Great Jazz Singer Is On

BY MABEL PAIS

The 15th annual Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition - also known as The SASSY Awards — officially invites registration for the next great jazz singer. This competition is presented by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC). The deadline to submit entries by solo vocalists from anywhere in the world is September 8, 2026, at 5:00PM Eastern Time at www.SarahVaughanCompetition.com

This competition is open to anyone who sings in clubs, classrooms, churches, open mics, shower acoustics, or anywhere else inspiration strikes, this is a chance to bring your voice to one of jazz's most celebrated stages.

The Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition is open to solo singers over the age of 18, of all genders and nationalities, who are not signed to a major label. Entrants will be judged on vocal quality, musicality, technique, performance, individuality, artistic interpretation, and — of course — the ability to swing.

"The Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition is rightfully one of the most anticipated events in jazz," said Christian McBride, Multi-GRAMMY™ winning bassist.



Sarah Vaughan -Courtesy, <https://njpac.org>

In the fall, the Top Five Finalists will be announced, then invited to compete live on November 22, 2026, on the iconic NJPAC stage in Newark, New Jersey, before a distinguished panel of judges and a live audience ready to discover the jazz stars of tomorrow.

This year's finalist concert will feature a high-powered judging panel including José James, Gretchen

Parlato, Jason Olaine, Lillias White, and T.S. Monk. Hosted by WBGO Radio's Gary Walker, the event will also include a performance by April May Webb, winner of the 2024 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition.

The first-prize winner of The SASSY Awards will receive a \$5,000 cash award, with \$1,500 awarded for second place and \$500 for third place.

For singers wondering if this opportunity can really change a career, the answer is already in the history books. Past winners include Samara Joy, the 2019 winner who went on to become a GRAMMY® Award winner for Best New Artist in 2023; Jazzmeia Horn, the 2013 winner; and Cyrille Aimée, the 2012 winner. Other past winners include Ashleigh Smith, Arianna Neikrug, Deelee Dubé, Quiana Lynell, Laurin Talese, Gabrielle Cavassa, Tawanda Suessbrich-Joaquim, G. Thomas Allen, Lucía Gutiérrez Rebolloso, Tyreek McDole, April May Webb, and Kate Kortum.

The competition honors the legacy of legendary jazz vocalist and NEA Jazz Master Sarah Vaughan, who was a Newark teenager when she won an amateur singing contest at the Apollo Theater in 1942. That night helped launch the career of one of the most influential voices in American music — and The SASSY Awards continue that spirit of discovery today.

NJPAC Arts Ed Initiative Invites Young Musicians to Train In Its Jazz Education Program

BY MABEL PAIS

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), the state's anchor cultural institution, invites young musicians to enroll in its TD Jazz for Teens Education Program.

NJPAC celebrates 29 years of nurturing young musicians through its popular TD Jazz for Teens program, which has provided exceptional jazz education and performance opportunities to thousands of high school students from Newark and beyond. One of NJPAC's earliest arts education initiatives, the program has grown into a nationally recognized training ground for emerging jazz artists, producing distinguished alumni including MacArthur "Genius" Fellow Tyshawn Sorey.

Grammy Award-winning jazz sensation Samara Joy won NJPAC's 2019 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition — an unforgettable moment that helped launch her extraordinary career.

Watch Samara Joy sing - <https://youtu.be/XGTxV9UFaTQ>

TD Jazz for Teens is a comprehensive, sequential jazz education program that provides students with rigorous musical instruction from world-class professional artists, opportunities for artistic collaboration, and guidance in exploring college and career pathways in music.

This year's curriculum includes jazz history, theory and composition, instrumental technique, small and large ensembles, music business, production, improvisation, and more. Students preparing for college receive personalized guidance throughout the application process.

Participants also perform regularly as members of the James Moody Jazz Orchestra and the George Wein Scholars Ensemble, which has appeared at the prestigious Newport Jazz Festival. Every student has the opportunity to compose and professionally record original music in a studio setting, while regular field trips to Rutgers University — Newark's renowned Institute of Jazz Studies — the world's largest archive of jazz-related materials — provide an unparalleled connection to the music's rich history.

Since 2015, Mark Gross has led TD Jazz for Teens as NJPAC's Director of Jazz Instruction. A multiple GRAMMY Award-winning alto saxophonist and composer, Gross has performed and recorded with jazz legends including Dizzy Gillespie, Buster Williams, Nat

Adderley, Dave Holland, and Wynton Marsalis.

Under Gross's leadership, students study with an outstanding faculty of more than a dozen accomplished working musicians, including guitarist Alex Wintz, himself a TD Jazz for Teens alumnus; acclaimed saxophonist Jason Marshall; drummer John Iannuzzi; and legendary Russian-born trumpeter and former Jazz Messenger Valery Ponomarev. Throughout the year, students also work directly with internationally celebrated guest artists through exclusive master classes, including nine-time GRAMMY Award-winning bassist Christian McBride, NJPAC's Jazz Advisor; acclaimed vibraphonist Stefon Harris; and MacArthur "Genius" Fellow and Doris Duke Artist Regina Carter.



NJPAC Arts Ed Jazz students.

-Credit for both: Courtesy, <https://njpac.org>

ELIGIBILITY AND PROGRAM DETAILS

WHEN: October 3, 2026 – May 15, 2027; Classes are held every Saturday from 10:00am-5:00 p.m. EST.

WHERE: New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), One Center Street, Newark, NJ.

WHO: Student musicians ages 13-18.

REGISTER: Registration is required and closes on October 10, 2026. Scholarships and financial aid are available. Fees are per semester or for the full year. For more information, visit [NJPAC.org/education](https://njpac.org/education) (<https://njpac.org/education>) or call 973.353.7058.

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To learn more, visit www.td.com/us.

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJPAC)

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njpac.org or 888.GO.NJPAC (888.466.5722)

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Website: njpac.org/takeastand
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Youtube: Standing in Solidarity playlist

ARTS EDUCATION @ NJPAC

NJPAC's Arts Education (<https://njpac.org/arts-education>) offerings reach more than 60,000 students and families through live performances, in-school residency programs and arts training classes. These programs bring the joy of dance, music, theater, and poetry directly to the classroom. Through its innovative residencies, Teaching Artists create stimulating performing arts experiences that engage students' imaginations and build self-confidence through positive self-expression. Its residencies help students learn to work together and develop their creative independence.

In addition to NJPAC's innovative In-School Programs, the Arts Center's comprehensive Arts Education Department offers an Arts Training Program that helps students at every level learn their artistic and technical skills they need to study acting, dance, instrumental music, vocal music, and musical theater. NJPAC also presents a SchoolTime Performance Series, which introduces students and their families to a world of entertainment and culture. NJPAC's Arts Education programs feature professional artists from a wide variety of traditions and performances of music, dance, storytelling, puppetry, and more.

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



Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara sequel in early stages: Zoya Akhtar

Filmmaker Zoya Akhtar has said a sequel to Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara is being worked on as the film completes 15 years. Speaking at the Monsoon Film Festival, she confirmed that the team is exploring a follow-up, while making it clear that the process is still at an early stage.

The conversation around a second film had picked up again after Hrithik Roshan, Abhay Deol and Farhan Akhtar reunited for a 2025 advertisement for Yas Island. The reunion left many viewers nostalgic for Arjun, Kabir and Imran, and led to speculation that Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara 2 was on the way.

In a conversation with The Hollywood Reporter at the Monsoon Film Festival, Zoya said a sequel is being considered. "We are on it," she said, adding, "We don't know what will happen and what won't if we will get to a place where it feels correct, in catching up with these characters today. But it will be nice."

She also addressed the reaction to the 2025 commercial featuring Hrithik, Abhay and Farhan. "People thought it was a trailer," she said. Recalling the excitement and the disappointment that followed, she added, "First, they were like, 'YEAH!' But then I got abused in my DMs saying, 'This was not funny.'"

Awarapan 2 kept Emraan Hashmi's 'serial kisser' image out of sequel

Emraan Hashmi became synonymous with his "serial kisser" image during a phase of his career, but Awarapan 2 chose to leave the kisses out.

The sequel, starring Emraan Hashmi and Disha Patani and directed by Nitin Kakkar, has already crossed the Rs 100 crore India net mark in its first week. The film also gave Hashmi his career-best opening, earning Rs 22 crore on Day 1, and became his first solo hero film to cross the Rs 100 crore milestone.

But while the numbers have been grabbing headlines, one question has also been doing the rounds: how did an Emraan Hashmi film go without even a single kissing scene?

Awarapan 2 writer Bilal Siddiqui has the answer. Speaking to NDTV, Siddiqui revealed that leaving out a kissing scene was a conscious decision.

"It was a conscious decision. Yes. So Awarapan 1 also didn't have it," Siddiqui said. But according to the writer, the bigger reason was Shivam's emotional journey in the sequel. The character, played by Hashmi, is still deeply connected to the memory of his late lover.

"Now that people have seen the film, they would know that it would be kind of unfair to the character to kind of throw that in," Siddiqui explained. "It would just look contrived."

Siddiqui believes Shivam's relationship with his late lover has evolved far beyond romance.

"Shivam as a character at some level still holds his lover who passed to that pedestal where he is not completely ever going to move on," he said.

"She has transcended from just being his love. She's become his strength and



almost like a guiding force."

And that changes what Shivam is looking for. "His priority is not necessarily moving on romantically. He's got a larger fight to fight," Siddiqui said.

So where did that leave the possibility of a romantic kissing scene?

"I think a kiss and all of that never came into mind at all because we didn't find an organic way to lead to that with this character," the writer said.

The makers were also aware of the

audience expectations attached to Hashmi.

"I know what people expect of Emraan," Siddiqui said.

But the writer has a cheeky answer for those waiting to see Hashmi return to his trademark territory: "I guess he'll do it in another film."

For Awarapan 2, though, the decision was clear. The kiss was never needed because, as Siddiqui puts it, Shivam has a "larger fight to fight."



Yami Gautam is 'bhabhi daayan' in Nayyi Navelli, poster promises fantasy and chaos

Actor Yami Gautam Dhar is set to take on a rather unusual role in her upcoming film Nayyi Navelli. The newly announced fantasy family entertainer introduces her as a picture-perfect 'bhabhi' whose arrival turns a chaotic Meerut household into paradise — but there may be more to her than meets the eye. The film's poster hints at plenty of fantasy, family drama and chaos, with Yami's character suspected of being a 'daayan' (witch).

Directed by Balaji Mohan, the film is set to release in cinemas across India on October 16, 2026, during the Dussehra weekend.

Produced by Aanand L Rai and Himanshu Sharma, Nayyi Navelli promises a mix of fantasy, comedy and family drama. The film is written by Himanshu Sharma and Divy Nidhi Sharma, with music composed by G V Prakash Kumar.

Set in Meerut, the film follows a picture-perfect bride who brings a sense of happiness and harmony to a chaotic family. However, things take an

unexpected turn when her brother-in-law begins to suspect that his seemingly ideal sister-in-law could actually be a daayan (witch).

The makers have described the film as a fantasy entertainer that combines family chaos with humour, adventure and unexpected twists.

Speaking about the film, Nikhil Madhok, director and head of Prime Video India and Amazon MGM Studios, said that the team felt the film was ideally suited for a Dussehra release. He said, "As we saw Nayyi Navelli finally come together, there was an instant, collective realization that this is THE Dussehra film. No other date would do it justice."

Producer Aanand L Rai said the story immediately stood out to him and Himanshu Sharma because of its unusual mix of fantasy, humour and adventure. He said, "Nayyi Navelli is the kind of story that surprises you at every turn."

Rai added that Yami Gautam was an instinctive choice for the role and said she brought the "warmth and mischief" required for the character.



Angelina Jolie's new film is about 'healing after trauma'

Angelina Jolie has opened up about healing, trauma and finding her strength again while discussing her recent films, with some of her comments drawing attention to her difficult divorce from Brad Pitt.

Angelina Jolie has dropped what insiders see as a big hint that her deeply personal new film, about "healing after trauma," reflects her own recovery from the painful aftermath of her relationship with Brad Pitt, as per Radar Online. The 51-year-old Oscar winner wrote and directed "Without Blood," a war drama starring Salma Hayek and Demian Bichir, based on Alessandro Baricco's novel of the same name.

As per Radar Online, Jolie has said that her film is for people seeking "answers and healing after trauma," themes that insiders say come after years of highly publicized legal and family battles following the breakdown of her marriage to Pitt, 62.

A source familiar with Jolie's work told Radar Online, "Angelina hasn't explicitly said this film is about Brad, but when she talks about trauma, healing and returning to the place where you broke, it is impossible for people close to the situation not to see parallels with what she has lived through. She is basically dropping a huge hint it is about her healing after her split from Brad. Her experiences have inevitably shaped the person and filmmaker she is today. Her new film is a story about surviving trauma and searching for answers, so there is naturally going to be speculation that some of Angelina's own healing is reflected in it."

Jolie and Pitt separated in 2016 after being together for 12 years and married for two. Their breakup led to a lengthy series of legal disputes, including a battle over their French winery, Château Miraval. The former couple share six children, Maddox Jolie-Pitt, 25, Pax Jolie-Pitt, 22, Zahara Jolie, 21, Shiloh Jolie, 20, and twins Knox Jolie-Pitt and Vivienne Jolie, both 18.

Avengers: Doomsday eyes historic \$1 billion global box office opening

Marvel Studios may be heading for another box office milestone with Avengers: Doomsday. The upcoming superhero spectacle is already seeing extraordinary demand months before its theatrical release. The buzz around the movie is immense as it brings together Avengers, Fantastic Four and X-Men characters under the same roof. And beyond that, the ticket pre-sales are hinting that it might create records that are unheard of.

According to reports in The Wrap, World of Reel and Box Office Theory, Avengers: Doomsday has already raked in around \$100 million from advance ticket sales. The tickets went on sale nearly four months before the film's December 18 release, far earlier than the usual 43-day advance window.

The film is also reportedly running 65% ahead of the first two days of presales for Spider-Man: Brand New Day, which went on to become the year's highest-grossing film and crossed the \$2 billion mark. The report claims that if the pre-sales trend continues, the film is looking at a potential \$1 billion global opening weekend.

Marvel Studios recently put Robert Downey Jr.'s Victor Von Doom in the spotlight with a special look at Avengers: Doomsday, unveiled during an action-packed showcase at D23: The Ultimate Disney fan event. The footage was introduced on stage by Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige, Robert, Chris Evans (Steve Rogers) and Hayley Atwell (Peggy Carter).

The new promo gave fans their first real taste of Doctor Doom and hinted at



just how dangerous the MCU's new big villain could be. Vanessa Kirby's Sue Storm set the tone for Doom's arrival, while the footage also teased a major showdown between the villain and Chris Hemsworth's Thor. The story reportedly takes place 14 months after the events of Thunderbolts. Heroes from Earth-616, Earth-828 and other universes are expected to come together as they attempt to stop a threat capable of destroying the multiverse.

At the convention, the actor was asked to pick between Iron Man and Doctor Doom. For now, the actor chose the villain. "I will say Doom, for now," the actor said, explaining that taking on the role gave him a very different experience on set and allowed him to watch his fellow Marvel stars from the other side. "It was really weird being the guy — everyone else is hanging out, they're the good heroes, and I'm (in) this mask and this hood," he shared.

