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YEAR

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The INDIAN PANORAMA
Will publish a profusely illustrated special edition in commemoration of the 80th Independence Day of India, August 15, 2026.
Articles, advertisements, and greetings for publication in the special edition are invited.
Please email at salujaindra@gmail.com by August 11, 2026.

Visit www.theindianpanorama.news for more information.
For any questions, please call 646-247-9458.

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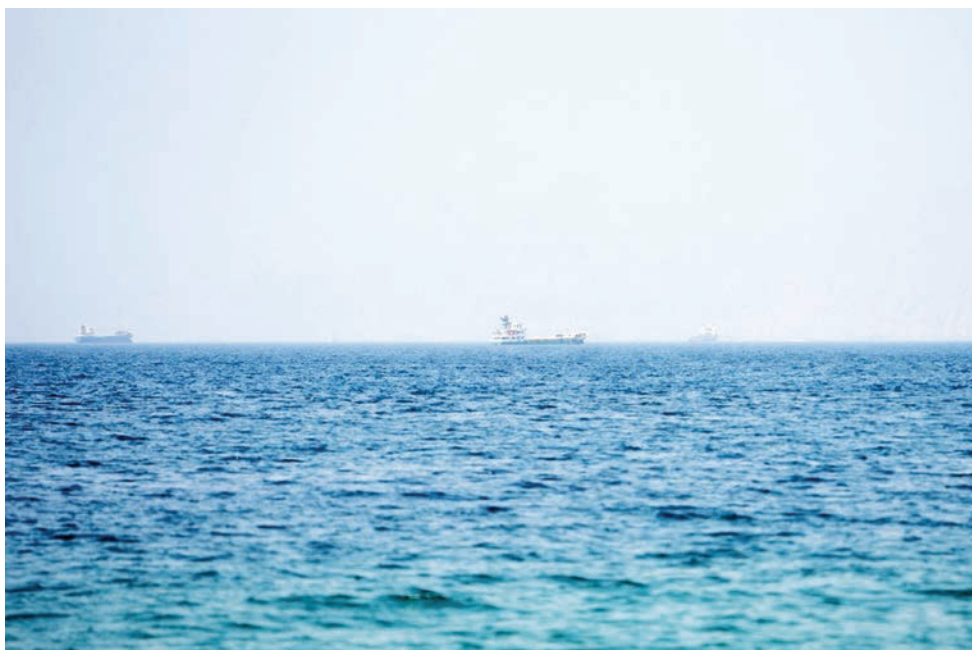
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OMAN, IRAN REACH AGREEMENT TO REOPEN THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ



A ship is seen in the Strait of Hormuz from the coast of Oman on Thursday, August 6, 2026 -File photo

**AUGUST 7, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

Oman has agreed to the framework of a deal with Iran to temporarily reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the global crude oil export route that Washington and Tehran have been wrestling to control since the war began, two Middle East diplomats with knowledge of the negotiations told MS NOW on Thursday, August 6.

The diplomats declined to describe the details of the temporary agreement or what issues remain unresolved. But an Iranian government official linked to the deal told MS NOW on Thursday morning that it will establish new shipping routes by allowing commercial vessels to enter the Persian Gulf through an Iranian-controlled route and exit through a route controlled by Oman.

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GOPIO Launches The Indian Panorama's special edition "America@ 250"

270-PAGE EDITION COMMEMORATES 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICA'S INDEPENDENCE

PROF INDRAJIT SALUJA AND THE INDIAN PANORAMA COMMENDED FOR THE HISTORIC FEAT



Prof Indrajit Singh Saluja, Editor and Publisher of The Indian Panorama, presenting to the Consul General of India in New York, Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, a printed volume of the special edition of his weekly commemorating 250 years of Independence of America.

**BY PARVEEN CHOPRA
AUGUST 7, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

Unprecedented. Unparalleled. A landmark in publishing. Worthy of a Guinness Book record. Such are the effusive compliments Prof Indrajit Singh Saluja has been receiving since publishing a week ago the massive 270-page special edition marking 250 years of America's independence.

Compliments, congratulations and commendations came fast and furious also at the launch of Indian Panorama's America@250 edition, conceived and edited by Prof Saluja, at a webinar organized by GOPIO (Global Organization of People of Indian Origin) on August 1 and moderated by Emmy-nominated filmmaker Tirlok Malik. Several community leaders joined Dr Thomas Abraham, GOPIO Chairman, to voice their appreciation for Prof. Saluja's ambitious project.

Said Mr Abraham, "This publication is a timely tribute to the ideals upon which America was founded—freedom, democracy, opportunity, and the enduring belief in 'We, the People'. It also recognizes the remarkable journey of the many communities that have helped build this great nation. The Indian American community is proud to be part of that story."

CONTD ON PAGE 3

U.S. Senate passes Russia sanctions bill that seeks 100% tariffs on India, four others

THE BILL, RENAMED THE LINDSEY O. GRAHAM SANCTIONING RUSSIA AND IRAN ACT OF 2026, WAS APPROVED BY THE SENATE BY AN 86-11 VOTE



US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin

File photo

**AUGUST 7, 2026
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)**

The U.S. Senate voted overwhelmingly to approve a bill to punish Russia and key buyers of its petroleum products, such as China and India, claiming that such trade helps fuel the Ukraine war.

The bill, renamed the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026, was approved by the Senate by an 86-11 vote.

U.S. Senate Bill seeks 100% tariffs on India, 4 other nations for buying Russian oil.

CONTD ON PAGE 38

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COMMENT

INDIA AT 80: A JOURNEY TO
CELEBRATE, AND MILES YET TO GO

On August 15, 2026, India will celebrate its 80th Independence Day. Across India, the Tricolor will fly proudly from government buildings, schools, homes and public squares. The national anthem will be sung, the sacrifices of the freedom fighters will be remembered, and a nation of more than a billion people will once again celebrate the freedom won after a long struggle.

Far beyond India's shores, too, preparations are underway. Wherever Indians have made their homes-from the United States and Canada to Britain, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Australia and elsewhere-August 15 will bring communities together in celebration and remembrance.

To all Indians, at home and abroad, we extend our warmest greetings on this historic occasion: Happy Independence Day!

Eighty years is a considerable journey in the life of a modern nation. And India's journey deserves to be celebrated.

The India that awakened to freedom in 1947 was burdened by poverty, illiteracy, disease and the enormous human tragedy of Partition. Its economy was weak, its institutions were young, and many outside observers doubted whether such a vast, diverse and desperately poor country could survive as a functioning democracy.

Yet India survived. More than that, it advanced.

It built democratic institutions and held elections after election. It established universities, laboratories, industries and scientific research centers. It achieved remarkable progress in agriculture and food production. It created a formidable scientific and technological establishment, developed nuclear and space capabilities, produced generations of doctors, engineers, scientists, teachers and entrepreneurs, and eventually emerged as one of the world's major economies.

Today, Indian scientists send missions to the Moon and study the Sun. Indian technology professionals occupy important positions across the world. Indian doctors serve humanity on almost every continent. Indian entrepreneurs have created enterprises of global significance. Indians lead some of the world's most influential institutions and corporations.

That achievement should inspire pride.

But anniversaries must do more than invite celebration. They should also invite reflection.

While recently working on a special commemorative edition of The Indian Panorama marking 250 years of American independence, I found myself repeatedly encountering a simple historical truth: America did not begin with independence. Long before there was a United States of

America, there were people living upon that land, building communities, creating cultures and shaping histories.

The thought led me naturally toward India.

India, too, did not begin on August 15, 1947.

The sovereign Republic is young compared with the civilization from which it emerged. For thousands of years, the people of the Indian subcontinent cultivated philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, literature, art, architecture and traditions of intellectual inquiry. Civilizations rose and declined, kingdoms appeared and disappeared, rulers came and went, but the people remained.

And therein lies an important lesson for India at 80.

A nation is ultimately its people.

The opening words of India's Constitution proclaim:

"We, the People of India..."

Those words carry an extraordinary promise. They tell us where sovereignty resides. Not in governments. Not in political parties. Not in leaders, bureaucracies or institutions. Ultimately, the Republic belongs to its people.

Therefore, India's progress cannot be measured only by the size of its economy, the height of its skyscrapers, the strength of its military, the reach of its technology or its position among the world's economic powers.

The more difficult question is: How does India treat its people?

Here the celebration must be accompanied by introspection.

There remain millions for whom the promise of independence has not yet translated fully into a life of dignity and opportunity. Economic inequality remains painfully visible. Extraordinary wealth exists alongside desperate poverty. Magnificent urban developments can stand within sight of settlements where families struggle for basic sanitation, healthcare, education and secure livelihoods.

Social divisions-of caste, class, religion, gender and region-continue to wound the idea of equal citizenship. Too many Indians still encounter indignity because of who they are, where they were born, what they believe, how little they possess or where they stand in the social hierarchy.

No economic ranking can make these realities irrelevant.

India is rightly proud of its economic rise. It should aspire to greater prosperity. Growth is indispensable: without wealth creation, no nation can sustainably finance education, healthcare, infrastructure, employment or social welfare.

But economic growth must never become an end in itself.

The purpose of an economy is ultimately to improve human life.

A country cannot be considered truly rich merely because its GDP has risen if millions of its citizens remain deprived of dignity, opportunity and basic security. Nor should human beings be regarded simply as instruments for producing economic growth.

Indeed, the opposite is closer to the truth: human beings are the engines of economic progress.

BY INDRAJIT
SALUJA

Invest in them. Educate them. Keep them healthy. Protect their freedoms. Give their children opportunities. Allow their talents to flourish. Treat their labor with respect. Ensure that justice is accessible regardless of wealth or influence. Protect the dignity of the weakest citizen as carefully as the privilege of the most powerful.

Do that, and economic progress will acquire something even more valuable: human meaning.

India's ancient traditions celebrated knowledge and inquiry. Its modern achievements demonstrate what Indians can accomplish when education, opportunity and scientific temperament come together. The task of the coming decades must therefore be to extend those opportunities more widely.

The child in a poor village deserves the chance to become a scientist.

The daughter of a laborer deserves the opportunity to become a physician.

The street vendor deserves respect from the state.

The farmer deserves security and dignity.

The worker who builds India's cities deserves to share in India's prosperity.

And every Indian, irrespective of religion, caste, gender, language, region or economic standing, deserves the assurance that the Constitution's magnificent opening words- "We, the People"-include them without qualification.

At this 80th Independence Day, Robert Frost's celebrated words seem particularly appropriate:

"And miles to go before I sleep."

India has traveled many miles.

It has traveled from colonial subjugation to sovereignty; from widespread hunger toward food security; from limited industrial capacity to technological ambition; from modest scientific infrastructure to missions in space; from economic weakness to a place among the world's largest economies.

These are not small accomplishments. They belong not merely to one government or one political party, but to generations of Indians who worked, struggled, dreamed and built.

Yet there are miles to go.

Let Indians everywhere celebrate the extraordinary journey of eighty years. Let us remember with gratitude those who sacrificed for freedom and those countless citizens-farmers, workers, teachers, scientists, soldiers, doctors, entrepreneurs, artists, civil servants and ordinary families-who built independent India.

But when the celebrations are over and the flags are carefully folded, let India's leaders remember the first three words in whose name they exercise power:

We, the People.

Put the people above political calculations. Put their dignity above statistics. Put education, health, justice and opportunity alongside economic ambition. Measure national greatness not only by how high India rises among the economies of the world, but also by how deeply the benefits of that rise reach the lives of ordinary Indians.

Happy 80th Independence Day, India.

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CONTD FROM PAGE 1



Participants at the Webinar. (L. to R): George Abraham (INOC), Gobind Munjal (Past President, AIA National), Koshy O. Thomas (India Parade Committee, Queens), Master Mohinder Singh (Former President, Gurdwara Makhan Shah Lobana), Mukund Mehta (India Homes, Queens), Parveen Chopra (founder of Lotusinthemud.com) and Ashok Arora (Indian Supreme Court Advocate)



GLOBAL ORGANIZATION FOR PEOPLE OF INDIAN ORIGIN
MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES

"Launch Of The Special Commemorative Publication "America At 250" By Professor Indrajit Singh Saluja To Mark The 250th Anniversary Of The Independence Of The United States Of America."

Focused on "We, the People," highlighting the historical journey, democratic values, and community perspectives of the U.S. semi-quincennial

Date: August 1st 2026 | Time - 11 AM ET | 8 AM PT | 830 PM IST

Zoom ID- 7095368686, Password: gopio



The GOPIO Invitation to the "Launch of the Special Commemorative publication "America@250" by Professor Indrajit Singh Saluja, to mark the 250th anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America".

We have made significant contributions to science, technology, medicine, education, business, public service, entrepreneurship, and the arts, enriching both the American economy and society."

Prof Saluja explained that the project was inspired by the concept of "We the people" and aimed to celebrate individuals

who built, defended, and will shape America's future. He expressed gratitude to numerous individuals and organizations for their support and encouragement in creating the 270-page publication, which exhaustively chronicles American history from 1776 to 2026, and includes the evolution of India-US relations and the

achievements of Indian Americans.

He thanked Harry Singh Bolla, founder of Bolla Oil and Patron of America@250 special, with whom he shares the vision of bringing India and America closer and the need for acquainting Indians here with American history and ideals on which the country was founded. Mr Bolla's congratulatory message was read at the well-attended webinar.

"Dear Dr. Thomas.

Thank you for inviting me to speak at the curtain raiser of America@250- a mammoth 270-page publication of The Indian Panorama in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of America's Independence.

Prof. Indrajit Singh Saluja apparently worked assiduously to bring the history of America before America, and of America through the 250 years since July 4, 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was made. Prof. Saluja who is an ardent votary of friendship and cooperation between the US and India, has done well to comment on the ever- growing ties between the two democracies. I understand it is a kind of service which every Indian origin naturalized citizen of America should always give preference to.

I am glad that the publication has carried a list of 250 Top Indian Americans in the US, and I am honestly flattered to find myself among them.

I wanted to join the Zoom meeting and congratulate you and your colleagues who have organized this curtain-raiser for America@250 and also say a few words in appreciation of Prof. Indrajit Singh Saluja's strenuous intellectual efforts at making what the publication has turned out to be - a reference book on history of America for the future generations. It is a mammoth task which Prof. has excellently executed, and I am happy as the Patron of the project America@250 that he has vindicated my trust in him. I congratulate him on a landmark achievement even as I congratulate you on your initiative to highlight a real good work by one of us.

I have to attend a family event in New Jersey at almost the same time as your Zoom meeting, and the clash in the schedule prevents me from attending your



Mr. John Polsinelli, a Reader of The Indian Panorama since its inception in 2006, glances through "America @250".

virtual meeting.

However, please accept my best wishes for a meaningful deliberation and discussion on America @250.

Best regards.

Harry Singh Bolla"

Prof Saluja mentioned that Consul General of India in New York, Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, had encouraged him to pursue the America@250 project. He thanked Dr V.K. Raju, dedicated to eliminating childhood blindness, for writing the Foreword for the special edition.

Several community leaders and top professionals, including Dr. Avinash Gupta, Dr Hari Shukla, George Abraham, Nilima Madan, Ashok Arora, and Gobind Munjal, congratulated Prof Saluja and praised the publication as a valuable historical record.

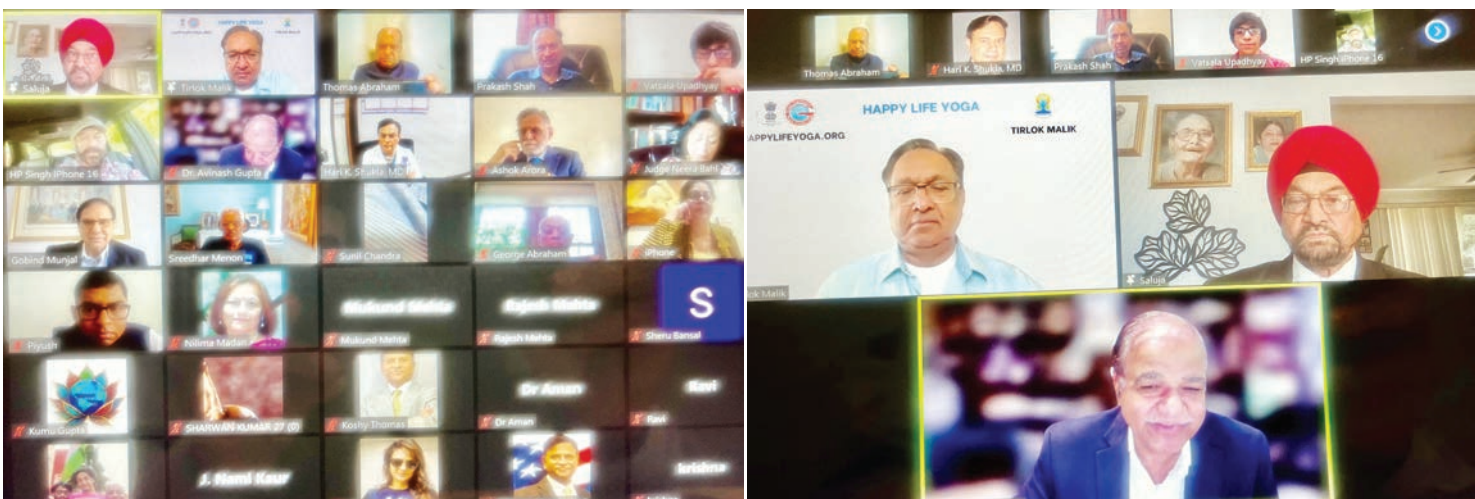
Those in attendance included Piyush Singh - Consul, Political and Press at the Indian Consulate, GOPIO President Prakash Shah, Mukund Mehta, Judge Neera Bahl, HP Singh, and Kumu Gupta.

Invited speakers included FIA President Sreekanth Akkapalli, Dr Krishna Kumar, Sikh leader Master Mohinder Singh and Parveen Chopra, founder of A Lotus In The Mud.

Tirlok Malik in his closing remarks emphasized the importance of community support and collaboration. Chander Malik led the laughter session at the end of the program.

GOPIO, founded in 1989, is a pan-Indian, non-profit organization with more than 100 chapters across 35 countries.

The Indian Panorama is a premier publication for the Indian community in America, founded by Prof Saluja. Now in its 20th year, the weekly is published simultaneously from New York and Dallas.



Sections of Participants in the Webinar to launch the special edition



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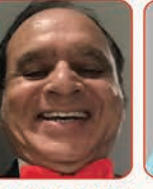

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SUN. SEPTEMBER 7TH 2025
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A4 Announces Honorees of 2026 Annual Benefit



**AUGUST 7, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

A4 is honored to announce the recipients of our 2026 Annual Benefit awards: Padma Lakshmi will receive the Vanguard Award, and Yao King & White Rabbit Trust will receive A4's Community Champion Award.

Padma Lakshmi is an Emmy-nominated producer, television host, food expert, and best-selling author, as well as one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People (2023).

She is the creator and host/executive producer of "America's Culinary Cup," a new culinary competition show that premiered on CBS in spring 2026. Lakshmi is also creator of the Emmy-nominated and James Beard Foundation award-winning Hulu series "Taste the Nation." Padma served as host/executive producer for 19 seasons of Bravo's two-time Emmy-winning series "Top Chef," which was nominated for 47 Emmys during her tenure, including her five nominations for Outstanding Host for a Reality-Competition Program.

Lakshmi is co-founder of the Endometriosis Foundation of America (EndoFound) and an American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Artist Ambassador for immigrants' rights and women's rights. Lakshmi was also appointed a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Padma has written several books,

including Easy Exotic; Tangy, Tart, Hot & Sweet; a memoir, The New York Times best-selling Love, Loss and What We Ate; The Encyclopedia of Spices & Herbs; a NYT best-selling children's book, Tomatoes for Neela; and Padma's All American: Tales, Travels and Recipes from Taste the Nation and Beyond.

Additionally, Lakshmi is a visiting scholar at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).
www.padmalakshmi.com

Yao King is the founder and chief investment officer of YKAM, a multi-strategy hedge fund based in New York City, and the executive producer of Asian Comedy Fest. Known for nearly a decade of quiet, sustained work and investment in the AAPI creative community, now organized under White Rabbit Trust, his philanthropic work spans film, comedy, food, fashion, art, and literature. In 2018, he co-founded the #GoldOpen movement and led the East Coast efforts with Gold House in support of Asian-led films, and would go on to co-found the annual Asian Comedy Fest, now entering its eighth year. Since 2020, he has underwritten and hosted a house for AAPI filmmakers at Sundance Film Festival, executive-produced AAPI-led films that have premiered at Sundance and the Tribeca Film Festival, and championed and organized meaningful opportunities for creatives in our community in the most visible rooms across industries, from the CFDA Fashion Awards to the National Book Awards.

Away from the city, he runs a small farm rooted in regenerative agriculture, where he cultivates crops, keeps bees, produces his own maple syrup, and regularly hosts friends and members of the community. A graduate of MIT, Yao received the Karl Taylor Compton Prize, the Institute's highest honor for devotion to community.

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4-STAR RATING REFLECTS CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN QUALITY, MEMBER EXPERIENCE, AND HEALTH OUTCOMES



Credit: Melody Cao for MetroPlusHealth

**AUGUST 7, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

MetroPlusHealth, New York City's high quality, affordable health plan, announced today that its Medicare Advantage plans have been awarded a 4-Star rating from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) following a recalculation of the 2026 Medicare Advantage Star Ratings and related Quality Bonus Payments. The

revised rating applies to the MetroPlusHealth Medicare Advantage Plans - including the MetroPlus Advantage Plan (HMO D-SNP), MetroPlus Platinum Plan (HMO), and MetroPlus UltraCare (HMO D-SNP) - serving approximately 14,000 Medicare Advantage members across New York City.

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

MISSING INDIAN SEAFARER

URGENT APPEAL FOR INFORMATION

A young Indian seafarer has been missing, and his family is urgently seeking public assistance.

Name: Mr. Manish Dwivedi

Date of Birth: 07 May 2000

Nationality: Indian (Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh)

Occupation: Seafarer (Merchant Navy)

Mr. Manish Dwivedi has been missing since 06 May 2026 while on shore leave from the Singapore-flagged

vessel SIFNOS LADY. Since that date, his family has had no communication with him and is deeply concerned for his safety and well-being.



PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

- Height: 5 ft 3 in (160 cm)
- Hair: Black
- Eyes: Dark Brown
- Complexion: Wheatish
- Identifying Mark: Tattoo on the left hand

LAST KNOWN INFORMATION

- Vessel: SIFNOS LADY (Singapore Flag)
- Status: Missing since 06 May 2026 during shore leave on Marcus Hook port, Pennsylvania
- Current Whereabouts: Unknown.

APPEAL

If you have seen Mr. Manish Dwivedi

or have any information regarding his whereabouts, no matter how small, please contact his family immediately. Your information could help reunite him with his loved ones.

FAMILY CONTACT

Father: Mr. Santosh Dwivedi

Phone (India): +91 99360 15051

Email: dwivedisantosh468@gmail.com

All information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

PLEASE HELP BRING MANISH HOME SAFELY

Every piece of information matters. Thank you for your kindness and support.

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WHY GENZ FINALLY REBELLED?

THE ANSWER LIES IN BOTH THE UNIQUE NATURE OF GENZ AND THE UNPRECEDENTED ECONOMIC DISTRESS THEY ARE FACING

BY AUNINDYO
CHAKRAVARTY



GENZ FROM INDIA'S TOWNS AND CITIES - THE ONES WHO TURNED UP AT JANTAR MANTAR -ARE CHILDREN OF THE MOST PROSPEROUS GENERATION IN THE HISTORY OF POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIA. EVEN THOSE FROM LOWER-MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES HAVE SEEN MORE MATERIAL COMFORTS IN THE PAST THREE DECADES THAN THEIR GRANDPARENTS DID. MANY WERE BORN INTO HOMES WITH CARS, AIR CONDITIONERS, MICROWAVE OVENS, WASHING MACHINES, LAPTOPS, AND SMARTPHONES. WHAT WERE LUXURIES TO GEN X AND MILLENNIALS ARE ESSENTIALS FOR GENZ.

India's GenZ surprised everyone last month when they turned up in their thousands from across the country to protest against our corrupt public examination system. I use the word 'surprised' advisedly. GenZ has been written off as a desensitized, self-absorbed, pleasure-seeking generation with the attention span of a 30-second reel.

They are seen as a demographic innocent of politics or of social issues, who can be pacified with the latest iPhone or the newest color range of

are employed. That means the effective unemployment rate among GenZ is a whopping 35%.

And this is happening despite - or perhaps because of - more young people getting college degrees. Again, the CMIE surveys indicate that in the past three years, India has added 90 million graduates to the working-age population. Almost all of them would belong to GenZ. In the same period, an additional 49 million graduates have got added to the labor force - people who want paid work.

The number of graduates who are

electricians or Uber drivers merely because those positions are more easily available. None of those professions requires spending three years in college.

But there are very few white-collar jobs available for the young. The most robust indicator for this is Naukri.com's JobSpeak Index, which is based on more than 80 lakh "new job mandates" every year.

Now consider those who graduated and joined the labor force over the past three years: their number has increased by 75%. Out of these, some did manage to

non-white-collar jobs as well. Seven years ago, when the oldest of GenZ started looking for work, the urban unemployment rate for those in the 20-24 age group was 45%. Today, it has crossed 50%. Back then, the unemployment rate for those in the 25-29 age bracket was 15%. Now, it is more than 20%.

