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"Not negotiating": Trump says "something will happen fairly soon" with Iran, as US mulls fresh strikes

**OCTOBER 22, 2026
WASHINGTON D.C. (TIP)**

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday, October 21, said that the United States is not negotiating with Iran and "something" will happen "fairly soon".

Speaking to American news network 'NewsNation's White House correspondent Libbey Dean, Trump was asked about developments in negotiations with Tehran, Trump initially acknowledged some activity but indicated that the outcome remained uncertain.

"A little bit, but we'll see what happens," Trump said when asked whether negotiations with Iran were ongoing.

Asked whether he was done negotiating with the Iranian government, Trump said, "No, I think we're not negotiating...we are going to have something, one way or the other. It'll happen fairly soon."

He added that some people expected



US President on October 21 stated in an interview that the US is not negotiating with Iran but "something" will happen "fairly soon".

developments to take place after the US election, saying, "Most people think, seem to think it's after the election, and we're going to see what happens."

Trump also praised his administration's approach towards Iran, stating, "But I will say this: what we've done with Iran is amazing."

In the interview, Trump also highlighted the situation between Washington and Tehran as "a little conflict against Iran" and said the United States was performing well on both military and economic fronts.

"I think our sanctions ended the real deal over there. But we're doing very well militarily and financially against Iran," he said.

Trump did not specify what action or development he expected to take place "fairly soon" or provide a definitive timeline for the next steps in the US approach towards Iran. But this comes amid the report by The New York Times that the United States and Israel have

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Scientists petition to scrap SIR 'disenfranchisement exercise'



The signatories say they have endorsed the statement in their individual capacities, and that their views are personal and do not represent their institutions

Photo for representation only

**OCTOBER 23, 2026
NEW DELHI (TIP)**

A collective of independent scientists

has petitioned the Election Commission of India (ECI) and the government to scrap the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. They have also demanded the immediate restoration of all eligible voters wrongly excluded.

The open letter, of Friday, October 23, 2026, is signed by scores of researchers and academics from institutions including the Indian Institute of Science, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Kolkata, the Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Chennai, and the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences, Bengaluru. The signatories say they have endorsed the statement in their individual capacities, and that their views are personal and do

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Mamdani celebrates Navratri with Hindu New Yorkers, calls for unity against hate

**OCTOBER 22, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani joined Hindu New Yorkers in Queens to celebrate Navratri, Durga Puja, Dashain and Vijayadashami, calling for unity and solidarity against hate following an attempted mass shooting at a Hindu temple in Illinois last week.

In a post on X on Wednesday, October 21, Mamdani said he was honored to join members of the Hindu community in celebrating the festivals and participating in religious and cultural traditions. "This week, I was blessed to join Hindu New Yorkers in Queens celebrating Navratri, Durga Puja, Dashain, and Vijayadashami."

CONTD ON PAGE 42



New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani joined Hindu New Yorkers in Queens to celebrate Navratri.

Organization founded 80 years ago struggling to deliver peace today: India on need for UNSC reforms



Photo caption: India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni said an organization that cannot renew its principal organ will find it ever harder to command authority in a world that has moved far beyond 1945

File Photo / Credit ANI

**OCTOBER 22, 2026
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK (TIP):**

India has highlighted the UN Security Council's struggles to deliver peace and reconciliation in some of the "gravest" global conflicts, emphasizing that authority derived from victory in the Second World War cannot compensate for a "deficit in legitimacy" of an unrepresentative UNSC today.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni on Thursday, October 22, 2026, said an organization that cannot renew its principal organ will find it

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COMMENT

YOUR VOTE, YOUR VOICE, YOUR REPUBLIC

BY INDRAJIT
SALUJA

As Americans prepare for the November 3 midterm elections, a reminder that democracy draws its strength not merely from the right to vote, but from the willingness of citizens to exercise that right.

The Constitution of the United States begins with three immortal words: "We the People." They are not merely an introduction to a historic document. They are a declaration that the ultimate authority in our Republic belongs to the people. Governments are created to serve them, representatives are elected to speak for them, and public institutions derive their legitimacy from their consent.

But there is a question that deserves our attention as Americans approach the November 3 midterm elections: What becomes of the sovereignty of the people when the people themselves choose not to exercise it?

Across the country, Americans are preparing to elect members of Congress, governors, state legislators and other public officials. In several states, voting has already begun. Millions will participate enthusiastically, exercising a right that generations before them struggled to secure and protect.

Yet many others may remain indifferent. Some believe their individual vote makes little difference. Some are disillusioned with political parties and candidates. Others find politics so unpleasant that they prefer to stay away from it altogether. And there are those who simply postpone the decision until Election Day has passed.

To all such Americans, we offer a respectful appeal: Do not surrender your opportunity to participate in shaping the government that will make decisions affecting your life, your family and your country.

THE POWER OF ONE VOTE

It is easy to underestimate the significance of a single ballot.

What difference, one might ask, can one vote make among millions?

The answer lies in the very nature of democracy. Every electoral majority is composed of individual votes. Every representative elected to Congress, every governor chosen to lead a state, and every local official entrusted with public responsibility receives authority through the participation of individual citizens. No vote is insignificant merely because it is one among many.

An election may not be decided by a single ballot. Indeed, most are not. But every outcome is the accumulated expression of individual choices. A single vote may appear small. Millions of individual decisions to vote or not to vote determine the direction of a nation. And the value of voting extends beyond deciding who wins.

A ballot communicates public priorities. It registers approval or dissatisfaction. It reminds those seeking office that their authority must be earned, not presumed. The act of voting affirms that government remains answerable to the governed.

DEMOCRACY CANNOT AFFORD INDIFFERENCE

The American people have never lacked opinions about their government. We debate taxation, inflation, healthcare, education, immigration, national security, foreign policy and the responsibilities of government. We discuss the conduct of presidents, the performance of Congress and the decisions of courts. These are not distant questions reserved for politicians. They influence the cost of living, employment opportunities, public safety, retirement security, the education of our children and the future awaiting generations yet unborn.

Yet there is a contradiction in passionately discussing these matters while declining to participate in the democratic process through which representatives are chosen. We cannot reasonably expect government to reflect our concerns if we are unwilling to make our



preferences known when the opportunity arises. That does not mean every citizen must support a particular political party. Nor does it mean every candidate deserves enthusiastic approval. Democracy accommodates disagreement, disappointment and uncertainty. But it is strengthened when citizens remain engaged rather than withdraw from public life. A healthy Republic requires more than political leaders who seek office. It requires citizens who understand that the authority of those leaders originates with them.

THE LESSONS OF PARTICIPATION

The figures from previous elections deserve reflection. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 52.2 percent of the citizen voting-age population participated in the 2022 congressional elections. That means nearly half did not vote. The same report found that among registered citizens who did not vote, conflicting work or school schedules were the most frequently cited reason.

These findings remind us that nonparticipation is not always indifference. Some Americans confront genuine obstacles involving employment, transportation, health, disability, family responsibilities or access to voting facilities. Our democracy must continue working to make lawful participation accessible to every eligible voter. But the figures also remind us how much potential civic participation remains unrealized. Imagine the additional range of experiences, concerns and aspirations that could be reflected in electoral outcomes if more citizens took part. A representative democracy is at its strongest when participation is broad enough to reflect the diversity of the society it serves.

MIDTERMS ARE NOT MINOR ELECTIONS

Presidential elections naturally attract extraordinary attention. The contest for the White House dominates political conversation, advertising and news coverage. Midterm elections sometimes receive less attention from citizens. That is unfortunate, because their consequences are substantial.

All 435 seats in the House of Representatives are contested every two years. Approximately one-third of the Senate is elected at the same time. Congress makes laws, approves federal spending, exercises oversight and plays a central role in the constitutional system of checks and balances.

State and local elections can be equally consequential. Decisions concerning schools, infrastructure, public services, housing and numerous other matters are often made much closer to home than Washington.

The ballot is therefore not simply a choice between national political personalities. It is an opportunity to select people who will make decisions affecting everyday life. And those decisions will be made whether we participate or not. When we decline to vote, we do not remove ourselves from the consequences of government. We merely leave the choice of government to others.

THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT ACCOMPANIES A RIGHT

Voting is a right. Its exercise should remain a free and personal decision. But rights also invite reflection upon responsibility. Americans today inherit a democratic tradition enlarged through generations of struggle. The franchise was not always extended equally. Women

fought for the right to vote. African Americans struggled against discriminatory barriers. Other communities worked to secure fuller participation in the political life of the nation.

The history of American voting rights is therefore also a history of citizens insisting that the promise of "We the People" should include them. We honor that history not merely by remembering it, but by understanding the value of the rights now available to us. Voting need not be an expression of unquestioning faith in politicians. Indeed, it may be an expression of precisely the opposite: the conviction that those entrusted with public authority must remain accountable. The citizen who votes thoughtfully is not surrendering judgment to a political party. That citizen is exercising judgment.

AN APPEAL TO THOSE WHO FEEL UNREPRESENTED

We recognize that some Americans are deeply disappointed with contemporary politics. They hear promises that remain unfulfilled. They see bitter divisions, personal attacks and campaigns that sometimes appear more concerned with defeating opponents than addressing public problems. Their frustration deserves to be heard. But disappointment with political leadership need not become withdrawal from democracy.

Citizens can examine candidates' records, compare their proposals, question their claims and decide which choices most closely reflect their priorities. They can support different parties in different contests. They can evaluate individual candidates independently of party labels. And they can continue holding elected representatives accountable long after the ballots have been counted.

Participation does not require agreement with everything a candidate says. It requires a willingness to exercise one's own judgment.

For those facing practical difficulties, early voting, absentee voting and other lawful options may provide alternatives, depending on state rules. Election offices can explain the applicable deadlines and procedures. A little preparation can prevent an important opportunity from being lost.

THE REPUBLIC BELONGS TO ITS PEOPLE

America celebrates its 250th anniversary of independence this year. That milestone invites us to remember not merely the founding of a nation, but the endurance of an idea: that legitimate government derives its authority from the consent of the governed. The founders did not establish a Republic in which citizens were expected to remain silent spectators. They created a system in which public authority would ultimately depend upon the people. That principle remains as relevant in 2026 as it was in 1776.

Democracy is not sustained by constitutional language alone. It is sustained by institutions that respect the Constitution and citizens who remain willing to participate in public life.

No election will solve every national problem. No candidate will satisfy every voter. And no single ballot can guarantee the future we desire. But participation gives citizens a voice in choosing those who will exercise authority on their behalf. A vote may take only a moment to cast, but its consequences can shape the years ahead.

As November 3 approaches, we invite every eligible American to reflect upon the privilege, responsibility and opportunity of participating in our Republic. Examine the issues. Consider the candidates. Make an informed choice according to your own conscience. And remember that the future of democracy does not rest with political leaders alone. It rests with the people whose consent gives those leaders their authority.

The Republic belongs to all of us. Our voices matter. Our participation matters.

We the People.

Charles B. Wang Community Health Center Hosts Family Health Fair in Elmhurst, Queens

**OCTOBER 16, 2026
FLUSHING, NY (TIP)**

The Charles B. Wang Community Health Center (CBWCHC) is hosting a Family Health Fair on Saturday, October 24, from 11 am - 4 pm at Moore Homestead Playground (on Broadway, 45th Avenue, and 82nd Street) in Elmhurst, Queens, 11373. The event is hosted by CBWCHC and cosponsored by UnitedHealthcare, Councilmember Phil Wong, and Councilmember Shekar Krishnan. The fair features free health screenings for blood pressure, glucose, and cholesterol, CPR demonstrations, tai chi performances, Zumba, Chinese dance, music, face painting, and free books and giveaways. This Family Health Fair aims to promote community wellness and connect residents to important health resources.

"The Health Center is excited to host another Family Health Fair for the community because it offers free access to various health resources," said Kaushal Challa, Chief Executive Officer of the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center. "This event will not only feature free health screenings from the Health Center but also important health and community resources and information from other community



organizations. Families will also get to enjoy fun activities and entertainment together with fellow community members."

"We know that good health is influenced by many factors beyond medical care alone," said Munmeet Singh, NYS Medicaid & Essential Plan Director from UnitedHealthcare Asian Initiatives. "When we come together as community partners, we can help remove barriers, expand access to resources, and empower individuals and families to make informed decisions about their health and well-being."

"I want to thank the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center and its

dedicated team for their continued commitment to our communities. Access to quality healthcare should not be limited by language, income, or background," said NYC Councilmember Phil Wong. "Events like the Elmhurst Family Health Fair bring essential health services, education, and resources directly to our residents, especially Chinese speaking seniors, immigrants, and working families. I appreciate everyone involved in making our community healthier, stronger, and better connected. Thank you for your dedication and service to our community!"

Special thanks to our event partners

Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC), Queens Public Library, Commonpoint Queens, Make the Road NY, NewYork-Presbyterian Queens (NYPQ), Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE), DocumentedNY, LiveOnNY, NYC Big Reuse, Garden of Hope, Northwell Hospital, New York City Cancer Services Program, and UnitedHealthcare.

ABOUT THE CHARLES B. WANG COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

For more than 50 years, the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center (CBWCHC) has been a leading health care provider dedicated to delivering high-quality, affordable health care to underserved communities with a focus on Asian Americans. Open 7 days a week, CBWCHC accepts most major health insurance plans and offers comprehensive primary care services to children and adults at 5 locations in Manhattan and Queens. CBWCHC's legacy of excellence is nationally recognized with its commitment to ensure equitable access to health care for all, regardless of ability to pay or language spoken.

For more information, visit www.cbwchc.org

South Asian Filmmaker Razid Season's Kaddish Heads to Goethe-Institut Following U.S. Television Broadcasts



A still from Kaddish
Photo courtesy: Razid Season

**OCTOBER 19, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

From international film festivals and national television broadcasts to Holocaust education and historical preservation initiatives, Kaddish (2020), an award-winning short film by New York-based South Asian filmmaker Razid Season, continues to reach audiences around the world. Its latest international presentation is scheduled for October 24, 2026, at Goethe-Institut Bangladesh in Dhaka, as part of Cine Sandhya, the institute's established film screening and cultural exchange programme. The screening will be followed by a hybrid question-and-answer session with the filmmaker.

Written and directed by Season, Kaddish is told in Yiddish and German and explores the devastating human consequences of the Holocaust, examining themes of loss, survival, compassion, and human dignity. The film reflects Season's interest in portraying historical injustice and the experiences of individuals confronting persecution and discrimination.

The film has received international recognition, including Best Film at the Columbus Jewish Film Festival and Best Director at the Southern Arizona Independent Film Festival. It was also an official selection of the Asian American International Film Festival in New York, one of the country's longest-running showcases for Asian and Asian American cinema.

Beyond the festival circuit, Kaddish has gained recognition through its inclusion in the Visual History of the Holocaust initiative, which brings together audiovisual materials related to Holocaust history and historical documentation. The film's association with this initiative highlights its reach beyond traditional entertainment platforms and into the broader field of historical and cultural engagement.

In April 2026, Kaddish was broadcast nationally in the United States on Jewish Life Television (JLTV), followed by additional broadcasts in June. The television presentations introduced the film to audiences across the country, expanding its reach beyond international film festivals and cultural institutions.

The film's latest international screening will take place at Goethe-Institut Bangladesh on October 24 as part of Cine Sandhya, a programme that provides a platform for cinematic expression and intercultural dialogue. Previously screened at the Dhaka International Film Festival in 2020, Kaddish returns to the city six years later.

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news

Liu, Rozic Announce major fraud prevention measure to protect snap recipients

RETAILERS URGED TO UPGRADE POINT-OF-SALE DEVICES TO RECEIVE CHIP-AND-TAP-ENABLED EBT CARDS BY DECEMBER 1, 2026 DEADLINE



**OCTOBER 22, 2026
FLUSHING, NY (TIP)**

State Senator John Liu, State Assembly Member Nily Rozic today joined with city, state, and federal elected officials and small businesses in Flushing to announce the rollout of a statewide initiative to combat Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) fraud.