Fast & Furious 11: Vin Diesel gives update, says script left him in tears



After years of delays, Fast Forever, the upcoming 11th instalment of the Fast & Furious franchise, is finally moving towards production. Actor Vin Diesel has revealed that the film is expected to begin shooting in December, while also opening up about the emotional impact of the script.

During a 25th anniversary screening of the original The Fast and the Furious, Diesel spoke about the long journey behind the upcoming film Fast Forever. He revealed that the 11th installment went through four sets of writers and four years of development before the team arrived at a script they felt was worthy of bringing the franchise to a close.

Reflecting on his first reaction to the screenplay, Diesel told Variety that it left him in tears. "After I read the script, halfway through, one tear. By the end of the script that we crafted and worked so hard to make right for you after four years, I was crying," he said.

The actor added that he could not hold back his emotions after finishing the script. "I couldn't hold it back, and I had to tell everyone. And my sister said, 'No more crying, bro.' So I just want to say that sometimes, even the toughest guys in the world need to cry," he said.

With filming expected to begin in December, Fast Forever is set to bring the long-running franchise closer to its planned finale.

Kuwait ends US-Iran conflict related visa extensions from September 1

AUGUST 21, 2026

KUWAIT CITY (TIP): Kuwait will end the temporary extensions granted for visit visas and absence permits from September 1, 2026, restoring the country's regular rules after the emergency measures introduced during regional airspace closures and security disruptions earlier this year.

The move was announced by Kuwait's Ministry of Interior on August 20.

The temporary relief measures had been introduced after drone and missile attacks and regional airspace closures disrupted travel following the outbreak of the US-Iran war in February.

Kuwait had allowed certain visitors to remain in the country beyond their original visa validity and granted special absence permits to residents stranded outside the country.

From September 1, the original legal validity periods for entry visas and absence permits will again apply, the Ministry of Interior said.

Kuwait had announced automatic visit visa extensions in March to help travelers affected by the exceptional circumstances, including flight disruptions and airspace closures. The extensions meant eligible visitors did not have to immediately leave the country or complete additional procedures while travel remained disrupted. The ministry has now said those temporary arrangements will end, bringing visa rules back to their normal framework.

AUGUST 22, 2026

TEHRAN (TIP): Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said that Iran does not interfere in Iraq's internal affairs and will continue to support any consensus reached by Iraqi groups and officials within the framework of the country's constitution and independence, IRNA reported.

Ghalibaf said that economic cooperation between Iran and Iraq will be operationalised during the upcoming visit of an Iraqi Chamber of Commerce delegation to Iran, where it will hold discussions with chamber experts and business leaders, according to IRNA.

Summarising his three-day visit to Iraq, Ghalibaf said discussions with Iraqi officials focused on strengthening bilateral ties and covered security, political, economic and cultural issues, adding that a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on security and border security was signed between the two countries.

He also said the meetings indicated that Iraq was moving towards the final withdrawal of foreign and coalition forces that had remained in the country

Huge Russian strikes on Kyiv leave 17 dead as attacks spill over to Romanian and Moldovan territory

AUGUST 22, 2026

KYIV (TIP): At least 17 people have been killed and dozens wounded in a "massive" Russian attack on Kyiv and the surrounding region on August 21, Ukrainian authorities said.

Attacks also bled into Moldova and Romania on Thursday. Romania said an explosive-laden naval drone believed to have been launched by Russia targeted one of its offshore natural gas projects.

In the Ukrainian capital, strikes damaged a hospital, a school, a preschool, residential buildings and several warehouses across the city, local authorities said, as the destruction of civilian infrastructure also drew sharp international condemnation. CNN producers in Kyiv heard several explosions and saw smoke over the city, as an air raid alert stretched on for hours. Massive fires lit up the night sky over the capital, video by Reuters news agency showed.

The attacks on Kyiv continued during the day as three separate air raid alarms sounded in the capital on Thursday, Aug 20. Ukraine has been relatively successful at intercepting the massive numbers of drones that Russia uses in its large-scale attacks. But in recent weeks, Moscow has repeatedly exploited Kyiv's near-zero stocks of Patriot interceptor missiles, which are needed to defend against faster-moving ballistic missiles. Ukraine only has 10% of the interceptor missiles it urgently needs from the United States and other allies, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky told CNN in an interview earlier this month.

"This year we have two and a half times less interceptors than we had in 2025," Zelensky said in that interview. "Russia has two times more ballistic missiles per month than they had before."

Romanian Foreign Minister Oana Toiu said European allies are "analyzing" how they can support Ukraine's air defense, but acknowledged that they're not doing enough collectively.

"And this is something that is very obvious, not just by the increase in the attacks of Russian drones, but also by the weaker air defense that is currently in place," she told CNN's Jim



A rescuer helps a woman through the rubble after an apartment was damaged by a Russian strike in Kyiv on August 20. Photo: Getty Images

Sciutto. Russia's defense ministry said Thursday on Telegram that it had launched a "massive strike using high-precision weapons" against military facilities, a transport and logistics center, and warehouses in the city of Kyiv and the broader region. Zelensky said that "the Russians prepared for a long time and combined various types of projectiles, cruise missiles, and drones to inflict as much damage as possible on civilian infrastructure."

Rescue workers had pulled two people from the rubble and were continuing to deal with the aftermath of the assault, hampered by the ongoing attacks. More than a dozen locations across the city were impacted, emergency services said. Firefighters were working to extinguish massive blazes.

"The missiles narrowly missed us by about 10 minutes," local Kyiv resident Anastasiia Kovtun, 31, told Reuters. She and her neighbors fled to a bomb shelter in a nearby parking garage. "By the time we were on our way back, the entire road had already been bombed, and all the buildings along the route were damaged."

Iran won't interfere in Iraq's internal affairs, backs withdrawal of foreign forces: Ghalibaf

for years following the occupation of its territory and airspace.

Ghalibaf said the withdrawal of foreign forces would be a significant step towards strengthening Iraq's independence and sovereignty, as reported by IRNA.

The remarks came amid Baghdad's efforts to bring all paramilitary factions under formal state security structures. According to Al Jazeera, Iraq has set a September 30 deadline for armed groups to integrate into state institutions and surrender independent arsenals.

The move to centralise weapons gained momentum after joint US-Saudi air strikes in July targeted militia positions in Iraq following drone attacks allegedly launched against Saudi oil facilities and US forces from Iraqi territory, Al Jazeera reported.

Most of the groups affected are Shia factions, with some maintaining close

ties with Iran.

Several groups, including Saraya al-Salam, Asaib Ahl al-Haq and Kataib al-Imam Ali, have indicated willingness to place their forces under official state command, while Kataib Hezbollah and Harakat al-Nujaba have rejected complete disarmament, arguing that their weapons are needed as a resistance capability against possible foreign attacks such as those from last month, as reported by Al Jazeera.

Araghchi says Trump's "Economic D-Day" on Iran "bound to fail", cites repeated US "failures"

Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Friday hit back at US President Donald Trump's announcement of an "Economic D-Day" campaign against Tehran, calling the latest US pressure campaign "bound to fail" and citing previous American sanctions policies that he said had

failed. In a post on X, Araghchi listed previous US "failed" measures against Iran and compared them with Trump's latest announcement.

"14 years ago: 'Most crippling sanctions in history.' Failed. 8 years ago: 'Maximum pressure.' Failed. 5 months ago: 'Unconditional surrender.' Failed. Today: 'Most crushing economic operation ever.' Bound to fail. We have seen this movie before. Same bull. Different bullies," Araghchi said.

Araghchi also shared a 2012 post by former US President Barack Obama in which Obama quoted then-Vice President Joe Biden describing US sanctions against Iran as the "most crippling sanctions in the history of sanctions."

The Iranian Foreign Minister had earlier described Trump's "Economic D-Day" announcement as an attempt to divert attention from economic problems in the United States.

Hong Kong convicts Tiananmen vigil organisers in national security case

AUGUST 21, 2026

HONGKONG (TIP): Two former organisers of Hong Kong's annual vigil for the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown were convicted on Friday, Aug 21, in a national security case under a law imposed by China. Lee Cheuk-yan and Chow Hang-tung, former leaders of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, had pleaded not guilty to inciting subversion. The alliance was also found guilty. The case is one of the latest involving Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement, which has been largely dismantled by Hong Kong and Chinese authorities. Lee and Chow face a maximum prison term of 10 years and are expected to be sentenced at a later date. For three decades, the alliance organised a candlelight vigil that drew tens of thousands of people each year to mourn those killed in China in 1989. It was the only large-scale public commemoration of its kind. The event was banned in 2020 during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, weeks before Beijing imposed the security law on Hong Kong after the massive anti-government protests of 2019.

Observers say the trial reflects the shrinking space for freedom of expression in the former British colony, which returned to Chinese rule in 1997. The judges did not read out the reasons for the conviction and said the full judgment would be put online later.

Eric Lai, a senior fellow with the Georgetown Center for Asian Law, said the charge of inciting subversion was commonly used in mainland China against human rights lawyers, activists and intellectuals, including late Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo. "We can see to what extent the court in Hong Kong falls into the level of the party-led judiciary in the mainland through the criminal verdict," he said.

During the trial, prosecutors said the case was not political. They argued that the alliance had called on others to overthrow the leadership of China's ruling Communist Party through unlawful means, pointing to "ending one-party rule", one of the group's core demands. Lee told the court that the phrase was not about ending the party's leadership, but about moving towards democracy and letting people decide who leads them, and that the Communist Party should not enforce "dictatorship".

Chow, a barrister who defended herself, said "ending one-party rule" meant ending a system in which power is unrestricted. She criticised what she called a reversal of the standard for deciding right and wrong in the case. In a Patreon post on Thursday, she said she had been shackled in handcuffs and waist and ankle chains for trips to court from prison, and was walked by correctional service officers "like a dog".

Netanyahu dismisses Turkey's Interpol Red Notice request as 'pathetic attempt' to intimidate Israel

AUGUST 22, 2026

TEL AVIV (TIP): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has launched a sharp counterattack against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, labelling him an "antisemitic dictator" after Ankara requested an Interpol Red Notice for Netanyahu and official Afek Moskovitch over the Global Freedom Flotilla delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza.

In a statement released by his office on X, Netanyahu cited Turkey's regional military footprint, internal governance record, and support for militant groups, while warning Ankara against extending military operations or influence into Syria.

"Erdogan is an antisemitic dictator who has massacred Kurds, harbors Hamas terrorists, occupies half of Cyprus, and jails record numbers of journalists and politicians who oppose him," the Prime Minister's Office stated. "He now seeks to extend his aggression against Israel into Syria. Israel will not tolerate it."

Addressing Turkish attempts to challenge Israeli military and political figures on international legal fronts, the statement dismissed Ankara's warnings as ineffective.

"Erdogan's pathetic attempt to intimidate the leaders and soldiers of Israel, the only true democracy in the



Middle East, will go nowhere," the statement added.

This comes after Turkey's Minister of Justice Akin Gurlek has formally requested an Interpol Red Notice for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and official Afek Moskovitch, following arrest warrants issued by the Istanbul 11th Heavy Penal Court over an armed intervention against the Global Freedom Flotilla delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza.

The legal action targets 35 defendants accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, and violent military action against civilian activists in international waters.

In an official statement on X detailing the court proceedings, the Turkish Justice Minister confirmed that relevant documents have been forwarded to both the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs to initiate the international search and extradition process via Interpol.

He stated that the arrest warrants were issued for the two on July 14, adding that the Interior Ministry had been asked to initiate the international search process.

"The judicial process regarding the attack carried out against activists of the Global Freedom Flotilla, which set sail to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza, continues with determination. In the case numbered 2026/108 Esas of the Istanbul 11th Heavy Penal Court, prosecution is being conducted against 35 defendants, including Binyamin Netanyahu and Afek Moskovitch. In the scope of the file, in line with the arrest warrants issued on July 14, 2026, for Binyamin Netanyahu and Afek Moskovitch on the charge of "Genocide," a request has been made to our Ministry of Interior for the issuance of a red notice at the international level for their search, and the relevant documents have been forwarded to our Ministry of Foreign Affairs," he wrote.

"We categorically reject the notion that the Netanyahu administration, which is implementing a genocide policy in Gaza, is untouchable and unaccountable. We will not allow the crimes committed in Gaza to be covered up or the perpetrators to be shielded by impunity. We will resolutely utilize all possibilities of national and international law," he added.

Prince Harry, Meghan plan UK return as Archie and Lilibet join British schools

AUGUST 21, 2026

TEHRAN (TIP): Prince Harry and Meghan plan to return to the UK from California within weeks after enrolling their children, Archie and Lilibet, in British schools for the autumn term, according to reports that emerged late on Wednesday. The move has set off fresh debate about where the couple will live, who will pay for their security and whether their return could affect the wider royal family.

British media reported that Harry and Meghan are expected to live at a private, non-royal residence outside London and will not resume the royal duties they gave up when they moved to Montecito in Southern California six years ago. But the bigger question is whether Harry can repair ties with Prince William after years of public fallout, and whether the couple's presence in Britain could overshadow William and Catherine.

Stories in the Telegraph and the Sun said the decision came as a surprise. Craig Prescott, an expert on the UK constitution and the monarchy at Royal Holloway University of London, said the palace would have to manage the situation carefully. "That will be something for the palace to deal with. They wouldn't want Meghan and Harry's presence in the UK here to overshadow the work of the monarchy, and there will have to be some discussion and allowance for that," he told The Associated Press.

The return comes while King Charles III, Harry's father, continues treatment for an undisclosed form of cancer discovered in 2024. Last year, Harry said he did not know "how



much time my father has left" and has spoken of wanting his children to have a chance to know their grandfather.

Royal historian Ed Owens said recent events may have opened the way for the couple's return. He pointed to Harry's stated wish for reconciliation, the apparently successful meeting last month between Charles, Harry, Meghan and their children at the king's Highgrove estate in western England, Harry's wish for his children to grow up British, and the view that the UK now appears safer than the US amid divisions in American society.

Imran Khan sent back to Adiala Jail after hospital check

AUGUST 21 2026

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan was taken back to Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi on Friday morning after undergoing a medical examination at Shifa International Hospital in Islamabad. He had been shifted to the private hospital after midnight in compliance with a Supreme Court order.

The move came amid a continuing dispute over Khan's treatment and custody. The apex court had directed on August 18 that he be transferred to the hospital "within the next two days" and remain there until the next hearing of his case on September 16, while the government's review plea was returned by the registrar's office over incomplete paper books. Khan's party had also threatened to file a contempt petition if he was not admitted to hospital by Thursday 11:59 pm, even as Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah said there was no deadline for the transfer.

In a social media post, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar confirmed that the former premier had been moved back to jail after the examination. "In the light of the Supreme Court's order, the prisoner was taken to the hospital under appropriate security arrangements during the night between August 20 and 21," he said. Tarar did not name Khan or the hospital in his post.

Tarar said a team of doctors, including an ophthalmologist, a cardiologist and a physician, carried out a detailed examination and found him medically fit. He also said Khan's sister, Uzma Khan, remained present during all stages of the medical examination and treatment. After the process was completed, Khan was shifted back to Adiala Jail "at approximately 5 am", Tarar said.

Earlier, Khan's international media spokesperson Zulfi Bukhari had confirmed that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder had been shifted from Adiala Jail to Shifa International Hospital following the Supreme Court order. Khan, 73, has been lodged in Adiala Jail, a detention facility on the outskirts of Rawalpindi, since his arrest on August 5, 2023, on multiple charges, including corruption.