As I said earlier, part of the reason is that GenZ consists of many more graduates than the generation preceding it. So, they want better jobs than their seniors were willing to settle for. That is why some of this high unemployment is voluntary - GenZ youth would rather wait for a suitable job than accept a position that pays poorly or lacks social status.

But this is not simply because they went to college. GenZ from India's towns and cities - the ones who turned up at Jantar Mantar -are children of the most prosperous generation in the history of post-Independence India. Even those from lower-middle-class families have seen more material comforts in the past three decades than their grandparents did. Many were born into homes with cars, air conditioners, microwave ovens, washing machines, laptops, and smartphones. What were luxuries to Gen X and Millennials are essentials for GenZ.

They are also perpetually bombarded by overt and covert advertisements for goods, services, and lifestyles via social media. Entire communities are constantly being formed around new products and trends, with influencers telling the young that their lives are incomplete if they don't buy them immediately.

This has created an unbridgeable gap between material aspiration and the opportunities to fulfil them. And this gap gets amplified by the virtual communities and identities that social media produces.

Yet, these very cybercommunities, which transcend the limits imposed by physical human interaction, became the basis for the impromptu organization of the Jantar Mantar protests. Instagram reels replaced political networking, so much so that protesting itself became a GenZ fad. That is why frustration and angst transformed into memes, jokes, and joie de vivre never before seen at protest sites.

It is an explosive force that the powers that be are unfamiliar with. No one knows how to contain it or what it will lead to in the days to come.

(Aunindyo Chakravarty is a business analyst and former Senior Managing Editor, NDTV India & NDTV Profit. His X handle is @Aunindyo2023)



Bargain: Today's youth want better jobs than their seniors were willing to settle for. -Photo / Manas Ranjan Bhui

Labubus. Why, then, did this depoliticized and atomized generation spontaneously erupt in such an unrestrained rebellion when the heavy hand of state action has silenced many an inveterate dissident?

The answer lies in both the unique nature of GenZ and the unprecedented economic distress that they are facing. GenZ - those born between 1997 and 2012 - are between 14 and 29 years of age right now. So, most of them qualify to be part of the working-age population, which includes anyone aged 15 years or older.

The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) estimates that there are 378 million Indians in the 15-29 years' age group. Out of these, 128 million would work if they got a job, but only 83 million

unemployed has increased by nearly 12 million. That means, roughly one in four young people who earned college degrees to get better jobs is currently jobless.

The high level of unemployment among the GenZ is not because there are no jobs available. It is about the quality of jobs being offered. A significant proportion of GenZ jobseekers have college degrees or professional diplomas. Their parents spent lakhs of rupees on their education so that they could get well-paying white-collar jobs. This is true even for those whose parents had blue-collar occupations.

It is understandable that these graduates are not going to willingly become factory workers, plumbers,

get work, which means they would have at best three years of work experience.

What kind of hiring opportunities do these GenZ folks have? The JobSpeak Index shows that hiring activity in this space -- those with 0-3 years of experience - has grown by just 10% in three years.

The situation is worse for the older lot among GenZ. If one assumes that most young people enter the work force at 22, the oldest among the GenZ cohort would have seven years of work experience. The latest Naukri JobSpeak Index estimates that hiring opportunities for those with four-seven years of work experience have dropped by 6% in the past three years.

This trend is confirmed by the CMIE's overall employment data, which covers

Donald Trump in the Persian labyrinth

America's Iran war stalls as Tehran turns pressure into strategic advantage

BY STANLY
JOHNY



BUT IN IRAN, THE U.S. LOST THE WAR IN THE FIRST PHASE ITSELF. THE U.S. NOW FACES A DIMINISHED PRESENCE IN WEST ASIA, WHILE IRAN, WITH HORMUZ UNDER ITS CONTROL, IS REASSERTING ITSELF AS A PERSIAN GULF REGIONAL POWER. MR. TRUMP IS NO LONGER TALKING ABOUT IRAN'S MISSILE PROGRAMME, ITS FOREIGN POLICY OR THE CHARACTER OF THE IRANIAN STATE. FORGET REGIME CHANGE; TODAY, HE IS ASKING THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC, THE SAME REGIME HE SOUGHT TO TOPPLE, TO MAKE A DEAL WITH WASHINGTON.

When we are finished, take over your government. It will be yours to take. This will be probably your only chance for generations," United States President Donald Trump told Iranians on February 28, 2026, after the U.S. and Israel assassinated Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and launched a war against the country. More than five months later, the war that Mr. Trump believed would be over in weeks, if not days, is far from over. The Islamic Republic has not only survived but has also consolidated its position, at home and in the region. Mr. Trump has alternated between strikes, ceasefires, talks, threats, ultimatums, renewed strikes, and U-turns in an attempt to shape the course and outcome of the conflict and the behavior of the Iranian state, while seeking a face-saving exit. But with the war unresolved and his objectives unmet, Mr. Trump, confronting a resolute yet risk-tolerant Tehran, has found himself in a strategic cul-de-sac.

The U.S. and Israel launched the war with four principal objectives: destroy Iran's nuclear programme; dismantle its missile capabilities and military industrial base; end Tehran's support for its non-state quartet (Hamas, Houthis, Hezbollah and Hashad) and bring about a regime change. The first three objectives, however, were inseparable from the fourth. Without toppling the Islamic Republic, achieving any of the other goals appeared impossible even before the war began. This makes regime change or regime collapse the central strategic aim of the war on which all the others depended.

THE PRESIDENT'S GRAVE MISCALCULATION

The challenge before Mr. Trump was to engineer regime change through an aerial campaign alone. He was unwilling to commit ground troops, and the U.S. lacked a credible local ally capable of leading an armed insurgency against Tehran. Mr. Trump initially seemed aware of the risks of attacking Iran. In June 2025, the U.S. joined Israel in striking Iran's nuclear facilities but quickly stepped back. He then declared that he had "obliterated" Iran's nuclear programme and compelled Israel to accept a ceasefire. Determined to avoid a wider regional conflict, he sought to prevent the war from spiraling out of control.

But by February 2026, two developments, along with sustained pressure from Israel, appeared to have convinced him that Iran could be defeated in a short war. The first was the U.S. invasion of Venezuela in early

January, which in Mr. Trump's view was a resounding success. U.S. forces abducted President Nicolás Maduro and withdrew without suffering casualties. Venezuelan Vice-President Delcy Rodríguez, who assumed the acting presidency, quickly offered full cooperation with Washington. The second was the wave of violent protests and riots across Iran in January, which reinforced the belief in Washington and Tel Aviv that the government in Tehran had been fatally weakened. They believed that by bombing Iran and decapitating its leadership, the regime would either collapse or result in a new leadership willing to cooperate with Washington, much as they believed had happened in Venezuela. This proved to be a grave miscalculation.



Donald Trump has few good options. -Photo Credit: AFP

THE THREE PILLARS OF IRAN'S RESPONSE

Iran's response rested on three pillars - preserving the state; regionalizing the war; and enhancing its economic cost through horizontal escalation. Tehran understood that because Mr. Trump's other war aims were dependent on regime change, preserving the Islamic Republic would, by itself, deny Washington its broader objectives. Mr. Trump mistook Iran for a personality-driven authoritarian regime, which could crumble once the head was taken out. But the Iranian state is sustained by a deeply-entrenched institutional system and an ideology that fuses Shia notions of sacrifice with the ideals of political revolution. Under attack, the state - designed and built to withstand both internal and external shocks - consolidated, while millions rallied around the flag.

The second element was to turn the U.S. bases in the region, built to project American power and protect its allies,

into vulnerable targets. Tehran shut down the Strait of Hormuz through which roughly 20% of the world's seaborne crude oil passed before the war. It turned the Persian Gulf into a battlefield and kept American warships out of it. The Iranian view was that if it was not allowed to export crude, nobody in the Gulf would be able to do so through the Strait. Surprisingly, the U.S. had no contingency plan for the closure of the Strait. Once the waterway was shut, the dynamics of the war began to shift. It was at that point that Mr. Trump began to lose the strategic initiative.

After 40 days of bombing, Mr. Trump announced a ceasefire on April 8. Since then, he has been searching for a dignified exit from the conflict. On June 17, he signed a memorandum of

to reopening the Strait of Hormuz, which had remained open until February 27. Four months into the war, Iran had forced the U.S. to set aside its original objectives - from regime change to the destruction of Iran's nuclear programme - and instead contend with a new strategic problem created by Tehran itself. In July, while responding to U.S. strikes, Iran widened the conflict by intensifying attacks on Jordan and targeting Iraqi Kurdistan, Syria, and the Persian Gulf monarchies. Yemen's Ansar Allah (the Houthis) struck Saudi oil facilities and imposed a naval blockade on the kingdom's Red Sea ports. The conflict thus expanded horizontally in July, something which Mr. Trump was unprepared.

TRAPPED IN ESCALATION

Consider America's major military campaigns in the 21st century. In Afghanistan, U.S. forces achieved an initial swift victory by toppling the Taliban and establishing a new political order. They began losing the war only after the Taliban began regrouping and started a sustained insurgency. In Iraq and Libya, Washington succeeded in bringing down the regimes, even though the interventions destroyed those states and societies. In each of those theatres, the U.S. at least achieved its immediate military objectives, before failing to manage the post-war order.

But in Iran, the U.S. lost the war in the first phase itself. The U.S. now faces a diminished presence in West Asia, while Iran, with Hormuz under its control, is reasserting itself as a Persian Gulf regional power. Mr. Trump is no longer talking about Iran's missile programme, its foreign policy or the character of the Iranian state. Forget regime change; today, he is asking the Islamic Republic, the same regime he sought to topple, to make a deal with Washington.

Trapped in this Persian labyrinth, Mr. Trump has few good options. He can acknowledge defeat and exercise diplomatic patience to reach a deal with Tehran and extricate the U.S. from the conflict. For Washington, which has been the dominant power in the Persian Gulf at least since the 1956 Suez War, this would come at a significant strategic cost. Alternatively, Mr. Trump could turn his failed air campaign into a full-scale invasion, with more devastating strikes and the potential deployment of ground troops. But there is no guarantee that escalation would help him win the war. On the contrary, it could draw the U.S. deeper into the sands of Iran, where a military of roughly 6,00,000 soldiers would be waiting.

(Stanly Johny is the International Affairs Editor with The Hindu)

Turn the scalpel towards foreign policy

The Great Game: India's presidency of BRICS may not signify that it is on board an alternative view of the global order

BY JYOTI
MALHOTRA



THE PROBLEM WITH THE CURRENT DEBATE ON FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL INTEREST IS THAT ACTUALLY THERE'S NO DEBATE. DELHI'S POLICY ELITE IS ARROGANTLY DISMISSIVE OF CRITICISM ON TWO COUNTS - FIRST, THE VIEW FROM THE PROVINCES IS SEEN AS BEING, WELL, TOO PROVINCIAL - CLEARLY, WE DON'T UNDERSTAND THE BIG PICTURE WELL ENOUGH.

Prime Minister Modi is readying to receive some of the world's most powerful leaders at the BRICS summit on September 12-13 - not just by personally pushing to reduce the temperature at home over the GenZ protests with Instagram selfies that directly speak to his young audience, passing anti-paper leak legislation in record time in Parliament or by having cases dropped against protesters - but by willing to stand up against the tide and invite folks to New Delhi, including those being shunned by Washington DC.

One of those men is Russian President Vladimir Putin, against whose country the US Senate has this week passed the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia Act of 2026, by an overwhelming 86-12 vote, permitting the slapping of 100% tariff against nations who buy Russian energy or its military equipment.

The Russia Act also invokes new sanctions against Putin and 20 other top people who work in the Russian defense industry.

First, some bald facts. China, India and Turkiye are among the top five buyers of Russian energy. And despite a defense framework agreement with the US that promises to strengthen "interoperability across all domains, including land, sea, air, space and cyberspace," India remains a key customer of Russian arms. According to the US Congress, since 2008, 59% of India's defense imports have come from Russia, 12% from France, 10% from the US and 9.5% from Israel.

Just two of those Russian pieces of equipment, the S-400 missile system and the BrahMos missile, were singularly helpful in tilting the balance against Pakistan during Op Sindoor. (It's another matter that Donald Trump insists he brokered the end of the conflict between India-Pakistan, a fact that India strenuously denies.)

As for the purchase of Russian energy, Kpler, the real-time global data and analytics provider, says that the Indian purchase of Russian crude crossed 2 million barrels per day over March-June 2026 and is well on its way to touching 3 million barrels per day. (In this time, India bought 244.89 million barrels from Russia, 58.57 million barrels from the UAE and 57.62 million barrels from Saudi Arabia.) This means that Russian energy imports account for as much as an incredible 50% of India's energy needs today.

Clearly, with the Strait of Hormuz still shut and tension in the Red Sea not abating in the wake of the prolonged standoff between the US and Iran, India has been forced to return to buying cheaper Russian oil, despite its earlier pleadings and promises that it will wean itself off this addiction in the face of looming US tariffs.

Question is, whether India is going to



BRICS summit: It will be interesting to see whether both Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin will show up.

Photo / Reuters

throw all this goodness away in order to evade US sanctions in the light of the recent passage of the Russia Act. Clearly, the answer is no. India needs Russian crude to keep the wheels of the economy churning so as to keep the evil forces of poverty and unemployment at bay. You don't need to be a rocket scientist to understand that the GenZ protests were triggered not just by NEET paper leaks but also by a rapidly growing despair about rising prices and lack of jobs.

The problem with the current debate on foreign policy and national interest is that actually there's no debate. Delhi's policy elite is arrogantly dismissive of criticism on two counts - first, the view from the provinces is seen as being, well, too provincial - clearly, we don't understand the big picture well enough.

So whether it's Punjab and Gujarat's trauma of deported illegals, bound hand and foot in chains; or the Centre's refusal to open the Kartarpur Sahib corridor; or Myanmar's army personnel crossing the border to take refuge in Mizoram; or Sikkim's need to open up border trade with China; or Bihar's angst over the denial of roti-beti relationships with the Nepal Terai - all these issues of India's states and their neighborhood are seen as important, but not significant enough to influence foreign policy.

The second count may be dubbed the 'Jurassic Age' view - this means that if you don't agree with the Delhi elite version of India's national interest, or believe that India must be non-aligned, or that India must have the freedom to align itself depending on the issue at hand, then you are condemned to be a diplomatic dinosaur.

This is where the BRICS summit comes in. On the face of it, India's presidency of this forum signifies that it is on board an alternative view of the existing US-led world order; in fact, India is nervous about China's rise as a global power on a par with the US, remains transactional about the tie with Russia (on both energy and defense), and is more or less indifferent about both Brazil and South Africa.

Truth is, India is so concerned about the potential impact of the Russia Act on its relationship with the US, because it doesn't want the all-important tie between Delhi and DC to be damaged in any way. Nor can it deny, however, that Russia has been bailing out New Delhi, especially on the energy front. That's why the recent meeting between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Manila was crucial - we don't know what came of it, except a bland comment that both discussed everything, including the T-

word, tariffs.

That's also why the next six weeks in the run-up to the BRICS summit will be critical - first, it will be interesting to see whether the big leaders, both Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin, will show up; certainly, Xi is not confirmed and it's not clear whether he thinks it's worth his while. Second, even if Putin lands up, as he and PM Modi clearly have a personal equation, the question remains whether the PM can reorient India's ship in favor of true multi-alignment - where India picks its friends and partners framed only by its national interest, one which is also defined by its citizens who live in the provinces and not just by the Nayi Delhi elite.

In the last few days, the PM has cut through the whirlpool of the BJP's own making by directly reaching out to India's despairing youth brigade. Perhaps it's time to turn the scalpel towards foreign policy and run an honest appraisal of what's what. What does India really want? And who are its trustworthy friends?

(Jyoti Malhotra is Editor-in-Chief of The Tribune group of newspapers. She has worked with India's top newspapers, across print, TV and digital, both in English and Hindi media, and is a regular contributor on BBC Radio. Her X & Insta handles are @jomalhotra & email is jyoti.malhotra@tribunemail.com)



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Senate narrowly approves Blanche as AG, capping tough confirmation fight

THE VOTE GRANTS PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S FORMER CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYER A FULL STINT AS THE HEAD OF THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, WHICH HAS BEEN ROCKED BY VACANCIES AND CONTROVERSIES



Todd Blanche has been confirmed as the head of the Justice Department.

**AUGUST 8, 2026
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)**

The Senate narrowly voted to confirm Todd Blanche as attorney general early Saturday morning, cementing President Donald Trump's former criminal defense lawyer as the head of the Justice Department despite rare pushback from Republicans that had left his nomination in doubt, says a Washington Post report.

Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-Louisiana) provided the crucial vote for Blanche as two other Republicans - Sens. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Susan Collins of Maine - sided with Democrats against the nominee. Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky), who has been absent from the Senate since he suffered a fall in June, missed the vote.

The 50-49 vote at 4:31 a.m. - right before the Senate left for a five-week recess - gives Blanche the imprimatur of Senate confirmation in a job he has held on to an acting basis since Trump fired former attorney general Pam Bondi in April.

But it hardly amounted to a full-throated endorsement.

Cassidy, despite voting in Blanche's favor, joined Murkowski and Collins in publicly raising questions about the politicization of the Justice Department under Trump. The three also voiced concerns about Blanche's role in a controversial deal struck this spring to resolve the president's legal claims against the IRS - a deal that included a now-scuttled proposal for a \$1.8 billion fund to compensate people who claimed they were victims of political prosecutions.

Two other Republican senators - John Cornyn of Texas and Thom Tillis of North Carolina - expressed similar reservations and threatened earlier in the process to vote against the nomination, although both ultimately backed Blanche on Friday.

Explaining his decision, Cassidy on Friday described it as a choice between Blanche - who before his time as Trump's personal lawyer had spent years as a federal prosecutor and a partner at a prestigious Manhattan law firm - and the possibility that Trump might pick someone worse. "Mr. Blanche is not perfect, and he will tell you this, but the choice is not between perfection and Mr. Blanche," Cassidy said on the Senate floor. "It is between Mr. Blanche and another acting attorney general who may not run the department as effectively under President Trump and who, indeed, may not be as good as Mr. Blanche."

With the confirmation fight now behind him, Blanche sheds the "acting" part of his title and, with it, any doubt about his authority as the head of a cabinet agency that Trump has made central to his second-term agenda.

Since returning to the White House last year, the president has eroded the Justice Department's long tradition of

independence, demanding it pursue prosecutions of his political enemies and directing resources toward rewarding his allies.

Blanche, first as Bondi's No. 2 and then as the department's acting leader, has played a central role in that transformation, although his boosters in Congress have praised his efforts to step up fraud enforcement, prosecute illegal immigration and combat violent crime.

Cassidy called aspects of Blanche's track record troubling, but he cited the bond Blanche built with Trump as he defended him in four criminal cases during his years out of office. The senator said he hoped that trust would strengthen Blanche's ability to talk the president out of decisions that run contrary to the rule of law.

But Democrats insist that, at every turn, Blanche has proven unable - or unwilling - to do just that.

Since becoming acting attorney general, Blanche has defended the president's "right" to intervene in criminal investigations and his controversial pardons of those who attacked the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. He has breathed new life into probes of Trump critics, including investigations of former FBI Director James B. Comey, former CIA Director John Brennan and Cassidy Hutchinson, a former White House aide from the president's first term who testified against him in Congress.

But it is the out-of-court deal Blanche announced this spring to resolve a lawsuit the president filed against the IRS earlier this year, over the leak of his tax returns to the media, that has drawn the most unified criticism from lawmakers.

In addition to the taxpayer-backed nearly \$1.8 billion payout fund, the deal also extended unusual tax protections to Trump, two of his sons and their

businesses, shielding them from any preexisting tax audits.

Lawmakers from both parties decried the agreement, describing the proposed payouts as a "slush fund" designed to reward Trump's allies, and denouncing the tax provisions as a corrupt exercise in self-dealing from a president who has often complained of burdensome audits.

Facing bipartisan pressure, Blanche walked back plans for the fund. But Cornyn and Tillis, both of whom are not running for reelection after Trump declined to support them, demanded written assurances from Blanche that the president would not later reverse that decision before they agreed to support his nomination.

Blanche ultimately relented, issuing statements late last Sunday declaring the fund officially dead and clarifying that the deal's tax provisions protected the Trumps only from past tax audits and would not prevent the IRS from reviewing their finances in the future.

But critics have questioned whether Blanche's written pledges hold any legal weight, given that they were not signed by Trump and his legal team, and could be ignored by the president at any point.

Murkowski raised that possibility in a statement Friday announcing her decision to vote against Blanche's nomination. The only reason the payout fund was now off the table, she said, was because Blanche needed Senate support for his nomination.

"Once we vote, that will end, and there is no telling what the future holds," she said.

"The country needs an attorney general who will check the worst impulses of this administration," Murkowski added. "I hope Mr. Blanche is able to achieve that if confirmed, but I simply do not have confidence that will be the case."

(Source: Washington Post)

Carney says U.S. trade talks 'nasty' after Trump criticizes Canada's leadership

**AUGUST 7, 2026
OTTAWA (TIP):**

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said Thursday, August 6, that trade negotiations with the United States had turned "nasty" after President Donald Trump derided America's neighbor and its leadership while threatening to expand tariffs.

Mr. Carney said Canada remained engaged in the negotiations despite Mr. Trump's comments, describing the talks as a fight to protect Canadian workers and businesses.

"This is a tough negotiation," Mr. Carney said in French. "You can say nasty." But this is a question of Canadian jobs. It's a question of the future of Canadian businesses." Mr. Trump criticized Canada during a speech Wednesday (August 5, 2026) in Las Vegas.

"Canada's nasty. They are. They're nasty," Mr. Trump said. "I love the people, but they're nasty. Nasty leadership."

Mr. Carney said "we are in the middle of a tariff war with the Americans" but laughed when asked about Mr. Trump's description. He said Canadian negotiators were in Washington this week and that he expected further conversations with Mr. Trump after speaking with him last week.



Canada Prime Minister Mark Carney. -File | Photo Credit: AP

The United States already has tariffs on Canadian steel, aluminum, and automobiles. Mr. Trump has threatened to impose 50 per cent tariffs on more Canadian goods beginning August 19.

Tariffs are taxes on imports, which companies can

then pass along to consumers in the form of higher prices. The President maintains that the costs created by tariffs will cause manufacturing to relocate to the U.S., though there is little evidence of that in the economic data.

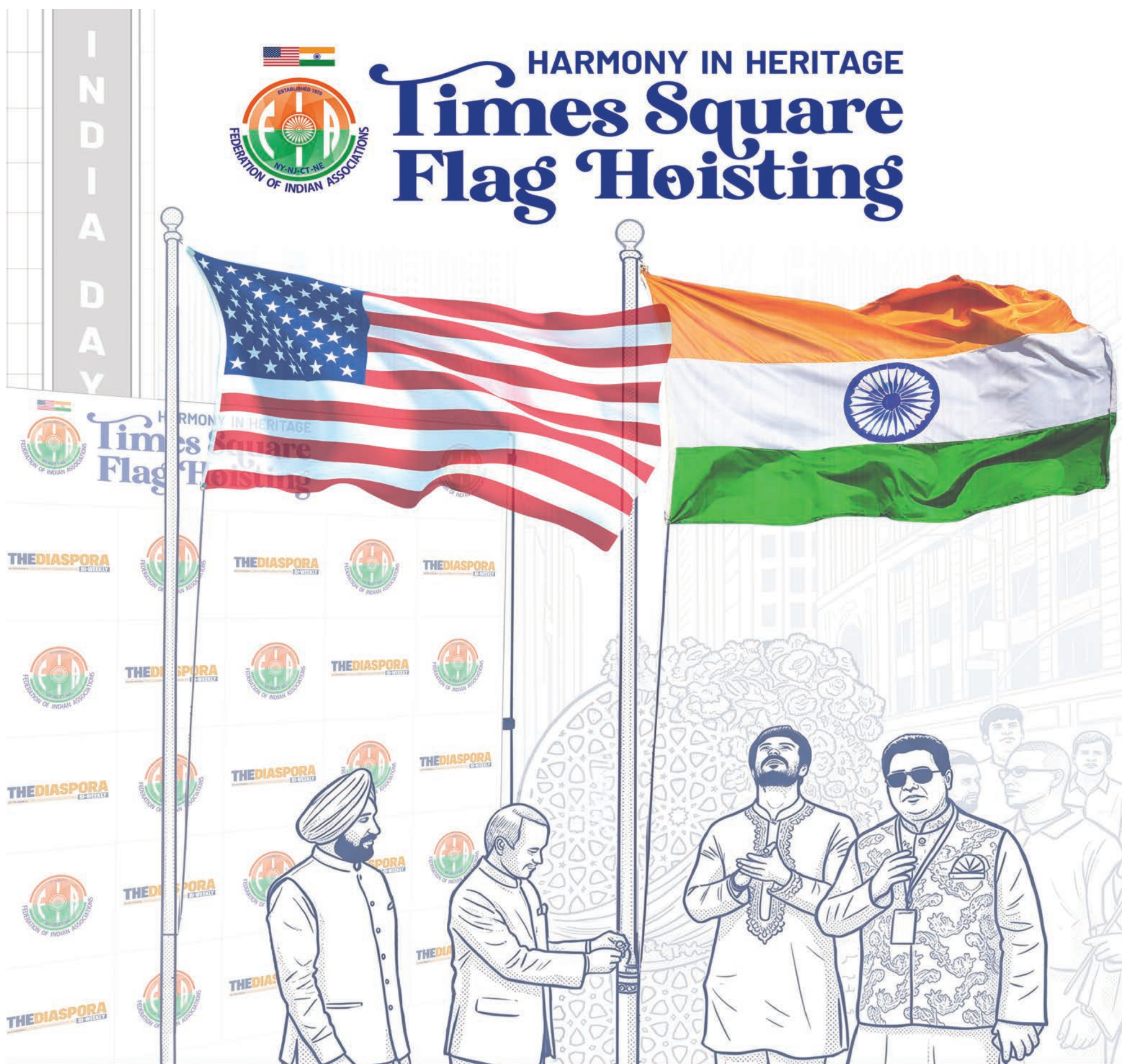
Mr. Trump's tariff threats and repeated suggestions that Canada should become the 51st U.S. state have angered many Canadians, prompting many Canadians to cancel trips to the United States.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer has argued that Canada and China are the only two countries to retaliate against Mr. Trump's tariffs, citing restrictions on U.S. alcohol sales in some Canadian provinces among his concerns. Canadian officials say their countermeasures were a response to existing U.S. tariffs.