The New York Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) is upgrading its magstripe Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards with chip-and-tap-enabled technology, a proven security measure used in commercial debit and credit cards that can significantly help prevent fraud and theft from skimming devices.

The upgrades come in response to persistent SNAP benefit theft in New York. Reports indicate that over the last year in NYC, there were over 34,000 claims for stolen SNAP benefits amounting to approximately \$17.1 million in reported losses.

During a legislative budget hearing in February, Senator Liu pushed for clear

and rapid deployment of chip-enabled cards to prevent more families from losing money and food in the midst of an affordability crisis. In response to his questioning, OTDA Commissioner Barbara Guinn committed to a 12- to 18-month rollout with the goal of completing the rollout as soon as possible. Funding to support the transition from swipe to chip technology was later included in the FY 2027 Budget, following strong advocacy by state legislators.

State Senator John Liu stated, "For years, New York has relied on an outdated EBT system that made it far too easy for scammers to take advantage of hard-working New Yorkers. As scammers and their skimming devices got more sophisticated, thousands of SNAP recipients continued to get ripped off, and so we relentlessly pushed the state to upgrade its EBT cards with the same safety measures found in credit and debit cards."

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news

Indian-origin author, broadcaster to judge Women's Prize of Non-Fiction in UK

THE PRESTIGIOUS ANNUAL PRIZE, WHICH ALSO INCLUDES A FICTION CATEGORY, CELEBRATES EXCEPTIONAL NARRATIVE NON-FICTION WRITTEN BY FEMALE THOUGHT LEADERS



Reeta Chakrabarti. - Image credit/X@reetacbbc

OCTOBER 21, 2026
LONDON (TIP)

Indian-origin author Shrabani Basu and broadcaster Reeta Chakrabarti were unveiled on Wednesday, October 21, as part of the judging panel of the 2027 Women's Prize for Non-Fiction worth 30,000 pounds in London.

The prestigious annual prize, which also includes a Fiction category worth the same prize money, celebrates exceptional narrative non-fiction written by female thought-leaders, changemakers and experts.

The winner will also receive a limited-edition artwork known as the 'Charlotte', created by artist Ann Christopher and gifted by the Charlotte Aitken Trust.

"As a non-fiction author myself, I love this prize because it gives a fantastic space for women to be recognized in this

genre," said Basu, the India-born author of 'Spy Princess: The Life of Noor Inayat Khan' and 'Victoria and Abdul: The Extraordinary True Story of the Queen's Closest Confidant'.

"It's a great experience as I am reading some fascinating books, discovering subjects I may not normally have been drawn to. There's everything, from history and politics to science, tech and memoirs.

"It is pretty intense, and for the next few months you'll find me nose-deep in a book. I can't wait to reveal the longlist," she said.

The London-based historian joins Chakrabarti, a prominent London-born BBC journalist of Indian heritage, on a panel made up of writer and disability advocate Sophie Morgan and psychotherapist Emma Reed Turrell, and chaired by lexicographer Susie Dent.

"Women's non-fiction writing is all too often overlooked and undervalued and, together with my fellow judges, I look forward to amplifying the voices of those whose experience, wisdom, and expertise can enrich us all," said Dent.

The 2027 non-fiction longlist will be announced on February 10 and the shortlist on April 7. The coinciding fiction longlist is set for a March 10 unveiling, with the shortlist out on April 28.

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news

British Indian landlord stripped of royal honor amid allegations over squalid rental properties

NIRPAL SINGH RIAT FINED FOR ILLEGALLY CONVERTING HOUSES INTO FLATS AND RENTING OUTBUILDINGS TO VULNERABLE TENANTS; HE DENIES SOME ALLEGATIONS

OCTOBER 22, 2026
LONDON (TIP)

A British Indian landlord based in London has been stripped of his royal honor by King Charles III after being fined for renting out damp and squalid rooms.

Nirpal Singh Riat's name was on an updated UK Cabinet Office list issued this month among those whose Order of the British Empire (OBE) has been annulled.

Riat, who was conferred the royal honor by the late Queen Elizabeth II in 2010 for "services to charity and to the Punjabi people", was found to have brought the "honors system into disrepute".

"The King has directed that the appointment of Nirpal Singh Riat to be an Officer of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, dated 31 December 2010, shall be cancelled and annulled and that his name shall be erased from the Register of the said Order," reads the Cabinet Office statement.

Riat, who denies some of the allegations levelled against him as "fabricated", has been dubbed a rogue landlord after details of his business emerged in court around three years ago.

According to local media reports, the businessman now in his 70s was given one of the biggest fines in west London of 300,000 pounds (around Rs 3.8 crore) over illegally converting houses into flats and renting outbuildings to vulnerable people forced to live in "terrible conditions". There were also reports of a previous fine



Photo for representational purpose only. iStock

over an illegal property conversion.

The stripping of Riat's honor follows a local councilor in Hounslow raising the matter with the Honours Forfeiture Committee.

The Honours Forfeiture Committee is an advisory committee under the UK Cabinet Office that reviews cases where a person with a British honor may have brought the honors system into disrepute.

The cancellation of a royal honor is rare and follows a similar move against another Indian-origin businessman in 2024. Lord Rami Ranger was stripped of his CBE conferred by the late Queen Elizabeth II in the New Year's Honours list of December 2015 for services to British business and the Asian community after the Forfeiture Committee found that he had brought the "honors system into disrepute".

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news

Indian-origin couple jailed over Covid protective gear fraud in UK

IN EARLY 2021, NCA DISCOVERED HE WAS PAID MORE THAN 3.18 MILLION DOLLARS FOR AN ORDER OF NITRILE GLOVES TO BE DELIVERED TO US HOSPITALS THAT WERE NEVER DELIVERED

OCTOBER 21, 2026
LONDON (TIP)

An Indian-origin couple have been jailed in the UK for fraudulently claiming to be able to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) during the Covid pandemic and then illegally laundering the funds.

Jogesh Bhandari, 59, and Meenakashi (Meena) Bhandari, 58, were found guilty of several counts of fraud and money laundering after a five-week trial at Leicester Crown Court in July.

While his wife was sentenced to a two-year suspended sentence and 250 hours of unpaid community work on October 7, Bhandari failed to appear in court, claiming health issues. He was ultimately sentenced to eight years' imprisonment last week after the judge ordered his arrest.

Craig Morris, 43, found to have made representations on behalf of the couple's company in numerous fraudulent deals in 2020 and 2021, was sentenced to three years and nine months in prison, alongside Meena earlier this month.

"These defendants took an opportunity to target legitimate businesses and line their own pockets for a lavish lifestyle during a pandemic that caused uncertainty around the world," said Paul Boniface, operations manager at the National Crime Agency (NCA), which investigated the fraud.



Photo for representation: iStock

While Bhandari was picking up his brand new luxury car and talking about how he couldn't stop smiling, healthcare facilities had not received the vital PPE they needed at a time when demand was exponential and companies were millions of dollars out of pocket.

"These sentences recognize that their selfish actions caused far reaching effects, far beyond the immediate losses for the legitimate businesses involved," he said. NCA's investigation discovered that the group spent hundreds of thousands of pounds they received for PPE supplies on house renovations and luxury cars. "NCA will continue to target fraudsters like these who cause significant harm to the UK economy," added Boniface. The agency's probe revealed that Bhandari owned and controlled a company set up in 2020 to buy and sell nitrile gloves during the pandemic.

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news

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‘ Paid for by Suozzi for Congress ‘

Indian student groups protest against CEC, SIR in London; govt supporters hold counter-protest



While "Stop Vote Chori" protest cheered for activist Dhruv Rathee as the keynote speaker, chants of "Modi, Modi" rang out from a smaller group across the Gandhi statue, being kept apart by Metropolitan Police officers

Photo:
dhruv_rathee/X

OCTOBER 17, 2026
LONDON (TIP)

Hundreds gathered at Mahatma Gandhi's statue at Parliament Square in London on Saturday for a protest organized by the Opposition Congress and UK-based Indian students' groups against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

While the "Stop Vote Chori" protest cheered for activist Dhruv Rathee as the keynote speaker, chants of "Modi, Modi" rang out from a smaller group across the Gandhi statue, being kept apart by Metropolitan Police officers.