The medical report placed before the court had said Khan was suffering from "level three plus" anxiety, described as severe anxiety that can overwhelm daily tasks, cause intense physical strain and affect clear thinking. One of the main concerns in his case has also been an eye condition. Over the past few months, he was taken several times to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences in Islamabad for treatment after his right central retinal vein occlusion came to light in late January. Demands to move him to a private hospital gathered pace after that.

Bangladesh elects ruling party veteran Alamgir as president

AUGUST 21, 2026

DHAKA (TIP): Members of parliament in Bangladesh have elected ruling party veteran Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir as the next president, following the premature resignation of the former president for health reasons.

Seventy-eight-year old Alamgir from the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was declared the winner after a 255-to-88 parliamentary vote on Thursday. He defeated Oli Ahmed, 84, a retired army colonel, chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party and candidate of the 11-party opposition alliance led by Jamaat-e-Islami.

"I dream of a happy, prosperous and welfare-oriented state where marginalised communities, hard-working people and daily wage earners can afford meals twice a day," Alamgir said before the vote, according to the state news agency BSS.

After the fall of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government in 2024 following youth protests, the BNP returned to power, winning a two-thirds majority in parliament and electing Tarique Rahman as prime minister after the February 12 general election.

Late last month, 76-year-old President Mohammed Shahabuddin resigned two years before the end of his full term citing health concerns. The vote was on Thursday as the constitution requires a new president to be elected within 90 days.

The presidency, while largely ceremonial, serves as head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

Alamgir joined the BNP in the early



1990s after entering politics while studying economics at Dhaka University and becoming a main student leader in the 1969 uprising opposing Pakistan's military rule.

He rose to prominence, becoming one of the best-known national leaders during Hasina's rule. He was repeatedly arrested, which he says was politically motivated.

Alamgir most recently served as local government minister but has held several ministerial posts, including minister of agriculture, aviation and tourism.

Shahabuddin was elected president in 2023 at the height of the Awami League's power. A close ally to Hasina and facing increasing pressure from opposition parties to step down, Shahabuddin announced that he was seriously ill and resigned on July 24. Hasina fled Bangladesh after the mass uprising that ousted her government in 2024. She has since been living in India but has said that she intends to return home in December.

Bangladesh seeks faster business visas, balanced economic ties with India

Bangladesh has called for faster issuance of business visas for its

nationals travelling to India and urged greater ease of doing business as it seeks to build an economic partnership with New Delhi that is "equally beneficial".

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam said Bangladesh want businesses and private sectors of the two countries to "communicate more frequently", Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported.

"Business visas for Bangladeshis should be issued more quickly so that businesspeople can travel to India more frequently," she said.

The minister also stressed on the need to address "non-tariff barriers, standards and testing-related difficulties, procedural delays, and infrastructure constraints that affect the smooth movement of goods and services".

Islam said Bangladesh wanted "more vibrant trade, investment and communication" between the two countries and that greater predictability and ease of doing business would benefit businesses on both sides.

Dhaka wants to see an economic partnership with New Delhi that is "equally beneficial and brings tangible changes" to the lives of people, she said.

"I am confident that the business communities of our two countries have both the vision and the capacity to make this happen. We can collectively identify practical solutions to the challenges," Islam said at the reception hosted by the Indian High Commission in honor of leading Bangladeshi business leaders and a delegation from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

Sri Lanka eases re-entry rules for refugees returning from India

AUGUST 20, 2026

COLOMBO (TIP): Sri Lanka will simplify immigration procedures to speed up the voluntary return of refugees from India who left the country without valid documents during the civil war, the government told Parliament on Wednesday. Public Security Minister Ananda Wijepala said the move followed a cabinet decision and would allow returnees to re-enter after a security clearance.

Responding to a question from the opposition, Wijepala said, "The cabinet decided to allow them back in with a security clearance," and added that those willing to return should get in touch with the Sri Lankan mission in Chennai. Earlier this month, the government approved special immigration arrangements to facilitate the return of refugees from India under the auspices of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Sri Lankan refugees began arriving in Tamil Nadu in large numbers after ethnic violence broke out in the island nation in 1983, followed by the escalation



of the armed conflict between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which lasted for nearly three decades. While around 18,000 refugees returned between 2002 and 2022, about 90,000 still live in Tamil Nadu. Many of them have spent decades in India, with livelihoods, documentation and long-term legal status among the issues linked to their eventual return.

Under the new arrangements, Sri Lankan nationals who left the country before August 1, 2006, without a passport will be screened by the State Intelligence Service to check that they are not accused of murder, treason or other

specified offences. Those cleared in the screening will be allowed to enter Sri Lanka through an authorised airport or port on temporary passports, and will not face legal proceedings under immigration law for leaving the country without authorisation. The measures are aimed at addressing legal hurdles in the return process.

The issue had drawn attention in May last year, when a 75-year-old Sri Lankan Tamil refugee was arrested by immigration authorities at the airport in Jaffna after returning from India. The arrest raised concerns and led the government to work on a more streamlined process for refugee returns. On Wednesday, Opposition leader Shanakiyan Rasamanickam said opposition parties could help if the government allowed the required documents to be sent to refugees in advance, and the minister agreed.

In sum, Sri Lanka has now put in place a simplified process for refugees in India to return voluntarily, with security screening, temporary travel documents and protection from legal action over their earlier unauthorised departure.

Strawberry face masks for a fresh and natural glow

Strawberries are not just a delicious seasonal fruit; they can also add a refreshing touch to a home skincare routine. Packed with vitamin C, antioxidants and naturally occurring fruit acids, strawberries have long been used in DIY beauty treatments to help the skin look brighter, smoother and more refreshed.

Their natural acids can help loosen dead skin cells from the surface, while their antioxidant content may help support the skin's natural defence against environmental stress. Strawberries also contain small amounts of salicylic acid, which is commonly used in skincare products for oily and acne-prone skin.

However, a homemade fruit mask should be treated as an occasional beauty ritual rather than a treatment for a skin condition. Sensitive skin can react to strawberries or other ingredients, so always patch-test first.

Here are some easy strawberry-based face masks for a little extra glow.

Strawberry and Honey Mask

Honey and strawberries make a simple combination for skin that feels dry or dull.

Mash two or three ripe strawberries into a smooth paste and add a teaspoon of honey. Mix well and apply a thin layer to freshly cleansed skin. Leave it on for about 10 minutes before rinsing with lukewarm water.

Honey can help attract moisture to the skin, while the strawberry provides antioxidants and gentle fruit acids. Follow with your usual moisturiser to help keep the skin comfortable and hydrated.



Strawberry and Yoghurt Mask

Plain, unsweetened yoghurt can be paired with strawberries for a cooling face mask.

Mash two strawberries and mix them with a tablespoon of plain yoghurt. Apply the mixture gently to your face, avoiding the eye area, and leave it on for around 10 minutes.

Yoghurt contains lactic acid, which can provide mild exfoliation, while strawberries contribute vitamin C and other plant compounds. Together, they can leave the skin feeling smoother and refreshed.

If your skin is sensitive, keep the application time short and stop immediately if you experience irritation.

Strawberry and Cream Mask

For dry skin, strawberries can be combined with a small amount of fresh cream to create a richer mask.

Mash two or three strawberries

and mix with a tablespoon of fresh cream. Apply to clean skin and leave it on for approximately 10 minutes before washing it off gently.

The creamy texture can help leave dry skin feeling softer and more comfortable. Finish with a moisturiser after rinsing.

Strawberry and Oatmeal

Oatmeal is a popular skincare ingredient because of its soothing and skin-conditioning properties.

For a gentle mask, finely grind a tablespoon of plain oats and combine it with mashed strawberries and a little water or plain yoghurt. Mix until it forms a smooth paste.

Apply without rubbing or scrubbing the skin. Leave it on for about 10 minutes and rinse gently.

The oats help make the treatment less acidic and provide a soothing component, while strawberries give the mask its antioxidant-rich fruit element.

FOOD CORNER

Ginger chicken masala

A fragrant, spicy and comforting chicken curry, Ginger Chicken Masala brings together the warmth of fresh ginger, the heat of red chilli, the aroma of curry leaves and the richness of coconut. A freshly ground masala of shallots, pepper, cumin and fennel gives the dish a deep, earthy flavour, while slow simmering allows the chicken to absorb all those spices. Serve it hot with steamed rice for a satisfying lunch or dinner.

Ingredients

- 4 skinless chicken legs, or chicken breasts, 100 g onions, finely chopped, 1 tsp fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped, 1 tbsp red chilli powder, A few curry leaves, 100 ml oil, Salt, to taste

For the Masala

- 2 tsp fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped, 2 tsp shallots (sambar onions), finely chopped, 4 tsp grated coconut, 2 tsp black peppercorns, 3-4 tsp cumin seeds, 1 tsp fennel seeds

Method

- Begin by preparing the masala. Combine the ginger, shallots, grated coconut, black peppercorns, cumin seeds and fennel seeds. Add a little water and grind everything into a smooth, aromatic paste. Keep aside.
- Heat the oil in a deep pan over medium heat. Add the finely chopped onions and sauté for about two minutes, or until they begin to soften.
- Add the curry leaves and chopped ginger. Lower the heat and cook for another 30-60 seconds, allowing the ginger and curry leaves to release their aroma.
- Add the red chilli powder and salt and stir well. Be careful not to let the chilli powder burn.
- Add the chicken pieces along with the freshly ground masala. Mix thoroughly so that the chicken is well coated with the spice mixture.
- Pour in about 750-800 ml of water, depending on how thick you want the gravy. Stir well, cover and allow the chicken to simmer over low to medium heat until it is completely cooked and tender.
- Continue simmering for a few more minutes so that the masala thickens slightly and clings to the chicken.
- Turn off the heat and allow the curry to rest for a few minutes before serving.
- Serve the Ginger Chicken Masala hot with steamed rice. The peppery, aromatic gravy also pairs beautifully with dosa, appam or soft Indian breads.



Pomegranate: The ruby-red fruit for healthy, glowing skin

Pomegranate is often celebrated for its juicy seeds and refreshing flavour, but this vibrant fruit also has plenty to offer when it comes to beauty. Rich in antioxidants, vitamin C and other plant compounds, pomegranate can complement a healthy diet and skincare routine while supporting skin that looks fresh and radiant.

Helps Protect Against Skin Damage

Pomegranate is packed with antioxidant compounds, including polyphenols, which help protect cells from oxidative stress. Antioxidants are important because environmental factors such as pollution and UV exposure can contribute to premature skin ageing.

Adding pomegranate to a balanced diet can therefore be a simple way to increase antioxidant intake.

Supports a Healthy Glow

Vitamin C plays an important role in collagen formation, which helps maintain the skin's structure and

firmness. Pomegranate contains vitamin C along with other nutrients that support overall skin health.

Regularly including fresh pomegranate in your diet may contribute to healthier-looking skin over time, although no single fruit can transform the complexion overnight.

May Help With Premature Ageing

Fine lines and loss of firmness are natural parts of ageing, but oxidative stress and excessive sun exposure can accelerate visible signs of skin ageing.

The antioxidants found in pomegranate may help the body combat oxidative stress, making the fruit a useful addition to an overall skin-friendly diet.

Supports Hydration From Within

Pomegranate contains a high percentage of water, making its juicy arils a refreshing addition to meals and snacks. While eating pomegranate cannot replace drinking enough water, fruits with high water content can contribute to overall fluid intake.

Surprising role your kidneys play in blood sugar control

When it comes to blood sugar, the pancreas usually takes centre stage. It produces insulin, the hormone that helps move glucose from the bloodstream into cells. But another pair of organs is quietly involved in the process: your kidneys.

Known primarily for filtering waste and producing urine, the kidneys also help regulate glucose levels, contribute to the body's energy supply and influence how much sugar is removed from the bloodstream. This lesser-known role makes kidney health particularly important for people concerned about diabetes and metabolic health.

Your kidneys handle glucose every day

Blood constantly passes through the kidneys, where it is filtered to remove waste and excess substances. Glucose is also filtered during this process.

Under normal circumstances, the kidneys recover almost all of the filtered glucose and return it to the bloodstream. This prevents the body from unnecessarily losing an important source of energy.

Special transport proteins in the kidney's tubules are responsible for much of this recovery. One of the most important is SGLT2, which reabsorbs most of the glucose filtered by the kidneys.

This carefully controlled process helps keep blood glucose within its normal range.

The kidneys can produce glucose too

The kidneys don't simply recycle glucose—they can also make it. During fasting, such as overnight when you have not eaten for several hours, the body needs to maintain a steady supply of glucose for tissues that depend on it. The kidneys contribute to this process by producing glucose through gluconeogenesis.

The liver remains the primary organ responsible for maintaining blood glucose during fasting, but the kidneys can make a meaningful contribution.

This is one reason the kidneys should be viewed as active metabolic organs rather than merely filtration systems.



What happens when blood sugar stays high?

The kidney has a limit to how much glucose it can reabsorb. When blood glucose becomes very high, the amount of filtered glucose can exceed the kidney's ability to reclaim it. The excess then passes into the urine. This is known as glucosuria.

In diabetes, prolonged high blood glucose can also alter normal kidney function. The kidneys may increase glucose reabsorption, potentially making it harder for the body to lower blood sugar.

This creates an important connection between diabetes and the kidneys: high blood sugar can affect kidney function, while changes in kidney glucose handling can influence blood sugar.

Why some diabetes medicines target the kidneys

The kidney's role in glucose reabsorption has become the basis for an important group of diabetes medicines known as SGLT2 inhibitors.

These medicines reduce glucose reabsorption in the kidneys, allowing more glucose to leave the body through urine. This lowers blood glucose.

Their significance goes beyond sugar control. Certain SGLT2 inhibitors have also been shown to protect kidney and cardiovascular health in appropriate patients.

Avocado: The creamy superfood that can support weight management

Avocado is often misunderstood because it contains more fat and calories than many other fruits. But its fat is predominantly monounsaturated fat, and when eaten in sensible portions, avocado can be a nutritious addition to a weight-conscious diet. Its combination of healthy fats, fibre, vitamins and minerals makes it filling and versatile—qualities that can make healthy eating easier to sustain.

Healthy Fats That Keep You Satisfied

One of avocado's biggest advantages is its high content of monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs). Unlike many highly processed, calorie-dense foods, avocado combines fat with fibre and a range of micronutrients. Because fat and fibre can contribute to feelings of fullness, adding avocado to a meal may help reduce the urge to snack soon afterwards. This can make it easier to stay within an appropriate daily calorie intake. The key, however, is portion size. Avocado is nutritious but still energy-dense, so eating large quantities can add significant calories to the diet.

Fibre for Better Appetite Control

Avocado is an excellent source of dietary fibre. Fibre adds bulk to meals, supports normal bowel function and can help promote satiety. Its fibre also includes components that can serve as prebiotics, providing nourishment for beneficial bacteria in the gut. A healthy and diverse gut microbiome is increasingly recognised as an important part of overall metabolic health. A balanced, fibre-rich diet is also associated with a lower risk of several chronic diseases, including heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

A Nutrient-Dense Choice

Avocado offers much more than healthy fats. It contains nutrients including vitamins C, E, K and several B vitamins, along with minerals and plant compounds. Eating nutrient-dense foods can be particularly useful when trying to manage weight because they provide valuable nutrients without relying on highly processed ingredients. Avocado can therefore fit comfortably into a balanced eating pattern that includes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes and adequate sources of protein.