Canada is one of the United States' largest trading partners, and the move threatens to push prices higher at a time when Americans are already frustrated with the high cost of living ahead of the November 3 midterm elections.

Mr. Carney said existing U.S. tariffs on aluminum have contributed to a 58% increase in aluminum prices in the United States.

"That's not a good situation for American companies," Mr. Carney said.



SATURDAY, AUGUST 15th, 2026

**10:00
AM EST**

**BROADWAY BETWEEN,
W.43rd St. & W.44th St. Times Square, NYC**

PRESIDENT OF INDIA SMT. DROUPADI MURMU ON HER FIRST STATE VISIT TO ROMANIA

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

The Hon'ble President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, concluded her State Visit to Romania from 23-25 July 2026, at the invitation of H.E. Mr. Nicusor Dan, President of Romania. The visit marked the third and final leg of her three-nation visit to Moldova, North Macedonia and Romania.

The State Visit was of historic significance as it was the first State Visit by an Indian President to Romania in over three decades, the previous Indian Presidential visit having taken place in 1994. The visit reaffirmed the importance India attaches to its partnership with Romania and imparted fresh momentum to bilateral cooperation, India's engagement with the European Union, and collaboration in multilateral fora. It opened a new chapter in India-Romania relations.

On arrival in Bucharest, Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji was received by H.E. Ms. Oana Toiu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania. Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji was accorded a ceremonial State welcome at the Cotroceni Palace by H.E. President Nicusor Dan. The two Presidents held one-to-one as well as delegation-level talks during which they reviewed the full spectrum of bilateral relations. Discussions covered trade and investment, defence, renewable energy,



President Droupadi Murmu was warmly received by Minister of Foreign Affairs Oana-Silvia Toiu at the airport.



President Droupadi Murmu was warmly received by President Nicusor Dan of Romania at the Cotroceni Palace in Bucharest. President Murmu was accorded a ceremonial welcome and Guard of Honour



Delegation-level talks between two Presidents



Signing of an MoU on the establishment of the ICCR Chair with the University of Bucharest



Delegation level talks between President Smt. Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Mr. Ilie Bolojan



digital technologies, science and technology, information technology, critical minerals, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals and healthcare, education, sports, culture, mobility and people-to-people exchanges. Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji conveyed India's appreciation to the Government of Romania for the assistance extended during Operation Ganga in facilitating the evacuation of Indian students from Ukraine in 2022.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction at the steady growth in bilateral trade and conveyed confidence that economic ties would expand further with the

CONTD ON PAGE 16

CONTD FROM PAGE 15

conclusion of the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement. They agreed to work towards doubling bilateral trade over the next three years from the current level of approximately USD 1.3 billion.

Defence cooperation emerged as a major pillar of the bilateral partnership. The two sides welcomed the growing engagement between their defence establishments, including the meeting of the Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation held earlier this year. They acknowledged significant opportunities for collaboration in defence manufacturing, industrial partnerships, defence technologies, maritime security and cybersecurity. Several Indian



President Droupadi Murmu addressed the India-Romania Business Forum in Bucharest with President Nicusor Dan



President Droupadi Murmu was conferred the Honorary Doctorate by the Bucharest University of Economic Studies



President Droupadi Murmu met Mr. Mircea Abrudean, President of the Senate of Romania and Mr. Sorin-Mihai Grindeanu, President of the Chamber of Deputies of Romania and members of India-Romania Parliamentary Friendship Group.



President Droupadi Murmu laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Bucharest

companies are exploring opportunities for co-development and co-production in the defence sector, including civil and defence aeronautics and next-generation drone technologies. An Indian company has also partnered with a Romanian company for investment in the production of military equipment.

The leaders welcomed the progress made following the meeting of the India-Romania Joint Economic Committee held in Bucharest in November 2025. They noted the ongoing efforts towards finalisation of the Mobility Partnership Agreement & Social Security Agreement to facilitate the movement of skilled professionals for mutual benefit.

As India and Romania prepare to celebrate the 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2028, the two sides agreed to commemorate the occasion as the "India-Romania Year of Innovation."

CONTD ON PAGE 17

CONTD FROM PAGE 16



President Droupadi Murmu interacted with members of the Indian community and 'friends of India' in Romania



THREE BILATERAL INSTRUMENTS



President Smt. Droupadi Murmu planted a tree under "Ek Pedd Maa ka Naam" initiative in Romania.



WERE SIGNED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE TWO PRESIDENTS:

- A Programme of Cooperation on Science and Technology (2026-2029) between the National Authority for Research of Romania and the Department of Science and Technology of India to promote joint research in natural sciences, engineering and technology, medical and health sciences, and agricultural sciences.
- A Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of an ICCR Chair in Indian Studies at the University of Bucharest to strengthen academic cooperation and promote Indian language and culture.
- A Joint Declaration on Cooperation in the field of Sports between the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of India and the National Sports Agency of Romania to promote collaboration in sports, including training and capacity building.

The two Presidents reaffirmed their shared commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji appreciated Romania's continued support for India's efforts against terrorism, including Romania's strong condemnation of the Pahalgam terrorist attack. The leaders also reviewed cooperation in Digital Public Infrastructure. Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji invited Romania to explore the adoption

of India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI), highlighting its potential to facilitate trade, tourism and digital connectivity between the two countries.

Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji announced the doubling of Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) training slots for Romania, including specialised programmes in Artificial Intelligence. Romanian diplomats were also invited to participate in the forthcoming Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service focusing on Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Diplomacy.

Noting Romania's active participation in the International Solar Alliance (ISA), Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji invited Romania to join India's other flagship global initiatives, namely the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA), reflecting the convergence between the two countries on sustainable development priorities.

As a symbol of the enduring friendship between the two nations, Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji presented, on behalf of the people of India, a bust of Mahatma Gandhi to the people of Romania through President Nicusor Dan. President Dan also hosted a State Banquet in honour of Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji.

During the visit, Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji met H.E. Mr. Ilie Bolojan, Prime Minister of Romania, and discussed ways to further deepen bilateral cooperation across a wide range of

sectors.

Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji and President Nicusor Dan jointly addressed the India-Romania Business Forum, which was also attended by Romania's Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Economy. The Forum brought together leading businesses from both countries and focused on strengthening cooperation in the areas of Trade, Technology, Tourism and Talent. Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji was accompanied by a high-level business delegation led by FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM representing sectors including agriculture, artificial intelligence, information technology, cybersecurity, capital goods, consulting, defence, drones and aerospace, e-commerce, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, hospitality, manufacturing, metals and steel, technical textiles, and travel and tourism.

The leaders recognised Romania's growing importance as a gateway for Indian businesses to the wider European market. They noted the expanding presence of Indian companies in Romania and welcomed the opportunities created by Romania's strategic location as a Black Sea state and an emerging logistics, transport and connectivity hub. They also noted that the conclusion of the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement and the adoption of the India-EU "Towards 2030: A Joint Comprehensive Strategic Agenda" would further strengthen India's economic engagement with

Romania and the broader European Union.

Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji also interacted with the leadership of the Romanian Parliament, including the President of the Senate and the President of the Chamber of Deputies, as well as members of the India-Romania Parliamentary Friendship Group. She paid homage at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and visited the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. She also visited the National Village Museum and planted a tree under the "*Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam*" initiative.

The President concluded the visit with an interaction with members of the Indian community and Friends of India in Romania, appreciating their contribution to strengthening India-Romania relations.

Before concluding the visit, Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji invited H.E. President Nicusor Dan to pay a State Visit to India at a mutually convenient date.

The State Visit marked an important milestone in India-Romania relations and reflected the shared commitment of both countries to building a modern, forward-looking and comprehensive partnership. Together with the visits to Moldova and North Macedonia, the visit significantly advanced India's engagement with Central and Eastern Europe and reinforced India's expanding partnership with Europe as a whole.

Internal matter: India on proposed FCRA changes

AUGUST 8, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): India on Friday brushed aside criticism from international voices, including US lawmakers, over the proposed amendments to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), asserting that the legislation was an internal matter and countries such as the US also regulated the flow of foreign funds.

Responding to questions at a media briefing, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said Parliament alone would decide on the proposed legislation.

"We have indeed taken note of the issue you mentioned, and there have been several comments on it. As far as legislative matters — specifically India's own — are concerned, these are an internal matter, and our Parliament makes decisions regarding these," Jaiswal said.

He said the regulation of foreign funding was not unique to India. "I also wish to point out that there are many nations across the world, including the US, that regulate the flow of foreign funds," he said. The remarks come two days after US Congressman Riley M Moore criticised the proposed FCRA amendments, alleging that these could enable government takeovers of churches and religious charities. Calling the proposal "a clear attack against Christians", Moore had warned that, if passed in its present form, it could become "a point of major concern" in the India-US bilateral relations. New Delhi, however, refrained from responding directly to the Congressman's allegations, limiting its response to reiterating that legislative matters are decided by Parliament and fall within India's sovereign domain.

The proposed amendments to the FCRA, which governs the receipt and utilisation of foreign contributions by individuals and organisations, are expected to be introduced in Parliament next week.

The proposed changes have triggered a debate, with critics expressing concern over their potential impact on religious and charitable institutions, while the government has maintained that the law is intended to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of foreign funds. The FCRA framework caters to the intake and utilisation of overseas funding across non-governmental organisations, charitable entities, academic institutions, religious trusts and affiliated bodies. Ministry of Home Affairs figures indicate that 13,520 entities received foreign remittances totalling Rs 55,741 crore between 2019 and 2022.

In CBI chargesheet, details of how NTA 'shortcomings' set stage for NEET paper leak

AUGUST 8, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Subject experts involved in more than one process getting more access than needed, and no surveillance feed to keep an eye on them during working hours at the headquarters are among the broader shortcomings the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has identified as the reasons behind the leak of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET-UG) question papers this year. The agency has also noted the limitation of surveillance footage backup to a maximum of 25 days, because of which a vital section was unavailable.

According to the CBI chargesheet, a Sikar-based teacher informed National Testing Agency (NTA) Director General Abhishek Singh of the possibility of a leak just four days after the examination took place on 3 May. The whistleblower had sent the NTA chief an email alerting him of a guess paper in circulation, whose questions matched those in the original question papers set for the exam taken by more than 22 lakh candidates in the country. The NTA chief responded to the email on 8 May.

In a chargesheet running to over 94 pages, a copy of which ThePrint has accessed, the CBI has highlighted that the NTA subject experts had access to more than one step in the process, allowing them to see the complete set of questions, and enabling them to leak it.

ThePrint had earlier reported that the agency had arrested and charged 13 accused, including the trio of P.V. Kulkarni, Manisha Sanjay Havaldar, and Manisha Mandhare, all subject-matter experts on the NTA panel. Kulkarni was a subject expert in chemistry while Havaldar and



Mandhare were experts in physics and botany respectively.

The agency has explained the entire flow of the process in setting up questions for the NEET examination in the chargesheet, stating that there is an item writing stage for each subject in the first step. "In this stage, experts are called to prepare questions and their answer options. Experts do not know whether the questions prepared by them will actually be used in the exam," the agency says in the chargesheet.

The next step, the agency further documents, is a stage of moderation in which some experts called 'moderators' are mandated to select questions for four sets to be prepared for NTA. These moderators, the agency explained, have to prepare 45 questions for each set—a total of 180 questions. "Moderation involves ensuring that the level of difficulty of questions is uniform across sets and the answers proposed are correct. Further they also check that the questions are from within the prescribed syllabus," the agency has said.

The CBI said that in the next step of the process, subject experts who are called 'vetters' are called to solve the questions sets finalised in the previous step by the moderators, and answers

are matched with the ones provided by the moderators. "In case of mismatch, Director (NEET) has to resolve it through meeting between moderators and vetters. In the next step, the finalised question sets are translated into vernacular languages by subject experts," the agency has explained.

There is also a step of called "back translation" in which translators are asked to re-translate the vernacular language questions into English to ensure the context of the question is not lost in translation. "Ideally, the above steps should be done by different experts and the visibility of all the final question sets to any one expert should be avoided to prevent chance of leak from them," the agency has alleged.

"However, in the process, actually followed for NEET UG 2026 examination, it is found that many experts have been involved in multiple stages. Further, from moderation step onwards, the experts concerned have full access to final sets of questions. This is particularly so in translation/back translation stage as here a single expert can see all four of the final master sets," it says.

Speaking to ThePrint, the NTA chief said: "I can't respond to CBI findings, and the matter is sub judice. What we did for re-examination is mentioned in the affidavit filed in the Supreme Court last week."

Moreover, the agency also documented gaps in the basic infrastructure of the NTA, such as storage of surveillance footage for a maximum period of 25 days and no live feed monitoring control room to keep tabs on the confidential section where subject experts dealt with the questions.

Source: The Print

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat backs Gen-Z's 'right to protest'

AUGUST 8, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday, Aug 6, defended the right of India's younger generation to protest, saying Gen Z should not be branded "anti-national" for raising concerns.

Speaking at the 15th anniversary celebration of the India International Model United Nations (IIMUN), Bhagwat said democratic dissent should aim at correcting the system rather than targeting individuals.

Responding to a question on protests by young people, Bhagwat said democracy provides constitutional ways to express dissent and urged people to understand the reasons behind

demonstrations instead of dismissing them.

"If Gen Z is raising its voice, it is not doing so merely to oppose someone. There is some problem, some pain, and that should be addressed," he said. "Agitation should not be against you or me. It should be for correcting the system." He added that dialogue between those in authority and those protesting should begin early so that issues do not escalate unnecessarily.

Addressing concerns that young protesters are often labelled "anti-national", Bhagwat rejected such characterisations.

"Gen Z is our own next generation. They are not anti-national," he said,

stressing that there must be a sense of belonging and dialogue between generations. "When that relationship is recognised, both sides understand each other better."

Bhagwat also praised the younger generation, saying he considered Gen Z and Gen Alpha to be more honest than previous generations.

"I believe this new generation is more honest. Appeals based on patriotism and service resonate honestly with them," he said. Asked about incidents in which young protesters have allegedly faced police action, including lathi-charge and pellet firing, Bhagwat declined to comment on specific cases, saying he did not have complete information.

Sukhbir-PM Modi meeting a 'muh dikhayi' not 'roka', says SAD leader Naresh Gujral

AUGUST 8, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Senior Shiromani Akali Dal leader Naresh Gujral has described the meeting between his party chief Sukhbir Singh Badal with prime minister Narendra Modi as "muh dikhayi" and not "roka".

Speaking to the Tribune after the meeting, Gujral said the sign is that the long-closed door between erstwhile allies has now slightly opened.

Although the meeting led to speculation around the possibility of a realignment between the Akali Dal and the BJP, the latter continues to insist that it will contest on all 117 seats in Punjab elections.

Gujral, however, said the engagement between top leaders showed they considered the interests of Punjab paramount and were willing to assess one another ahead of polls.

The BJP has been saying it would contest all state seats on its own but there are growing anxieties within as the narrative is slipping after CJP protests and the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan as the Education Minister.

Add to that the raging backlash in Punjab to the recent organisational changes which have led to several resignations, a never-heard-of development in the BJP.

Against this backdrop, the meeting becomes significant.

Source: TNS

'Implement women quota now': Rahul's reply to Kiren Rijiju's swipe

AUGUST 8, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju engaged in a verbal duel on social media on Saturday morning. While Rijiju took a swipe at Gandhi's video message on women power asking the Congress to support the Women's Reservation Bill, Rahul Gandhi hit back asking why hasn't the government implemented the law that was passed in 2023.

In a video of Friday, Aug 7, Rahul Gandhi had said that it is important to bring women "back into the conversation and allow them to do what they want to do".

Responding to Gandhi's video, Rijiju called it a "positive message" and wondered if there has been a "change of heart".

"This seems to be a positive message from the Congress Party. There's a visible change of heart in Shri Rahul Gandhi Ji about the Women," Rijiju posted on X.

He then slipped in Women Reservation question for the Leader of Opposition in his post.

"Now, I hope Congress Party will support the Women's Reservation Bill unconditionally," Rijiju added.

In a quick repartee, Rahul Gandhi hit back at Rijiju asking why is Centre linking women's reservation to delimitation?

"Mr. Rijiju, who would know better than you, as the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs—that the Women's Reservation Bill 2023 has already been passed unanimously, with the full support of the Congress. The question is, why has it still not been implemented even after three years, and why do you now want to unnecessarily link it to delimitation?" the Leader of Opposition posted on X in reply to Rijiju's post.

He then demanded that the Centre implement women's reservation. "Implement the 2023 law. Without any conditions," Gandhi added.

In a quick repartee, Rahul Gandhi hit back at Rijiju asking why is Centre linking women's reservation to delimitation?

"Mr. Rijiju, who would know better than you, as the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs—that the Women's Reservation Bill 2023 has already been passed unanimously, with the full support of the Congress. The question is, why has it still not been implemented even after three years, and why do you now want to unnecessarily link it to delimitation?" the Leader of Opposition posted on X in reply



to Rijiju's post. He then demanded that the Centre implement women's reservation.

"Implement the 2023 law. Without any conditions," Gandhi added.

E20 policy destroying people's lives, their vehicles: Rahul Gandhi

Rahul Gandhi has stepped up his criticism of India's E20 petrol policy, calling the issue a major public concern. He also alleged that ethanol-blended fuel is increasing the burden on vehicle owners. In a video shared on social media, he said the Congress would take up the matter "in a massive way".

Rahul Gandhi said E20 fuel was affecting cars and two-wheelers and claimed that it was causing financial losses for consumers. He used the Hindi phrase, "daal mein kuchh kaala hai, magar yahan puri daal hi kaali hai", to suggest that the issue involved more than an isolated problem.

"This issue of E20 is very big," he said. "The Congress will take up the matter 'in a massive way' because it is 'destroying people's scooters, destroying people's lives, and literally is stealing directly from them'."

AUGUST 8, 2026

BENGALURU (TIP): The Food Safety and Drug Administration Department's Food Safety Wing has launched action against several three-star and five-star hotels in Bengaluru after a special inspection drive uncovered multiple food safety violations.

According to the department, 30 teams inspected 26 hotels and collected 35 food samples for laboratory analysis, with officials flagging issues including improper labelling, expired food products, unhygienic storage and handling, fungal growth on vegetables, and inadequate segregation of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food items.

During the inspections, officials found several food safety violations, including non-compliance with FSSAI labelling requirements, improper labelling and misbranding of food products, storage of expired food items, and unhygienic food handling and storage conditions.

Following the violations, notices have been issued to the concerned Food Business Operators (FBOs). Adjudication proceedings under the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 will be initiated before the Adjudicating Officer.

The food samples collected during the drive included tea powder, chicken, mutton, fish, edible oil, chilli powder, turmeric powder, tomato sauce, lemon juice, cheese, papad, cashew nuts, ginger, pepper powder,

Expired food, fungal vegetables: Bengaluru's 3-star, 5-star hotels face food safety action



spice powder and milk, among other food products.

The Karnataka Health and Family Welfare Department constituted 30 special teams to conduct surprise inspections at hotels, restaurants and food outlets across Bengaluru and other major locations in the state following a rise in complaints over poor food quality, hygiene and food safety violations.

The inspection drive has been launched on the

directions of Karnataka Health and Family Welfare Minister UT Khader after the department received several complaints from members of the public, including those shared on social media, alleging unhygienic practices and the sale of substandard food at various eateries.

The latest crackdown comes amid growing public concern over food safety in Karnataka. Over the past few months, several videos and posts shared on social media have raised allegations of unhygienic kitchen conditions, poor food handling and the use of artificial colours in popular dishes such as gobi manchurian, kebabs and other prepared foods. These complaints have prompted the department to step up enforcement measures.

The state government had also carried out a similar enforcement drive last year under "Operation Eat Right" after reports of food poisoning and the use of artificial colouring in food products. During that campaign, several hotels and food establishments were inspected, notices were issued to violators and penalties were imposed for non-compliance with food safety standards.

India in history this Week

AUGUST 7 TO AUGUST 13

AUGUST 7

1905 - Swadeshi Movement gainsboost in Calcutta



On August 7, 1905, a large public meeting was held at Calcutta Town Hall where the Swadeshi movement was formally launched in response to the British decision to partition Bengal. The meeting called for the boycott of British goods and encouraged the use of indigenous products. The movement became one of the earliest mass expressions of Indian nationalism and helped bring students, traders, women and sections of the middle class into the freedom struggle.

1947 - Indian National Congress adopts the National Flag

The tricolour that had evolved during the freedom movement was adopted as the national flag of independent India by the Constituent Assembly shortly before independence. The flag's saffron, white and green bands, with the Ashoka Chakra at the centre, came to symbolise India's national aspirations and its constitutional future.

1905 - Partition of Bengal announced

The British government's decision to divide Bengal, formally implemented in October 1905, became a turning point in India's nationalist movement. The proposed division was widely regarded by Indian nationalists as an attempt to weaken political unity through a communal and administrative division.

AUGUST 8

1942 - Quit India Movement begins



August 8 marks one of the most important dates in India's freedom struggle. At its historic meeting in Bombay, the All India Congress Committee adopted the Quit India resolution, demanding an immediate end to British rule.

Mahatma Gandhi gave his famous call of "Do or Die", urging Indians to launch a mass struggle for independence. The following day, August 9, Gandhi and other senior Congress leaders were arrested. The arrests triggered widespread protests, strikes, underground resistance and attacks on symbols of

colonial authority across the country.

The Quit India Movement ultimately became the final major mass movement against British rule before independence in 1947.

1940 - Viceroy's Executive Council expanded

During the Second World War, constitutional and political developments increasingly brought the question of Indian participation in government to the forefront. The British government's wartime policies, however, continued to face strong opposition from Indian nationalists.

AUGUST 9

1942 - Quit India Movement erupts across India

Following the arrests of Gandhi and other Congress leaders, August 9 became synonymous with the beginning of the nationwide phase of the Quit India Movement.

With the established leadership imprisoned, local leaders, students and ordinary citizens took the initiative. Underground networks emerged, while protests spread through Bombay, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, Maharashtra and other regions.

August Kranti Day is observed in India to commemorate this historic movement.

1925 - Kakori Train Action



On August 9, 1925, revolutionaries associated with the Hindustan Republican Association stopped a train near Kakori, close to Lucknow, and seized government funds being transported by rail. The action was intended to finance revolutionary activities against British rule.

The subsequent Kakori conspiracy case led to the arrest and trial of several revolutionaries, including Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan, Rajendra Lahiri and Roshan Singh. The executions that followed turned the revolutionaries into enduring symbols of India's freedom struggle.

AUGUST 10

1963 - Nationalisation of the State Bank of India takes effect

The State Bank of India, created in 1955 through the nationalisation of the Imperial Bank of India, became an important institution in the expansion of banking services across independent India. The development was part of the broader effort to extend organised banking to rural and semi-urban areas.

1947 - Preparations intensify for Independence

In August 1947, India was in the final days before independence. The Constituent Assembly, the interim government and provincial administrations were preparing for the transfer of power while communal

violence and the impending Partition posed enormous challenges.

AUGUST 11

1942 - Revolutionary resistance after Quit India arrests

As the Quit India Movement spread, resistance increasingly took decentralised forms. Students, workers and local activists organised demonstrations, disrupted communications and established underground networks.

Among the best-known young activists was Aruna Asaf Ali, who famously hoisted the Congress flag at Bombay's Gowalia Tank Maidan on August 9 after the senior Congress leadership had been arrested. She subsequently became one of the most recognisable faces of the Quit India Movement.

AUGUST 12

1919 - Rabindranath Tagore renounces knighthood in protest against Jallianwala Bagh



Rabindranath Tagore had renounced his British knighthood in 1919 following the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. His decision was a powerful moral protest against colonial repression and attracted international attention. Tagore's action demonstrated that opposition to British rule extended beyond organised political movements into India's intellectual and cultural life.

1961 - India continues its institutional nation-building

The early decades after independence saw the creation and consolidation of institutions in education, science, industry and public administration, reflecting the leadership's emphasis on building a modern democratic state.