The face-off between the groups got heated as each tried to drown out the other's chants.

"We don't want any foreign interference. I am here at Parliament Square to address Indians and NRIs," said Rathee, addressing the gathering in Hindi.

"It is important to spread the

message against 'vote chori' in our country. These protests will stop the moment the Chief Election Commissioner is replaced by a candidate that is chosen in agreement between the government and Leader of the Opposition," he said.

His address followed slogans of "Inquilab Zindabad", "Vande Mataram" and the reading of the preamble of the Constitution of India.

The protest was organized by the Indian Overseas Congress Youth wing and supported by several diaspora platforms including Save Democracy, Students' Federation of India (SFI) UK and South Asia Solidarity Group, among others.

Meanwhile, India Diaspora (ID) UK had issued an "Urgent appeal to all London Bharat Premi Janta" to gather in counter-protest.

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news

Haryana Sikh youth killed in head-on crash on Canada highway, 3 others seriously injured

JASKEERAT SINGH NAUKHRIA, 24, WAS DRIVING THE CAR WHEN A PICKUP TRUCK ALLEGEDLY TRAVELLING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION HIT IT

OCTOBER 22, 2026
SURREY, BC (TIP)

A 24-year-old man from Haryana was killed and three others were seriously injured when a pickup truck rammed head-on into the car he was driving on Canada's Coquihalla Highway on October 17.

The deceased was identified on Thursday, October 22 as Jaskeerat Singh Naukhria, 24, a native of Rattak village in Haryana's Karnal district who had moved to Canada in 2024.

According to a British Columbia (BC) Highway Patrol news release, police had received multiple complaints about a vehicle travelling southbound in the northbound lanes of Highway 5.

Witnesses told the police that a black Toyota Tacoma had entered the highway near Lac Le Jeune before colliding with the white Toyota RAV4 driven by Naukhria.

The 22-year-old driver of the pickup truck, its lone occupant, sustained minor injuries and was detained on suspicion of impaired driving.

Naukhria's three fellow passengers,



Jaskeerat Singh Naukhria (inset) hailed from Rattak village in Haryana's Karnal district and had moved to Canada in 2024.

Image credit: Screengrab/social media

who were also of Punjabi origin, were hospitalized, with two in critical condition. All four occupants of the vehicle were aged between 24 and 38.

The police are appealing for witnesses and dashcam footage to help investigators determine what happened.

Naukhria is survived by his father, a farmer, his mother and his younger sister.

An online fundraiser in his name aims to raise \$100,000 to cover funeral and memorial expenses, related costs and provide financial support to the family.

(SOURCE: TNS)

Indian-origin pharmacist, employee jailed for 6 years over £1.3m NHS fraud in UK

JIGNESH PATEL, 46, AND RAHIL PATEL, 42, WERE SENTENCED LAST WEEK FOLLOWING A THREE-WEEK TRIAL AT SOUTHWARK CROWN COURT

OCTOBER 22, 2026
LONDON (TIP)

An Indian-origin pharmacist and his employee have each been sentenced to six years' imprisonment over an NHS prescription fraud worth an estimated 1.3 million pounds.

Jignesh Patel, 46, and Rahil Patel, 42, were sentenced last week following a three-week trial at Southwark Crown Court.

The Patels, who are not related, were both found guilty of three counts of fraud by false representation and two counts of converting criminal property.

"This was committed out of greed and you were equal partners in the serious fraud designed to make you a lot of money," Justice Cole said at the sentencing hearing last Friday.

"This was a thoroughly impressive investigation, expertly presented on all sides," he said.

The National Health Service said the NHS Counter Fraud Authority (NHSCFA) investigators will now use their powers under the UK Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) to recover these lost funds.

"Jignesh Patel and Rahil Patel worked together for several years, obtaining drugs using false prescriptions and selling them on to European pharmaceutical wholesale businesses," said Ben Harrison, Head of Operations and Engagement at the NHSCFA.

"Our expert investigation team followed the evidence, both in the UK and Europe, to bring these individuals to justice. This case demonstrates that there is no hiding place for those who seek to defraud the NHS," he said.

"We will actively pursue any criminals



The Patels, who are not related, were both found guilty of three counts of fraud by false representation and two counts of converting criminal property. iStock photo

that seek to defraud the NHS of vital funds and every pound stolen from the NHS is a pound that cannot be spent on frontline services, and the NHSCFA is committed to pursuing those responsible," he added.

As a pharmacist who owns Wise Pharmacy in north London and a pharmaceutical wholesale business called Actipharm Limited, Jignesh Patel came under the NHSCFA radar for dispensing high-cost drugs, normally only issued in a hospital environment.

Following anomalies in the expected prescribing data, NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups obtained copies of the prescriptions and checked them with the named general practitioners (GPs).

These checks identified that there was no documentation to support the patients' clinical need for the drugs and confirmed they had not been prescribed.

Enquiries by the Local Counter Fraud Specialist (LCFS) identified seven high-cost medicines being dispensed by Wise Pharmacy which would not normally be expected in primary care.

Read full story at
atwww.theindianpanorama.news

APPEAL TO FELLOW AMERICANS:

LET'S COME TOGETHER IN NOVEMBER AND VOTE THEM ALL OUT!

Any Democrat, any Republican that has been pushing wars from Ukraine to Palestine, Lebanon to Yemen — **VOTE THEM OUT!**

Because if we don't, and we the people don't have our voice guiding this reckless ship that could blow up the whole world, **IT IS UP TO EVERY AMERICAN TO STAND UP!**

SHUT THE MILITARY COMPLEX DOWN! WE DON'T NEED IT.

This also applies to any candidate accepting money from Billionaires that has diminished the value of individual voter.

NOW IS THE TIME!

Do not hold back — it is our conscious hour now to wake up and speak out!

Dave Makkar
(Community Activist)
davemakkar@yahoo.com

IACFNJ Hosted Grand Navratri Garba Celebration at South Brunswick High School in New Jersey



Attendees at Mata's Aarti

**OCTOBER 13, 2026
SOUTH BRUNSWICK, NJ (TIP)**

The Indo-American Cultural Foundation of Central Jersey (IACFNJ) successfully hosted its annual South Brunswick Garba 2026 on October 9 and 10 at South Brunswick High School, bringing together thousands of participants from Central New Jersey and surrounding communities for a vibrant celebration of Indian culture, music, dance, and tradition.

The two-day celebration featured traditional Garba, energetic Dandiya-Raas, and the popular Gujarati folk dance Sanedo. Participants of all ages arrived in colorful traditional attire, creating a festive atmosphere filled with music, enthusiasm, and community spirit. The celebration began each evening with Aarti and prayers to Goddess Amba Maa, followed by Garba and Dandiya-Raas.

The event welcomed distinguished local leaders and elected officials, including South Brunswick Mayor Charles Carley, Deputy Mayor Ken Bierman, Councilwoman Archana Grover, South Brunswick Police Chief James Ryan, South Brunswick Board of Education members Barry Nathanson, Mike Mitchell, and Raja Krishna, North Brunswick Board of Education member Manpreet Singh, Community Supporters Mukund Thakar, Sunil Nayak, Kaushik Vyas, Ritesh Shah, Rupen Patel and Ketan Shah. Their presence reflected the community's support for IACFNJ's efforts to promote cultural understanding, diversity, and community engagement.

South Brunswick Garba 2026 was made

possible through the generous support of sponsors, local businesses, community partners, and volunteers. Royal and Daawat Basmati Rice, represented by LT Foods, sponsored the Best Dress and Best Dance competitions. Middlesex County Cultural Arts, Patel Brothers, OHM International, Dr. Navin Mehta, Arista Care, MP Engineers, and Ruby Memorial were among the major supporters. Reshma Nangia Heritage Studio of Princeton generously provided prizes recognizing the best-dressed men and women. The delicious food vendors were Jhopri Restaurant of Plainsboro and Ice Gola Express.