What About Blood Sugar?

Avocado is naturally low in carbohydrates and has little effect on blood glucose compared with many carbohydrate-rich foods.

Research also suggests that replacing some saturated fat with unsaturated fat can improve certain markers of metabolic health and insulin sensitivity. However, avocado itself should not be considered a treatment or a guaranteed way to prevent type 2 diabetes.

Stronger after 40: Simple ways to protect your muscles

Muscle loss does not suddenly begin in old age. It can gradually start from the 40s, becoming more noticeable as the years pass. This age-related decline in muscle mass and strength is known as sarcopenia. While some muscle loss is a natural part of ageing, staying active and eating well can help slow the process.

Strength training is essential

One of the most effective ways to preserve muscle is resistance exercise. Weight training, squats, lunges, push-ups and resistance-band exercises challenge muscles and encourage the body to maintain strength. Even two or three sessions a week can be valuable when performed consistently.

Eat enough protein

Muscles need protein for repair and maintenance. Include protein-rich foods such as eggs, milk and yoghurt, fish, poultry, pulses, beans, soy, nuts and seeds in your meals. Rather than relying on one large



protein-heavy meal, try to include a good source of protein throughout the day.

Keep moving

Regular movement matters outside the gym too. Walking, climbing stairs, gardening and taking breaks from prolonged sitting help keep muscles active. Maintaining mobility becomes increasingly important as you grow older.

Support your bones and muscles

Adequate calcium and vitamin D support healthy bones and normal muscle function. A balanced diet, appropriate sunlight exposure and medical advice about supplementation when necessary can help meet these needs.

Don't ignore weakness

Difficulty climbing stairs, getting up from a chair, carrying groceries or maintaining balance may signal declining strength. Persistent or unexplained weakness should be discussed with a doctor, particularly if accompanied by unintentional weight loss.

Start before you need to

You don't have to wait until your 60s or 70s to think about muscle health. Your 40s are a good time to build strength that can serve you for decades. Regular resistance exercise, sufficient protein, everyday movement, good sleep and a balanced diet can help keep your muscles stronger for longer.

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Apple to change app data consent rules, German regulator says

Apple will change rules governing how app developers can use personal data for targeted advertising on iPhones and iPads, Germany's competition authority said, closing a years-long investigation.

The Federal Cartel Office, or FCO, found that Apple's App Tracking Transparency framework gave its own apps more favourable consent prompts than those of third-party developers, potentially breaching competition rules.

Apple has four months to implement the changes after the decision is served. Commitments run for seven years and will be monitored by a trustee.

Under the commitments, consent pop-ups for third-party apps must be redesigned to remove discouraging language and symbols, and made visually and linguistically neutral.

"While we believe the current ATT prompt provides a clear, easy-to-understand and effective way to keep users in control of their data – an opinion shared by the German data protection authorities – we have agreed to make changes to the text and formatting of the prompt at the FCO's request," Apple said, adding that with these commitments, it can continue to provide the tool in Europe. The changes will apply in almost all European Union countries.

Developers of third-party apps, including Facebook parent Meta Platforms, aim for accurate user data so that targeted adverts can be displayed on devices. These generate more revenue than broader campaigns.

Apple camera AirPods could debut soon with Visual Intelligence

Apple may be giving its AirPods a new set of eyes. A demo video discovered in the macOS Tahoe 26.7 release candidate appears to reveal how the company's rumoured camera-equipped AirPods could use Visual Intelligence to understand what users are looking at.

The development comes amid reporting by Bloomberg's Mark Gurman, who has previously said Apple is working on camera-equipped AirPods and that the first model, codenamed B790, could launch as early as September.

The video, first spotted by MacRumors, reportedly shows a man wearing the unreleased earbuds while holding up a book.



A Siri voice-over explains that Visual Intelligence could allow users to save something they see for later.

The earbuds are expected to use built-in cameras to capture visual information and pass it to Apple's Visual Intelligence system. This could allow Siri to answer questions about objects or surroundings and potentially remember information users encounter.

Gurman has reported that the cameras could capture low-resolution visual information, effectively giving Apple's AI a way to interpret the user's environment.

A software warning reportedly advises users to keep their hair away from the AirPods to ensure the cameras can accurately understand their surroundings.

References to B790 have appeared in macOS Tahoe 26.7, including code linked to an "image stream". The earbuds shown in the demo resemble the current AirPods Pro design, although their stems appear thicker.

Gurman has previously suggested that the longer stems could accommodate the cameras. Apple is also reportedly developing another camera-equipped AirPods model, codenamed B798, which could arrive in 2027.



China robot makers seek to turn humanoid hype into useful work

Chinese robot makers showed off humanoids sorting parcels, packing mobile phones and helping with household chores at a Beijing conference on Wednesday, seeking to demonstrate a shift from crowd-pleasing displays to broader commercial use.

More than 300 mostly domestic companies are attending the World Robot Conference, which runs through Sunday, displaying over 2,000 exhibits and launching more than 150 products, according to organizers.

The event comes amid a surge of investor interest in humanoids, a potential new source of industrial growth for China and an arena of technological competition with the United States.

Shares in Unitree, China's best-known humanoid robot maker, soared nearly sixfold in their Shanghai trading debut on Wednesday, after Unitree's initial public offering was more than 8,000 times oversubscribed by retail investors.

Following Unitree's IPO, startup Lumos Robotics and the robotics division of China's largest auto exporter Chery Automobile told Reuters they were also considering stock market listings.

Nvidia executive visits

Madison Huang, a senior Nvidia executive and daughter of the U.S. chipmaker's CEO Jensen Huang, made an unannounced visit to the event, watching robots perform flying kicks and dance routines before stopping at a companion-robot booth to ask about its sensors.

Huang, who drew onlookers much as her father has on past visits to Beijing, oversees marketing for Nvidia's Omniverse and robotics platforms, software used to simulate and test physical AI — systems that can perceive and act in the real world.

Despite geopolitical tensions and U.S. restrictions on exports of Nvidia's most advanced AI chips to China, her visit highlighted foreign suppliers' role in China's push to develop robots for its factories, warehouses and homes.

RealSense, a U.S.-based maker of vision systems for robots and one of the few foreign exhibitors at the conference, said it was building sales partnerships in China as the sector develops. "We see China as a very strategic market for us," said Mike Nielsen, the company's chief marketing officer.

Milky Way is a cannibal: When Akashganga ate an entire galaxy and didn't burp

The Milky Way did not grow into the vast galaxy we see today on its own. Our galaxy swallowed a smaller galaxy about 11.8 billion years ago, marking the earliest major merger yet identified in the Milky Way's history, new research has found.

The galaxy that became a meal was named Low-energy-Kraken-Heracles (LKH) and contained stars with a combined mass roughly equivalent to 50 crore Suns, or about one-quarter that of the young Milky Way. The finding pushes the known merger history of our galaxy back to a remarkably early period, when the universe was less than 2.1 billion years old at the time, which is about 15% of its current age of around 13.8 billion years.

The event happened about 1.5 billion years after the Big Bang, when the Milky Way itself was still taking shape.

Rather than observing the collision directly, astronomers reconstructed it from the remains it left behind. They studied ancient globular clusters, which



are tightly packed groups of very old stars, in the inner regions of the Milky Way. Using observations from the Hubble Space Telescope and the European Space Agency's (ESA) Gaia mission, researchers examined the clusters' ages, chemical composition and movements.

These clues revealed a distinct population of stars that could not have formed as part of the original Milky Way alone. The researchers concluded that these stars were deposited by the LKH

galaxy during the merger.

A galaxy merger does not mean stars simply smash into one another as the distances between stars are enormous.

Instead, gravity pulls the galaxies apart and mixes their stars, gas and dark matter.

In the LKH event, the stellar merger was relatively gentle, but the interaction between gas clouds is thought to have triggered fresh star formation.

The smaller galaxy also left much of its material in the Milky Way's inner region, helping shape the galaxy that developed later.

The discovery shows that the Milky Way's growth was driven not just by stars forming within it, but also by smaller galaxies being absorbed.

LKH was not the last galaxy to become part of the Milky Way. Gaia has revealed evidence of other mergers, including Gaia-Sausage-Enceladus, which collided with the Milky Way roughly 10 billion years ago and significantly changed its structure.

Source: India Today

RBI Governor Malhotra awaits more clarity on inflation, opts for rate hold

AUGUST 21, 2026

MUMBAI (TIP): RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra preferred to wait for greater certainty on the inflation trajectory, as he and other members of the MPC voted to maintain the existing interest rate earlier this month, according to minutes of the meeting of the rate-setting panel released on Wednesday, August 19.

The Governor-headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to keep the benchmark policy rate (repo) unchanged for a fourth consecutive time, opting to wait for greater clarity on whether higher energy costs triggered by the US-Iran conflict feed into broader inflationary pressures.

Despite the conflict in West Asia disrupting supply chains, heightened uncertainty, and an erratic monsoon so far, the Indian economy has performed better than expected in Q1:2026-27, the Governor said as per the minutes.

Monetary response to a supply-side shock is warranted when there are signs of it leading to a generalisation of inflation, de-anchoring of inflation expectations or persistent inflation. While risks remain, evidence of this so far is limited, Malhotra said. "...I would prefer to wait for more certainty to emerge on the inflation trajectory in terms of the persistence of realised prints at these or higher levels, the forecast and the likely levels to which inflation may normalise and settle, for any recalibration of the policy rate," he said.

The Governor also stressed the need to be watchful as the risks of higher food, fuel and other input prices translating into a broad-



based increase in inflation and de-anchoring of expectations persist. "Any evidence of these risks materialising may need policy tightening," he opined.

Deputy Governor and MPC member Poonam Gupta was of the view that with persistent uncertainty on account of global developments and weather-related risks, the best course of action would be to wait and watch a bit more.

RBI's problem with revolving credit

A few days ago, the RBI issued a draft direction that defined "revolving credit" and "term loan" and, at the same time, proposed banning all NBFCs (except those authorised to issue credit cards) from offering revolving credit products.

And that's caused quite a bit of chaos in the market. If you've seen stocks of large NBFCs like Bajaj Finance, Tata Capital, Jio Financial Services and others fall over the last few days, well, you can blame this. So let's understand why this is such a big deal. But before we get there, you need to know what revolving credit actually is and

why the RBI wants to pull the plug on NBFCs offering it.

Think of revolving credit as a loan that is sanctioned once, but can be borrowed and repaid repeatedly, as long as you stay within your limit. Just like a credit card. Say you have a Rs 1 lakh limit. You borrow Rs 50,000. After a while, you repay that Rs 50,000. You can then borrow any amount up to Rs 1 lakh again without having to apply for a fresh loan.

That's very different from a regular term loan. If you take a Rs 1 lakh loan, borrow Rs 50,000 and repay it, you can't borrow again without submitting a fresh loan application and documents.

But what's the problem with revolving credit, you ask?

To begin with, there's something you may have heard in the world of credit: evergreening. For the uninitiated, evergreening is simply using a new loan to repay an old one. And revolving credit can potentially make this easier.

Say a business has taken a Rs 1 lakh flexi loan, which is a type of revolving credit, for working capital (money required for day to day operations). It has drawn Rs 50,000 so far. But the business is under stress and can no longer comfortably service the loan. If it doesn't repay the interest or principal within 90 days, the loan could risk becoming a Non-Performing Asset (NPA), which could also hurt the business's credit record.

But it could still do something smart here. Since it still has Rs 50,000 left on its credit line, it could draw more money from that unused limit and use it to repay part of the earlier borrowing.

Rupee rises 17 paise to 95.56 against US dollar

AUGUST 20, 2026

MUMBAI (TIP): The rupee appreciated 17 paise to 95.56 against the American currency in early trade on August 20, tracking a weak US dollar, after the US Treasury announced that it would double its buyback operations for longer-dated Treasury bonds.

Forex traders said the dollar index fell to its lowest level since late May after the US Treasury announced that it would double its buyback operations for longer-dated Treasury bonds, pushing US long-term yields lower and reducing the dollar's yield advantage.

Moreover, the dollar is also being weighed down by reduced expectations of further Federal Reserve tightening though the FED policymakers' inflation concerns increased at the July meeting, according to the FED minutes.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 95.57, then rose to 95.56, higher by 17 paise from its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee stayed almost flat, ending just 1 paisa higher at 95.73 against the US dollar.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 98.82, lower 0.01 per cent.

The US Treasury has said that it will at least double how much it buys back in longer-term government bonds, from USD 2 billion to USD 4 billion per operation, starting September 9.

"Lower long-term yields and concerns around fiscal support can reduce the appeal of dollar assets," CR Forex Advisors MD - Amit Pabari said.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading higher by 0.32 per cent at USD 91.91 per barrel in futures trade.

"Oil continues to trade above USD 90 with a nervous edge, keeping pressure on India's import bill. So while a weaker dollar offers some relief to the rupee, elevated oil prices remain a major counterweight," Pabari said.

According to Pabari, the immediate support for the rupee is near 95.30-95.50. As long as this holds, USD/INR is expected to gradually move towards 96.20-96.50, he said.

"The weaker dollar may create short-term pauses, but oil and sentiment remain fragile. Dips are therefore likely to be shallow and short-lived rather than a genuine trend reversal," he said.



US Treasury doubles debt buybacks to support bond market as yields surge

AUGUST 21, 2026

WASHINGTON (TIP): The US Treasury Department said on Wednesday that it will more than double the size of its government debt buybacks. The move comes as the bond market is facing heavy pressure and Treasury yields have climbed to levels not seen in nearly 20 years.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent is leading the department as it increases its role as a buyer in the government bond market, CNBC reported. The main aim is to support liquidity in the longer-term part of the Treasury market, where trading conditions have become difficult.

Buybacks will target longer-term Treasury debt

Under the new plan, Treasury will focus on government debt with maturities of 10 to 20 years and 20 to 30 years. These longer-term bonds have faced a buyers' strike since late June,



meaning investors have been less willing to buy them.

The Treasury currently allows a maximum of \$2 billion in each buyback operation. That amount will now be increased to at least \$4 billion, meaning the size of the operations will at least double, according to the Treasury Department. The new plan will begin on September 9 and remain in place through November 4.

Bond yields dropped after announcement

Treasury's announcement immediately pushed bond yields sharply lower, while US stock market futures moved higher. The benchmark 10-year Treasury yield fell 6 basis points to 4.647%. The 30-year Treasury yield dropped 9 basis points to 5.196%. One basis point is equal to 0.01 percentage point. Treasury bond prices and yields move in opposite directions, so falling yields mean bond prices are rising.

Why is the Treasury doing this?

Treasury said the larger buyback operations are meant to provide more liquidity in longer-dated parts of the government bond market. The department said there is still strong interest from market participants in these longer-term bonds. Treasury also pointed to the large number of high-quality offers it regularly receives during longer-term buyback operations.

Sikh History This Week

AUGUST 21 TO AUGUST 27

AUGUST 21 - GURU HARGOBIND SAHIB AND THE MIRI-PIRI TRADITION



Guru Hargobind Sahib, the sixth Sikh Guru, occupies a crucial place in Sikh history. His Guruship marked a period when the Sikh community increasingly combined spiritual devotion with a responsibility to defend justice and protect the oppressed.