AUGUST 13

1947 - Final days before Independence

August 13, 1947, fell only two days before India became independent. The country was witnessing intense political and social upheaval as the British prepared to transfer power to India and Pakistan.

The Indian Independence Act 1947, passed by the British Parliament in July, had provided the legal framework for the creation of the two dominions. In India, preparations were underway for the historic midnight session of the Constituent Assembly on August 14-15.

1942 - Underground freedom struggle grows

The Quit India Movement continued to develop after the arrests of Congress leaders. Underground activists established clandestine communication networks and circulated newspapers and messages challenging British authority.

THREE WOMEN FILM MAKERS COLLABORATE TO PRODUCE “DEMON HUNTERS”

BY MABEL PAIS

DEMON HUNTERS

Director: Mei-Juin Chen (Taiwan/America); Co-Producers: Cindy Shyu (Taiwan) & Gayathiri Guliani (India); 2025; India/Taiwan; Action/Drama/Musical; Hindi, Chinese, Taiwanese Mandarin, English; 1h 55m

Directed by Mei-Juin Chen (Taiwan) and produced by Cindy Shyu (Taiwan – Light House Productions) and Gayathiri Guliani (India – Kleos Entertainment Group), this first time Taiwan-India co-production follows Tommy (played by Taiwan’s popular JC Lin), a YouTuber who fakes exorcisms for views, as he teams up with Sanjay (played by India’s current superstar Arjan Bajwa), an Indian tech expert and grandson of a legendary exorcist, to battle a zombie demon possession.

Watch - TRAILER:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLcBFGk_IsY

DEMON HUNTERS - NEW CLIPS FROM THE FILM:

Clip 01 <https://youtu.be/apfMXc4MNIw>
DEMONS GET ENERGIZED in a scene from DEMON HUNTERS

Clip 02 <https://youtu.be/Hl8gDk6cI-U>
AZURA gets ready to fight the hunters in a scene from DEMON HUNTERS

Clip 03 <https://youtu.be/JVfq2injZDg>
DEMON HUNTERS fight the demons in a scene from DEMON HUNTERS

The film from these three female filmmakers blends action, horror, comedy, romance and sci-fi was a great success across India and Taiwan and had audiences on the edge of their seats.

The **DEMON HUNTERS** cast also includes Jack Kao, Harry Chang and Regina Lei. The production features more than 700 VFX shots and a combined Taiwanese-Hindi soundtrack, including Bollywood-style track “Dadaji Ka Jadoo,” distributed by Sony Music Taiwan.



The DEMON HUNTERS get ready to fight off a new demon
Courtesy, Demon Hunters, film

The international crew included collaborators from Jackie Chan’s action and cinematography teams.

For the first time, India and Taiwan have collaborated to create the film, “DEMON HUNTERS.”

Director Chen stated: “I am proud and excited that three women filmmakers from different cultures and countries came together to create and make DEMON HUNTERS. I am looking forward to working together again and ensuring our voices are heard through stories that have been told traditionally from a male perspective. This film gives us so much insight to do more.”

“This is a great step toward building globally resonant IP from Asia,” said Guliani, producer at Kleos Entertainment Group. “It demonstrates how culturally rooted stories can transcend borders and unlock new film audience ecosystems. Our hope is to do even more cross-cultural and cross-country collaborations.”

Shyu, producer at Light House Productions, added:



Left to Right: Demon Hunters Filmmakers - Producer Gayathiri Guliani, Producer Cindy Shyu, Director Mei-Juin Chen
Courtesy, Demon Hunters, film

“Bringing together Taiwan and India on this scale has been creatively enriching. The film reflects a seamless blend of storytelling traditions and technical excellence that audiences worldwide can connect with. We are looking forward to the US reception for this wild and fun film.”

Release: **DEMON HUNTERS** is set to launch in America August 7, 2026 on demand via AppleTV, Amazon Prime Video, and everywhere you purchase/rent your movies. The film will be available in the country in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Mandarin and English.

SALSA ICON TITO NIEVES BLENDS SALSA WITH CONTEMPORARY STYLES

BY MABEL PAIS

Tito Nieves, the internationally celebrated Salsa icon — affectionately known as “El Pavarotti de la Salsa” (The Pavarotti of Salsa) — is set to electrify the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) on Saturday, September 26, at 8:00 PM with his highly anticipated tour, “50 Años La Historia... Continúa.” (50 Years, The Story Continues). The performance will take place at NJPAC’s Prudential Hall located at One Center Street, Newark, New Jersey.

With an illustrious career spanning over half a century, Tito Nieves stands as one of salsa music’s most influential and beloved figures. His music has crossed borders and generations, bringing the vibrant rhythms of salsa to the world’s grandest stages. Fans can expect a not-to-miss evening featuring Nieves’ classic hits and new material, presented with world-class production and a refreshed repertoire.

Tito Nieves’ 2025 tour, “50 Años – La Historia,” was a resounding success, reaching more than 30 cities across the United States — including major stops in Chicago and New York — and captivating audiences in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Spain. Building on this incredible momentum, “50 Años La Historia... Continúa.” promises to bring his trademark energy and legacy to new stages and audiences.



Tito Nieves. Courtesy, <https://njpac.org>

From his early days with New York’s Orquesta Cimarron and his collaborations with the legendary Héctor Lavoe and Conjunto Clasico, to his groundbreaking solo career launched in 1986, Tito Nieves has continually pushed the boundaries of salsa. He distinguished himself by recording salsa in English, broadening the genre’s appeal. Among his beloved hits are “El Amor Más Bonito,” “Sonámbulo,” and the crowd-pleasing “I Like It Like That.”

More than a concert — it’s a celebration of music that unites people of all backgrounds. Tito Nieves continues his remarkable journey, bringing the soulful sounds of salsa to New Jersey’s premier performing arts venue.

TICKETS

For tickets to experience the legendary Tito Nieves, visit www.NJPAC.org or the NJPAC Box Office at 1 Center Street, Newark or call , calling 888.GO.NJPAC (888.466.5722).

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJPAC)

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

As New Jersey’s anchor cultural institution, NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the state’s and the world’s best artists while acting as a

leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts.

NJPAC has attracted more than 12 million visitors (including more than two million children) since opening its doors in 1997 and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. Visit njpac.org for more information.

NJPAC

One Center Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102
njpac.org or 888.GO.NJPAC
(888.466.5722)

FOLLOW NJPAC ONLINE:

Website: njpac.org
Twitter: @NJPAC
Instagram: @NJPAC
Hashtag: #NJPAC
Facebook: facebook.com/NJPAC
YouTube: NJPACtv

FOLLOW NJPAC’S STANDING IN SOLIDARITY SERIES ONLINE:

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

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

BATTERY DANCE FESTIVAL RETURNS TO NYC FOR FORTY FIFTH YEAR

BY MABEL PAIS

The Battery Dance Festival, New York City's annual longest-running free public dance festival, will take place this year for its 45th year in August. The Festival returns to the waterfront transforming Wagner Park into a vibrant hub of movement, music, and cultural celebration in partnership with Battery Park City Authority.

BATTERY DANCE FESTIVAL OUTDOOR FREE COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS AT WAGNER PARK

MONDAY, AUGUST 10:

The Festival begins on August 10 when the Festival launches an exciting series of free community dance workshops led by selected local dance groups participating in this year's Festival, welcoming New Yorkers of all ages and experience levels to move, learn, and connect through dance. Designed especially for beginners, each 45-minute workshop will introduce participants to a different dance style and cultural tradition, creating an accessible and joyful space for discovery and community engagement. Workshops begin at 4:00pm and offer a unique opportunity to learn directly from artists while celebrating the diversity and energy of New York City's dance community.

4:00pm – 4:45pm: Ashley Liang Dance Company

5:00pm – 5:45pm: Battery Dance

6:00pm – 6:45pm: Ina Medhanet

7:00pm – 7:45pm: Allpayana Danza Tradicional Ecuatoriana

BATTERY DANCE FESTIVAL PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE AT WAGNER PARK**

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11 - SUNDAY, AUGUST 16 AT 7PM

On Tuesday, August 11, 2026, the performances officially begin as the Festival celebrates its legacy as New York City's longest-running free public dance festival — an annual tradition that brings together extraordinary artists and audiences from around the world. For more information on the Festival performance schedule, August 11-16, visit <https://batterydance.org>

**Program subject to change

HONORING THE SPIRIT OF INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

The Battery Dance Festival continues its tradition with a vibrant tribute to the beauty and depth of Indian dance, honoring the spirit of Indian Independence Day.

Sindhoor Natya – Navarasa: Excerpts from “ENCOUNTER” by Aparna Sindhoo and Anil Natyaveda (US-NYC Premiere);

Tanveer Alam: “Zikr” by Tanveer Alam (Canada – US Premiere);

Nava Dance Theatre: “Rogue Gestures/Foreign Bodies” by Nadhi Thekkekk (US – NY Premiere);

Mesma Belsaré: “SIREN” by Mesma Belsaré (US – NY Premiere);

Jeevika Bhat: “Clothesline” by Jeevika Bhat (US - originally premiered in 2025)



Navarasa

SINDHOOR NATYA - NAVARASA



Kalpavruksha Dance Ensemble

Dr. Aparna Sindhoo and Anil Natyaveda, directors of Sindhoo Natya - Navarasa create and perform dance-theater inspired by Bharatanatyam, Kalari, Mallakhamb acrobatics, and theater.

They were artists in residence at Bates Dance Festival, East West Players, Asian Art Museum, Teesri Duniya, UCSB, Wellesley College, CT College. Choreography credits for films including Santhosh Sivan's, Anandabhadram, S M Raju's Varnam and have worked with Oscar winner Anthony Dod Mantle and Cirque du soleil famed Franco Dragone'. They were nominated for the LA Stage Alliance Ovation Award.

Aparna Sindhoo is trained in the Mysore style of Bharatanatyam for more than fifteen years with legendary Dr. K. Venkatalakshamma (Mysore palace dancer) and Dr. Lalitha Srinivasan. She is a recipient of CAC's Individual Artist Fellowship, NPN creation award, Boston Dance Alliance and was nominated for Kerala Film choreography.

Anil Natyaveda is a dancer and a leading exponent in martial arts Kalari ppayattu (Kalaripayattu). He is a recipient of Alliance for California Traditional Arts, the Natyaratnam (Guru Gopinath Trust, India,) and Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute. Sindhoo Natya's "Dance for Everyone," program offers free dance training for two hundred students in India and USA. They teach in California and online. "A magical mix of traditions and styles." - Boston Globe. <https://navarasa.org>

TANVEER ALAM

Toronto-based Tanveer Alam started his Kathak training with Sudeshna Maulik and continued further nuanced studies with guru Sandhya Desai. Alam is a 2019 graduate of western contemporary dance from Dance Arts



Mesma Belsaré



Tanveer Alam

Institute of Canada (DAI). Tanveer has received further kathak training from Pandita Shama Bhate and Sanjukta Sinha. He is currently pursuing mentorships with Harikishan S. Nair and Dheerendra Tiwari.

Alam has performed in the works of Rina Singha, Lata Pada, Padmini Chettur, Harikishan S. Nair, Sashar Zarif, Brandy Leary, Lucy Rupert, and Peter Chin, to name a few. As an emerging choreographer, he has presented work at SummerWorks Festival, Battery Dance Festival +, Luminato Festival, and Tangente.

As an emerging curator, he has supported programming initiatives with Dancemakers, TOES FOR DANCE, and Flemingdon Park Toronto Public Library.

He was the co-curator for the Kathak & Ballet program at Fall For Dance North 2025, a leading international dance festival based in Canada. Across the 25/26 season, Alam has performed at The New York Kathak Festival (New York), Fall For Dance North (Toronto), the Aga Khan Museum (Toronto), and Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (Mumbai) to name a few. Recently, he toured Singapore and India as part of Sampradaya Dance Creations' new work "Kintsugi," performed a solo at the prestigious 28th Vasantotsava Kathak Festival presented by Kalashram in New Delhi, India, and was featured as a dancer in the Toronto presentation of Abi Sampa and Rushil Ranjan Orchestral Qawwali Project. Tanveer was recently awarded the prestigious Eldred Family Protégé award by the Ontario Arts Foundation. <https://tanveerdance.com>

NAVA DANCE THEATRE

Founded in 2012 by Artistic Director Nadhi Thekkekk, Nava Dance Theatre

(NDT) is a bharatanatyam dance company rooted in the South Indian form yet driven by a contemporary and justice-centered artistic practice. Its mission is to use Bharatanatyam as a medium to explore identity, place, and politics through the lens of lived experience. Through new works, residencies, workshops, and community programming, it creates layered, socially engaged art that uplifts historically underrepresented stories and forges powerful intersections between culturally specific art, diaspora, and community care. <https://navadance.org>.

MESMA BELSARÉ

Mesma Belsaré works across choreography, painting, and theater as one project in multiple materials. For twenty-five years, she has pressed through classical training toward the pre-institutional memory the body carries beneath every layer of form. The audience is the site of transformation. Her choreographic works include SIREN, The Hourglass (currently touring Europe), In the Creator's Gaze, and Carmine Bees.

She has performed at Lincoln Center, Asia Society, MFA Boston, the Harbourfront Centre in Toronto, and Siri Fort in New Delhi. Her work has been reviewed by The New York Times, The Guardian, CBC Radio and The Dance Current.

As a painter, her work is held in collections across six countries and has been exhibited at the Royal Ontario Museum, Baruch College, and the Triveni Art Enclave, New Delhi. She holds two fellowships across two disciplines: the Dance/USA Fellowship (Doris Duke Charitable Foundation) and the Individual Artist Fellowship for Painting from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and Mid Atlantic Arts. She lives and works in the New York area.

Ramya Shankaran, who will perform along Mesma is a Bharatanatyam and Mohiniyattam artist, choreographer, and educator with over 27 years of experience in classical Indian dance. She is the founder and director of Adhyaathma LLC, NJ, a 2025 Mid Atlantic Arts Fellow, and recipient of the Bharat Gaurav Samman. <https://mesmabelsare.com>

JEEVIKA BHAT

Jeevika Bhat is a Manhattan based dancer and choreographer who explores the confluence of her cultures through a Contemporary/Indian-American medium. Her background is in Odissi, an East Indian classical dance form known for its nuanced storytelling and graceful fluidity, which she studies under the guidance of Guru Jyoti Rout.

Academically, she is a graduate of UC San Diego, where she earned a BS in Mathematics with minors in Linguistics and Dance, and UC Irvine, where she earned an MFA in Dance. IG: @jeevika.bhat

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

AMERICA'S MATH-E-MAGICIAN WILL MESMERIZE NYC AUDIENCE UNTIL AUGUST 16, 2026



Dr. Arthur Benjamin, magician.

Credit: <https://arthurbenjamin.info>

BY MABEL PAIS

DR ARTHUR BENJAMIN, the magic-performing-math-genius, popularly known as the American “math-e-magician,” will be performing his math magic until Sunday, August 16, 2026. He has been performing his mathematical magic in New York City since June 11, 2026. The performances of “That Math Show” will continue at off-Broadway’s Theater555 located at 555 West 42nd Street. This is a presentation of The Science Theater Company.

SCHEDULE

The remaining performances this week are:

Friday, August 7 @ 7pm

Saturday, August 8 @ 2pm & 7pm

Sunday, August 9 @ 3pm

The final week of performances are

Thursday, August 13 @ 7pm

Friday, August 14 @ 7pm

Saturday, August 15 @ 2pm & 7pm

Sunday, August 16 @ 3pm

Performance runs 75 minutes

TICKETS

Tickets may be purchased at <https://thatmathshow.com> or at the Theater555 box office two hours before curtain time. Check out more at <https://theater555.com>

THE SCIENCE THEATER COMPANY

From the company that produced more than 800 performances of “That Physics Show” and “That Chemistry Show,” The Science Theater Company returns to off-Broadway with “That Math Show.” Presented in association with the National Museum of Mathematics (<https://MoMath.org>), “That Math Show” is created by and features Dr. Arthur Benjamin, a nationally known “math-e-magician”, and MoMath’s Visiting Professor for Public Outreach,

who shares the beauty and magic of mathematics.

His math-magic has been covered in The New York Times, Scientific American and People Magazine. Reader's Digest named him “America's Best Math Whiz.” “That Math Show” is entertainment and wonder for anyone who lives in a world of mathematics...and that means everyone. Can you square a 4-digit number in your head faster than a calculator? “That Math Show” mathemagician can!

“Art Benjamin is one of the world's fastest mental calculators,” states director Eric Krebs. “He will dazzle you with feats of mathematical wizardry. He will break the magician's rule by teaching you how to perform many of these skills yourself. You will leave the theater feeling smarter than you did before you came and have a wonderful time watching this mathemagician in action. From mathematical magic to Fibonacci numbers to pi, you will appreciate math as you've never seen it before.”

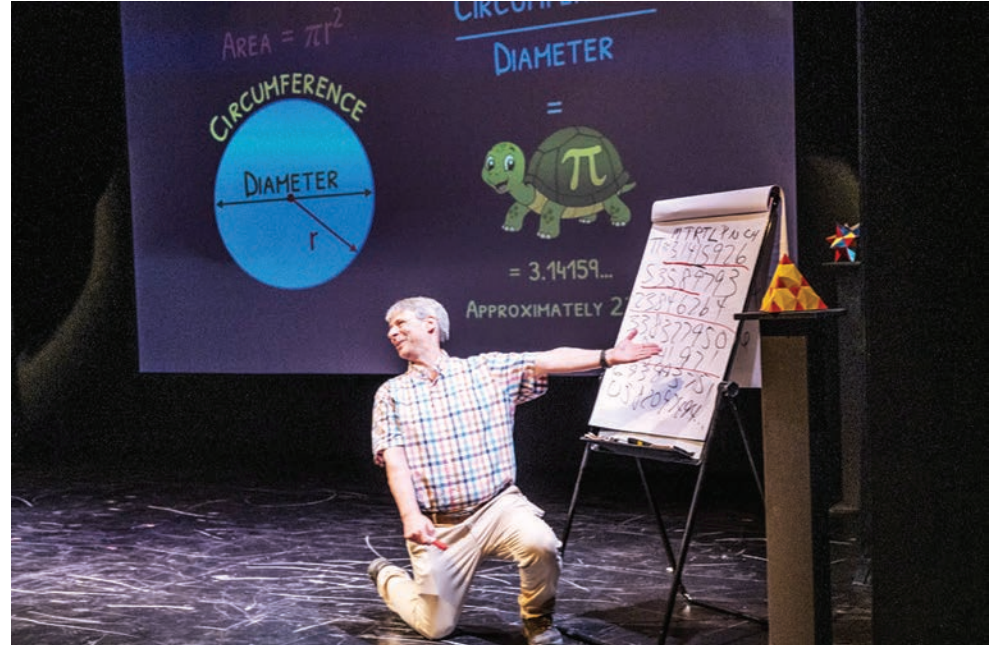
“That Math Show is a delightful evening for people nine to 90!

....Unique, enlightening and entertaining. Dr. Arthur Benjamin is a human calculator not to be believed!” says TheatreScene.Net.

Watch the trailer - <https://youtu.be/jv3Px45L4g?si=7GVJu6Ylaog24fvS>

ARTHUR BENJAMIN
([HTTPS://ARTHURBENJAMIN.INFO](https://ARTHURBENJAMIN.INFO))

Dr. Arthur Benjamin is a professor of mathematics at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, California, and is the Visiting Professor for Public Outreach at the National Museum of Mathematics (MoMath) in New York City. He is also a professional magician and has combined his two loves to create “That Math



Dr. Arthur Benjamin, mathematician.

Credit: <https://arthurbenjamin.info>

National Museum of Mathematics (MoMath)

Credit: <https://momath.org>

Show.” Dr. Benjamin has presented to audiences all over the world and has appeared on many television programs including: “The Today Show,” “CNN,” and “The Colbert Report.” He has been written up in The New York Times, USA Today, Scientific American, and People Magazine. Princeton Review profiled him in their recent book, The Best 300 Professors. He has given 3 TED talks which have been viewed more than 50 million times. He is the author of many books and DVD courses that share the beauty and magic of mathematics. He is also an expert backgammon player and was recently elected to the American Backgammon Hall of Fame. Reader's Digest calls him “America's Best Math Whiz.” Learn more at <https://arthurbenjamin.info>

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MATHEMATICS (MOMATH.ORG)

The National Museum of Mathematics (MoMath.org) is the nation's leading museum devoted to mathematics, offering dynamic exhibits, programs, and experiences that reveal the beauty, creativity, and relevance of math in everyday life. MoMath is widely recognized as North America's first major museum dedicated solely to mathematics, and the only hands-on science center in Manhattan. Now housed in a spectacular new home in an architecturally significant building in the Ladies' Mile Historic District on Sixth Avenue, MoMath has more than doubled the size of its original location. The Museum, referred to by The New

York Times as “the palace of all things mathematical,” features more than 70 extraordinary interactive exhibits that combine deep mathematical ideas with playful, engaging experiences for visitors of all ages.

ERIC KREBS

Eric Krebs (Director), whose theatrical career spans more than 50 years, has worked as a producer, a theater founder and operator, a college professor and occasionally as a performer. In 1974 he founded the George Street Playhouse regional theater in New Brunswick, New Jersey, now in its 52nd year. Off-Broadway he has produced more than 50 plays and musicals. On Broadway he produced: “Bill Maher: Victory Begins At Home,” Neil Simon’s “The Dinner Party,” “It Ain’t Nothin’ But The Blues,” and “Electra.” In April 2007, he performed his own 90-minute adaptation of “King Lear.” For his 80th birthday, he performed “My Father's Voice,” a solo presentation of his father's letters from the Ellis Island Prison and the War in the Pacific, 1938-1945. Mr. Krebs recently retired after 50 years as a professor of theater arts at Baruch College, City University of New York, where he continued a career as an educator that began in 1969 at Rutgers University (37 years) in New Jersey, where he is professor emeritus.

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



Bigg Boss season 20 to premiere on September 6

The countdown to Bigg Boss Season 20 has begun. The makers have unveiled the first teaser of the upcoming season, giving fans a glimpse of Salman Khan's return as host and hinting at a mystery that could shape the new edition.

The teaser opens with Salman making a striking entry alongside a horse. He then delivers a cryptic line that references his 1995 film Karan Arjun.

"Jo Karan Arjun mein hua tha, woh hoga ab Bigg Boss mein... Thathastu!" Salman says in the teaser.

The line is accompanied by a subtle visual cue, leaving viewers to speculate about what the makers have planned for the milestone season. The teaser does not reveal details about the contestants or the twist, but appears designed to encourage fans to look for clues.

Bigg Boss Season 20 will premiere on September 6. The show will stream on JioHotstar and air on Colors TV.

Salman Khan returns as the host for the new season, which marks the reality show's milestone 20th edition. The makers are yet to reveal the contestants and details of the central mystery teased in the promo.

'Real Housewives' star Wendy Osefo says new season will show her 'lowest points'

Following her arrest on fraud charges late last year, "The Real Housewives of Potomac" star Wendy Osefo said she is ready for viewers to see both the good and bad aspects of the cast's personal lives in the show's upcoming 11th season.

The TV personality, 42, discussed what fans can expect going into Season 11 at the New York City premiere of "Real Housewives Ultimate Girls Trip: Roaring 20th" on Aug. 4. The Bravo series debuts on Sunday, Aug. 9.

"The beauty of 'Housewives' is, you guys are able to see us at our highest points and, unfortunately, our lowest points," she told People.

She continued: "That does not escape anyone on this show. And so, this season I'm just living my truth, and you guys will get to see that."

Osefo previously addressed the Oct. 9 arrests of her and her husband Eddie Osefo, 42, in November at BravoCon, where she called it an "unfortunate situation."

"Right now I can't say too much, but I will say when the time is right," she said. "I will share my story with everyone. And for now, they're just allegations. So we will continue to push forward."

Wendy and Eddie Osefo were both arrested in Westminster, Maryland, on Oct. 9, after allegedly "fraudulently reporting a burglary and theft" in 2024, according to the Carroll County Sheriff's Office.

Their arrests followed a police investigation into a reported burglary in their home on April 7, 2024. The



sheriff's office said the couple reported that around "80 items of jewelry, luxury goods, clothing and shoes were stolen, worth a total of more than \$200,000" went missing after they returned home from vacation.

"They are grateful for the outpouring of concern and support from friends, fans and colleagues," a representative for Wendy Osefo said in a statement shared with USA TODAY after the arrests. "The Osefos, alongside their

legal team, look forward to their day in court. At this time, they respectfully ask for privacy as they focus on their family and the legal process ahead."

Prosecutors charged the couple with seven counts of insurance fraud, eight counts of conspiracy to commit insurance fraud and one count of making a false statement to a police officer, according to the Baltimore Banner. Their trial is set for Jan. 25, 2027.

Source: USA TODAY

At 83, Amitabh Bachchan continues to maintain a work schedule that would put many younger actors to the test.

The veteran actor recently revealed that he worked a 24-hour shift, wrapping up at 7 am after beginning work at the same time the previous day. With barely any time to rest, Big B is already gearing up for another major commitment, the shooting of Kaun Banega Crorepati, as the first broadcast date is out.

Big B took to his blog and wrote, "... aaaahhhh .. got hold of time in time .. finished work at 7 am this morning .. of work that began at 7 am yesterday .. but the importance of its presentation and its timely work was necessary .. so DID IT .. but more the relief of having connected with the daily routine of the Blog and the Eff .."