Beyond the festivities, South Brunswick Garba 2026 served as a powerful celebration of cultural heritage, diversity, and community unity. Bringing together thousands of people across generations and backgrounds, the event created a vibrant space where families strengthened cultural ties, younger generations connected with their Indian roots, and the broader American community experienced the richness of Indian traditions. More than a cultural celebration, South Brunswick Garba fostered meaningful connections, promoted mutual respect, and strengthened the bonds that make Central New Jersey a more inclusive and connected community. With more than two decades of community service, IACFNJ continues to build bridges across cultures, preserve India's rich heritage for future generations, and demonstrate how shared traditions can unite people, celebrate diversity, and enrich the social



IACFNJ Team members with invited guests and elected officials - Mayor Charles Carley, Deputy Mayor Ken Bierman, School Board Members Barry Nathanson & Mike Mitchell and Police Chief James Ryan

fabric of our community.

The IACFNJ Executive Committee, Board of Trustees, organizing team, and volunteers worked diligently to ensure the event ran smoothly. The organization extends its heartfelt gratitude to all sponsors, supporters, volunteers, media and community members whose dedication and overwhelming participation made the celebration a tremendous success.

For more information, visit

www.IACFNJ.org, email info@iacfnj.org, or contact Dr. Tushar Patel at 848-391-0499.

About IACFNJ: The Indo-American Cultural Foundation of Central Jersey is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting Indian culture, traditions, and heritage while fostering cultural diversity, community engagement, and mutual understanding among people of all backgrounds.

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



Thousands enjoying the Garba -Photos / Courtesy of Sharan Sathya - IACFNJ Official Photographer

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MEDIA IN THE CROSSHAIRS OF THE STATE & PEOPLE

BY GEETA SESHU



FOR A MEDIA THAT DARES TO QUESTION, WINNING BACK PUBLIC TRUST IS A CRUCIAL TASK

The news media in India is finding itself in the crosshairs of the State and its agencies. Concurrently, it is also under attack from a distrustful public and broken by deep ideological divisions from within. Leaving aside the important debate over who qualifies as a journalist, the news media's impact and relevance depend on how it navigates and repairs its complicated relationship with the State, the public and itself.

Over the past week, the protests seeking the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar have pitted the media against a brutal police force in Delhi. On October 11, there were 20 documented instances of journalists' detention, assault, sexual harassment of women journalists and the seizure of mobile phones and camera equipment by the Delhi Police.

who were picked up by the police in uniform but without name badges or other identification, are being removed. Account holders have been warned that the content they post violates laws, without specifying which content is deemed unlawful and under which provisions of the law.

The large-scale detention and attacks on journalists were violations of the Supreme Court's order of October 11, wherein Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana had said that "lawyers, journalists and other professionals shall not be hindered in discharge of their professional duties in any manner whatsoever." (The Court has now issued notice on a contempt petition filed by this writer on behalf of the Free Speech Collective, and the next hearing is on November 3).

The detentions were only one part of the brutal police crackdown on journalists. Surveillance, with the deployment of face recognition software, was already part of the police toolkit during the July protests seeking the resignation of then Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. In this round of protests, the personal data of detained journalists has been collected, and with reports that electronic devices are yet to be returned to them, it is anybody's guess what data the police have garnered from them.

The relationship between the media and the government has always been fraught, as it should be in a functioning democracy with a robust, questioning and assertive media. Over the last decade, the relationship has gone steadily downhill, with the government

political spectrum. Challenges to a plethora of laws that impact media freedom are still pending before the apex court.

The government's shutout of an independent media has been enabled by an increasingly partisan media that openly aligns itself with the ruling NDA and aggressively defends government action. It has manufactured opinion against activists and dissenters, demonized them as anti-national forces and actively sought criminal action against them. Serious investigative reports by independent media are debunked and discredited.

The fissures run deep, and this was evident when reporters of Republic TV heckled AISA leader Neha Bora and CJP leader Abhijeet Dipke during a press conference at the Press Club of India. Other journalists present shouted them down and they were finally made to leave.

Public distrust of the media came out into the open during the farmers' agitation of 2020-21 with the unequivocal rejection of the partisan, government-supported "Godi media".

Anger against this section of the media was palpable. Protesters flatly refused to speak or allow themselves to be interviewed. Others listened to the live reporting challenging journalists, heckled reporters calling them out for spreading falsehoods on camera while mobs even roughed up and attacked some of them.

Journalists, especially from independent news sites, were hard put to explain how they were different from the "Godi media" and were there to report fairly and accurately, committed to upholding the highest journalistic principles. For the public, seeing was believing and they watched everything as it happened.

The upsurge in videos, memes and reels on social media, provided what broadcast media couldn't or didn't show. Raw, immediate and unfiltered, they have become the central mode of communication about the protests. The continuous stream of social media-driven content may have over-run established media, even as it was fed by it. In this tumultuous scenario, counter narratives, false and misleading reports abound, but in the competition for attention, videos of the ground protests hold sway, at least till they are taken down.

For a media that dares to question, winning back public trust is a crucial task. The rift within the media, a section of which openly speaks for the current dispensation, has prevented any united response to the government and its law enforcement agencies. A punitive police goes unchecked and remains unaccountable. And the government remains safely in the shadows.

(Geeta Seshu is co-founder, Free Speech Collective, an organization which aims to defend the right to freedom of expression and vigorously promote free speech and the right to dissent.)



Videos, memes and reels on social media provided what broadcast media didn't show. -Credit / ANI

Each protest raises the stakes for both the protesters and the State. The police action on October 11 and 12 signaled the State's most concerted attempt to police the narrative on the ground. Despite the detentions, the attempt didn't work, as a veritable army of independent news media information gatherers, almost entirely operating on social media, recorded events and put out videos in real time.

Like their counterparts in the established media, some independent journalists bore the brunt of assault and detention by cops, but with far less acknowledgement or even recognition of their identity and work. A Press badge gave slim protection, despite advisories by Delhi Police about journalists displaying ID cards prominently. Videos and reels of protesters and journalists,

To date, no FIR has been registered on a woman journalist's allegation that ACP Vivek Bhagat sexually assaulted her, but the latter's counter FIR on charges under the Prevention of Atrocities Act was quickly registered by the Parliament Street police station.

In response to the argument of senior advocate Indira Jaising, representing the Network of Women in Media, India, in a petition filed before the Supreme Court concerning the assault and arbitrary detention of women journalists, the Court directed no coercive action be taken against the scribes. In another application, the Court agreed to hear an application alleging that the Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi pushed a pregnant woman journalist during a protest march to the Supreme Court on the SIR issue.

making no secret of its disregard for time-honoured mechanisms of engagement with the media and its blanket refusal to hold press conferences or allow any unscripted interaction with journalists.

While an unquestioning media remains passive, sections of the media that were seen as recalcitrant and combative face raids, criminal cases for investigative reports or the routine takedown of content. They struggle to survive, dependent on a subscriber base and bogged down by expensive litigation. Established media, whether in print or broadcast, risks the drying up of advertising revenue and plays safe through the self-censorship route.

Statutory self-regulatory mechanisms have all but broken down as they exclude even token participation from across the

Political Vendetta: A Greater Threat to the Republic than to its Victims

BY PROF.
INDRAJIT S
SALUJA



The targeted opponent may survive the persecution. Public confidence in impartial government may take generations to recover.

From the earliest years of the American Republic to the present administration, political revenge has tested the institutions entrusted with protecting liberty. The danger today is not merely to those singled out for punishment, but to the independence of justice itself.

Political vendetta is not a new phenomenon in America. It is almost as old as the Republic itself. From the earliest days of constitutional government, officeholders have been tempted to turn public authority against their political adversaries. The instruments change: the temptation persists.

The Constitution begins with "We the People." It does not say "We the President" or "We the Party in Power." The authority of government belongs to the people, including those who oppose the government of the day.