Guru Hargobind Sahib established the Akal Takht Sahib at Amritsar, representing the temporal dimension of Sikh authority alongside the spiritual authority of the Harmandir Sahib. His concept of Miri and Piri became one of the defining principles of Sikh thought. His life also reflected the community's growing readiness to confront injustice while remaining rooted in spiritual discipline.

AUGUST 22 - REMEMBERING SOBHA SINGH

1986 - Sobha Singh passes away



The death anniversary of Sobha Singh, one of Punjab's best-known artists, falls on August 22.

Born in 1901, Sobha Singh became particularly renowned for his paintings of the Sikh Gurus and other important figures from Sikh history. His portraits of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib and other Sikh personalities became widely reproduced and helped shape the popular visual representation of Sikh religious history.

His art combined devotion with a distinctive realistic style. He was awarded the Padma Shri in recognition of his contribution to Indian art.

AUGUST 23 - A REVOLUTIONARY CHAPTER

The history of Punjab during the late colonial period was marked by several revolutionary movements. Sikh soldiers, political activists and former Ghadar revolutionaries participated in different forms of resistance against British rule.

The Ghadar movement and later revolutionary organisations reflected the growing impatience among

sections of Punjabis with colonial rule. Their activities extended beyond India, connecting Punjab with revolutionary networks in North America, Southeast Asia and other parts of the world.

This revolutionary tradition would later intersect with the Akali and Babbar Akali movements, creating a complex political landscape in Punjab during the early decades of the 20th century.

AUGUST 24 - THE RISE OF SIKH POWER IN THE HILLS

1809 - Kangra Fort and Maharaja Ranjit Singh



The early 19th century witnessed the rapid expansion of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Sikh kingdom.

The acquisition of Kangra Fort in 1809 was an important milestone in this expansion. The historic fortress, one of the oldest and most strategically significant forts in the region, had long been contested by local rulers and outside powers.

The Sikh presence in the Kangra region demonstrated the growing influence of Lahore under Ranjit Singh and strengthened the kingdom's position in the Himalayan foothills.

Hari Singh Nalwa and the Sikh Frontier

The expansion of the Sikh Empire was also closely linked with the military achievements of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa.

One of Ranjit Singh's most celebrated generals, Nalwa played a major role in extending Sikh authority towards the north-western frontier. His campaigns against Afghan forces earned him a formidable reputation.

His name remains deeply embedded in Sikh historical memory as a symbol of military courage and leadership.

AUGUST 25 - BHAI GURDAS AND SIKH LEARNING



Bhai Gurdas Ji occupies a special place in the intellectual history of Sikhism.

A contemporary of several Sikh Gurus and a close associate of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib, Bhai Gurdas was involved in the preparation of the Adi Granth. His writings, particularly the Vaaran Bhai Gurdas, are considered an important source for understanding early Sikh beliefs and traditions.

His compositions explain Sikh principles in accessible language and provide insight into the religious and social world of the early Sikh community.

For generations, Sikh scholars have studied the Vaaran as an important interpretative text.

AUGUST 26 - BHAI DAYA SINGH AND THE BIRTH OF THE KHALSA

Bhai Daya Singh Ji, traditionally remembered as the first of the Panj Pyare, holds a special place in Sikh history.

Born as Daya Ram in Lahore, he responded to Guru Gobind Singh Sahib's historic call at Anandpur Sahib in 1699. When the Guru asked for a volunteer willing to offer his head, Daya Ram was the first to step forward.

Four others-Bhai Dharam Singh, Bhai Himmat Singh, Bhai Mohkam Singh and Bhai Sahib Singh-followed him.

Together, the five became the Panj Pyare, and Guru Gobind Singh Sahib initiated them into the Khalsa. The Guru subsequently received initiation from the Panj Pyare himself, establishing a profound principle of collective authority and equality.

Bhai Daya Singh's story represents the essence of the Khalsa ideal: faith without fear, devotion accompanied by courage and a willingness to stand for righteousness.

AUGUST 26 - THE GURDWARA REFORM STRUGGLE

The early decades of the 20th century were marked by a major movement to bring historic Sikh shrines under community management.

The Gurdwara Reform Movement brought thousands of Sikhs into peaceful campaigns against hereditary custodians and administrators whom reformers accused of mismanagement and misuse of gurdwara resources.

The movement led to the establishment and strengthening of institutions such as the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) and the Akali Dal.

The campaigns also produced important episodes of mass mobilisation, arrests and sacrifice, eventually resulting in legislative changes governing Sikh gurdwaras.

AUGUST 27 - THE BABBAR AKALIS

The Babbar Akali movement emerged in Punjab in the early 1920s from a combination of revolutionary nationalism, Sikh political activism and opposition to British rule.

Several of its members had earlier been influenced by the Ghadar movement or had served overseas during the First World War. Unlike the non-violent strategy adopted by the mainstream Akali leadership, the Babbar Akalis favoured armed resistance.

Their activities brought them into direct conflict with the colonial government. Many members were arrested, imprisoned or executed.

The movement remains an important part of the broader story of Punjab's revolutionary politics, particularly in the period following the First World War.

Shravan Purnima: When faith, family and nature come together

The full moon of Shravan, known as Shravan Purnima or Sawan Purnima, is one of the most sacred occasions in the Hindu calendar. Arriving in July or August, during the heart of the monsoon, it marks the culmination of a month traditionally devoted to prayer, fasting, worship and spiritual reflection. Shravan is considered especially dear to Lord Shiva, and the full moon is regarded as an auspicious time to seek divine blessings, perform sacred rituals and renew one's spiritual commitments.

What makes Shravan Purnima particularly remarkable is its many regional expressions. The same full moon is celebrated as Narali Purnima along the Maharashtra and Konkan coast, Avani Avittam among Yajurveda-following Brahmin communities, Kajari Purnima in parts of central India, Raksha Bandhan across much of northern India and Pavitropana in Gujarat. Each tradition has its own rituals, stories and cultural setting, yet all are woven into the larger spiritual fabric of Shravan.

The festival thus offers a vivid reflection of India's religious diversity, where one sacred occasion can acquire different meanings while retaining a shared foundation of faith, gratitude and renewal.

A Sacred Full Moon

Purnima has long been regarded as an important day in Hindu spiritual practice. The full moon represents completeness and fullness, while its gentle light has traditionally been associated with calmness and contemplation.

Shravan gives this full moon an additional spiritual significance. The month coincides with the monsoon, a season of transformation when rain revives the land after the intense heat of summer. Rivers begin to flow more strongly, fields turn green and nature appears renewed.

This transformation outside becomes a metaphor for renewal within. Shravan Purnima encourages devotees to cleanse themselves of negative thoughts, practise restraint and turn towards prayer and self-reflection.

The month is particularly associated with Lord Shiva. Devotees observe fasts, visit temples and perform Jalabhishek, offering water to the Shiva lingam. On Shravan Purnima, these practices acquire special significance as devotees seek the blessings of Shiva and pray for peace, prosperity and spiritual well-being.

Narali Purnima: Honoring the Sea

On the Maharashtra and Konkan coast, Shravan Purnima is celebrated as Narali Purnima. The festival is especially significant for fishing communities whose lives and livelihoods are closely connected with the sea.

Devotees offer coconuts, rice and flowers to Varuna, the deity associated with water and the sea. Fishermen decorate their boats and offer prayers for safety, a prosperous fishing season and protection from the forces of nature.

The festival reflects an old and deeply



rooted Indian understanding that human prosperity depends upon harmony with nature. The sea provides livelihood, but it also commands respect. Before returning to their work, fishing communities seek divine protection and express gratitude for the bounty of the waters.

The coconut has special significance in Hindu worship. Its three markings are traditionally associated with the three eyes of Lord Shiva. Offering a coconut is also considered a symbolic act of surrendering one's ego and seeking divine blessings before undertaking something important.

Narali Purnima therefore combines devotion with gratitude and reminds us that nature is not merely a resource to be used but a force to be respected.

Avani Avittam: The Renewal of Sacred Learning

For Yajurveda-following Brahmin communities in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Odisha and Maharashtra, Shravan Purnima is observed as Avani Avittam.

The day is marked by rituals of purification and the changing of the sacred thread, or Yagyopavita. Devotees take ritual baths, perform prayers and reaffirm their commitment to sacred learning and religious discipline.

The changing of the thread has a deeper significance. It symbolises a fresh beginning and a renewed sense of responsibility. The sacred thread serves as a reminder that knowledge must be accompanied by discipline, duty and ethical conduct.

Avani Avittam is also traditionally associated with the study and recitation of the Vedas. Hindu tradition connects the day with Lord Vishnu in his Hayagriva form, who is revered as a divine embodiment of knowledge and learning.

The festival consequently places education at the centre of spiritual life. Knowledge is not seen merely as a means of worldly success but as a path towards wisdom and self-understanding.

Kajari Purnima: Fertility, Family and Rural Life

In Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and parts of Uttar Pradesh, Shravan Purnima is observed as Kajari Purnima.

The preparations begin with Kajari Navami. Women traditionally collect soil from agricultural fields and place it in leaf containers or small vessels, where barley is sown. The growing shoots symbolise fertility, life and the agricultural cycle.

On the day of Kajari Purnima, women carry the barley shoots in a procession and immerse them in a nearby pond or river. Traditional prayers are offered for the well-being and longevity of family members, particularly sons.

The festival reflects the close connection between rural life, agriculture, women and the rhythms of nature. The growing barley becomes a symbol of hope and prosperity, while its immersion connects the agricultural cycle with the sacred waters of the monsoon.

Pavitropana: A Day of Shiva Worship

In Gujarat, the full moon of Shravan is associated with Pavitropana, an important observance dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Devotees perform special prayers and offer sacred materials to Shiva. One of the distinctive rituals involves offering cotton threads or wicks prepared with Panchagavya.

As with many Shravan traditions, the underlying theme is purification. The festival encourages devotees to seek forgiveness, renew their devotion and strengthen their relationship with the divine.

Since the entire month of Shravan is considered especially auspicious for Shiva worship, Shravan Purnima becomes a natural culmination of the month's devotional practices.

Raksha Bandhan: Celebrating Human Bonds

Across northern and many other

This year, the Shravan Purnima falls on Friday, August 28, 2026. The full moon (Purnima) tithi begins on August 27, 2026, at 09:08 AM and ends on August 28, 2026, at 09:48 AM. This sacred day also marks the culmination of the holy Shravan month and the celebration of Raksha Bandhan.

parts of India, Shravan Purnima is celebrated as Raksha Bandhan.

The tying of the rakhi represents affection, trust and a promise of mutual care. Traditionally associated with the bond between brothers and sisters, the festival has acquired a broader meaning over time, becoming a celebration of family relationships and emotional bonds.

Its spiritual significance lies in the idea that relationships carry responsibilities. Love is not simply an emotion; it also involves care, protection, respect and standing beside one another through difficult times.

In this sense, the sacred thread becomes a powerful symbol. Though physically delicate, it represents a bond that families hope will remain strong through the changing circumstances of life.

The Story of King Tungadhwaj

One traditional story connected with the worship of Lord Satyanarayan tells of King Tungadhwaj, whose pride brought him misfortune.

According to the legend, the king was once hunting in a forest when he encountered villagers performing a Satyanarayan worship. The villagers respectfully offered him prasad, but the king, overcome by pride, refused to accept it.

After returning to his kingdom, the king discovered that his fortunes had dramatically changed. His kingdom had been attacked and his possessions had been lost.

Realising that his disrespect towards the sacred offering had been a grave mistake, he returned to the villagers. He acknowledged his error and accepted the prasad with humility.

The traditional story says that the king was forgiven and his lost prosperity was restored.

The deeper message of the story is not simply about material prosperity. It is a reminder that arrogance can blind an individual, while humility allows one to recognise one's mistakes and seek forgiveness.

Prasad represents divine grace, and accepting it with reverence symbolises acceptance of that grace.



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

ARIES



Ganesha says you will have good relationships with them and also support them well. Involvement in good actions is seen for you. Be courageous and don't lose hope easily, you will surely be successful. Try to keep your house and surroundings clean. In this week, you may be a little frustrated while doing more expenses on enjoyment. This week brings good opportunities for players and students. A lot of valor and effort from your side help you to win the competitions. Professionals will get good opportunities to show their talents to superiors.

TAURUS



Ganesha says during this week, you may not feel so good and enthusiastic to perform well in public. Students may not be able to concentrate on their studies. Your efforts are not seen up to the mark this week. Some kind of problem may arise instantly related to the relationship with the elder brother/sister. Try to control expenses. People who are in secretive business or profession will get good results but be careful; there are chances of being trapped now.

GEMINI



Ganesha says good gains are seen but try to control your expenses. Relationships with spouse or boss may become difficult. Students who have an interest in food science can explore more things. People, who are having problems related to kidneys and life, be careful, as you may have to go under diagnostic confusion due to some medicine. There may be a health problem due to such kind of food for you. It is better to be emotional in a marital relationship.

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - AUGUST 24, 2026 TO AUGUST 30, 2026

BY ASTROLOGER CHIRAG DARUWALLA

Professionals may not pay full attention and devotion to their work.



CANCER

Ganesha says you need to understand the attention of those people who are only interested in harming you. You will get full support from your family. Students who had worked hard in previous periods only get good results now. Don't try to cheat anyone, it may give you trouble. Don't be so fast in making decisions. If you are planning to buy anything, it will be better for you to think about it properly. People who are in a profession related to military, administration, red colored objects will get good gains and chances to enjoy their life with their children and family.



LEO

Ganesha says during this week, professionals and those people who have innovative and creative minds will make more progress. Family problems may disturb you a little. Married people need to give more attention to their spouse but be careful; it won't harm your work. People in government jobs should come in aggressive and attacking mode. There is so much pending work for you. Please pay some attention to it otherwise your superiors are not very far away from you. If you were planning to do some effective work, do it now.



VIRGO

Ganesha says little enjoyment with family members and more passion for work force you to get maximum benefits. Try to make a good reputation in front of elders. You will get benefits in later periods. Doing exercise and eating healthy food keep you mentally and physically fit. Slow progress is the key to success for you. Professionals related to computers, engineering, medicine, etc. need to work more to gain good results.



LIBRA

Ganesha says if you have any plans to be implemented, discuss them with an

experienced person before implementing them. It may be possible that you are not standing on real grounds. The birth of a child is possible in a family. Chances for enjoyment in the family are there. Students who are related to political science and administration easily pass through their exams and are able to get good marks. Most of the time is going to be passed within the family.



SCORPIO

Ganesha says you will find a lot of courage and stamina to do every possible thing this week. This stamina will help you in getting good profits for you. Keep good care of your health and make a good relationship with your maternal uncle. Don't get so aggressive that you forget to respect and misbehave with your elders. Students need to pay little attention and must work more in physics and chemistry. Married person, be alert, a major expense is waiting for you at your doorstep.



SAGITTARIUS

Ganesha says this week is full of romance and more fun for people who are already engaged with a lovely friend of the opposite sex. Go and make love openly. This week will be a little difficult period for professionals. You will not get constant benefits this week. Take advice and support from superiors or elders, they have more experience than you. People, who have invested money in the stock market, will get sudden benefits. Married people should give importance to the family as this week is going to be fantastic and lovely for couples.