He further revealed that he will be shooting for KBC today, August 6, and wrote, "I shall retire now get some food in the belly .. hit a pillow for a while for, tomorrow the 6th Aug is another early call .. the first Broadcast Date for KBC is announced .. and missing that would mean a job replacement for me .. so off to do what needs to be done."

Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC) Season 18 will premiere on Monday, August 10 at 9 pm on Sony Entertainment Television and Sony LIV, followed by weekday episodes

Amitabh Bachchan, 83, heads to shoot KBC after working a 24-hour shift

from Monday to Friday. Big B will return as the host, with the new season built around the theme 'Sochna Padega'.

The season explores the idea that in an age where knowledge is universally accessible, the competitive advantage lies in the ability to interpret, connect and apply it.

Apart from Kaun Banega Crorepati Season 18, Big B also has Nag Ashwin's Kalki 2898 AD sequel in the pipeline. The film will see Prabhas and Kamal Haasan reprise their roles. While the first instalment also featured Deepika Padukone in a pivotal role, she will not be returning for the sequel. The makers announced their decision to part ways on social media.

There have since been reports that Sai Pallavi could replace Deepika in the sequel, but the makers have not issued any official confirmation. The first film collected over Rs 1,000 crore worldwide and emerged as a blockbuster, raising expectations for its sequel.





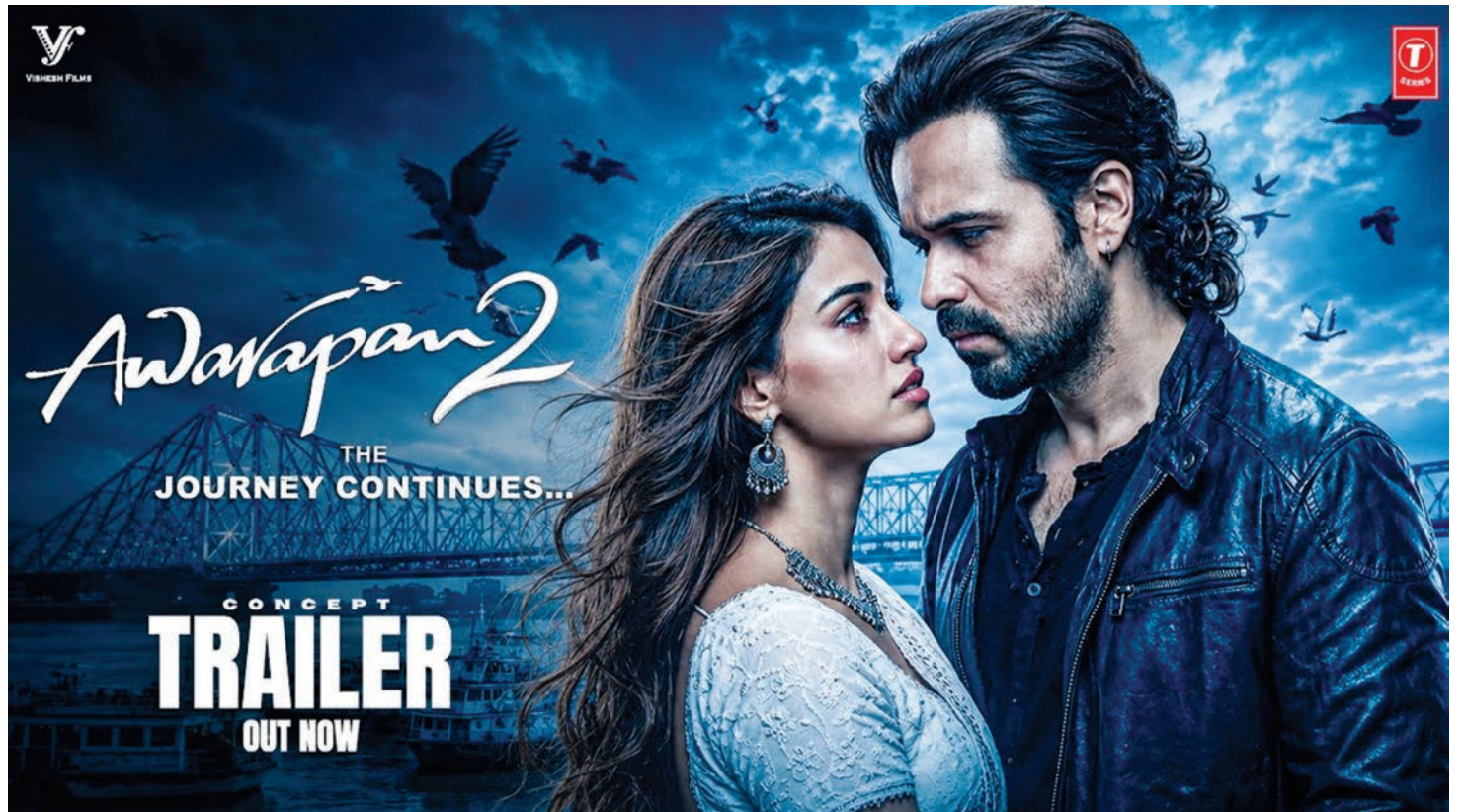
Pankaj Tripathi says Indian films are global now as they go more local

The last few years have seen Indian films travel across borders to be feted at various film festivals and award shows around the world, and in some cases, even break the bank at foreign box offices beyond the diaspora. Be it mainstream offerings like RRR or Kill, or independent films like All We Imagine as Light or Songs of Forgotten Trees, Indian films are winning hearts worldwide. Actor Pankaj Tripathi, who has seen his fair share of cinema over the years, believes this shift is because of Indian writers and filmmakers returning to their roots.

In a candid chat with Hindustan Times, the actor reflects on how Indian cinema is going back to its core strength of focusing on what is local and cultural, something that Western audiences want to see.

"The core value of Indian emotion is empathy," says the two-time National Award winner. "And then, our culture has so many festivals, across states and regions. So, when one incorporates that in stories, our culture, our emotions in an authentic manner, then that becomes global. That is the strength of Indian stories."

Awarapan 2: Emraan Hashmi, Disha Patani set for dark revenge saga



The trailer of Awarapan 2 was released on August 6, bringing back actor Emraan Hashmi as Shivam Pandit nearly 19 years after the first film. Actor Disha Patani has also joined the cast as Zara, adding a new layer to Shivam's journey.

The upcoming film sets up a darker story of pain, rage and revenge, with Shivam returning to face consequences left unresolved earlier.

The promo places Shivam in a world driven by vengeance and redemption, while returning to the emotional tone associated with the franchise. Emraan Hashmi appears as an older, scarred Shivam, still carrying the weight of his

past. The trailer also highlights action and music as central parts of the film's narrative.

Alongside Hashmi and Disha Patani, veteran actor Shabana Azmi features as Nafisa. The trailer also introduces actors Puran Gabbi as Zorawar, Anirudh Rawal as Sikandar, Surendar Vicky as Jaideep, Vijayant Kohli as Mehmood, and Atul Kumar as Samarth. Together, these key characters set the stage for Shivam's return.

The music of Awarapan 2 has been composed by Mithoon, Jeet Gannguli, Amaal Malik, Ankit Sachdev and Wasif Ahmad, with lyrics by Sayeed Qadri, Rashmi Virag, Akhil Sachdeva and

Sachin Singh Chandel.

The album has already featured Ve Junoon, Yeh Awarapan and Toh Phir Aao, with more songs still to come. Tera Mera Rishta, composed by Mithoon and sung by Saaj Bhatt and Subodh Sharma, runs through the trailer and connects its emotional and action-focused moments.

Mukesh Bhatt and Vishesh Films present Awarapan 2, produced by Vishesh Bhatt, directed by Nitin Kakkar and written by Bilal Siddiqui.

The film is set for a worldwide theatrical release on August 14, 2026, with Pen Marudhar handling All India theatrical distribution.

Shah Rukh Khan tops India's most valuable celebrity brand list



The latest Celebrity Brand Valuation Report 2025 by Kroll has revealed a major change in the rankings of India's most valuable celebrity brands. After leading the list in 2024, Virat Kohli has lost the top position.

This year, Shah Rukh Khan has claimed the number one spot, even though he has not had a theatrical release since Dunki in December 2023. Ranveer Singh has also moved ahead of Virat Kohli to secure the second position, mainly due to the success of Dhurandhar.

According to the Brand Valuation Report, Shah Rukh Khan currently ranks number one with a brand value of USD 177.9 million after moving up from third place in 2024. Ranveer Singh is holding the second position for the second consecutive year. While he was behind Virat Kohli in 2024, this year he is behind King Khan, with an estimated brand value of USD 162.9 million. Virat Kohli slipped to third place with USD 158.4 million.

Sachin Tendulkar holds the fourth position with USD 125.9 million, followed by MS Dhoni with USD 115.3 million. Alia Bhatt is ranked sixth on the list, as her brand value is USD 93.9 million, while Deepika Padukone takes the seventh spot with USD 89.2 million.

Hrithik Roshan stands at the eighth spot with USD 88.9 million, Amitabh Bachchan is ninth with USD 80.8 million, and Akshay Kumar completes the top 10 list with a brand value of USD 80 million. Other well-known artists and cricketers on the list are Ranbir Kapoor, Rashmika Mandanna, Salman Khan, Rohit Sharma, Kareena Kapoor, Kartik Aaryan, Kiara Advani, Kriti Sanon, Ananya Panday and Jasprit Bumrah.

Coming back to Shah Rukh Khan, the actor is set to return to the big screen with Siddharth Anand's King. The film also features Suhana Khan, Deepika Padukone and Abhishek Bachchan in important roles. The film will hit the big screens on December 24, 2026.



Anne Hathaway says she found a family in *The End of Oak Street* co-stars

Anne Hathaway may be dealing with dinosaurs in *The End of Oak Street*, but it was her human and canine co-stars who made the shoot memorable. The Oscar-winning actor has spoken about finding an easy equation with Ewan McGregor, Maisy Stella and Christian Convery, sharing that somewhere between filming the action and spending time together off camera, they began to feel like an actual family.

And it seems Hathaway found the perfect on-screen husband in McGregor. The two play parents to Stella and Convery in David Robert Mitchell's sci-fi adventure, which sees the Platt family land in serious trouble after their suburban neighbourhood is transported to a world filled with dinosaurs.

Talking about working with McGregor, Hathaway, in an exclusive statement to India Today, said there was a sense of fun that he naturally brought to the part. She was also impressed by just how easily the *Star Wars* actor slipped into action mode when the stunts kicked in.

She said, "Ewan is such a joy. He's a joy to act with; he's just a joy to sit next to in a director's chair in between shots. He's just a lovely human, and I was just really looking forward to seeing him play this part. I always think that Ewan brings the most wonderful energy, just a sense of fun to all of his roles, and so I was really excited to have that dynamic with the person who would be playing my husband, to see what kind of relationship we would have with that."

"And then once we got into the action portion of the film, all of a sudden you see all of Ewan's many years of stunt training kick in. And he was phenomenal. I mean, he could pick up stunts like that -- swing a sledgehammer like it's a lightsaber -- so he's just absolutely wonderful, a dream co-star, great laugh, A-pluses across the board," *The Odyssey* actor added.

But it wasn't just her on-screen husband that Hathaway bonded with. The actor was particularly taken by young Convery's ability to move in and out of emotionally intense scenes with surprising ease. With Stella, the relationship went a step further, as the two ended up becoming good friends during the shoot.

Priyanka Chopra and Russell Crowe team up for sci-fi thriller *Bluefly*

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Oscar winner Russell Crowe are set to share the screen in the upcoming sci-fi action thriller *Bluefly*. The film will be directed by Nimród Antal, known for *Predators*, while the screenplay has been written by David Frigerio, William Eubank and Carlyle Eubank.

Set deep in the Congo, *Bluefly* follows a grieving UN translator who is pulled into a covert mission to recover a mysterious downed aircraft that officially does not exist. As a Special Operations team travels upriver through militia-controlled territory, the mission takes a dangerous turn, with the closer they get to the aircraft, the more they realise that they were never supposed to bring it back.

According to Deadline, the film is being produced by Michael Jefferson for Polite Society, David Frigerio for Broken Open Pictures, Deborah Glover for G2 Dispatch, Arianne Fraser and Delphine Perrier for Highland Film Group, and Vanessa Yao Guo. Lia Buman, Guy Davies, RuthAnne Frigerio, Brian Kavanaugh-Jones, Jason Kringstein, Katie Leary, Scott Levenson and James Norbury are serving as executive producers.

Highland Film Group is handling the worldwide rights to the film and will launch sales at the upcoming Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) market. Principal photography is expected to begin later this year on Australia's Gold Coast.

Meanwhile, Crowe, who won an Oscar for *Gladiator*, was recently seen in *Nuremberg*. He also has several projects



lined up, including Netflix's thriller *Unabomber*, *The Weight*, *Billion Dollar Spy* and Amazon MGM's *Highlander* reboot.

Priyanka, on the other hand, recently starred in Prime Video's *The Bluff* and

appeared in *Heads of State* alongside Idris Elba and John Cena. She is also set to headline SS Rajamouli's upcoming action-adventure epic *Varanasi*. The film is scheduled for release in April 2027.

Hollywood star Michelle Pfeiffer never wants to star in another movie



Veteran actor Michelle Pfeiffer has revealed that she is no longer interested in starring in leading movie roles, saying she has found greater joy in ensemble television projects, according to People. Speaking at an event, Pfeiffer said she prefers being part of a larger cast rather than carrying a film as the central character. "I never want to star in another movie, I swear to God. I only want to do ensemble pieces. It's so much more fun, I love it so much," Pfeiffer said.

The 68-year-old actor appeared on the panel alongside fellow Emmy nominees Elle Fanning, Dale Dickey, Karolina Wydra, Rhea Seehorn and Jessica Williams, according to People.

Pfeiffer's comments came after her experience working on two television projects this year: Apple TV's *Margo's Got Money Troubles* and *The Madison*, which streams on Paramount.

Talking about *Margo's Got Money Troubles*, an adaptation of Rufi Thorpe's bestselling novel, Pfeiffer praised the strength of women-led performances on television. "I've just been so bowled over by the female performances on television, and honestly, they're just really owning TV," she said, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

The actor also highlighted the complexity of the show's characters and shared a message she associated with a quote often attributed to Robin Williams.

Bus Driver Kicked Explosive Drone Out Of Air At German Airport: Lawmaker

AUGUST 8, 2026

BERLIN (TIP): A bus driver knocked an explosive-laden drone out of the air, potentially preventing an attack this week at a German airport that serves as a major NATO and cargo logistics hub, a senior lawmaker said on Friday, Aug 7.

The man spotted the drone flying low while he was working at Leipzig/Halle airport late on Tuesday, then kicked out at it in what Detlef Seif described as a courageous but dangerous act.

The drone, which prosecutors said was equipped with professional explosives and a detonator, then crashed nearby, Seif, from the governing conservative CDU party, told journalists.

Federal prosecutors have launched a counterterrorism probe into what they say was a serious attack that could have impacted foreign and domestic security. The incursion was reported on Wednesday. Seif's statement was the most detailed account to date of how the drone was spotted and stopped.

Authorities have not named the man or said where the drone came from and how it managed to get into a restricted part of the airport. Leipzig/Halle is the main operational base for NATO's Strategic Airlift International Solution, known as SALIS, which uses Antonovs to deliver equipment to strengthen the defence pact's eastern flank among other missions.

It is also used by logistics companies including DHL. German authorities have in the past accused Moscow of carrying out hybrid attacks - incidents of aggression that fall short of acts of war.

Putin could strike NATO allies to test bloc's resolve, say US intel reports

AUGUST 8, 2026

WASHINGTON (TIP): New US intelligence assessments suggest Russian President Vladimir Putin could test NATO's unity with a limited attack on one of its member states within the next few years, according to a report by The Wall Street Journal. Officials say the scenarios being examined range from cyberattacks and covert operations to a small-scale military incursion.

The findings mark a significant change in Washington's assessment. Until recently, US officials believed Putin would avoid confronting NATO directly while Russia remained tied down in Ukraine. That view has now shifted.

Officials say the change comes as Russia faces growing pressure on multiple fronts. Ukrainian drone strikes are increasingly hitting Russian military targets and oil infrastructure, while Moscow's advances on the battlefield have slowed despite heavy losses.

US officials told the publication that any move against NATO would not necessarily be aimed at winning territory but at exposing cracks within the alliance.

"The question mark is how the United States would respond in that case," said Heather Conley, senior fellow with the American Enterprise Institute, on a possible Russian incursion. "It has always been a goal [of Russia's] to challenge the credibility of NATO and to separate the United States from its allies."

US and European leaders also point to what they see as warning signs already underway, including Russian cruise missiles landing in Poland and drones entering Romanian airspace.

Officials believe Moscow could resort to several forms of aggression if pressure on Putin continues to grow.

The possibilities under review include cyberattacks on NATO members, covert operations involving unmarked armed groups seizing small pieces of territory, or a limited military push along NATO's eastern border. Intelligence assessments estimate that such a move, if it happens, could come anytime between this autumn and 2029.

The reports say a direct land incursion remains the least likely scenario because it would trigger NATO's Article 5 collective defence clause. Hybrid attacks, however, fall into a



legal grey area. "This has always been NATO's challenge to respond to a sub-Article Five attack, and it's been very true that to this point, NATO allies have preferred not to escalate," Conley said. Referring to Russia's cyberattacks on Estonia in 2007, she noted that the country dealt with the crisis on its own rather than invoking NATO.

NATO said that it is ready for any contingency. "We are always thinking through and preparing for any number of scenarios. NATO is watching and we are ready to deter and defend as necessary, which we continue to demonstrate," said Col Martin O'Donnell, a NATO spokesman.

The new intelligence comes as Washington struggles with concerns over shrinking stocks of critical weapons.

Officials say inventories of long-range Precision Strike Missiles, Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS), and Stinger missiles have fallen after years of military support for Ukraine and recent operations involving Iran. Supplies of Patriot, SM-3 and THAAD interceptors, along with THAAD radars and air-defence artillery units, are also under strain.

The Pentagon, however, rejected claims that the military is running short of key weapons.

Chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell called reports of munition shortages false, while White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said the US military had "more than enough" weapons to "serve all of President Trump's strategic goals". She added that Trump has also directed defence contractors to increase production.

AUGUST 8, 2026

HODEIDAH (TIP): Spain announced on Friday, Aug 7, it would introduce temporary border checks on travellers from Italy in response to Rome imposing similar measures after a mass migrant rush into Ceuta.

The checks, which come "amid the persistent irregular migration pressure" facing Italy, will start at midnight on Saturday and last until September 7, Spain's interior ministry said in a statement.

Hours earlier, Spain threatened Italy with countermeasures if it did not swiftly lift its own border checks, drawing a rebuff from Rome.

The rare spat between the European Union and NATO allies came after tens of thousands of people crossed from Morocco to Spain's North African territory on July 30-31 in an unprecedented, deadly rush.

The scenes infuriated EU members that back a hard line on irregular immigration, including Italy which imposed a one-month suspension of its visa free-travel Schengen deal with Spain.

The Spanish government slammed the measure Friday as "unfair, contrary to the EU's interests and discriminatory for the Spanish population".

Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares described it as "a torpedo fired at the hull of European unity."

"We urge the government of Italy to rectify, put an end to the checks and treat Spaniards like other European citizens," the government said.

He threatened "proportional measures" in response by Sunday if Italy failed to comply.

In tit-for-tat move, Spain imposes border controls on Italy over Ceuta



Within hours, the government of Italy's far-right Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said it "had no intention of revising the decision" before August 15, when it said Spanish authorities "expected a new wave of migration" to hit Ceuta.

"Italy does not accept ultimatums or impositions from abroad regarding national security and border control," Meloni's office said in a statement.

"Only when there is certainty that there are no security or terrorism risks to Italy, that no new wave is occurring, and that no irregular migrants are heading toward European territory, will the decision be

reconsidered," it read.

Spain's interior ministry announced the reciprocal measures within hours.

Spanish police have been monitoring online rumours and social media about possible fresh arrivals in Ceuta in mid-August, according to local media. But authorities have not expressly said they expect a repeat of last week's rush.

Border authorities would in the meantime "do their utmost to ensure maximum ease of movement for Spanish and European citizens" who are not affected by border checks, the Italian statement added.

Italy, which does not share a land border with Spain, introduced border controls at maritime and air entry points for third-country nationals arriving from the Iberian country.

The move announced on July 31 was an "extraordinary measure" intended to "safeguard national security and prevent possible repercussions for our nation", Meloni said at the time.

She was among EU leaders who called for Spain to be suspended from the visa-free Schengen travel zone after the Ceuta incident, despite such a move being legally impossible.

11 Injured In Yemen's Houthi Strikes On Saudi Arabia

AUGUST 8, 2026

RIYADH (TIP): More than 10 civilians, including a 4-year-old child, were injured in Saudi Arabia on Thursday after a series of attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels, according to the Saudi military.

The attacks, which took place in the southern region of Najran, near the Yemeni border, came hours after the Iran-backed rebels claimed responsibility for another series of strikes in central and eastern Yemen that killed at least 30 government troops and wounded at least 50 others.

A Houthi leader said Saudi-backed troops were targeted in the attacks and that "hundreds" were either killed or injured. The assaults hit camps for forces of the internationally recognized government in the provinces of Marib and Hadramout, the Yemeni officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Turki al-Malki, a spokesman for the Saudi military, said the later attack wounded seven Saudi nationals, one Yemeni, two Egyptians and one Pakistani expat. The Houthis did not release any statement.

"The terrorist Houthi militia carried out these terrorist attacks using indiscriminate shelling against civilian objects, which is a flagrant violation of the Customary International Humanitarian Law through deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian objects," al-Malki said in a post on X.

The back-to-back attacks mark the latest major escalation since a de facto truce in Yemen in April 2022 that halted major fighting between the Houthis and a Saudi-led coalition, which backs the internationally recognized government.

Yemen's army reported publicly only that the Houthi attacks on its camps had left dead and wounded among its troops, but it didn't give a death toll.

Houthi Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree said the attacks on camps in Marib and Hadramout provinces were carried out with ballistic missiles and drones and that they were in response to a build-up of Saudi-backed forces in eastern Yemen.

The strikes killed and injured "hundreds of Saudi enemy mercenaries" and destroyed and burned camps, depots, military vehicles and weapons, the Houthi leader said. "We call upon all our people to remain vigilant and confront any Saudi aggression, and to strike Saudi troop concentrations wherever they may be," Saree said in his address.

The US mission to Yemen expressed condolences to the families of the killed Yemeni soldiers in Hadramout and Marib, adding in a statement on X that the attacks by the Houthis "represent yet another example of their terrorism against the Yemeni people."

Thailand school shooting leaves eight dead, over 20 injured; Suspect, grandparents among fatalities

AUGUST 8, 2026

BANGKOK (TIP): The death toll in the school shooting at Debsirin Nonthaburi School in Thailand's Nonthaburi province rose to eight on Friday (local time), with 22 others injured, while the grandparents of the suspected teenage shooter were later found dead at their residence.

According to the Bangkok Post, the suspected shooter, a Grade 8 student at the school, was found dead inside the campus after the attack. Authorities later searched the suspect's home in Bang Bua Thong district and discovered the bodies of the teenager's 73-year-old grandfather and 74-year-old grandmother, both with fatal gunshot wounds to the head.

Investigators believe the grandparents were killed before the school shooting, though the exact sequence of events remains under investigation.

According to Thailand's Public Health Minister Pattana Promphat, the eight fatalities include five teachers, the suspected shooter and the two grandparents. Twenty-two people sustained injuries, including nine who were seriously hurt and taken to hospitals for treatment, the Bangkok Post reported.

Police said the teenager entered the school armed with a 9mm handgun believed to belong to the grandfather. Authorities recovered the firearm along with additional ammunition from the scene. Officials said the suspected shooter had barricaded himself inside a school building before being found dead from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound, according to the Bangkok Post.

Videos verified by CNN showed terrified students taking cover beneath classroom desks as gunshots echoed through the school, while other footage captured students being evacuated by school staff.

One student told CNN that classmates quickly barricaded their classroom by pushing desks and chairs against the door



Schoolgirls being carried away from the scene of the shooting in Bang Krui district of Nonthaburi province. Photograph: AP

before switching off the lights and waiting for help.

Thailand's Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul described the attack as a tragedy and said it could have been even more devastating, noting that the suspected shooter still had more than 30 rounds of ammunition remaining, CNN reported. He also said preliminary information suggested the teenager had been experiencing stress related to studies, though authorities have not confirmed a motive.

Police are continuing forensic examinations of the crime scene, interviewing witnesses and investigating how the teenager gained access to the firearm. The incident is among Thailand's deadliest school shootings in recent years and follows previous fatal attacks at educational institutions in 2022 and earlier this year.

Iran's supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei in critical condition; rushed to hospital: Israeli media

AUGUST 8, 2026

TEHRAN (TIP): Reports have surfaced in Israeli media claiming that Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei is in critical condition and has been rushed to a hospital.

According to Channel 14 (C14), citing sources inside Iran, and a prior report by the Jerusalem Post, which quoted the IranWire outlet and sources close to President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration, rumours that Khamenei is in an "extremely critical condition" are circulating widely at the highest levels of the regime. One source cited by the Jerusalem Post stated, "We would not be surprised if we heard news of his martyrdom soon."