There is a decisive distinction between political conflict and political persecution. Harsh criticism, even when unworthy of public office, generally belongs to democratic debate. The misuse of prosecution, taxation, surveillance, regulatory power or public employment to punish opponents is something altogether more dangerous. It transforms public trust into a personal weapon.

THE HISTORICAL RECORD

In 1798, President John Adams signed the Alien and Sedition Acts. The Sedition Act was used against opposition journalists critical of the Federalist administration. Barely a decade after the Constitution took effect, the government was prosecuting critics despite the new nation's commitment to freedom of expression. The law expired in 1801, but its warning endured.

Under Andrew Jackson, the spoils system became closely associated with rewarding political allies through government jobs and displacing opponents. Later civil-service reforms recognized that the machinery of government must serve the public rather than whichever party won the last election.

The Palmer Raids of 1919-1920 demonstrated how genuine security anxieties could be accompanied by sweeping abuses of civil liberties. McCarthyism showed how accusations of ideological disloyalty and congressional investigative powers could intimidate citizens. Under FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, surveillance operations against activists, including Martin Luther King Jr., revealed the perils of intelligence authority insufficiently restrained.

Richard Nixon supplied the clearest modern warning. His White House maintained lists of perceived enemies, while Watergate and related investigations exposed attempts to misuse executive authority and obstruct accountability. Nixon's resignation in 1974 affirmed that even the presidency is subject to constitutional limits. The lesson was not that political opponents should escape investigation; it was that the President's personal interests must not govern the administration of justice.

RETRIBUTION AS A PUBLIC DEMAND

Against that history, the conduct of President Donald Trump's second administration raises serious questions. Trump did not invent political vindictiveness, and his supporters maintain that officials who investigated him must be accountable if they committed wrongdoing. That principle is sound: no official should be above the law. But having investigated a president is not itself evidence of misconduct.

Trump has repeatedly described investigations of himself as politically motivated. During his political rise he also adopted the language of retribution, telling supporters in 2023, "I am your retribution." After his return to the White House in January 2025, actions affecting federal employees, law firms, institutions and people associated with opposition to him intensified debate about retaliatory use of government power. Reuters documented a broad pattern of actions it characterized as punitive; that journalistic classification should not be confused with a court finding that every action was unlawful.

The most consequential issue is not the President's language alone. It is what happens when public demands for



The Constitution, justice and the institutions of American democracy. -(AI-generated conceptual artwork / ChatGPT)

THE ENEMIES OF A PRESIDENT ARE NOT NECESSARILY ENEMIES OF THE REPUBLIC. AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE REPUBLIC MUST NEVER BE PLACED AT THE SERVICE OF A PRESIDENT'S DESIRE FOR REVENGE.

punishment intersect with personnel decisions and criminal prosecutions. A president may set lawful enforcement priorities. He may not replace evidence with personal grievance or insist that a prosecutor produce charges merely to satisfy political anger.

SEPTEMBER 2025: THE PRESSURE BECOMES EXPLICIT

In September 2025, federal prosecutor Erik Siebert departed the Eastern District of Virginia amid pressure surrounding possible cases against prominent Trump adversaries. Reporting indicated that he had reservations about the strength of the evidence.

On September 20, Trump publicly pressed Attorney General Pam Bondi for action against former FBI Director James Comey, New York Attorney General Letitia James and Senator Adam Schiff. All three had played prominent roles in investigations, litigation or congressional proceedings involving Trump.

Trump then selected Lindsey Halligan, a former personal lawyer, for the interim federal prosecutorial position. Comey was indicted in connection with congressional testimony; James subsequently faced mortgage-related charges. Both denied wrongdoing.

The sequence invites scrutiny: a prosecutor who questioned the evidence departed; the President publicly demanded action against named adversaries; a replacement prosecutor secured indictments. The sequence does not by itself establish every element of unlawful vindictive prosecution. It does make the independence of prosecutorial judgment a central public concern.

In November 2025, a federal judge dismissed the indictments against Comey and James, ruling that Halligan had been unlawfully appointed. The decision did not determine the defendants' guilt or innocence. The Justice Department appealed, and litigation continued into 2026. The episode nevertheless illustrated why appointment rules and judicial review are essential restraints on executive power.

OCTOBER 2026: A WARNING TO CAREER OFFICIALS

On October 15, 2026, nine former FBI employees sued after being dismissed earlier in the year. They had worked on the investigation into Trump's retention of classified documents at Mar-a-Lago. They alleged retaliation and failures of required procedure. Those claims remain for the courts to decide.

Yet the institutional question is immediate. If a federal agent risks dismissal merely for having been assigned to investigate a politically powerful person, how independent can future investigations be? Agents do not select their cases to suit political fortunes. Their duty is to gather evidence and obey the law.

Officials who fabricate evidence, violate rights or abuse their positions must be held accountable. But participating in a lawful investigation is not proof of disloyalty or wrongdoing. When public servants fear that faithfully

performing their duties may end their careers, professional independence gives way to self-preservation. The resulting silence may outlast any administration.

THE REAL VICTIMS ARE THE INSTITUTIONS

An individual singled out by government may suffer legal expense, humiliation, loss of employment or lasting reputational damage. These injuries matter. But the deeper wound of political vendetta is often inflicted on the institutions themselves.

The Department of Justice loses credibility if citizens believe prosecutions depend on presidential favor. The FBI loses independence if agents fear investigating those in power. The civil service loses impartiality if professional judgment must yield to political loyalty. Congress weakens itself when partisan solidarity replaces oversight. Courts face mounting pressure when decisions are judged chiefly by whether they please the executive.

These institutions support the constitutional edifice. A Republic may retain its elections, offices and ceremonial language while the public's trust in their impartial operation quietly erodes. The targeted opponent may survive the persecution. Public confidence in impartial government may take generations to recover.

ACCOUNTABILITY WITHOUT REVENGE

Condemning political vendetta does not mean granting immunity to former presidents, prosecutors, investigators or political opponents. Credible evidence of wrongdoing must be investigated, wherever it leads. But suspicion is not proof; disagreement is not a crime; and having performed an official duty is not, by itself, misconduct.

The relevant questions are straightforward. Is there credible evidence? Were lawful procedures followed? Were prosecutors free to exercise independent judgment? Would the same standards apply to someone without a history of conflict with the President?

The Attorney General serves the law and the nation, not presidential resentment. Congress must exercise oversight regardless of which party controls the White House. Journalists must distinguish allegations from findings. Citizens must refuse to excuse in their preferred leaders' conduct they would condemn in their opponents.

AMERICA AT 250: A TEST OF CONSTITUTIONAL CHARACTER

The founders could not abolish ambition, resentment or the human desire for revenge. They sought instead to build institutions capable of restraining their consequences. Their achievement was not a democracy without political conflict, but a constitutional order in which political conflict need not become governmental persecution.

Winning an election confers authority to govern. It does not confer a license to punish disagreement. The presidency is not a personal possession, and the powers attached to it are not instruments for settling private scores.

We must defend the right to investigate wrongdoing while resisting the use of investigation as punishment for political opposition. That principle protects no single party or personality. It protects the rule of law.

Political opponents come and go. Presidents serve limited terms. Administrations rise and fall. But the Constitution must endure.

The enemies of a president are not necessarily enemies of the Republic. And the authority of the Republic must never be placed at the service of a president's desire for revenge.

We the People, not We the Powerful.

(References: National Archives (Alien and Sedition Acts; Nixon records); FBI historical records (COINTELPRO); Reuters (September 2025 presidential demands and prosecutor replacement; November 2025 retaliation investigation); AP (October 15, 2026 FBI employee lawsuit); federal court rulings in the Comey/James appointment dispute)

(Prof. Indrajit S Saluja is the chief editor of The Indian Panorama. He can be reached at salujaindra@gmail.com)

A contested UNSC seat poses a test for India

It is a battle that can be avoided - the path to next year's UNSC election will not be a cakewalk, and India must consider its options

BY SUHASINI
HAIDAR



Following the conclusion of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), held from September 8 to 28, 2026, the government must double its efforts to secure a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in next year's election. India's bid for the 2028-29 two-year term of the UNSC was launched by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar this year, with voting in the UNGA to take place in June 2027. As a result, Mr. Jaishankar was busier than usual during UNGA week, holding nearly 90 meetings over a 10-day stay in New York. Between now and next summer, India needs at least 129 affirmative votes in the 193-member Assembly to win.