CAPRICORN

Ganesha says intelligence and communication abilities help you to win the hearts of the audience and competitors. Try to avoid using harsh words against business partners. Though you can win over your enemies and diseases you must also, be careful. A good opportunity is waiting for you. Students need to put more stress on mathematics and science-related subjects. Keep control over your

romantic ideas at least until the end of this week. Professionals will get the chance to flourish.



AQUARIUS

Ganesha says this week is not a good period to act and come openly in front of your enemies. Students need to give more attention to their studies. Don't waste your time watching television and playing; give little importance to your studies also not a good period for romance and proposing your love. Married people may feel a strain and have little difficulty in adjusting properly with a spouse. Respect your elders and teachers, they mean a lot in your life. Saying abusive words to anyone may give you mental tension in later stages.



PISCES

Ganesha says during this week, you will find good support from your brother/sister or friends. Someone in the family may favor you. Students need to respect their teachers this week. Take a normal diet and don't eat any spicy things from the market. Parents need to take care of their children. Few expenses may be possible for your health or any member of the family. People involved in music, drama, art, beauty, and hobbies-related professions, be alert as more efforts are required from your side to show effective results.

AUTHOR BIO

Chirag Daruwalla is the best astrologer and one of the most famous names in the astrology world. He has more than 18 years of experience. Readers may seek his advice related to career, health, finance, business, money, love and marriage. He has complete knowledge, solutions, and guidance to all the problems related to life. Visit his website chiragdaruwalla.com. He is available for consultations on WhatsApp number +91 8141566266 or by email: info@chiragdaruwalla.com

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BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : AUGUST 24 TO AUGUST 30 BY ASTROLOGER CHIRAG DARUWALLA

AUGUST 24

Ganesha says today your expenses may increase, due to which it may be difficult for you to save. Investments made during this time can eventually give good returns, if not immediately. Academic excellence and participation in extra-curricular activities can be acknowledged by the students. Although slow progress in work and arguments over small things may make you angry and even affect your health, at the end of the year you may be happy and satisfied with your achievements. Despite your erratic behavior, your spouse's cooperation will remain.

AUGUST 25

Ganesha says financial gains may come from various sources today, but uncertainty surrounding your relationship may leave a blot on your record of success and achievements. Socializing, gatherings, and pleasant outings can all be frequent and enjoyable. For those who are eligible, wedding bells may ring, and others may search for a romance to keep them going. Don't trust others more than necessary. Planning

and managing your time can be important.

AUGUST 26

Ganesha says promotion or an increase in responsibilities can be a source of happiness for you at this time. Your profile may gain some sophistication with new initiatives. In the home, there can be a healthier, more loving environment that can promote prosperity and excellent health. Professionals willing to work abroad may be welcome. Housewives may have to deal with the problem of frequent visits from family and friends. It is possible to go on a spiritual journey to a distant place.

AUGUST 27

Ganesha says you should not spend too much of your time and money this year. Make the most of the opportunities that present themselves to raise your income and standard of living. You'll have a lot of confidence and motivation, and you'll probably get a lot of favors in the meantime. Participating in cultural events can be entertaining and

educational. New collaborations can be profitable, and investments can pay off. Your position in the social group may improve.

AUGUST 28

Ganesha says through the new contacts, you make this year, you will get an opportunity to raise your standard of living. Your professional advancement should be your main focus as it can give the required results. Your parents' health may be a matter of concern, but your spouse and children may be supportive. If you go out and join clubs and social activities, you will be quite successful socially. Some of you have a distant pilgrimage on the horizon.

AUGUST 29

Ganesha says people at work constantly give you important responsibilities because they trust you. Unresolved issues can be resolved. You may receive rewards and acknowledgment for entering this new phase of your life. Your parents' health may be a matter of concern, but your



spouse and children may be supportive. Additionally, your financial condition may improve, and you will feel more secure and satisfied in all your endeavors. Marriage relationship for a few numbered lovers. Religious practices and pilgrimages can provide peace.

AUGUST 30

Ganesha says gains in your career are almost certain, but rising costs may worry you. There may be instances when your achievements exceed your expectations, but for the most part, you may have to work hard to get minimal results. The relationship you share with your spouse can be friendly and balanced, but you must restrain yourself from being too stubborn as it can create an uncomfortable situation at home.

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CONTD FROM PAGE 1

Iran's Pezeshkian Calls For End To US War, Says Tehran Is In 'Position Of Power'

attacked our schools, hospitals and infrastructure in violation of all regulations and is hated around the world," he added. Pezeshkian's comments signal that Tehran may be seeking a diplomatic path to end the conflict while maintaining that Iran would negotiate from a position of strength. The remarks come as the war remains deadlocked and talks between Washington and Tehran are on hold.

The Iranian president also defended the June memorandum of understanding reached with Washington, despite criticism from hardliners in Iran's parliament. Critics have accused Pezeshkian's government of making concessions to the United States. He rejected that argument and said the agreement did not require Tehran to surrender its interests. "They cannot find even a single clause in this agreement that indicates capitulation. All the commitments concern the other side," he said. The disagreement highlights the political debate inside Iran over whether Tehran should pursue negotiations with Washington or maintain a harder line as the conflict continues.

Pezeshkian's call for an end to the war came as Iran and Oman discussed ways to reopen a diplomatic channel between Tehran and Washington. Oman's state news agency reported that the two countries' foreign ministers spoke by phone on Friday about creating conditions for the resumption of dialogue and negotiations. They also discussed developments affecting navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. Oman has previously played an important role in facilitating communication between Iran and the United States. The latest contact suggests that diplomatic channels remain active despite the military confrontation.

While Pezeshkian called for the conflict to end, Iran's military leadership warned that the country remains prepared to respond to any fresh threat. "With preparedness across land, sea, air, air defense and cyberspace, Iran's armed forces will respond to the enemy's new threats with crushing, punishing and devastating responses," Major-General Ali Abdollahi, chief of staff of Iran's armed forces, was quoted as saying. The contrasting messages underline Tehran's current position: Iran is signaling openness to negotiations while also warning that it remains ready for further military action if attacked.

The Strait of Hormuz remains at the center of the confrontation. Iran has kept the strategic waterway partially closed, while Washington has maintained a naval counter-blockade. The disruption has also added pressure to global energy and shipping markets. The latest diplomatic contacts between Iran and Oman also included discussions on navigation through the strait, suggesting that reopening or stabilizing the crucial shipping route could become an important part of any future negotiations.

US President Donald Trump has remained skeptical about the possibility of reaching an agreement with Tehran. Trump said Iran would like a deal but was not prepared to accept what he considers the "right deal". He also claimed that the United States has extensive control over the region around the Strait of Hormuz.

"We have total control of that entire region having to do with the Strait of Hormuz, and that means well into it, the land areas. So, they would love to make a deal, but they're not ready to make the right deal, in my opinion," Trump said. Trump has separately described the Strait of Hormuz as "American territory", further escalating the rhetoric surrounding the strategically important waterway.

The diplomatic uncertainty comes as the Trump administration prepares to intensify economic

pressure on Tehran. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has said Washington intends to use sanctions to pressure the Iranian government, while the administration has warned countries and companies against providing economic support to Iran.

Iran has rejected the planned measures and described Washington's sanctions campaign as "economic terrorism". Tehran has argued that further economic pressure will not resolve the conflict and has continued to call for negotiations based on its own conditions.

With Pezeshkian now openly calling for an end to the war while claiming Iran is in a position of strength, and Washington continuing its sanctions campaign, the conflict remains caught between diplomacy and escalation. Oman's efforts to facilitate renewed talks could provide an avenue for dialogue, but major disagreements over sanctions, the Strait of Hormuz and the terms of any potential agreement remain unresolved. (Source: The Sunday Guardian/ Nisha Srivastava)

US imposes 50% tariffs on Canada as trade talks fail

earlier this week, despite the U.S. offer to Canada to receive the best treatment of any major exporter to our market," Mr. Greer said on a virtual briefing with the press.

"New demands and walk backs of other commitments by Canada have upended the careful balance reached in the past days," Mr. Greer added.

Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada said in a statement that it had been the American side that introduced last-minute terms that were "unfair, uneconomic, and called into question the reliability of any deal."

He added that the talks had marked important progress but had ultimately "not been enough to meet our objectives for Canadians."

Speaking to reporters, a U.S. official said that Canada wanted concessions that the United States wasn't prepared to give, particularly when it came to the automotive sector, steel, aluminum and lumber.

If Canada does retaliate against the tariffs, the official said, Mr. Trump would be provided with options "to level out the playing field once again."

Shortly before Mr. Greer's statement to the press, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection sent out guidance for importers saying that any of the Canadian products that the president had identified would face tariffs after 12:01 a.m. (With input from The New York Times)

Ahead of Bhagwat's visit, US religious freedom body seeks sanctions against RSS

Mahmood's remarks came weeks ahead of RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat's visit to the US to participate in the 'Universal Oneness Celebrations' organized by the American Hindus for Engagement and Dialogue (AHEAD) in New York on August 29.

USCIRF Commissioner Gene Mills said RSS leaders, even when affiliated with the Indian government, should not be honored with high-level meetings or diplomatic courtesies.

"Instead, the USG (US Government) should focus on imposing sanctions on RSS members found responsible for FoRB (freedom of religious belief) violations," Mills said.

Advocacy group Hindus for Human Rights said Bhagwat's visit cannot be separated from the RSS network's violence against Muslims and Christians.

"A celebration of 'oneness' cannot conceal the politics of religious supremacy," the advocacy group said in a post on X.

In March, the USCIRF annual report criticized India for alleged violations of religious freedom and backed "targeted sanctions" on individuals and entities such as



the RSS and Research and Analysis Wing, holding them responsible for the matter.

In its recommendation, the USCIRF also called for designating India as a "country of particular concern" or CPC, for engaging in and "tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations, as defined by the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA)".

India rejected the USCIRF report, saying that the organization has persistently presented a "distorted and selective" picture of the country that relies on "questionable sources and ideological narratives".

External Affairs Ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said in a statement in March that the USCIRF should be designated as an "entity of concern", adding that its "persistent" attempts to cast aspersions on the country's vibrant multicultural society reflect a "deliberate" agenda rather than a genuine concern for religious freedom.

"We have no expectation that the USCIRF will engage with the reality of India's pluralistic framework or acknowledge the harmonious coexistence of its diverse communities," Jaiswal said.

In another statement earlier in March, Jaiswal said instead of persisting with "selective criticism" of India, the USCIRF should reflect on "disturbing incidents of vandalism and attacks on Hindu temples in the US, selective targeting of India, and growing intolerance and intimidation of members of the Indian diaspora in the US, which merit serious attention".

The USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan US federal government agency. It makes policy recommendations to the US President, Secretary of State, and Congress and tracks the implementation of these recommendations. (Source: PTI)

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History This Week **AUG 21-28****AUGUST 21**

August 21, 1863 - During the American Civil War, William Quantrill led 450 irregular Confederate raiders on a pre-dawn terrorist raid of Lawrence, Kansas, leaving 150 civilians dead, 30 wounded and much of the town a smoking ruin. In 1862, Quantrill had been denied a Confederate commission by the Confederate Secretary of War, who labeled Quantrill's notions of war as 'barbarism.'



August 21, 1959 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a proclamation admitting Hawaii to the Union as the 50th state.

August 21, 1983 - Filipino opposition leader Benigno S. Aquino, Jr., was assassinated at the Manila airport while leaving his plane. Public outcry over the killing ultimately led to the collapse of the government of Ferdinand E. Marcos and the inauguration of Corazon C. Aquino, widow of the slain man, as president.

AUGUST 22

August 22, 1986 - Deadly fumes from a volcanic eruption under Lake Nios in Cameroon killed more than 1,500 persons.



Birthday - French composer Claude Debussy (1862-1918) was born in St. Germain-en-Laye, France. His unusual chords, based on the whole-tone scale, laid the groundwork for a new style of music called impressionism.

AUGUST 23

August 23, 1927 - Italian immigrants Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were electrocuted inside a prison at Charlestown, Massachusetts. They had been convicted of a shoe factory payroll robbery during which the paymaster and a guard had been killed. Following their

convictions, all appeals for a new trial had failed, despite the lack of hard evidence and a later admission by a known criminal that he had participated in the robbery with an organized criminal gang. The days and weeks leading up to their execution aroused worldwide protests amid accusations of unfair treatment because they had radical political views and were Italian.

AUGUST 24

August 24, 79 A.D. - Vesuvius, an active volcano in southern Italy, erupted and destroyed the cities of Pompeii, Stabiae and Herculaneum.



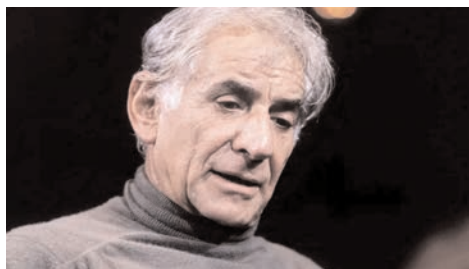
August 24, 1572 - Thousands of Protestant Huguenots were massacred in Paris and throughout France by Catholics, in what became known as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.

August 24-25, 1814 - During the War of 1812, Washington, D.C., was invaded by British forces that burned the Capitol, the White House and most other public buildings along with a number of private homes. The burning was in retaliation for the earlier American burning of York (Toronto).

AUGUST 25

August 25, 1985 - Samantha Smith died in an airplane crash in Maine. In 1982, the 11-year-old American schoolgirl had written a letter to Soviet Russia's leader Yuri Andropov asking, "Why do you want to conquer the whole world, or at least our country?" To her surprise, Andropov replied personally to her and offered an all-expense paid trip to the U.S.S.R. She toured Russia for two weeks

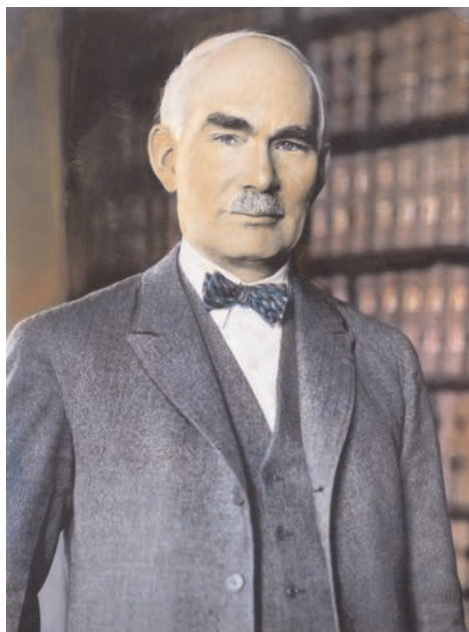
amid worldwide publicity and came to symbolize American and Russian hopes for peaceful co-existence.



Birthday - American conductor and composer Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Considered one of the finest conductors in American music history, his works included West Side Story, On the Town, and the opera Candide.

AUGUST 26

August 26, 1883 - One of the most catastrophic volcanic eruptions in recorded history occurred on the Indonesian island of Krakatoa. Explosions were heard 2,000 miles away. Tidal waves 120 ft. high killed 36,000 persons on nearby islands, while five cubic miles of earth were blasted into the air up to a height of 50 miles.



Birthday - American inventor Lee De Forest (1873-1961) was born at Council Bluffs, Iowa. He held hundreds of patents for inventions and was also a pioneer in the creation of wireless radio broadcasting and television.

AUGUST 27

Birthday - Charles Dawes (1865-1951) was born in Marietta, Ohio. He served as U.S. Vice President from 1925-29, and is best remembered for his "Dawes Plan"

for German reparations following World War I. He received the 1925 Nobel Peace Prize.