Khamenei assumed the position of Supreme Leader shortly after his father was killed in joint US-Israeli military strikes on February 28, 2026. Since taking office, he has not made any public appearances and has communicated exclusively through written statements.

Reports indicate he was injured and potentially disfigured in the initial strikes that targeted his father's compound, forcing him into hiding and compelling him to communicate with senior regime figures through a slow network of intermediaries to avoid targeting.

Adding to the speculation surrounding his status, President Masoud Pezeshkian acknowledged in a state TV interview that direct interaction with Khamenei is currently "very difficult."

International and regional reports have repeatedly questioned his physical location and capacity. In July, Saudi



news outlet al-Hadath, citing an Israeli security source, claimed that Khamenei was "not in Iran."

Around the same time, US President Donald Trump asserted in a Fox News interview that Iran's top military leadership had been eliminated, claiming that Khamenei was "90% gone" and incapacitated following the military campaign.

Iranian state officials have previously downplayed the severity of his initial injuries, but the persistent lack of live appearances or direct public addresses continues to fuel intense regional and international speculation regarding his health and leadership stability.

Pak, Turkiye, Saudi Arabia sign joint defence agreement

AUGUST 8 2026

MECCA (TIP): Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkiye have signed a joint defence pact as tensions in the Middle East continue to escalate with the United States and Israel's war on Iran. The agreement, called the Mecca Joint Deterrence Agreement, was signed in the Saudi holy city of Mecca on Friday, August 7, by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The pact is intended to provide a collective deterrence against any act of aggression by stipulating that an armed attack against any of the three would be regarded as an attack on all, the partners said jointly.

In a statement of its own, the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the joint defence deal signed was "guided by the longstanding historical ties among the three states, based on the enduring bonds of brotherhood and Islamic solidarity that unite them, and building upon their shared strategic interests and longstanding defence cooperation".

The agreement reflects "the three states' shared commitment to further strengthening their collective security and to promoting peace, security, and stability in the region and beyond, in pursuit of a secure and prosperous future", it added.

The deal comes a day after Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, accompanied by powerful army chief Asim Munir, arrived in Saudi Arabia and performed the Umrah pilgrimage in Mecca.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also travelled to Saudi Arabia on Friday to meet Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The defence agreement between Ankara, Riyadh and Islamabad has been in the making for some time. Negotiations began soon after the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel and the onset of the subsequent Israeli genocide in Gaza, and gained pace amid the US and Israel's ongoing war on Iran. While Turkiye and Pakistan have not been directly impacted by tensions in the region so far, Saudi Arabia, which hosts US military assets and infrastructure, has come under attack from Iran and its allies, the Houthis in Yemen. Tehran has also attacked other Gulf nations and Jordan, which also host US military assets. But the three nations have been particularly concerned about the impact of Iran's war and Israel's growing influence – and attacks – on the region. Israel has occupied roughly one-fifth of Lebanon as it allegedly targets strongholds of the Lebanese armed group, Hezbollah, which is also backed by Iran.

Pak bans international media from reporting in most of country

AUGUST 7, 2026

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistani authorities have imposed severe new restrictions on international media, including barring them from reporting in most of the country, in a move that has provoked a significant backlash from journalist organisations.

According to the new rules anyone, including Pakistani nationals, should seek permission first if they want to report from anywhere in Pakistan except three cities – Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore.

Pakistan is ranked 153 out of 180 on the World Press Freedom Index. Successive regimes there have imposed restrictions and censorship on local media. But this is the first time they have put restrictions on international media.

The sudden announcement of new rules came after the killing of dozens of protesters in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, which was only reported by international media.

Al Jazeera's website was restricted in Pakistan after it reported on the bloody protests and the news that people were boycotting regional elections from Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan's Kashmir.

Pakistan's information ministry derided Al Jazeera's reporting as "yellow journalism", a derogatory term used for sensationalised reporting.



Authorities have not publicly announced a ban of the news website, but it remains inaccessible without a VPN.

The BBC reported from Pakistan-administered Kashmir and quoted protesters and people who accused Pakistani security forces of firing at unarmed protesters. Pakistani authorities issued a strongly worded denial and asked all journalists to immediately leave Kashmir.

The new rules, which the ministry of information called the Foreign Media Facilitation Guidelines 2026, do not specify a timeframe for how long it would take for journalists to be granted permission to report.

Nasir Zaidi, a former general secretary at the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and a senior journalist, said that international media has been objectively reporting on protest movements, crackdowns on opposition parties and the repressive political

situation in Pakistan.

"For decades, various governments have always tried to kill the news and they failed because of the reporting of international media and now it came up with these repressive rules to curb the movement of journalists. They don't want the truth to be reported," said Zaidi.

The government denies that the new rules are a blanket restriction on the movement of journalists or constrict media.

Zaidi, who was subjected to public flogging during the military dictatorship of Gen Zia ul-Haq for raising his voice for media rights, said that he had never witnessed such times before.

"Despite the fact I have worked during martial laws, but, such curbs and restrictions on international media were unseen. It is worse than martial law," he added. According to the new guidelines, the accreditation and registration is mandatory for international media outlets and journalists in the country.

The new rules also state that journalists can lose their accreditation for "acts against ideology, sovereignty, security or public order of Pakistan".

Legal experts and journalists have said that these stipulations are vague and difficult to interpret.

"Pakistan is sending a very wrong message to the world with all these rules curbing free speech and freedom of international media," said Zaidi.

Hasina vows she will return to Bangladesh despite risk of arrest

AUGUST 7, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Bangladesh's former prime minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5 signalled her determination to return home in December after two years in self-exile in India, despite the risk of arrest or a death sentence, saying she wanted to help put the country back on the right track by restoring democracy.

In her first news conference since fleeing Dhaka on August 5, 2024, Hasina outlined several demands ahead of her planned return, including lifting the ban on her Awami League party and releasing political prisoners. Despite repeated questions at the virtual interaction, she did not announce a specific date for her homecoming.

The Bangladesh government reacted sharply, with the foreign ministry expressing outrage over the news conference and saying India had not responded to repeated requests to extradite Hasina.

The 78-year-old has lived in self-exile in India since fleeing Bangladesh and described India as a "great friend" that has always stood by her country during difficult times.

"I know they may put me in jail or they may kill me, anything may happen, but



still I have to go home," Hasina said while responding to questions after her address. She did not appear on video during the 90-minute event, which featured several Awami League leaders.

"Whatever fate awaits me, I will return to my people... I know I may be detained. I may be sent to prison. They may try to enforce verdicts issued in fabricated cases. But fear cannot decide my duty to the people," she said, referring to the death sentence given to her last year by the International Crimes Tribunal over the use of lethal force against protesters in 2024.

Hasina insisted her return was not about bringing the Awami League back to power but about restoring democracy and justice in Bangladesh.

"My return, and the return of the Awami League to the democratic

process, is not about power. It is about putting Bangladesh back on the right track. It is about reviving the country's path of development, progress, secularism and stability," she said.

"Bangladesh needs reconciliation, Bangladesh needs constitutional development and constitutional position. Bangladesh's people should have their constitutional rights and justice – now they have nothing," she added.

Hasina outlined what she described as the "necessary steps to save Bangladesh". She said the ban on the Awami League must be lifted, political prisoners released and false cases dropped.

She also called for the restoration of freedom of speech, protection of media freedom, judicial independence and law enforcement agencies that "must serve the people, not those who use power for revenge".

Hasina said December had been chosen for her return because it is "our victory month".

Bangladesh became an independent nation in December 1971 after the Liberation War with Pakistan, making the month especially significant for the Awami League, whose founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman — Hasina's father — led the country to independence.

Healthy skin, naturally: Simple habits for a radiant look

Everyone wants skin that looks fresh, healthy and youthful. But with endless skincare advice, products and beauty trends competing for attention, knowing what your skin really needs can be difficult. The truth is that good skin does not always require an elaborate routine. Understanding your skin type and following a few simple, consistent habits can make a noticeable difference. Skin types generally include dry, oily, normal and combination, and each has its own requirements. However, the basics of good skincare remain largely the same: keep the skin clean, maintain its moisture, protect it from the sun and support it with a healthy lifestyle.

Cleanse Gently

Washing your face is an essential part of maintaining clean and healthy skin. Cleanse your face twice a day, preferably in the morning and before bedtime, with a mild cleanser suited to your skin type. Avoid washing your face too frequently, as this can remove the skin's natural oils and leave it dry or irritated. Use lukewarm water rather than very hot or very cold water, and gently pat your face dry after cleansing.

Exfoliate With Care

Exfoliation helps remove dead skin cells and excess oil from the surface of the skin, leaving it feeling smoother. However, excessive exfoliation can cause irritation and weaken the skin's protective barrier.

For most people, gentle exfoliation once or twice a week is enough. Those with sensitive skin should use extra caution and avoid aggressive scrubbing.



Keep Your Skin Moisturised

Moisturising is important for every skin type. A suitable moisturiser helps prevent moisture loss and supports the skin barrier.

Choose a product according to your skin's needs. Dry skin may benefit from a richer cream, while oily or combination skin often feels more comfortable with a lightweight, non-comedogenic moisturiser. Winter can be particularly harsh on the skin. Cold weather and dry indoor air can leave it rough, tight and flaky, making regular moisturising even more important.

Make Sunscreen a Daily Habit

Sun protection is one of the most important steps in any skincare routine. Long-term exposure to ultraviolet radiation can contribute to premature ageing, pigmentation and wrinkles, while also increasing the risk of skin cancer.

Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher to

exposed skin before going outdoors. Make sunscreen part of your everyday routine rather than using it only during summer. UV rays can still affect the skin on cloudy days and during winter.

Give Your Lips Extra Care

The delicate skin on the lips can become dry and cracked, especially in cold or windy weather. Applying a moisturising lip balm regularly can help prevent chapping and keep the lips comfortable.

A lip balm with sun protection can provide additional protection during the day.

Add Moisture to Dry Air

Indoor heating and dry winter air can make the skin feel dehydrated and uncomfortable. A humidifier can increase moisture in the surrounding air and may help reduce dryness.

If you use one, clean it regularly and follow the manufacturer's maintenance instructions to keep it hygienic.

FOOD CORNER

Lamb makhani

Ingredients

(1 tbsp) Olive oil, (1/2) Yellow or White Onion, chopped, (1) Shallot, finely chopped, (2 tbsp) Butter, (2 tsp) Lemon juice, (1 tbsp) Garlic, pressed or grated, (1 tbsp) Ginger, grated, (1.5 tsp) Garam Masala, (1.5 tsp) Chili Powder, (1.5 tsp) Ground cumin, (1 tsp) Turmeric (optional), (1) Bay leaf, (1/4 cup) Plain yogurt, (1 cup), Half-and-Half or heavy cream, (1.5 cups) Tomato puree, (1/4 tsp, or to taste) Cayenne pepper, (1 pinch) Salt, (1 pinch) Black pepper, (2.5 lbs, cut into bite-size pieces) Lamb Boneless Shoulder Roast, (1 tbsp) Butter, (2 tsp) Garam masala, (1 pinch, or to taste) Cayenne pepper.

Directions

Heat tablespoon oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Sauté shallot and onion until soft and translucent. Stir in butter, lemon juice, ginger-garlic paste, 1.5 teaspoon garam masala, chili powder, cumin, turmeric and bay leaf. Cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add tomato puree, and cook for 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Stir in heavy cream and yogurt. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and set aside.

Heat 1 tablespoon butter in a large heavy skillet over medium heat. Fry the lamb cubes until lightly browned, stirring constantly. Reduce heat, and season with 2 tsp garam masala and cayenne. Stir in a few spoonfuls of gravy, and simmer until liquid has reduced. Stir cooked lamb into the sauce. Bring the curry to a simmer and let it cook for at least 1.5 hours, stirring frequently to prevent the sauce from burning on the bottom of the saucepan. Serve with hot rice or naan bread.



Nourish, repair and revive: DIY hair masks for dry hair



Dry, damaged and frizzy hair can make even the best hairstyle look dull. Heat styling, colouring, chemical treatments, pollution and changing weather can all leave hair feeling rough and brittle. Fortunately, a few simple ingredients from the kitchen can be used to create nourishing hair masks at home. Here are two easy combinations that can help condition dry-looking hair and make it feel softer and more manageable.

Coconut oil + banana + avocado

Step 01: Add one avocado, one ripe banana and two tablespoons of coconut oil in a blender jar. Blend it all together until it forms into a thick, smooth paste.

Step 02: Strain this mixture through a cheesecloth to get rid of any chunks and to allow the hair mask to spread more effectively.

Step 03: Apply this mixture all over your hair and scalp. Cover your hair with a disposable shower cap and leave it on for about 30 minutes.

Step 04: Rinse it off with a gentle shampoo and conditioner.

Why this works – Loaded with essential fatty acids and vitamins, coconut oil is a great ingredient to infuse moisture into severely dry and damaged hair. Avocados are brimming with vitamin B, which strengthens hair and prevents breakage by improving elasticity. Bananas on the other hand, are full of potassium and natural oils, and provide deep nourishment to chemically processed and dry strands, as well as prevent split ends and breakage.

Milk + honey

Step 01: Heat about a cup of milk in a saucepan until it's lukewarm.

Step 02: Add a teaspoon of honey into the mixture and gently stir until it completely dissolves into the milk.

Step 03: Apply this mixture all over your hair and scalp, concentrating on the areas that are super dry and frizzy. Let it rest for 20-30 minutes before rinsing it off with some cold water and a gentle shampoo and conditioner.

From sugar to supplements: habits that can hurt your liver

When people think about liver damage, alcohol is often the first thing that comes to mind. But alcohol is only one of many factors that can affect liver health. Everyday habits, diet, excess body weight, certain medicines and uncontrolled health conditions can also contribute to liver injury - sometimes gradually and without obvious symptoms.

The liver performs hundreds of important functions. It helps process nutrients, stores energy, produces substances needed for blood clotting and digestion, and breaks down medicines and toxins. Because it has a remarkable ability to repair itself, liver problems can develop silently for years before symptoms become noticeable. By the time fatigue, abdominal discomfort, jaundice or swelling appears, significant damage may already have occurred.

One of the biggest modern threats to liver health is excess weight, particularly the accumulation of fat around the abdomen. Excess calories can cause fat to build up inside liver cells, leading to metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease, commonly known as fatty liver disease. It is now one of the most common liver conditions worldwide and can affect people who drink little or no alcohol.

A sedentary lifestyle can make the problem worse. Spending long hours sitting and getting little physical activity can contribute to weight gain, insulin resistance and unhealthy blood-fat levels, all of which can increase the likelihood of fatty liver. Regular movement, including walking, cycling, swimming or strength training, can support metabolic health and help reduce liver fat.

Diet is another major consideration. Regularly consuming large amounts of sugary drinks, sweets, refined carbohydrates and highly processed foods can contribute to excess calorie intake and metabolic problems. Sugar-sweetened beverages are particularly easy to overconsume because they provide calories without creating the same feeling of fullness as whole foods. A diet dominated by processed foods can



therefore place additional stress on the metabolic system and indirectly affect the liver.

A better approach is to build meals around vegetables, fruits, whole grains, pulses, nuts, seeds and other minimally processed foods, while choosing healthy sources of protein and fats. Dietary patterns that support a healthy body weight and good blood-sugar control are generally more beneficial than focusing on one supposedly "liver-cleansing" food.

Another common misconception is that the liver needs regular detox drinks, juices or herbal cleanses. In reality, the liver already performs the body's natural detoxification processes. There is no proven drink or food that can "flush out" a healthy liver. Some commercial detox products may even contain ingredients that can cause liver injury.

Herbal and dietary supplements deserve particular caution. "Natural" does not necessarily mean safe. Some supplements have been associated with liver injury, particularly when taken in high doses or when products contain multiple concentrated ingredients. People taking supplements should tell their doctor about them, especially if they take prescription medicines or have existing liver problems.

Eat right, don't starve: The truth about weight loss

When it comes to losing weight, many people find themselves caught between two extremes. Eating more can seem like a direct route to weight gain, while skipping meals may appear to be an easy way to cut calories. In reality, neither approach is necessarily healthy or sustainable. What matters more is the overall quality and quantity of food, eating patterns, physical activity and the body's individual needs.

Food provides the energy and nutrients the body needs to function. Carbohydrates, proteins and fats supply energy, while vitamins and minerals support everything from immunity and metabolism to bone health and muscle function. Consistently eating too little can leave the body without adequate fuel and may result in tiredness, weakness, headaches, irritability and difficulty concentrating.

Skipping meals does not automatically lead to healthy weight loss. Some people who miss meals may become extremely hungry later and compensate by eating larger portions or choosing calorie-dense foods. Others may experience low energy and find it harder to remain physically active. Over time, a pattern of restrictive eating followed by overeating can make maintaining a healthy weight more difficult.

At the same time, eating frequently or eating large portions can contribute to weight gain when total calorie intake consistently exceeds the body's energy requirements. The issue is therefore not simply whether someone eats three meals, five meals or skips breakfast.

Overall energy intake, food quality, portion sizes and activity levels matter.

A sustainable approach to weight management begins with balanced meals. Instead of drastically reducing food, aim to include a combination of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, pulses, lean protein and healthy fats. Protein-rich foods can help with satiety and support muscle maintenance, while fibre-rich foods can help keep you feeling full for longer.

Portion awareness is equally important. Even nutritious foods contain calories, and regularly eating portions much larger than the body requires can contribute to gradual weight gain. Eating slowly, paying attention to hunger and fullness cues and avoiding distracted eating can make it easier to recognise when enough food has been consumed.

Liquid calories can also be easy to overlook. Sugary soft drinks, sweetened tea and coffee, energy drinks and some packaged beverages can add substantial amounts of sugar and calories without providing much satiety. Choosing water or unsweetened beverages more often can be a simple way to reduce unnecessary calorie intake.

Another common mistake is eliminating entire food groups without a medical reason. Carbohydrates, for example, are an important source of energy. Rather than avoiding them completely, choose nutrient-rich sources such as whole grains, oats, brown rice, millets, beans, lentils and vegetables, while limiting highly refined and heavily processed carbohydrate-rich foods.

Vegetarian women may face a higher risk of hip fractures in later life

A vegetarian diet is often associated with a healthy lifestyle, but new research suggests that women who avoid meat may need to pay particular attention to bone health as they grow older. While a well-planned vegetarian diet can provide many important nutrients, researchers have found an association between vegetarian diets and a higher risk of hip fractures in women later in life. The findings highlight the importance of ensuring adequate intake of protein, calcium, vitamin D and other nutrients that contribute to strong bones.

Hip fractures are among the most serious injuries associated with ageing. They can significantly affect mobility and independence and may require surgery, prolonged rehabilitation and, in some cases, long-term care. The risk of fractures generally increases with age as bone density declines, particularly after menopause when falling levels of oestrogen can accelerate bone loss in women.

Vegetarian diets exclude meat and, depending on the type of vegetarian diet followed, may also exclude fish, poultry or other animal-derived foods. Although such diets can be nutritionally adequate, people who eliminate major food groups need to make sure that they replace the nutrients those foods provide. For women, this becomes particularly important with advancing age, when maintaining muscle mass and bone strength becomes increasingly challenging.

One possible explanation for the association between vegetarian diets and hip fractures is lower protein intake. Protein plays an important role not only in maintaining muscles but also in supporting the structure and strength of bones. Strong muscles are equally important because they help with balance and movement and can reduce the likelihood of falls. If a vegetarian diet is low in protein or overall calories, it may contribute to lower muscle mass and poorer bone health over time.

Calcium and vitamin D are also central to maintaining strong bones. Calcium provides much of the mineral structure of bone, while vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium effectively. Dairy products can be an important source of both protein and calcium for lacto-vegetarians, while fortified plant milks, tofu made with calcium, leafy green vegetables, beans, nuts and seeds can also contribute to calcium intake. Vitamin D can be obtained from fortified foods and supplements when necessary, although requirements vary from person to person.

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Astronomers may have unknowingly searched far more of Milky Way for alien signals

Astronomers searching for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) may have already surveyed a much larger portion of the Milky Way than previously believed, according to new research. The findings suggest that while the search has yet to detect signs of alien civilisations, scientists have unknowingly observed millions more stars than earlier estimates indicated.

Louisa Mason, a PhD student at the University of Manchester, reanalysed observations made by the Green Bank and Parkes radio telescopes. Earlier calculations, based on existing star catalogues, suggested that 1,327 observations covered around 288,315 stars. However, Mason's analysis found that the same observations likely included more than 6.1 million stars, many of which are too faint to appear in optical catalogues.

"One of the most exciting things about this work is realising that we've surveyed many more stars than initially thought," Mason said in a statement. "Even a very small observation can contain a huge number and diversity of stars that we might never have intended to study."

The discovery stems from the way radio telescopes operate. When aimed at a target star, they simultaneously receive signals from every star within their field of view. This makes them particularly useful for commensal SETI, where searches for alien signals are conducted alongside routine astronomical observations.

Traditional estimates rely on visible star catalogues, such as those produced by the European Space Agency's Gaia mission. However, these catalogues exclude countless dim stars that remain invisible to optical telescopes but could still produce detectable radio signals.

Despite the larger search area, researchers caution that the hunt remains limited. Most stars have only been observed for brief periods, meaning any transmission outside those observation windows would have gone unnoticed. In addition,



SETI searches have largely focused on a narrow section of the radio spectrum.

For decades, scientists have concentrated on the so-called water-hole frequencies between 1,420 MHz and 1,666 MHz, a region considered favourable because radio waves there travel efficiently through Earth's atmosphere and carry symbolic significance related to water, a key ingredient for life.

Mason is now exploring frequencies beyond that range. She recently carried out the first SETI search using archival data from the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA) in Chile, which operates at much higher radio frequencies than conventional SETI instruments.



Nancy Grace Roman Telescope to carry 1.3 million people into space

More than 13 lakh people are getting a rather unusual space trip, while sitting in their homes, here on Earth.

Their names are set to travel aboard Nasa's Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope when it launches towards a point nearly 15 lakh km from Earth.

Over one million names will be traveling a million miles away in space in less than a month!

Roman's Send Your Name campaign wrapped up with over 1.3 million names submitted. Make sure to tune in Aug 30 at 7:26 am ET to watch the observatory launch from @NASAKennedy. pic.twitter.com/hqvV06sspR— Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope (@NASARoman) August 3, 2026.

The names have been stored on an SD card attached to the observatory, turning a major scientific mission into a small time capsule of public participation.

Nasa invited people around the world to submit their names through its free "Send Your Name with Roman" campaign. Participants received a digital boarding pass after signing up, giving them a personal connection to a mission designed to explore some of the biggest mysteries of the universe.

The campaign closed on July 12, with the collected names uploaded to the card that will fly with Roman.

The idea follows a long-running Nasa tradition of carrying people's names and messages aboard spacecraft.

This time the names of millions will accompany Nasa's next groundbreaking space telescope.

The Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope is Nasa's next major space observatory and is named after Nancy Grace Roman, the space agency's first chief astronomer and a key figure in making the Hubble Space Telescope possible.

The telescope is designed to survey enormous areas of the sky while looking for answers to two major questions: What is dark energy doing to the expansion of the universe, and how common are planets beyond our solar system? Its Wide Field Instrument will give Roman a field of view at least 100 times larger than Hubble's, allowing it to survey huge stretches of the cosmos far more quickly. Nasa expects the observatory to discover thousands of exoplanets and study billions of galaxies over its mission.

WhatsApp gets 3 new features to make group chats less chaotic

WhatsApp is apparently making group chats a little less chaotic. In a blog post today, the messaging platform revealed a set of new features that are designed to help users make decisions faster and ensure important messages do not get lost. Notably, none of these features is new to the app; WhatsApp already had @all and polls. The new update improves these existing features while also introducing an easier way to create new group chats from existing ones.

WhatsApp is making polls more useful with three new changes. Users can now set an end time for a poll, after which voting will automatically close. This can be useful when a group needs to make a decision by a specific deadline.

The company is also allowing users to hide voter names in polls. This means other members of the group will not be able to see who voted for which option, making it easier for people to share their preferences without worrying about how



others might react.

There is also an option to edit poll questions within 15 minutes of creating them. So, if you spot a typo or realise that the question needs a little clarification, you can fix it without creating a new poll.

Another major addition is the @all mention. For larger groups with more

than 32 members, the @all option will be available only to admins. WhatsApp also says users can control how they receive these notifications and can mute @all alerts through the notification settings.

WhatsApp is also making it easier to start a smaller conversation within a larger group. Users can now create a new group chat with people from an existing group in just a tap, without having to manually add each person.

This could be useful when a large group needs a separate conversation for a specific purpose. For example, a group planning a surprise party can quickly create a smaller chat for organisers, while members coordinating an event can move their discussion to a separate group without disturbing the main conversation.

WhatsApp says these changes build on other group chat features introduced earlier this year, including group message history, member tags and event reminders.

Digital rupee struggles; programmable CBDC comes to rescue

AUGUST 8, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Nearly four years after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched the pilot for the digital rupee, the central bank's flagship payments initiative is yet to become a preferred mode of payment for ordinary users, with the runaway success of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) leaving little room for another retail payments platform.