THE UNITED NATIONS' LONG ROAD TO RESTORING TRUST

This has not been as much of an issue on the eight occasions that India has won the seat over the past eight decades, becoming the Asia-Pacific grouping's consensus choice once every decade. Even Pakistan votes for India at the UNGA in these elections, and India

wider UNGA. From there it is a race for every country's vote; the rule that contestants must also win two-thirds of the assembly, or more than 129 votes, complicates the task. Given that the course is set, the Modi government has three options, each opening a differently difficult path. The first is to battle it out against Tajikistan on the global stage; the second is to convince the Tajik government to withdraw its candidature; and the third is for India to withdraw its own. Another option - to divide the two-year term equally between the two candidates - has been tried in the past, but these cases have been countries that are evenly matched in other respects.

BATTLING IT OUT

At first glance, India's advantage over Tajikistan seems glaringly obvious, given its size, economic standing and past record on the Council. However, UN insiders know that these are not the only criteria by which UNSC elections are won. To begin with, India's multiple terms on the UNSC may work against it, as there is a growing

member-states voted overwhelmingly in favor of at least 13 resolutions criticizing Israel. The UNSC elections this year were particularly instructive. For the Asia-Pacific seat, the UNGA voted for first-timer Kyrgyzstan over the western-backed Philippines. For the WEOG, Germany, which had never lost a UNSC election, lost to Portugal and Austria, ostensibly due to its stance in support of Israel. In the election for the President of the UNGA, too, the Bangladesh Foreign Minister, Khalilur Rahman, defeated his rival from Cyprus, another western-backed candidate. While India's assertion of strategic autonomy vis-à-vis the big powers may stand it in good stead, its diplomats may have to answer questions about India's own ties with Israel in recent years, particularly following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel in February 2026.

TAJIKISTAN OR INDIA BOWING OUT

The next option, which has worked in the past, is to persuade Tajikistan to withdraw its candidature - India was able to negotiate with Kazakhstan in 2010 for the 2011-12 term, and Afghanistan in 2013 to step aside for the 2021-22 tenure. However, despite meetings between Mr. Modi and Tajik President Emomali Rahmon on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Bishkek, and between Mr. Jaishankar and his Tajik counterpart during the UNGA session (both in September 2026), there has been no such announcement. Defense Minister Rajnath Singh will travel to Dushanbe next week for the SCO Heads of Government Council (October 19-20) and his meetings there will also be watched closely on this issue.

Even if Tajikistan decides to step aside after studying its chances, India must consider the message this would send to other Global South countries: that its second turn in a decade is more important than giving a smaller country its first opportunity to serve on the Council.

This leaves the third alternative, which would certainly make the world sit up: India could agree to step aside for Tajikistan, in order to return to the UNSC a year or two later with the full backing of the Asia-Pacific grouping. Such a move would acknowledge Tajikistan's special strategic relationship with India in the past, particularly its role in hosting an Indian Air Force base at Ayni and a medical base at Farkhor, strategically important in the Afghan conflict in the early part of this century, despite pushback from the U.S., China and even Russia. There is little evidence so far, however, that the Modi government, which announced its candidature with some fanfare, is considering backing down.

Before choosing an option, the government must undertake a cost-benefit analysis of the value of the UNSC non-permanent seat at a time the global body is seen, in the words of Mr. Jaishankar, as "largely irrelevant". The last six years of this decade have witnessed shock after shock, but perhaps none have rendered its own significance into question as much as the violation of the UN charter by the Permanent members themselves. China's refusal to share information on early cases of the COVID-19 pandemic with the World Health Organization, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, U.S. backing of Israel despite its violation of every UN covenant, the killing of UN personnel in Gaza and the visa ban on the UN Secretary-General, followed by the U.S.'s war on Iran - the assassination of its leaders, and the bombing of a girl's school - are all examples of this.

The path to securing another non-permanent seat on the UNSC next year is not easy. India's win can only be guaranteed by defeating the ambitions of its old friend and regional partner - the choice is between a Pyrrhic victory versus a tactical defeat. In the bigger war for India's rightful place as a permanent member of the UNSC - one whose voice represents the aspirations of the Global South - this is a battle that could be avoided.

(Suhasini Haidar is the Diplomatic Editor with The Hindu)



UN Security Council Chamber -UN Photo / Loey Felipe

returns the favor. With the full backing of the 55-member group, India won a record 187 of 191 votes in 2010 and 184 of 192 votes in 2020.

THE BID FOR A NINTH TERM

India's ambition to win a ninth term is guided by several factors - its terms were in 1950-51, 1967-68, 1972-73, 1977-78, 1984-85, 1991-92, 2011-12 and 2021-22. Its last tenure, in 2021-22, was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Narendra Modi government felt it had been unable to meet all its objectives. New Delhi may want to complete these objectives, including resolutions on terrorism and United Nations reform, before the Modi government's current term ends in 2029. With India's push for permanent membership of the UNSC still elusive, the government may wish to increase the frequency of its non-permanent tenures, keeping India at the centerstage of geopolitics from the UNSC's horseshoe table.

RUSSIA BACKS INDIA'S CANDIDATURE FOR UNSC PERMANENT SEAT

The difference this time, however, is that when India announced its candidacy for the 2027 election, Tajikistan was already in the fray and, according to the chart drawn up for the Asia-Pacific seat, was to be the consensus choice. On the two previous occasions when India had to contest an election - in 1975 against Pakistan and in 1996 against Japan - it lost. Decisions on consensus are made informally by diplomats at the UN, sometimes decades in advance for the 55-country Asia-Pacific grouping.

Like with all the other regional groups - African, Latin American and Caribbean (GRULAC), the Western European and Others Group (WEOG), and the Eastern European Group - a different number of seats fall vacant each year. When consensus breaks down, votes within the group are split, leading to a contest in the

push within the UNGA to consider smaller countries that have never held council membership such as Tajikistan. In his UNGA speech, Tajik Foreign Minister Sirojiddin Muhriddin said that, more than status, his country's bid for a seat on the UNSC was about its responsibilities to the UN Charter and to "listen to all voices - large and small". This David-versus-Goliath pitch is attractive to other smaller states, especially those from the Global South that feel their lack of representation is unfair: Japan, for instance, which has served 12 terms on the UNSC, announced its candidature for the 2043 election in 2024, having previously declared its intention to contest the 2032 election.

UNSC reform would border on failure if only non-permanent category expanded: India

The next important factor is how subregional blocs are likely to vote within the Asia-Pacific grouping. Tajikistan already has the endorsement of its own region, Central Asia, and possibly, by extension, that of several neighboring countries. It also has the endorsement of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, a grouping of 57 member-states which would largely follow that position, although New Delhi may be able to win over some of its friends within the organization. India is fairly confident of the votes of the Global North - the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and allied countries - as well as those of Southeast Asian countries (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN), Caribbean nations represented by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and Pacific Island countries (PIC). This means the battle ground that matters most is the Global South - Africa, South America and also South Asia.

The current mood among Global South countries, as reflected in a number of UNGA resolutions over the past year, has been decidedly against the big powers, the U.S. and Russia, and has been inordinately critical of Israel. During the 80th session,



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INDIA CULTURE WEEK COMMENCES IN NEBRASKA



Consul General and Dr. Kari Costello, Vice Provost of Creighton University along with Indian traditional and folk dance performers at Omaha, Nebraska, October 21, 2026.

OCTOBER 21, 2026 SEATTLE (TIP)

The 1st India Culture Week in the State of Nebraska was inaugurated at Creighton University, Omaha on 21 October 2026. Jointly organized by the Consulate General of India, in partnership with Creighton University, it showcased an Indian Film Festival, Indian Food Festival, Unveiling of the India Corner, Incredible India Photo Exhibit and a cultural dance performance showcasing the various flavors of Indian classical and contemporary dance forms.