Birthday - Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908-1973) the 36th U.S. President was born near Stonewall, Texas. He ascended to the presidency upon the assassination of John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963. Johnson served until January 20, 1969.



Birthday - Mother Teresa (1910-1997) was born (as Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu) in Skopje, Yugoslavia. She founded a religious order of nuns in Calcutta, India, called the Missionaries of Charity and spent her life working to help the poor and sick of India.

AUGUST 28

August 28, 1963 - The March on Washington occurred as over 250,000 persons attended a Civil Rights rally in Washington, D.C., at which Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made his now-famous I Have a Dream speech.



Birthday - German author-philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) was born in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. He is best known for the dramatic poem Faust, completed in 1831.

Birthday - The first American-born Roman Catholic saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821) was born (as Elizabeth Ann Bayley) in New York. She founded the first American Catholic religious order, the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph. In 1809, she opened an elementary school in Baltimore, marking the beginning of the parochial school system in the U.S.

Sikkim: The kingdom of clouds & mountains

There are places one visits for a holiday, and then there are places that seem to slow time itself. Sikkim belongs to the second category. Tucked into the eastern Himalayas, this small mountain state unfolds between Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and West Bengal, offering an extraordinary concentration of snow peaks, forested valleys, waterfalls, monasteries and high-altitude landscapes.

The Sikkimese name for their homeland, Ney Mayal Lyang, meaning "heaven", is hardly an exaggeration. Around every bend, the landscape seems to change—misty forests give way to mountain villages, prayer flags appear beside rushing streams and distant snow peaks suddenly emerge through the clouds. Sikkim may be India's second-smallest state, but its geography is remarkably dramatic. Much of the state is mountainous, rising from subtropical valleys to some of the highest terrain in the Himalayas. At its heart stands Kanchenjunga, one of the world's highest mountains and a sacred presence in Sikkimese culture.

Yet Sikkim's appeal goes well beyond mountain scenery. Its monasteries preserve centuries-old Buddhist traditions, its villages retain distinctive local customs, and its forests shelter rare Himalayan wildlife. It is a destination where a journey can become as memorable as the places on the itinerary.

A Land Sculpted by the Himalayas

Sikkim is a state of extraordinary vertical contrasts. Within relatively short distances, the landscape can change from lush valleys to dense temperate forests, rhododendron-covered slopes, alpine meadows and barren high-altitude terrain. The monsoon transforms the state into a vivid green world. Waterfalls swell, streams rush down mountain slopes and forests appear freshly washed. Spring brings rhododendrons and orchids, while autumn often offers some of the clearest views of the Himalayan peaks.

The state's forests are also home to an impressive range of wildlife. Among its most celebrated residents is the red panda, an elusive and endangered animal found in the eastern Himalayas.

For travellers, this diversity means Sikkim can be experienced in several ways: as a mountain escape, a cultural journey, a trekking destination, a wildlife experience or simply a place to breathe in the quiet of the Himalayas.

Pelling: Where Kanchenjunga Takes Centre Stage

Perched at about 2,100 metres in West Sikkim, Pelling is one of the state's most popular destinations, and its greatest attraction is visible from the surrounding hills: the magnificent panorama of Kanchenjunga.

The town itself has grown considerably around tourism, but step away from the main roads and the character changes quickly. Forest paths, monasteries and mountain viewpoints open up a quieter side of Pelling.

Early morning is the moment to look



towards the mountains. As the first rays of sunlight reach the snowy peaks, Kanchenjunga gradually changes colour, creating one of the most memorable spectacles in the eastern Himalayas.

Pelling is also an excellent base for exploring the historical heritage of West Sikkim. Pemayangtse Monastery, one of the state's oldest and most important monasteries, stands amid greenery and offers an introduction to Sikkim's Buddhist traditions. Its religious festivals, including traditional masked Cham dances, bring the monastery alive with colour, music and ritual.

A short distance away lies Rabdentse, the ruins of Sikkim's second capital. The remains are reached by a forest trail, making the journey almost as atmospheric as the destination. Once the political heart of the kingdom, Rabdentse now stands quietly on a ridge, surrounded by trees and mountains.

For those who enjoy walking, the trail to Sangachoeling Monastery is another rewarding excursion. The uphill route winds through the forest before opening onto expansive views of the surrounding landscape.

Yuksom: Where a Kingdom Was Born

If Pelling is about mountains, Yuksom is about memory. Hidden in a peaceful valley, Yuksom was the first capital of Sikkim. It was here in the 17th century that three Buddhist lamas came together and crowned Phuntsog Namgyal as the first Chogyal of Sikkim.

The historic coronation site at Norbugang is marked by a stone throne and other monuments. Surrounded by trees and prayer flags, it remains one of the most evocative places to understand Sikkim's early history.

Yuksom feels less like a conventional tourist town and more like a Himalayan settlement. Its quiet lanes, forests, homestays and traditional atmosphere make it a place where travellers often find themselves lingering longer than planned.

The surrounding area adds to its appeal. Rimbi Waterfall is particularly impressive during the monsoon, while Kanchenjunga Waterfall plunges dramatically through the mountains.

A short forest walk leads to Dubdi



Monastery, one of the oldest monasteries associated with Sikkim's Buddhist heritage. Prayer flags line the trail, and the peaceful setting makes the monastery especially atmospheric.

But Yuksom's biggest adventure begins where the roads start to disappear. It is the traditional gateway for treks towards Dzongri and Goecha La, routes that take travellers deep into the high Himalayas and towards spectacular views of Kanchenjunga.

Rumtek: Monastery on the Hill

A journey through Sikkim would be incomplete without experiencing its Buddhist heritage, and Rumtek

Monastery is perhaps the most famous expression of it. Located around 24 km from Gangtok, Rumtek is associated with the Karma Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism. The monastery complex sits amid forested hills, overlooking the surrounding landscape.

The present monastery was built in the 20th century, while the original Rumtek monastery dates back to the 18th century. The complex combines traditional Himalayan architecture with richly decorated interiors, murals and religious artworks. One of its most significant features is the Golden Stupa, an ornate reliquary associated with the monastery's religious heritage.

GOPIO Celebrates Indian Independence Day with Flag Hoisting Ceremony at Govt. Center in Stamford Followed by Luncheon Meeting

AUGUST 20, 2026
STAMFORD, CT (TIP)

The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin-Connecticut Chapter (GOPIO-CT) commemorated India's Independence Day on August 15 with a flag-hoisting ceremony at the Stamford Government Center, celebrating India's 79th Independence Day and the enduring contributions of Indian Americans to Connecticut and the United States.

The chief guest was Connecticut State Senator Bob Duff, Senate Majority Leader. Also attending were Janeene Freeman, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and representative of Stamford Mayor Caroline Simmons; Nitin Mhatre, President and CEO of First County Bank; Pilar Pelaez, President of the Stamford Mayor's Multicultural Council; GOPIO leaders; community representatives; and members of the Indian-American community.

During the ceremony, the American flag was raised by Senator Duff as the U.S. national anthem was sung. This was followed by the singing of the Indian national anthem and the raising of the Indian tricolor by Nitin Mhatre. The Connecticut state flag was raised by Janeene Freeman.



First County Bank President Nitin Mhatre raising Indian flag

Following the flag-hoisting, Senator Duff and Ms. Freeman addressed the gathering and praised GOPIO-CT for organizing programs that preserve and celebrate Indian heritage while strengthening the community's engagement with the broader Stamford and Connecticut community.



Photo: Connecticut Senator Majority Leader Bob Duff addressing the community

The ceremony brought together elected officials, community leaders, business representatives, and Indian American community and friends to honor India's independence while celebrating the diversity, democratic values, and shared aspirations that connect the Indian-American community with the United States.

INDEPENDENCE DAY LUNCHEON AND LECTURE

Following the flag-hoisting ceremony, attendees gathered at the Hampton Inn & Suites for a luncheon and an address by Dr. Sunil Purushotham, Associate Professor of History at Fairfield University. A historian of modern South Asia, Dr. Purushotham's research focuses on the history of sovereignty and democracy in India, Indian political thought, and global intellectual history. His book,

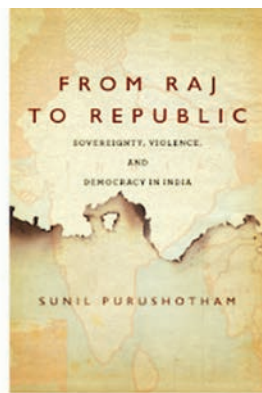


Dignitaries, GOPIO officials and the community at the flag hoisting

From Raj to Republic: Sovereignty, Violence and Democracy in India, was published by Stanford University Press in 2021.



Dr. Sunil Purushotham and his book From Raj to Republic



Sushanth Krishnamurthy, Chair of the GOPIO-CT Independence Day Program, opened the luncheon program and introduced GOPIO-CT President Mahesh Jhangiani, who welcomed the attendees and expressed appreciation to the elected officials, community leaders, sponsors, volunteers, and members of the community who participated in the celebration.

Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chairman of GOPIO International and an Advisor and Trustee of GOPIO-CT, highlighted GOPIO's longstanding international presence. Founded in New York in 1989, GOPIO has grown into a global organization with more than 100 chapters in over 30 countries.

Dr. Abraham also highlighted the recent establishment of the Connecticut-India Trade Commission, legislation for which was signed by Governor Ned Lamont. He noted that GOPIO had played an important role in supporting the legislation, including by providing testimony in support of the initiative.

He further spoke about the recent launch of the GOPIO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI)-Connecticut Chapter at the Connecticut State Capitol. The chapter was launched following the signing of the Connecticut-India Trade Commission legislation by Governor Lamont. Dr. Abraham encouraged Indian-American small and medium-sized business owners, entrepreneurs, and professional practitioners to become involved with GCCCI, emphasizing its potential to connect businesses and professionals locally, nationally, globally, and with India. He also introduced GCCCI Treasurer Prasad Chintalapudi.

A central message of the celebration was that Indian Americans can be "proud to be Americans and proud to be Indians." Speakers emphasized that celebrating Indian heritage and American identity are complementary, reflecting the community's commitment to both its cultural roots and its contributions to the United States.

The program also recognized the approaching 250th anniversary of American independence, providing an opportunity to reflect on the ideals of freedom, democracy, and pluralism shared by the two nations. Nitin Mhatre, President and CEO of First County Bank, also addressed the gathering and conveyed his Independence Day greetings.

Pilar Pelaez, President of the Stamford Mayor's Multicultural Council, spoke about the importance of cultural diversity in Stamford. She noted that the council represents the many cultures and ethnicities that contribute to the character and vitality of the city and

emphasized the importance of enabling residents to celebrate and take pride in their heritage.



Fairfield University Professor Sunil Purushotham speaking

The keynote speaker, Dr. Sunil Purushotham, holds a doctorate in History from the University of Cambridge and has written extensively on modern South Asian history. His address focused on a fundamental question: What is the significance of August 15?

Dr. Purushotham discussed the challenges involved in interpreting history, particularly when political parties and competing ideological perspectives offer different accounts of the past. He emphasized the importance of examining historical events carefully and critically, noting that political rivalries can sometimes obscure a fuller understanding of history.

He described August 15, 1947, as representing far more than the end of British colonial rule. It marked the beginning of a new era in which India sought to establish itself as a democratic nation committed to representative government, equality, peaceful governance, and the rejection of caste-based discrimination and prejudice.

"1947 brought an end to kingship and it was replaced by the will and sovereignty of the people," Dr. Purushotham said, describing the transformation of India's political system and its aspirations for a more equal society.

He placed Indian independence within the broader history of decolonization in Asia, describing India's emergence as an important development in the global history of freedom, self-government, and democracy.

Dr. Purushotham also drew connections between historical milestones such as 1776, 1946, and 1947, while reflecting on the challenges confronting societies today. He emphasized that history continues to shape how people understand the present and envision the future.

He noted that historical interpretation remains highly relevant, including in the American legal system, where courts such as the U.S. Supreme Court frequently examine historical context in addressing questions of law and constitutional interpretation.



GOPIO CT Officials with Professor Sunil Purushotham.

Standing from L to R: Dr. Thomas Abraham, Sonali Gannu, Dr. Purushotham, Mahesh Jhangiani, Meera Banta, Mirat Joshi and Sushanth Krishnamurthy; Sitting from L to R: Prasad Chintalapudi, Manish Maheshwari, Deepender Gupta and Santosh Gannu

Despite the challenges facing contemporary societies, Dr. Purushotham expressed optimism about the future. He pointed to the growing participation of young people in protests, civic activities, and public discourse as evidence that a new generation is actively thinking about the kind of society and future it wants to create.

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news

FIH WORLD CUP HOCKEY

BY
PRABHJOT SINGH

AUGUST 22, 2026

AMSTELVEEN (TIP): India's hopes of reaching the semifinals of the FIH Women's Hockey World Cup suffered a major setback after a 0-2 defeat to hosts and Olympic champions the Netherlands in their opening Phase 2 match at a nearly packed Wagener Stadium in Amstelveen on Friday, Aug 21.

Both Dutch goals came from penalty corners as the home side moved to the top of the table with six points.

Despite the defeat, India remains in contention for a semifinal berth. The team must beat Australia in its final Phase 2 match and hope that the Netherlands either defeats China or holds them to a draw.

Earlier, Olympic silver medallists China and Australia shared points in the other Phase 2 match.

With carry-over points from the group stage, the Netherlands leads the table with six points, followed by China with two. India and Australia have one point each, but Australia is placed above India after scoring three goals compared to India's two. Both teams have the same goal difference.

The final round of Phase 2 matches on Sunday, featuring India against Australia and the Netherlands against China, will



decide the two semifinalists from the group. The Netherlands made an aggressive start and earned their first penalty corner within 85 seconds. Yibbi Jansen converted the opportunity, firing to the left of Indian goalkeeper Bichu Devi to give the hosts an early lead.

The Dutch earned another penalty corner in the fifth minute, with the decision upheld after a video referral, but Bichu made a fine save. She produced another important stop soon afterwards

as the Netherlands continued to press.

India, however, gradually settled into the contest and created some promising moves. Captain Salima Tete had an opportunity to restore parity, but India failed to capitalise.

The Netherlands led 1-0 at the end of the first quarter. Savita replaced Bichu in goal in the second quarter as India continued to match the hosts in several phases of play. The visitors earned their first penalty corner in the 19th minute

and eventually had two such opportunities, but failed to convert either.

Navneet had a good chance in the 22nd minute but her shot went wide and high. India squandered another promising opportunity soon afterwards.

At the other end, Savita made an important save from Albers in the 25th minute as the Netherlands went into half-time with their one-goal advantage intact.

The Dutch increased their lead in the second half through another penalty corner. After earning set-piece opportunities in the 33rd and 38th minutes, Matila Frederequie converted the latter to make it 2-0.

The Netherlands earned further penalty corners but could not add to their tally. India continued to search for a way back, with Navneet testing the Dutch goalkeeper in the 58th minute, but the effort was saved.

The Netherlands eventually sealed a 2-0 victory, leaving India with a must-win encounter against Australia.

India, whose best World Cup finish remains fourth place in the inaugural edition, will now have to beat Australia and depend on the result of the Netherlands-China match to keep their semifinal hopes alive.