However, bankers say the RBI may have found the digital rupee's winning use case in programmable Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), which allows money to be spent only for a pre-defined purpose. Public sector banks are increasingly deploying programmable CBDC for government welfare schemes, Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs), targeted lending and employee benefits, giving fresh momentum to what has otherwise been a slow-moving project.

Executives of Punjab National Bank (PNB), Canara Bank and Indian Bank told TNIE that while retail CBDC transactions remain modest, programmable CBDC is beginning to demonstrate tangible value by enabling governments and banks to control the end use of funds.

Punjab National Bank Managing Director and CEO Ashok Chandra said the bank is among the leading participants in the RBI's programmable CBDC initiative and has already deployed it for DBT and subsidy schemes in at least one state, with similar projects expected to be rolled out elsewhere.

"The way programmable CBDC is progressing, it will definitely expand. We



need to wait for some time," Chandra said.

PNB currently has around 172,000 CBDC users and has processed nearly 1.53 million digital rupee transactions, making it one of the more active participants in the RBI's pilot.

Canara Bank Managing Director and CEO Brajesh Kumar Singh said the digital rupee is finding acceptance primarily through programmable applications rather than retail payments. The bank has implemented programmable CBDC in Puducherry for the Pradhan Mantri Garib Jan Kalyan Yojana, allowing welfare benefits to be spent only for designated purposes. It has also started disbursing certain employee benefits through programmable CBDC to familiarise users with the platform.

"The biggest advantage of programmable CBDC is that you can

control where the money is spent," Singh said. Canara Bank's CBDC business has increased from 11.99 lakh to 19.26 lakh, reflecting growing adoption.

Yet Singh admitted that competing with UPI in retail payments will be difficult. "UPI is such a hit that it has overshadowed everything. CBDC and UPI are differently placed. Programmable CBDC offers capabilities that UPI cannot."

Indian Bank Managing Director and CEO Binod Kumar says programmable CBDC can ensure that loans and subsidies are used strictly for their intended purpose. A machinery loan, for instance, could be programmed so that the amount can be spent only on purchasing machinery, while payments made under paddy procurement schemes could be restricted exclusively to procurement-related transactions.

US nonfarm payroll employment drops by 23,000 in July as unemployment holds at 4.1%: Labour Statistics

AUGUST 8, 2026

WASHINGTON (TIP): Total nonfarm payroll employment in the United States declined by 23,000 in July while the overall unemployment rate showed little change at 4.1 per cent, according to figures released by the US Bureau of Labour Statistics. The latest figures indicated a shift following a period of modest growth in the national job market in July.

"Total nonfarm payroll employment changed little in July (-23,000), following an average monthly gain of 34,000 over the prior 12 months," the US Bureau of Labour Statistics stated in its report.

Employment declines were concentrated in specific sectors during the month. Local government education experienced a drop of 50,000 jobs after showing minimal net change over the previous year.

Retail trade recorded a reduction of 19,000 positions, driven by losses in warehouse clubs, super centres, and general merchandise retailers, which cut 21,000 positions, alongside gasoline stations and fuel dealers losing 5,000 jobs.

Financial activities also maintained a downward trend, shedding 14,000 jobs due to reductions in credit intermediation and insurance carriers.

"Financial activities employment is down by 121,000 since a recent peak in May 2025," the report noted.

Conversely, health care maintained job creation, adding 22,000 positions, though at a slower rate than its 12-month average gain of 36,000. Ambulatory health care services contributed 18,000 of those additions. The total number of unemployed individuals stood at 6.9 million, remaining essentially unchanged both over the month and over the year. Among demographic groups, unemployment rates decreased for teenagers to 12.1 per cent and Hispanic workers to 4.6 per cent, while rates for adult men, adult women, White, Black, and Asian workers remained largely steady.

"Among the unemployed, the number of people on temporary layoff increased by 153,000 to 921,000 in July," the US Bureau of Labour Statistics stated.

The long-term unemployed, representing individuals out of work for 27 weeks or more, numbered 1.8 million and accounted for 25.5 per cent of all unemployed persons.



RBI sweetens NRI deposit nudge for banks

AUGUST 8, 2026

MUMBAI (TIP): In a fresh incentive for banks to attract foreign currency deposits from overseas Indians, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday exempted rupee loans against fresh and renewed foreign currency non-resident (FCNR-B) deposits of three to five years mobilized between 8 June and 30 September from their adjusted net bank credit (ANBC) calculations.

Adjusted net bank credit is net credit plus investments made by banks in certain bonds, and is used as a base for priority sector lending targets. This implies they are free to use these funds for loans without setting anything aside for the mandated priority sector targets.

Loans against non-resident external (NRE) term deposits, maintained in rupees by non-resident Indians (NRIs) earning in foreign currencies, of three years or more mobilized by the banks between 19 June and 30 September will also be exempt from the ANBC calculation, the central bank said.

RBI said it has provided exemption from maintenance of cash reserve ratio



(CRR) and statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) on fresh FCNR deposits of minimum tenor of three years and a maximum of five years, mobilized between 8 June and 30 September, and on fresh NRE term deposits.

The new FCNR accounts scheme allows NRIs to make leveraged and unlevered deposits at Indian banks in foreign currency, with RBI taking the hedging risk to offer the potential for high returns. The scheme, announced on 5 June and rolled out three days later, will run till the end of September.

HSBC, State Bank of India (SBI) and ICICI Bank garnered half of all inflows

under the deposit incentive scheme to attract dollars and strengthen the rupee, official data showed.

Despite strong inflows, RBI has no immediate plans to end the FCNR(B) scheme before the 30 September deadline, governor Sanjay Malhotra said on Wednesday.

"We have got robust flows as you have mentioned, and we do hope to get good healthy flows going forward. But as of now, there is no proposal under consideration to close the scheme prematurely. We will keep you posted on this," Malhotra said at the post-policy press conference.

During the monetary policy announcement, he also said the country's balance of payments (BoP) would see a healthy surplus in the current financial year.

India's BoP surplus in FY27 is estimated at \$40 billion, scaled up from the earlier estimate of \$25 billion. The current account deficit (CAD) is estimated at 1.7% of GDP, according to a report by IDFC FIRST Bank dated 3 August.

Sikh History This Week

AUGUST 7 TO AUGUST 13

AUGUST 7



1765 - Death anniversary of Baba Ala Singh

Baba Ala Singh (1691-1765), founder of the Patiala state and one of the most influential Sikh chiefs of the 18th century, died on August 7, 1765. Ala Singh belonged to the Phulkian family and gradually established his authority in southeastern Punjab at a time when Mughal power was weakening and Sikh chiefs were emerging as important regional forces. He established Patiala as the centre of his territories and laid the foundations of what became one of the most prominent Sikh princely states. His career illustrates the transformation of the Sikh community from a persecuted religious group into a significant political and military power in 18th-century Punjab. He was succeeded by his grandson Amar Singh, who continued expanding the Patiala state.

1925 - Sikh Gurdwaras Act published

A landmark development in the Gurdwara Reform Movement took place on August 7, 1925, when the Sikh Gurdwaras Act was published. The legislation followed years of agitation by Sikhs seeking control of historic gurdwaras that were then frequently administered by hereditary mahants. The movement had produced major confrontations, including the Nankana Sahib tragedy, the Guru Ka Bagh Morcha and the Jaito Morcha. The Act ultimately provided the statutory basis for the management of notified Sikh gurdwaras through the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC).

AUGUST 8

1922 - Guru Ka Bagh Morcha begins



August 8, 1922, marks the beginning of one of the most important episodes of the Gurdwara Reform Movement—the Guru Ka Bagh Morcha. The dispute centred on the Guru Ka Bagh gurdwara near Amritsar. Sikh volunteers asserted their right to collect firewood from land belonging to the shrine. The colonial administration supported the mahant's position and began arresting Sikh volunteers. The Akali volunteers responded with disciplined non-violent resistance.

Groups of volunteers marched towards the site knowing that they were likely to be beaten and arrested. The brutal treatment meted out to the peaceful volunteers attracted widespread attention and became a powerful demonstration of Sikh courage, discipline and commitment to the reform of religious institutions. The movement eventually contributed to growing pressure on the colonial government and strengthened the demand for legislation governing Sikh gurdwaras.

AUGUST 9

1922 - Sikh volunteers face repression

The Guru Ka Bagh struggle continued to intensify on August 9 and in the days that followed. Sikh jathas repeatedly entered the area and faced arrests and physical assault. The volunteers maintained strict discipline despite the violence. Their conduct attracted attention in India and abroad and became an important example of non-violent Sikh resistance during the freedom struggle. The Morcha remains significant not only in Sikh religious history but also in the history of India's anti-colonial movements.

1925 - Gurdwara Reform Movement

The campaigns of the early 1920s eventually forced the British authorities to address Sikh demands through legislation. Thousands of Sikhs had been arrested during the various morchas, and many had suffered imprisonment and physical violence.

The movement ultimately culminated in the Sikh Gurdwaras Act of 1925, giving the SGPC a statutory role in the administration of Sikh shrines.

AUGUST 10

1986 - Assassination of General Arun Vaidya

August 10, 1986, marks the assassination of former Indian Army Chief General Arun Vaidya in Pune.

Vaidya had served as Army Chief during Operation Blue Star, the June 1984 military operation at the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar. He was assassinated by Harjinder Singh Jinda and Sukhdev Singh Sukha, who were later arrested, tried and executed. The killing occurred during one of the darkest periods in modern Sikh and Indian history, following Operation Blue Star, the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the anti-Sikh violence of 1984.

AUGUST 11

1664 - Gurgaddi of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji



One of the most significant Sikh events of this week is associated with Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, the ninth Sikh Guru. Following the passing of Guru Har Krishan Ji in Delhi in 1664, the next Guru was to be identified at Bakala. A number of claimants reportedly presented themselves as the successor. According to Sikh tradition, Bhai Makhan Shah Labana, a wealthy trader and devoted Sikh, eventually identified the true Guru.

After making an offering of 500 dinars, he secretly offered only two coins to each claimant. When Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji referred to the remaining 498 coins, Makhan Shah realised that he had found the true Guru.

He is traditionally said to have raised the cry: "*Guru Ladho Re!*"

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was subsequently recognised as the Ninth Guru. His Gurgaddi marked the beginning of a decade of extraordinary importance in Sikh history. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji travelled extensively, preached the Sikh message and ultimately sacrificed his life in Delhi in 1675 while defending the right of others to practise their faith. His martyrdom earned him the enduring description of "Hind Di Chadar", the protector of India.

1635 - Death anniversary of Sain Mian Mir

Sain Mian Mir, the celebrated Sufi saint of Lahore, is traditionally recorded as having died on August 11, 1635. Mian Mir occupies an important place in Sikh historical memory because of his association with Guru Arjan Dev Ji and the wider Sikh-Sufi interaction in Punjab. Sikh tradition associates him with the laying of the foundation stone of the Harmandir Sahib, although historians have debated the details of this tradition.

AUGUST 12

1947 - Sikhs face the approaching Partition of Punjab

August 1947 was an exceptionally difficult period for Punjab's Sikh population. With only days remaining before Independence, communal violence was spreading and the future boundary between India and Pakistan remained uncertain. Sikh families in western Punjab faced the prospect of losing ancestral villages, agricultural land and access to historic gurdwaras.

The eventual Partition placed several of the most sacred Sikh sites—including Nankana Sahib, Panja Sahib and Kartarpur Sahib—in Pakistan.

The mass migration that followed transformed Sikh society and permanently altered the demographic and cultural landscape of Punjab.

AUGUST 13

1947 - Punjab on the eve of Independence and Partition

By August 13, 1947, India was just two days away from Independence.

For Punjab's Sikh population, however, Independence was accompanied by immense uncertainty. The Radcliffe Boundary Commission was finalising the border between India and Pakistan, while communal violence and mass migration were already underway.

Historic Sikh centres such as Lahore were destined to become part of Pakistan, while Amritsar remained in India. The Partition resulted in the displacement of enormous numbers of Sikhs from western Punjab. Families left behind homes and ancestral villages that had been inhabited for generations.





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(VETERAN)



**CO-GRAND
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BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

ARIES

Ganesha says this is a time of big change in life. Old problems will be solved. The mind will be restless in realizing its ambitions. Some unique desires will be effective on the mind. The mind will be affected by negativity regarding some relations. Blocked tasks will be solved. Negative doubts will bother you. The minds of the students will be focused on continuous hard work. Some things about your life partner will trouble you. Your intensity will increase in romantic relationships. On Thursday and Saturday, stop living in imagination and try to walk according to the physical world. Do not waste time on unnecessary tasks. Engage your mind in some creative and good work.

TAURUS

Ganesha says Now you have to work hard and do something. Despite having good feelings towards everyone, you will be unable to prove yourself good. There is a possibility of bitterness among relatives due to some unpleasant things. For economic strength, the mind will be focused on new schemes. On Monday and Tuesday, the mind will be worried about its result in the areas of effort. Good plans will bring success. Will be excited by the affection of close relations on Thursday and Saturday. The mind will be troubled to arrange the necessary resources. The mind will be troubled by the daily aimless routine.

GEMINI

Ganesha says to leave monotony and give creative direction to the mind. Will try to implement new schemes with enthusiasm. Time is in your favor. So make full use of the time. The worries of family members will disturb the mind. You may have to face a shortage in meeting your daily needs. On Sunday and Monday, the mind will be worried about the efficient fulfillment of any important responsibility. With the help of your mother, your side of the family will be strong on every issue. Good profit opportunities will bring happiness to the mind. Unplanned functioning will create an imbalance in income and expenditure. You will move towards progress through your activity on Thursday and Saturday. There will be happiness in the house.

**CANCER**

Ganesha says do not pay attention to small things in the family, but emphasize sweet communication. This week will be a week full of complications. Will be worried about the happiness and sorrow of the family members on Monday and Tuesday. Take care of the health of the elderly people at home. At present, the economic crisis will trouble you. In a sensitive situation on Friday and Saturday, the image in the workplace will be affected due to its childish nature. Possible differences with a colleague in the job. Efforts in education competitions will be worthwhile. The family atmosphere will be pleasant. Expenditure is possible in material comforts. There will be chances of fulfillment of some important family obligations.

LEO

Ganesha says there will be an increase in divine faith. The mind will be burdened with many responsibilities at the same time. There will be some financial difficulties. With the cooperation of family members, every situation will seem easy. Bitterness is possible over small things in married life. Will be able to face situations with high fortitude. On Monday and Tuesday, some obstacles will be faced in the trying areas. The mind will be worried about gathering material comforts. It will be efficient and popular on Wednesday and Friday. High-level people will benefit. Time can be particularly beneficial for politicians.

VIRGO

Ganesha says the mind will be troubled by financial difficulties. Meaninglessness will become a hindrance to the fulfillment of essential tasks. Suddenly, the mind will be happy with some good news. Be patient in odd situations. Amid immorality, the mind will be unable to adjust to the physical environment. Students will get the benefit of planetary compatibility. Possible emotional distress from a close relative on Sunday and Monday. On Friday and Saturday, the people in governance will get profit opportunities. The effort made for some important work will be worthwhile. It is possible to improve spoiled relations with the mediation of a friend. Proximity to high-level people will increase.

LIBRA

Ganesha says the busyness of family responsibilities will increase. There is a sum of money spent on important work. Due to the sudden increase in obligations, the mind will be worried about their fulfillment.

Negative worries will be effective on the mind due to weak morale. On Sunday and Monday, the mind will be focused on domestic work. Faith will increase in social and religious works. Domestic worries will disturb the mind. Students pay attention to their studies. Try to run your routine with limited means. Will be worried about obstruction in some important work on Wednesday and Saturday. Old relations will be strengthened, but avoid defamation and slander. Your serious nature reduces emotional exchange in relationships. To rectify this.

**SCORPIO**

Ganesha says this week, you have to be patient. The mind will be troubled by the daily expenditure of the accumulated money. It is time for major changes in employment. The mind will be troubled by some negative situation. Don't criticize others everywhere. Be patient because everything will be fine in the future. Your good feelings will serve the purpose during this difficult period. Some new doubts will create bitterness in old relations. On Sunday and Tuesday, the mind will be focused on divine faith. Old problems will be conquered on Friday and Saturday. Be cautious about the health of your life partner. In this time full of worries, some good prospects will also be seen. Proximity to people of a flattering nature can be harmful to you.

**SAGITTARIUS**

Ganesha says increasing responsibilities will put pressure on the mind for timely fulfillment. New prospects will showcase amazing abilities in you. Good ideas will enable you to unleash your inner talents. Don't mind small things in important relationships on Monday and Tuesday. The mind will be worried due to a lack of money and spiritual practice. Give constructive direction to the mind on Wednesday and Saturday by controlling the mind, which is apprehensive of prejudice. Suffering is possible due to the work done on emotion. The mind will be worried due to the ill health of someone in the family. Creative works will increase in popularity. Support from parents and superiors will be received.

**CAPRICORN**

Ganesha says divine faith will increase. Control sensitivity and anger; otherwise, bitterness is possible in close relationships. Some old incidents will disturb the mind. The mind will be worried about the happiness and sorrow of the family members. Ambitions will be effective on the mind. The words of a relative can hurt the mind. Minor health problems are possible on Monday and Wednesday. To fulfill the increasing

responsibilities, the mind will be worried about arranging proper resources. The illness of a superior person in the family is possible. Success will be achieved in the endeavored areas on Friday and Saturday. Efforts made in the direction of employment will be worthwhile. Students will be worried about a little career.

**AQUARIUS**

Ganesha says put your mind in a positive direction. Divine grace will increase on you. Control your childish nature as it affects your image badly in the workplace. Desired success will be achieved in the endeavored areas. Maintain a balance in income and expenditure. Do not do any work in haste; otherwise, errors are bound to happen. Good desires will awaken in the mind on Sunday and Monday. Learners will get the benefit of planetary compatibility. Material happiness will increase. On Thursday and Friday, there will be a lot of worries on the mind. Will get the full support from family members. With your tact, you will strengthen your relations. The mind will be happy with the favorable situation in the workplace. There will be busyness related to social discharge.

**PISCES**

Ganesha says there may be some arguments with the borrowers this week. Do not create bitterness in the relationship due to any frustration or an inferiority complex. Some financial difficulties will bother you. It would be best to forget the past because this will make the relationship sweeter. Accidental long-distance travel may have to be done. Some worries in education competition will be effective on the mind. There is a sum of excessive expenditure in the fulfillment of material comforts. On Thursday and Friday, the mind surrounded by negative worries will be focused on the refuge of God. Laziness can deprive you of important benefits. Do not mind the words of family members. Will get emotional affection from a life partner. Some employment-related travel may have to be done. The arrival of a guest this week will keep the entire family environment upbeat.

AUTHOR BIO

Chirag Daruwalla is the best astrologer and one of the most famous names in the astrology world. He has more than 18 years of experience. Readers may seek his advice related to career, health, finance, business, money, love and marriage. He has complete knowledge, solutions, and guidance to all the problems related to life. Visit his website chiragdaruwalla.com. He is available for consultations on WhatsApp number +91 8141566266 or by email: info@chiragdaruwalla.com

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : AUGUST 10 TO AUGUST 16 BY ASTROLOGER CHIRAG DARUWALLA

AUGUST 10

Ganesha says today is a day to celebrate love and affection with friends and family. You may feel more emotional and impatient than usual, so be sure to give some thought to what you're about to do before doing it. Spend some quality time showing your significant other how much you value the connection you share. If you are currently unattached, be ready to explore new possibilities for a romantic relationship.

AUGUST 11

Ganesha says today is a very good day for you to focus on your needs and concerns. Spend some time taking care of yourself and engaging in the activities that bring you the most joy. You may also consider devoting some time to considering your goals and concerns

about the future.

AUGUST 12

Ganesha says that communication is essential in today's world. You may find yourself in situations that require you to express your ideas clearly and confidently. Be sure to listen to what other people have to say, and look for areas of agreement to help avoid arguments.

AUGUST 13

Ganesha says today is the day to connect with your emotions and express them. You may feel more sensitive and intuitive than usual, in such a situation, you must pay attention to the voice of your intuition. You should also probably spend some time with the people you care about and be as honest as possible about

your feelings.

AUGUST 14

Ganesha says today is a good day to focus on your personal growth, trust your instincts, and make choices that are in line with your values and long-term goals. Today is a good day to focus on your personal growth and trust your conscience. Your ability to be realistic and your attention to detail will help you greatly in managing these issues.

AUGUST 15

Ganesha says you may experience a feeling of restlessness or a need for change. Take advantage of new possibilities, and push yourself to do things that take you out of your comfort zone. You will be able to overcome any challenges that come your way due to



your flexibility and resourcefulness.

AUGUST 16

Ganesha says today you can focus on your relationships and your relationships with other people. Maintain your existing friendships and also be ready to make new ones. It may be easier for you to connect with others as a result of your charisma and other people's abilities, which can be highlighted. Still, you must set positive boundaries and take time for your self-care.

|| SHREE GANESHAY NAMAH ||



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CONTD FROM PAGE 1

Oman, Iran Reach Agreement to Reopen the Strait of Hormuz

The agreement, according to the Iranian official, does not include the collection of tolls from commercial shipping vessels seeking safe passage through the waterway, which Iran has previously sought. The proposal is a "temporary agreement" that would lay the foundation for Washington and Tehran to call a new ceasefire and resume the nuclear negotiations that began in mid-June but collapsed after retaliatory strikes by both sides across the region. One of the attacks killed four American service members in Jordan.

The United Nations International Maritime Organization and the U.S. will be involved in the official announcement of the agreement, according to the Iranian official. Another Gulf government official with knowledge of the agreement also told MS NOW that the arrangement has been endorsed by the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Officials have not said when the agreement would be announced.

Whether the U.S. will support the deal on how the strait is managed, however, will depend on the final details. A U.S. official said Washington will only support a temporary deal that reopens the strait with no impediments and no fees.

"Any temporary routes will be without any impediments - meaning no approvals

or permissions and no tolls or charges," a U.S. official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to talk about the deal, told MS NOW. "The Strait of Hormuz is an international waterway, and no party controls the lanes or the ability to transit through them."

President Donald Trump has balked at any deal that would grant Iran more control over the strait. But the deal could pave the way for the U.S. and Iran to resume negotiations over Tehran's nuclear program after a framework agreement that laid the ground rules for the talks collapsed in June following Iranian attacks on vessels in the waterway. The president has at times suggested the U.S. would collect fees from vessels seeking to transit the waterway but has not followed through on that plan.

Speaking to reporters Thursday, August 6 afternoon in the Oval Office, Trump said the strait is "sort of open right now," adding that the U.S. is enforcing a blockade.

"I think we're doing fine," he said, later adding that an announcement on the strait "could be soon."

The strait is a critical choke point through which about 20% of the world's petroleum liquids must travel to reach the Arabian Sea, the gateway to the global market. Before the U.S. and Israel's Feb. 28 joint strikes on Iran, the strait was considered an international shipping route that no country officially controlled. Iran swiftly launched retaliatory attacks on vessels in the waterway, which has become its

strongest point of leverage.

Commercial shipping traffic has since ground to a halt, sending global oil prices soaring and putting downward pressure on the U.S. economy ahead of November's midterm elections.

U.S. Senate passes Russia sanctions bill that seeks 100% tariffs on India, four others

It allows President Donald Trump to impose 100% tariffs on goods from countries that are the top five importers of Russian oil and gas.

At present China, India, Azerbaijan, Hungary and Slovakia are top five importers of oil and gas from Russia.

In addition to Russia sanctions, the bill would extend till 2031 the expiration date of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996, which penalizes companies that invest in Iran's energy sector.

The bipartisan bill was championed by Republican senator Lindsey Graham, who passed away on July 11, and Democrat Richard Blumenthal.

After Graham's sudden death following a trip to Kyiv, leaders across the aisle moved with renewed vigor to ensure passage of the bill and honor the late Senator's legacy as an ally of Ukraine.

"This bill forces those primary countries keeping Russia's economy afloat to make a simple yet critical choice - a choice between doing business with America or buying cheap Russian energy," said Darline Graham, the late senator's sister who was appointed to his

seat after his death.

It also seeks to impose sanctions on Russian leaders and officials, targeting Russian President Vladimir Putin, oligarchs and financial institutions.

Following the vote, Senator Blumenthal told reporters that Lindsey Graham would be "proud of what we've done".

"These sledgehammer sanctions and tariffs will stop all who are complicit in this murderous, criminal war of aggression against brave free people," Mr. Blumenthal said.

Some Democrats have warned that the bill would give Mr. Trump new tariff powers at a time when he has put such levies at the center of his trade policy.

The bill will now go to the House of Representatives for approval when it reconvenes on August 31.

As temporary tariffs expire, U.S. imposes 10% 'forced labor' tariffs on India.

Democrat Congressmen Gregory Meeks and Don Beyer have criticized the legislation for creating "sweeping new tariff authorities that the president could weaponize with abandon, as he has repeatedly done in the past".

"We welcome our Senate colleagues' urgent effort to support Ukraine and punish Russia for its continued illegal war, but this bill would not achieve those goals. Instead, it would allow President Trump to dodge holding Russia accountable and impose yet more tariffs in his destructive trade wars, leaving Americans to foot the bill," the two leaders said.

Parents Can Ride With Open Strollers In NYC Bus Expansion

Parents and caregivers can now roll onto more MTA buses without folding their strollers



By the end of 2026, all more than 5,800 local and Select Bus Service buses will have a marked area near the rear door where riders can secure one open stroller, according to MTA.