Indian companies take centre stage in global hockey sponsorship

BY
PRABHJOT SINGH

AMSTELVEEN (TIP), AUG 22: Major international sporting events thrive on a combination of sponsorship revenue and broadcast rights, but the commercial landscape of hockey remains far removed from the financial scale enjoyed by global sporting giants such as football.

The ongoing FIH World Cups for men and women have attracted several prominent corporate partners, including major Indian companies, although the tournaments do not have a title sponsor on the scale once associated with Hero Group.

Hero, which for years was the title sponsor of several major International Hockey Federation (FIH) events, continues to have a presence at the World Cups in the Netherlands and Belgium. The Indian conglomerate and its electric two-wheeler brand VIDA are among the tournament's major sponsors.

They are joined by other leading Indian companies, including dairy cooperative giant Amul and corporate group JSW, underlining the growing presence of Indian brands in the commercial ecosystem of international hockey. For the Royal Netherlands Hockey Board, Rabobank has remained a long-standing supporter of major international hockey events hosted in the Netherlands. However, compared with the FIFA World Cup and other major global sporting properties, hockey continues to face significant challenges in attracting corporate investment and widespread commercial backing. The response from companies in several major hockey-playing nations, including England, Spain, France, Australia, Pakistan and New Zealand, has



remained limited. Australian hockey legend Richard Charlesworth believes the sport continues to struggle for the kind of sponsorship and media attention enjoyed by football.

"Hockey is nowhere near soccer in getting sponsorship, which has a much larger appeal for the masses," Charlesworth said, pointing to the significantly higher commercial value and earning potential associated with football. He also highlighted the limited media attention field hockey receives, even in established hockey nations such as Australia.

According to Charlesworth, European hockey's dominance is also linked to geography and infrastructure. Countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany benefit from shorter distances, making it easier for players to assemble regularly for training and competition.

For countries such as Australia, however, the vast geographical distances can make frequent training

camps and player gatherings more difficult.

Corporate sponsorship, industry observers say, is largely driven by the visibility and commercial mileage that companies receive from their investment. Brands with an international consumer base are more likely to associate themselves with global sporting events that offer exposure across multiple markets.

Hero built a long association with international hockey while expanding its global presence, while Amul and JSW have also increased their involvement in international sporting events as their business interests and brand recognition have expanded.

In India, hockey has also received substantial backing from governments. Odisha has emerged as one of the biggest supporters of Indian hockey over the past two decades, providing sustained sponsorship and hosting major international events.

Other states, including Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu, have also shown interest in supporting and promoting the sport.

Punjab is the latest state to strengthen its association with hockey, with plans to host the Asian Champions Trophy later this year at Mohali and Jalandhar. The tournament is expected to feature six of Asia's leading teams. While hockey continues to seek greater corporate and commercial support globally, the presence of Indian brands and state governments remains an important source of financial backing for the sport.

The challenge for the FIH and national federations, however, will be to expand the game's commercial appeal, secure stronger broadcast revenues and attract new sponsors in an increasingly competitive global sports market.

FIH WORLD CUP HOCKEY

England, South Africa start well in Phase 2



BY
PRABHJOT SINGH

AUGUST 22, 2026

AMSTELVEEN (TIP): Giant-killers South Africa began their Phase 2 campaign in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup with an impressive 3-1 victory over France, while South Africa's women were held to a 1-1 draw by Japan in the matches deciding positions from ninth to 16th.

The opening round of Phase 2 action produced an exciting mix of upsets, high-scoring contests and hard-fought encounters as teams began their battle for places in the next stage of the tournament.

Chile, who had earlier held Australia to an exciting 4-4 draw, once again showed their fighting spirit against England. The Chileans took an early lead but eventually succumbed to England's sustained pressure, losing 1-4.

In another men's match, Ireland registered a high-scoring 7-4 victory over Malaysia.

China, Australia share points

In the women's competition, Olympic silver medalists China and Australia played out a 1-1 draw in a keenly contested Phase 2 encounter. China, who had earlier dropped points in a 2-2 draw against India in the group stage, took the lead in the 39th minute through Ying Zhang.

Australia pressed hard for an equaliser, but the Chinese defence held firm for much of the second half. The breakthrough eventually came in the 50th minute when Courtney Schonell converted a penalty stroke to level the scores. Neither side could find a winner as the match ended 1-1.

India had also progressed to Phase 2 after holding England to a goalless draw, the first scoreless match of the tournament. The result secured India second place in Pool D behind China.

Belgium survive Irish challenge

The final round of group-stage matches



had earlier produced late goals and dramatic twists. Belgium registered a 2-1 victory over Ireland in a tense women's Pool C encounter. Ireland took the lead in the 13th minute through Charlotte Beggs, who converted a penalty corner.

Belgium dominated possession and territory but struggled to find an equaliser. The breakthrough finally came in the 49th minute when Charlotte Englebert struck into the bottom-left corner. With the match heading towards its closing stages, Ambre Ballenghien scored with just 43 seconds remaining to complete Belgium's comeback and send the team to the top of Pool C.

Spain also booked their place in the next

round with a 3-0 victory over New Zealand, inspired by a hat-trick from Patricia Alvarez. After a goalless first half, Alvarez broke the deadlock in the 40th minute. Play was briefly interrupted by heavy rain in Wavre, but Spain resumed control after the restart.

Alvarez scored again in the 55th minute before completing her hat-trick in the final minute after New Zealand withdrew their goalkeeper in search of a late comeback.

China cruise, India qualify

China secured top spot in Pool D with a comfortable 5-1 victory over South Africa. Meirong Zou opened the scoring before

Paris-Gail Isaacs equalised from a South African penalty corner. China quickly regained control, with Jiaqi Zhong and Anhui Yu converting penalty corners.

Yi Chen added another from open play before Zou completed her brace late in the match.

India, meanwhile, held England to a goalless draw to finish second in the group and qualify for Phase 2, while England were eliminated after failing to secure the victory they needed.

Argentina and Netherlands dominate

In the men's competition, Argentina produced one of the most dominant performances of the final group stage, thrashing New Zealand 7-1.

Tomas Domene starred with a hat-trick as Argentina recovered from an early setback. Kane Russell gave New Zealand the lead from a penalty stroke in the 13th minute, but Domene equalised from the spot before half-time.

Argentina took complete control after the break. Bautista Capurro put them ahead before Domene added his second goal from a penalty corner. Tadeo Marcucci and Nicolas Keenan further extended the lead, while Capurro scored again late in the match.

Domene completed his hat-trick in the final minute to seal a 7-1 win and cap a commanding performance by Argentina.

Hosts the Netherlands also finished the group stage on top of Pool A after beating Japan 4-1.

Japan stunned the home crowd by taking the lead in the eighth minute through Kazumasa Matsumoto. However, the Netherlands responded quickly, with Thijs van Dam equalising four minutes later. Japan held the Dutch at bay until the closing stages, but a penalty stroke converted by Jip Janssen gave the hosts the lead with 10 minutes remaining.

Tim Reijnders then struck twice from penalty corners in the final five minutes to complete a 4-1 victory.

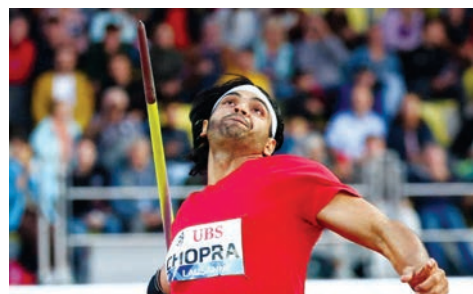
(Prabhjot Singh is a Toronto-based senior journalist who writes on Sports, politics and community.

He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)

Neeraj Chopra finishes second at Lausanne Diamond League with 88.05m throw

Neeraj Chopra finished second at the Lausanne Diamond League with a season-best throw of 88.05m, missing out on the top spot by just nine centimetres. Sri Lanka's Rumesh Tharanga Pathirage continued his impressive 2026 campaign, winning the event with an 88.14m effort.

The result extended Chopra's wait for a victory, with his last win coming at the Neeraj Chopra Classic in Bengaluru in July 2025. However, his return to the 88m range will be a major positive, particularly after a difficult start to the



season. Before Lausanne, Chopra had competed in just two events in 2026 -- finishing fourth at the Doha Diamond League and second at the

Commonwealth Games -- without crossing the 86m mark in either competition.

He opened in Lausanne with an 83.54m throw, while Pathirage immediately established himself as the early leader with 85.99m before improving to 87.06m on his second attempt. Chopra responded strongly with his second throw, producing 88.05m to improve his previous season's best by 2.23m and move into contention for the title. Pathirage, however, reclaimed the lead with his third attempt, sending the javelin 88.14m

to secure another victory.

Neither athlete was able to better those marks in the remaining rounds, leaving Chopra to settle for second place. Pathirage topped the standings with a throw of 88.14m, followed by Neeraj at 88.05m. Anderson Peters finished third with 86.69m, while Keshorn Walcott recorded 83.71m for fourth place. Marc Anthony Minichello (80.06m), Curtis Thompson (78.13m), Jakub Vadlejch (77.32m), Artur Felfner (74.84m) and Simon Wieland (73.23m) completed the top nine.



Cristiano Ronaldo kickstarts probable final season with 977th career goal

AUGUST 22, 2026

EUGENE (TIP): Cristiano Ronaldo has begun what could be his final season as a professional footballer in typically familiar fashion. The 41-year-old came off the bench to score his 977th career goal as Al Nassr began their campaign with a 4-0 win over Al Riyadh on Friday, Aug 21.

Ronaldo had recently suggested that this season could be his last as a professional footballer, adding extra significance to his return to action. The Portugal star had also recently married Georgina Rodriguez and was back in the Al Nassr squad after missing their opening Saudi Pro League win over Al Fateh and King's Cup victory against Al Diriyah.

Al Nassr had already built a three-goal advantage by the time Ronaldo entered in the 62nd minute. Abdulrahman Al-Amri, ngelo Gabriel and Joo Flix had found the net to put the visitors firmly in control.

Ronaldo needed only 21 minutes to make his presence felt. Aiman Yahya's low cross found him inside the box, and the forward controlled the ball before sweeping his finish into the net from close range to take his career tally to 977.

The goal was Ronaldo's 130th for Al Nassr since his move to Saudi Arabia in December 2022. It also extended his remarkable scoring run across 25 consecutive professional seasons.

Ronaldo comes into the new campaign after scoring 35 goals for club and country during the 2025-26 season. His latest strike also means he is now only 23 goals away from reaching 1,000, a landmark no player has officially achieved in senior professional football.

The timing makes the pursuit even more compelling. Ronaldo has indicated that the 2026-27 season could be his final campaign, meaning the race to four figures could unfold during the closing chapter of his career.

After returning from his recent break and celebrating a new chapter away from the pitch, Ronaldo has wasted little time creating another milestone on it. The 977th goal is in the books, and the remaining 23 could shape the final season of a career that has been defined by chasing numbers few thought possible.

India spin coach backs Kuldeep Yadav to bounce back in 2nd Test gainst SL, says 'he is a match-winner'

AUGUST 22, 2026

COLOMBO (TIP): Kuldeep Yadav may not have produced the numbers expected of him in the first Test against Sri Lanka, but India's team management has no intention of writing off their premier wrist-spinner after one underwhelming outing. Spin bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule has backed Kuldeep to bounce back in the second Test in Colombo, insisting that he remains a match-winner and firmly part of India's plans.

Kuldeep finished the Galle Test with just one wicket from 25 overs across the two innings. His only success came in the first innings, when he had Kamindu Mendis caught by Shubman Gill for 14. He conceded 65 runs from 14 overs in that innings and bowled another 11 overs for 38 runs without taking a wicket in the second.

"He's been bowling extremely well. It's just the situation which arose in Galle, he had to play a different role. For me, he has always been a match-winner and he definitely is in the scheme of things," Bahutule told reporters at the Sinhalese Sports Club.

The contrast with India's other two spinners was stark. Manav Suthar and Ravindra Jadeja shared 14 wickets between them, with Suthar leading the attack with 10 wickets in the match and Jadeja contributing four. Suthar was particularly effective in the first innings, striking four



times as Sri Lanka were bowled out for 284, while Jadeja claimed three wickets.

Bahutule believes the conditions worked against Kuldeep's particular style of bowling. With the Kookaburra ball becoming softer after the initial shine disappeared, the wrist-spinner found it harder to extract the same assistance as the finger spinners.

"All the spinners are struggling with the soft ball. But for finger spinners (left-arm or off-spinners), it becomes easier. For a leg-spinner, it is that much harder because of the softness of the ball, the seam just goes down," Bahutule explained.

Bahutule stressed that Kuldeep had been asked to adjust his trajectory and pace as the pitch slowed down. "So, I don't think one game decides on the way he is performing and the way he is approaching," he said, adding that the spinner had tried his best to adapt to the role demanded of him.

With the second Test beginning in Colombo on August 23, Kuldeep now has an opportunity to respond on a different surface. India took a 1-0 series lead with a dominating 165-run win in Galle, which also happened to be their sixth victory in Tests in a row on Sri Lankan soil.

Treesa-Gayatri stun Chinese fourth seeds, end India's 15-year wait for World Championships women's doubles medal

AUGUST 22, 2026

DARWIN (TIP): India's Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand assured the country of at least a bronze medal at the World Championships after stunning world No. 4 Chinese pair Jia Yi Fan and Zhang Shu Xian in the quarterfinals on Friday, Aug 21.

The Indian duo fought back from a game down to beat the Chinese pair 16-21 21-15 21-13 and book their place in the semifinals, marking one of the biggest wins of their partnership.

Doubles coach B Sumeeth Reddy, who has closely followed their journey through injuries, poor form and a fall in rankings, said the achievement carried special significance for both players.

"When emotions fall in, no words could normalise things. They're still very emotional. It takes probably a day for things to digest," Reddy told reporters.

Reddy said Gayatri, who is chief coach Pullela Gopichand's daughter, had faced her own share of expectations, while Treesa had always wanted to establish herself as one of India's leading



badminton players.

"Both of them have their own baggage, starting with Gaya (Gayatri) being Gopi sir's daughter. Everyone would say silver spoon and all of that. With this, she would also be relieved that she's a World Championships medallist. That would be a huge medal in her career.

"Treesa has also been very hungry since the start of her career. She wanted to prove a point that she's not playing tournaments just to compete. She always wanted to be the star of Indian badminton. This again is a big achievement in her kitty. That was one of the reasons why she was very emotional."

The pair's contrasting styles have been an important part of their success. While Treesa brings aggression and intensity to the court, Gayatri is known for her calm approach.

"We have two different players, Treesa being the player who's always charging at the opponents while Gayatri being the calm one. You need to deal with them differently," Reddy said.

"We obviously encourage Treesa to just calm a little bit when she is becoming too aggressive or smashing too often. At the same time, we need to encourage Gaya to be a little bit aggressive," he added.

The Indians have also improved their court rotation, with both players increasingly sharing responsibilities instead of sticking to fixed front- and back-court roles.

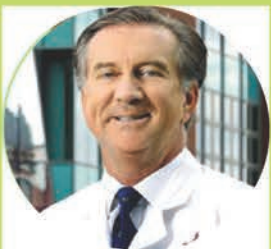
"Since the last 30-40 days, the rotation has gotten better. If you remember, most of them would say that Treesa would always stay back and Gaya, but I think this tournament, that's not the case. Both of them shared their load equally," said Reddy, who represented India at the Olympics alongside Manu Attri.



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