Credit: Marc A. Hermann / MTA

**AUGUST 7, 2026
NEW YORK CITY (TIP)**

By the end of 2026, more than 5,800 local and Select Bus Service buses will have a marked area near the rear door where riders can secure one open stroller, the MTA announced. There might not be a bumper sticker slapped on the back of buses, but babies are officially on board with the MTA. And, their strollers are officially coming along for the ride.

Approximately 75 percent of the MTA's bus fleet now has designated stroller spaces.

The expansion gives families a dedicated place to ride while keeping wheelchair priority areas available for riders who use mobility devices.

"We understand even the youngest New Yorkers have places to be and we're ensuring our bus network continues to get them there," Demetrius Crichlow, New York City Transit president said.

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Kinner Kailash: Where the mountains become a prayer

High in the rugged Himalayas of Himachal Pradesh lies a sacred landscape where mountains are not merely peaks, but manifestations of the divine. Among the most revered of these is Kinner Kailash, a holy mountain in Kinnaur associated with Lord Shiva and deeply embedded in the religious traditions, legends and cultural memory of the region. For devotees, the journey to Kinner Kailash is not simply a mountain pilgrimage; it is an inward journey towards faith, surrender and spiritual awakening.

The Kinnaur region has been regarded as a land of gods for centuries. Its valleys are dotted with ancient temples and shrines, while local traditions preserve a distinctive blend of Hindu and Buddhist beliefs. Mountains, rivers, forests and villages are woven into a sacred geography in which the natural world and the divine are closely connected. Kinner Kailash occupies a special place within this landscape because of its association with Shiva, the supreme ascetic, yogi and lord of the mountains.

The Sacred Shivling

At the centre of the Kinner Kailash pilgrimage is the remarkable natural rock formation known as the Kinner Kailash Shivling. Rising dramatically against the Himalayan landscape, the rock is revered by devotees as a manifestation of Lord Shiva.

The sight of the Shivling against the vast mountain sky is central to the spiritual experience of the pilgrimage. For Shiva devotees, it is not simply an unusual geological formation. It is a sacred symbol representing the presence of the deity himself. The natural form of the rock reinforces one of the oldest ideas in Shaiva tradition - that Shiva can be worshipped through the sacred linga, a symbol associated with the infinite and formless nature of the divine.

The mountain itself is therefore considered sacred, while the Shivling becomes the spiritual focal point of the pilgrimage. Devotees traditionally approach the site with prayers and reverence, regarding the difficult journey as an act of devotion.

Kinner Kailash in Shaiva Tradition

The religious importance of Kinner Kailash is closely connected with the Himalayan association of Lord Shiva. Hindu tradition repeatedly portrays Shiva as the great yogi who dwells in the mountains, particularly in the Himalayan realm associated with Kailash.

Mount Kailash in Tibet is traditionally regarded as Shiva's abode, while numerous Himalayan mountains and pilgrimage sites have acquired their own Kailash traditions. Kinner Kailash is one such sacred landscape, and its association with Shiva has made it an important destination for devotees.

The very character of the mountain reflects the traditional image of Shiva. The rugged cliffs, silence, snow, clouds and isolation evoke the atmosphere of meditation and renunciation. The pilgrim entering this landscape is, in a sense, entering the symbolic world of the great yogi.



The Legend of the Pandavas

One of the popular traditions associated with Kinner Kailash connects the mountain with the Pandavas of the Mahabharata. According to local belief, the Pandavas passed through or stayed in the Himalayan region during their period of exile.

Various local traditions associate the Pandavas with sacred sites across Himachal Pradesh, and Kinnaur has its own stories linking the epic heroes with the mountains. In some versions of the Kinner Kailash tradition, the Pandavas are believed to have undertaken penance and worshipped Lord Shiva here.

The legend reflects a familiar theme in Hindu sacred geography: mountains become holy through the presence, meditation or worship of divine and epic figures. Whether understood literally or symbolically, such stories have helped preserve the sacred character of the landscape across generations.

Shiva and Parvati: The Divine Couple

Another strand of local religious tradition connects the Kinner Kailash landscape with Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. In Hindu mythology, Parvati is the daughter of the mountains and the eternal consort of Shiva. The Himalayas are therefore not merely the setting of their divine story but are themselves deeply connected with the identity of the goddess. The idea of Shiva and Parvati inhabiting the Himalayan realm gives special meaning to mountain pilgrimage. The peaks become reminders of the divine couple, while the solitude of the high mountains evokes Shiva's meditative existence.

For devotees, approaching Kinner Kailash can thus be understood as entering a sacred space associated with both Shiva and Shakti - the masculine and feminine dimensions of divine reality.

The Mountain as a Place of Divine Assembly

Kinnaur has a long-standing tradition of regarding local deities as powerful living beings who protect villages and communities. In this religious worldview, gods are not distant figures confined to mythology. They are believed to inhabit mountains, forests and temples and to remain connected with the lives of their devotees.

Kinner Kailash forms part of this larger sacred landscape. Local traditions describe the mountains as places where divine beings gather, and the region's numerous deity traditions reinforce the belief that the Himalayas are inhabited by the supernatural.

This belief gives the pilgrimage a character different from ordinary trekking. The traveller is expected to approach the mountain with humility and respect because the landscape itself is considered sacred.

The Rock That Changes Color

Among the fascinating beliefs associated with the Kinner Kailash Shivling is the observation that the rock can appear to change colour as sunlight shifts across it during the day. The changing light and weather conditions can produce striking variations in the appearance of the rock.

For devotees, these changing forms can acquire spiritual meaning and are sometimes interpreted as signs of divine presence. Scientifically, changes in illumination, shadow and atmospheric conditions can alter the appearance of a rock surface, but the religious interpretation remains an important part of the pilgrimage experience.

This illustrates how Himalayan spirituality often combines the physical landscape with a rich world of symbolism. What appears to be a natural phenomenon can

simultaneously become an object of devotion.

The Meaning of the Pilgrimage

The journey to Kinner Kailash is traditionally regarded as an act of devotion rather than merely an adventure. The difficult terrain becomes part of the spiritual discipline. Every step requires physical effort, patience and determination.

For a devotee, hardship can itself become a form of prayer. The pilgrim leaves behind familiar comforts and accepts cold, steep paths, fatigue and uncertainty. This physical renunciation mirrors the spiritual ideal associated with Shiva, whose life represents detachment from worldly possessions.

The mountain therefore becomes a teacher.

It teaches patience when the path becomes difficult, humility when the landscape overwhelms the senses and surrender when circumstances cannot be controlled. The pilgrimage asks the traveller to move beyond the ordinary concerns of life and focus on something larger.

Shiva as the Lord of Transformation

The deeper religious significance of Kinner Kailash can also be understood through the nature of Shiva himself. In Hindu philosophy, Shiva is often associated with destruction, but destruction does not simply mean an ending. It makes transformation and renewal possible. Shiva destroys ignorance, ego and attachment. His ascetic form represents meditation and detachment, while his cosmic form represents the endless cycle of creation, preservation and dissolution.

A pilgrimage to a Shiva shrine can therefore be understood as an opportunity for inner transformation. The devotee approaches the mountain carrying personal worries, desires and prayers, and the journey becomes a process of reflection. The destination is important, but the transformation takes place along the path.

Kinner Kailash and the Idea of Kailash

The name Kinner Kailash itself evokes the sacred idea of Kailash. Mount Kailash in the trans-Himalayan region has for centuries been revered in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and the Bon tradition. For Hindus, it is traditionally associated with Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati.

Kinner Kailash is not identical to Mount Kailash in Tibet, but its religious association with Shiva places it within the broader Himalayan tradition of sacred mountains. The use of the name "Kailash" reflects the way particular Himalayan landscapes have become local expressions of a much larger sacred imagination.

History This Week AUG 07-13

AUGUST 7

August 7, 1964 - Following an attack on two U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin off North Vietnam, the U.S. Congress approved the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, granting President Lyndon B. Johnson authority "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression."

August 7, 1990 - Just five days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, President George Bush ordered Desert Shield, a massive military buildup to prevent further Iraqi advances.



Birthday - International spy Mata Hari (1876-1917) was born (as Margaret Gertrude Zelle) in Leewarden, Netherlands. Arrested by the French in 1917 as a German spy, she was tried, convicted and sentenced to death. At her execution, she refused a blindfold and instead threw a kiss to the French firing squad.

Birthday - African American statesman and Nobel Prize recipient Ralph J. Bunche (1904-1971) was born in Detroit, Michigan. In 1949, as a mediator for the United Nations, he helped bring an end to hostilities in the war between Israel and the Arab League.

AUGUST 8

August 8, 1945 - Soviet Russia declared war on Japan and sent troops into Japanese-held Manchuria.

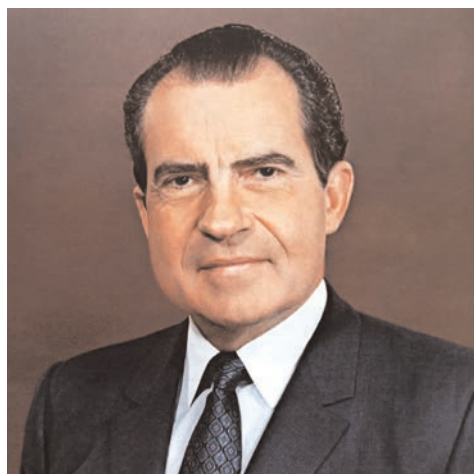


Birthday - African American explorer Matthew Henson (1866-1955) was born in Charles County, Maryland. He accompanied Robert E. Peary on several Arctic expeditions and reached the North Pole on April 6, 1909.

AUGUST 9

August 9, 1945 - The second Atomic bombing of Japan occurred as an

American B-29 bomber headed for the city of Kokura, but because of poor visibility then chose a secondary target, Nagasaki. About noon, the bomb detonated killing an estimated 70,000 persons and destroying about half the city.



August 9, 1974 - Effective at noon, Richard M. Nixon resigned the presidency as a result of the Watergate scandal. Nixon had appeared on television the night before and announced his decision to the American people. Facing possible impeachment by Congress, he became the only U.S. President ever to resign.

AUGUST 10



Birthday - Herbert Hoover (1874-1964) the 31st U.S. President was born in West Branch, Iowa. He was the first President born west of the Mississippi.

AUGUST 11

August 11, 1841 - Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave, spoke before an audience in the North for the first time. During an anti-slavery convention on Nantucket Island, he gave a powerful, emotional account of his life as a slave. He was immediately asked to become a full-time lecturer for the Massachusetts Antislavery Society.

August 11-16, 1965 - Six days of riots began in the Watts area of Los Angeles, triggered by an incident between a white member of the California Highway Patrol and an African American motorist. Thirty-four deaths were reported and more than 3,000 people were arrested. Damage to property was listed at \$40 million.

Birthday - Roots author Alex Haley (1921-1992) was born in Ithaca, New York. His Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, published in 1976, explored seven generations of his family from its



origins in Africa through slavery in America and eventual hard-fought freedom. Roots was translated into 37 languages and also became an eight-part TV miniseries in 1977 which attracted a record American audience and raised awareness concerning the legacy of slavery.

AUGUST 12

August 12, 1676 - King Philip's War ended with the assassination of Metacom, leader of the Pokanokets, a tribe within the Wampanoag Indian Federation. Nicknamed 'King Philip' by colonists, he led a Native American uprising against white settlers which resulted in a war that raged for nearly two years, now known as King Philip's War.



Birthday - Film pioneer Cecil B. DeMille (1881-1959) was born in Ashfield, Massachusetts. He produced over 70 major films including Cleopatra, The Ten Commandments, and The Greatest Show on Earth.

AUGUST 13

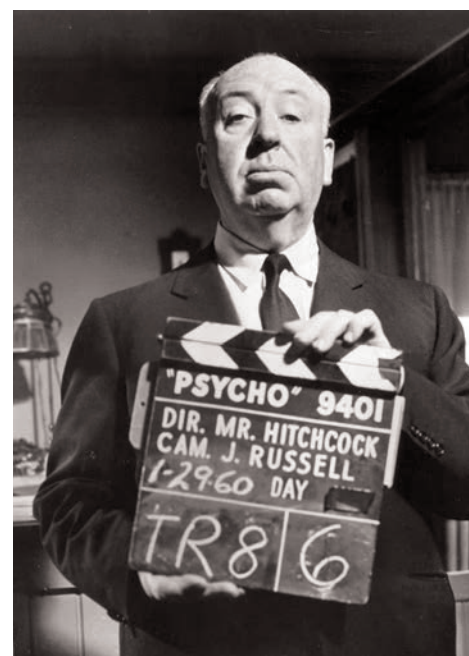
August 13, 1961 - The Berlin Wall came into existence after the East German government closed the border between east and west sectors of Berlin with barbed wire to discourage emigration to the West. The barbed wire was replaced by a 12 foot-high concrete wall eventually extending 103 miles (166 km) around the perimeter of West Berlin. The wall included electrified fences, fortifications, and guard posts. It became a notorious symbol of the Cold War. Presidents Kennedy and Reagan made notable appearances at the wall accompanied by speeches denouncing Communism. The wall was finally opened by an East German governmental decree in November 1989 and torn down by the end of 1990.



Birthday - Women's rights pioneer Lucy Stone (1818-1893) was born near West Brookfield, Massachusetts. She dedicated her life to the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of women and aided in the founding of the American Suffrage Association.



Birthday - Wild West performer Annie Oakley (1860-1926) was born in Darke County, Ohio. Famous for her shooting ability, she joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in 1885 and was one of the star attractions for 17 years.



Birthday - British film director Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980) was born in London. His suspenseful films included classics such as The 39 Steps, Rebecca, Suspicion, Notorious, Rear Window, The Birds, Psycho and Frenzy, in addition to his American TV series Alfred Hitchcock Presents.

Birthday - Cuban President Fidel Castro was born in Mayari, Oriente Province, Cuba, August 13, 1927. He led a rebellion in 1959 that drove out Dictator Fulgencio Batista, and remains one of the last outspoken advocates of Communism.

There are places in the Himalayas that seem to belong to another world. The Valley of Flowers in Uttarakhand is one of them. Hidden deep in the Garhwal Himalayas, this spectacular alpine valley bursts into colour during the monsoon, when thousands of wildflowers carpet its meadows and transform the landscape into a natural garden surrounded by snow-covered peaks.

Located in the Chamoli district, the Valley of Flowers National Park is celebrated for its extraordinary floral diversity, dramatic mountain scenery and rich wildlife. Together with Nanda Devi National Park, it forms part of the Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The valley's beauty, however, is not simply about flowers. It is the combination of high-altitude meadows, glacial streams, waterfalls, towering peaks and ever-changing Himalayan weather that gives the place its unmistakable character.

A Valley That Comes Alive in the Monsoon

For much of the year, the Valley of Flowers remains inaccessible beneath snow. As summer advances and the snow begins to melt, the valley gradually awakens. The arrival of the monsoon brings moisture to the high-altitude slopes, and the dormant landscape begins to change. Flowers emerge in waves, creating a constantly changing palette across the meadows. Blue, pink, purple, yellow and white blossoms appear among the grasses, while the surrounding mountains rise dramatically on every side. The flowering season is relatively short, making the valley's transformation all the more remarkable. The same landscape that appears austere and snowbound for much of the year becomes vibrant and alive for a brief period.

This seasonal rhythm is one of the Valley of Flowers' greatest attractions. It is not a static garden but a living ecosystem that changes from week to week.

The Journey to the Valley

The journey to the Valley of Flowers is itself part of the experience. The traditional route begins from Govindghat, from where travellers head towards Ghangaria, the main base for visiting the valley.

The trek from the roadhead to Ghangaria passes through mountain scenery, forests, streams and steep slopes. The sound of flowing water accompanies much of the journey, while the landscape gradually changes as the altitude increases. From Ghangaria, the trail to the Valley of Flowers takes visitors deeper into the high Himalayas. Once inside the national park, vehicles disappear and the landscape becomes increasingly wild and open.

The trail follows the Pushpawati River and leads into the broad alpine valley. The first glimpse of the meadows is often the moment when the effort of the journey seems to disappear.

The name "Valley of Flowers" can make the destination sound like a simple meadow covered in blossoms. In reality, the landscape is much more dramatic.

The valley stretches beneath massive

Valley of Flowers: A Himalayan meadow painted by nature



Himalayan peaks and is surrounded by steep mountain slopes. Glacial streams cut through the meadows, waterfalls appear along the cliffs and mist frequently drifts across the mountains.

The weather can change quickly. Bright sunshine can give way to clouds and rain within a short period, while patches of mist can completely transform the appearance of the valley.

This constant change gives the landscape an almost dreamlike quality. A view that is clear one moment may disappear behind clouds the next, only to emerge again in a different form.

A Botanical Treasure

The Valley of Flowers is recognised for its remarkable variety of alpine flora. During the flowering season, the meadows support numerous species adapted to the harsh conditions of the high Himalayas.

Among the flowers associated with the region are Himalayan bellflowers, blue poppies, primulas, potentillas, anemones, saxifrages and brahmakamals in the wider Himalayan landscape.

The famous Himalayan blue poppy, with its delicate blue petals, is among the flowers that attract particular attention. The brahmakamal, considered sacred in many parts of the Himalayas, is another celebrated high-altitude flower.

The flowering plants are not merely decorative. They form an important part of the mountain ecosystem, supporting insects and other organisms and contributing to the ecological health of the alpine environment.

Wildlife in the High Himalayas

The Valley of Flowers is also home to a variety of Himalayan wildlife. Visitors may encounter or hear about species such as the Himalayan monal, musk deer, Himalayan tahr, bharal and various smaller mammals and birds.

The elusive snow leopard inhabits the broader Himalayan region, although seeing one is extremely rare. The same is true of several other high-altitude animals. The best wildlife experience here



is often not about spotting a particular animal but about observing the larger ecosystem - birds moving between shrubs, insects among the flowers and signs of wildlife along the trail.

The Story Behind the Valley's Discovery

The modern story of the Valley of Flowers is often associated with British mountaineer and botanist Frank Smythe. In 1931, Smythe and his companions encountered the valley after returning from an expedition to Mount Kamet.

Smythe was captivated by the extraordinary floral landscape and later wrote about the region, helping introduce the valley to a wider audience.

However, it is important to remember that the landscape was not "discovered" in any meaningful sense by outsiders. Local communities had long known the region and its surrounding valleys. The modern scientific and travel interest that followed Smythe's account simply brought international attention to a place that was already part of the Himalayan cultural and geographical world.

A Place of Spiritual Significance

The wider region around the Valley of Flowers is deeply connected with Hindu pilgrimage traditions. The nearby pilgrimage centre of Badrinath is one of the most important sacred destinations in

the Himalayas.

The Valley of Flowers itself is primarily known for its natural and ecological importance, but its setting within the Garhwal Himalayas gives the journey a distinctive spiritual atmosphere. The silence of the mountains, the flowing rivers, the clouds moving across the peaks and the extraordinary abundance of flowers can create a sense of tranquillity that is difficult to find in ordinary tourist destinations.

For many visitors, the journey becomes as much about slowing down and reconnecting with nature as it is about sightseeing.

Hemkund Sahib: A Sacred Detour

A visit to the Valley of Flowers is often combined with a pilgrimage to Hemkund Sahib, one of the most revered Sikh shrines in the Himalayas. Situated at a high altitude, Hemkund Sahib lies beside a glacial lake surrounded by towering mountains. The journey from Ghangaria to the shrine is steep and demanding, but the dramatic landscape makes it one of the most memorable Himalayan pilgrimages. The combination of the Valley of Flowers and Hemkund Sahib creates a unique travel experience in which natural beauty and spiritual devotion exist side by side.



Ashish Yadav wins javelin silver, opens India's account at U20 World

AUGUST 8, 2026

EUGENE (TIP): Ashish Yadav won a silver in the men's javelin throw event to open India's medal account on the third day of the World Athletics U20 Championships here.

Yadav's third round throw of 74.09m fetched him the silver medal while T Dharanidharan, the other Indian in the fray in the men's javelin throw finals, finished sixth with 72.35m.

The 19-year-old Yadav became the second Indian, after two-time Olympic medallist Neeraj Chopra, to win a silver in the event.

Chopra had won gold and set the still-standing world junior record of 86.48m in the 2016 edition in Poland.

The gold medal went to South Africa's Jan-Hendrik Heymans who sent his spear to 80.50m, the season's U20 world lead, in his sixth and final attempt.

Head edges Alex Carey to win second straight Allan Border medal

SYDNEY , AUGUST 7 (TIP): Australian batter Travis Head has become the fifth cricketer to win back-to-back Allan Border Medals after edging out wicketkeeper-batter Alex Carey in a tightly contested vote.

Meanwhile, Mitchell Starc won the Shane Warne Men's Test Player of the Year award, while Mitchell Marsh and Tim David were named the top ODI and T20I players respectively, according to cricket.com.au. Travis Head received his second consecutive Allan Border Medal from former Australia captain Allan Border at an event in Brisbane on Friday. Last year, Head won the Allan Border Medal by a big margin and was close to winning several other awards too. This year, he secured the honour by a narrow margin after votes from players, umpires and media. Head edged South Australian teammate Alex Carey by one vote and Mitchell Starc by three votes. His match-winning 163 in the New Year's Test at the SCG, his third century of the Ashes series after moving up to open the batting, played a key role in helping him secure the award.

Ajinkya Rahane shares blueprint for India to succeed in Sri Lanka Tests: 'You cannot be too defensive'

AUGUST 8, 2026

COLOMBO (TIP): Veteran batter Ajinkya Rahane has shared his advice for India's young batting unit ahead of the upcoming two-Test series against Sri Lanka.

Having recently retired from international cricket, Rahane signed off as one of India's most dependable Test batters and played a key role in the team's success during a golden era in the longest format. He was instrumental in several memorable overseas triumphs, earning a reputation for delivering under challenging conditions. Rahane also enjoyed an outstanding record in Sri Lanka, starring in India's 3-0 clean sweep during the 2017 tour. He scored more than 200 runs in the series, including a century and a half-century, making him one of India's standout performers on that tour.

Rahane stressed the importance of putting bowlers under pressure from the outset, saying a defensive mindset rarely pays off in Sri Lankan conditions.

"I think in Sri Lanka, the first day wicket generally is very good. But being top of the bowler as a batsman is very important. That's what I have learned in Sri Lanka. You cannot be too defensive," Rahane told PTI. The former Mumbai batter also warned India against taking Sri Lanka lightly, pointing out that home conditions and a capable spin attack make them a



difficult side to beat. He stressed that every batter must have a clear game plan and play with positive intent, insisting that being proactive, even in Test cricket, would be crucial to succeeding in the series.

"You have to probably be more proactive because they will have spin friendly wickets, and Sri Lanka do have decent spinners in their side. And again, a home team is always a tough team to beat. Whatever I've learned playing cricket for so many years, you can't take anyone for lightly.

"So it's all about, I think, having your own game plan as an individual and being proactive. Even in Test cricket, it's going to be the key," he added.

Meanwhile, Rahane enjoyed a

distinguished Test career, scoring 5,077 runs in 85 matches at an average of 38.46, with 12 centuries and 26 half-centuries. While his overall numbers were impressive, it was his performances in challenging overseas conditions that truly defined his legacy. Time and again, he rescued India in difficult situations across South Africa, England, New Zealand, Australia and the West Indies, earning a reputation as one of the team's most dependable batters away from home. In SENA countries and the West Indies combined, Rahane amassed 2,928 runs in 46 Tests at an average of 38.52, including six centuries and 16 fifties, making him India's sixth-highest run-scorer in those conditions.

Australia pacer, 22, takes 8/25 as Bangladesh fold for 54 in warm-up ahead of first Test

AUGUST 8, 2026

DARWIN (TIP): Campbell Thompson. Remember the name. The 22-year-old returned with figures of 8/25 as Bangladesh folded up for 54 in the warm-up match against Cricket Australia XI to lose the contest by an innings and 38 runs on Saturday, August 8.

This result comes as a major blow for the side ahead of the two-Test series against Australia, beginning August 13 in Darwin. The visitors endured a dramatic collapse in the morning session on Day 3, with left-arm seamer Campbell completing a remarkable haul to dismantle Bangladesh's batting lineup.

Bangladesh resumed their second innings with two wickets already down and had little opportunity to recover. They survived for only 17 more overs and were dismissed before lunch, with opener Tanzid Hasan the only batter to reach double figures. He top-scored with 22. Thompson continued the damage he had begun late on the previous evening. The 22-year-old South Australian claimed the first five wickets of the



Australia pacer Campbell Thompson returned with figures of 8/25 (Cricket Australia)

morning to put Bangladesh under relentless pressure. The youngster, who had just one first-class appearance before this match, eventually finished with figures of 8 for 25. He removed Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto for a duck, trapping him lbw. He then wrapped up the innings by taking

the final two wickets with successive deliveries. The performance marks another impressive step in Thompson's rapid rise. He represented the Prime Minister's XI against England last season before making his List A and Sheffield Shield debuts for South Australia.



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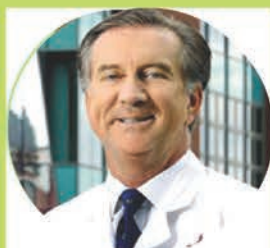
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Best Wishes, Peter



Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



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