The India Culture Week began with the unveiling of the India Corner at Creighton's Reinert-Alumni Memorial Library, the first India Corner in Nebraska. A gift from the Government of India to the Creighton University, it holds a specially curated collection of books on India's culture, history, cinema, art, ecology, spirituality and cuisine and will help bring Indian literature and scholarship closer to the young students and faculty.

An "Incredible India" Moving Photo Exhibit was also on display at the Harper Center Atrium. It featured select photographs clicked by an acclaimed Seattle-based photographer of India's people, places, heritage



Unveiling of the India Corner at the Reinert-Alumni Memorial Library in Creighton University



Participants savoring delicious Indian cuisine at the India Food Festival

and everyday life, from the streets of New Delhi to the temples of Bhubaneswar. The photographs were taken during a CGI Seattle-organized US Pacific Northwest delegation visit to India in March 2026, which also included members from Nebraska, including the University's Vice Provost Dr. Kari Costello.

The India Culture Week celebrations also featured a captivating cultural performance by the Gurukulam Center for Indian Arts, presenting a range of Indian dance traditions, including the classical forms of Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi and Mohiniyattam, Punjabi and other contemporary dances. The performance showed the diversity of India's regional cultures and its centuries-old traditions of music and dance.

Students and faculty also enjoyed the India Food Festival, which served some of the finest Indian cuisine. The spread introduced guests to the distinctive spices, flavors and regional variety that have made Indian food popular around the world. The inaugural day concluded with the screening of the acclaimed



Participants at the First India Culture Week at Creighton University



Students and faculty viewing the acclaimed Bollywood film Dangal at the Hixson-Lied Auditorium as part of India Film Festival



Specially curated performance of India's traditional, folk and Bollywood dance



India Corner, holding curated collection of Indian books at Reinert-Alumni Memorial Library in Creighton University



Students at Creighton University viewing the Incredible India Photo Exhibit at the Mike and Josie Harper Center

Indian film Dangal (2016), as part of an Indian Film Festival at Creighton University.

It may be recalled that this unique template of India Culture Week at US Universities commenced at Seattle University in November 2024. Since then, India Film Festivals have reached students and communities across the US Pacific Northwest, including at prestigious venues like Museum of Pop Culture (Seattle, Washington), Shoreline College (Shoreline, Washington), University of Montana (Missoula, Montana), North Dakota State University (Fargo, North Dakota) and schools in the Bellevue and Northshore School Districts of Washington State as well as University of Nebraska - Lincoln (Nebraska).

This unique template of India Culture Week (ICW) celebrations aim to bring modern India and its culture, traditions and heritage, closer to young American minds. By giving students direct exposure to India's literature, art, cuisine and cinema, the ICW initiative seeks to build interest among young Americans toward contemporary Indian studies and also strengthen people-to-people and educational ties and increase tourist traffic from the US Pacific Northwest into India.

(Based on a Press Release issue by Soumith Raju K, Press Officer at CGI Seattle)

UK study visa clampdown hits foreign students, including Indians, as universities withdraw offers

This tightening of the previous 10 per cent threshold is aimed at what the UK government believes is the abuse of the student visa route by certain nationalities, led by Pakistanis and Nigerians

OCTOBER 17, 2026
LONDON (TIP)

International students, including Indians, are likely to be impacted as British universities revoke offers to courses amid a clampdown on study visas issued by the UK Home Office, according to a media analysis last week.

The Financial Times newspaper analyzed official data to find that universities are taking the step to withdraw offers to students over fears of facing a blanket ban on their ability to recruit foreign students.

Under the Home Office rules, education institutions where more than 5 per cent of prospective international students given offers subsequently have their visa applications rejected face the risk of being banned from recruiting them.

This tightening of the previous 10 per cent threshold is aimed at what the UK government believes is the abuse of the student visa route by certain nationalities, led by Pakistanis and Nigerians.

"Many refusals appear to rest on flawed, inconsistent and highly subjective reasoning, forcing universities to withdraw offers at scale to avoid breaching compliance thresholds," said Jamie Arrowsmith, director of Universities UK International (UUKi) - which represents institutions recruiting abroad.

While acknowledging the need to maintain



confidence in the immigration system, he stressed that "visa processing has become markedly less predictable."

The Financial Times said its analysis of Home Office data showed that in the first half of this year, 10.5 per cent of study visa applications to the UK ended up being withdrawn, up from 2.3 per cent in the same period last year and 0.4 per cent in 2023.

Around 40.9 per cent of prospective students from Pakistan had visa applications withdrawn in the first six months of this year, up from 3 per cent in the same period last year.

Further down the list was 22.7 per cent of study visa applications from Nigeria being withdrawn in the first half of this year, up from 4.5 per cent in the first half of 2025. Bangladesh's proportion of withdrawn applications rose from 7.1 per cent to 23.5 per cent and India's from 1.2 per cent to 5.2 per cent.

Sir David Bell, vice-chancellor of University of Sunderland, told the newspaper: "The recent and unexpected spike in visa refusals has prompted pre-emptive action in several universities.

"This has involved pulling back from international markets where a tougher approach is being taken to visa applications."

The newspaper also referenced figures in the higher education sector to flag that around 15 universities are thought to have suspended recruitment from Pakistan entirely this year.

Professor Steven McGuire, deputy vice-chancellor of University of East Anglia, said the policy's effect may be that UK universities "double down" on China and India where refusal rates are lower.

The Home Office said that while international students "make a positive contribution" to Britain, "this must not be at the expense of recruiting responsibly, in turn protecting the integrity of our immigration system," offering universities "support where needed to improve recruitment practices."

Trump Renews \$100,000 Payment Requirement and Adds Layoff-Related Scrutiny

OCTOBER 17, 2026
WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP)

President Trump signed two H-1B-related actions on September 18, 2026: a proclamation extending the \$100,000 H-1B fee originally imposed in September 2025 for another 12 months, and a separate Executive Order directing agencies to weigh an employer's recent layoffs when reviewing its H-1B petitions. The fee extension takes effect at 12:01 a.m. Eastern time on September 21, 2026, right as the original one-year restriction was set to expire. The restriction is scheduled to remain in effect for 12 months, absent another extension, modification, or court action.

WHAT THE NEW PROCLAMATION DOES

The core requirement is unchanged from the original 2025 proclamation: entry into the U.S. as an H-1B specialty occupation worker is restricted unless the petition is accompanied or supplemented by a \$100,000 payment. The proclamation generally targets H-1B petitions involving beneficiaries outside the United States who must seek admission to activate the petition approval, including through consular processing, port-of-entry admission, or pre-flight inspection. Employers should obtain case-specific advice concerning extensions, amendments, changes of status, and international travel.

The Secretary of Homeland Security retains discretion to exempt an individual worker, an entire company, or an entire industry from the restriction if doing so is found to serve the national interest and does not threaten U.S. security or welfare. Employers must obtain and retain documentation of payment before filing, and the State Department is directed to verify payment before approving the visa.

The White House cites steep drops in H-1B filings by large IT staffing and outsourcing firms as evidence the original restriction worked as intended, along with a shift toward higher-paid, higher-skilled registrants in the FY 2027 cap season. Those figures come from the administration's own account of the policy's effects and



are worth reading with that in mind.

A COMPLICATED LEGAL BACKDROP

This renewal doesn't arrive on settled legal ground. The original \$100,000 fee has been through a genuinely messy run in the courts over the past several months. A coalition of 20 state attorneys general sued in Massachusetts as *State of California v. Mullin*, and on June 8, 2026, Judge Leo Sorokin vacated the policy implementing the fee, calling it an unlawful tax. A separate lawsuit in D.C., brought by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Association of American Universities, went the other way, with that court upholding the fee. Both rulings are on appeal, and on July 24, 2026, the First Circuit denied the government's request to pause the Massachusetts vacatur while its appeal moves forward.

USCIS's own guidance currently states that it disagrees with the ruling but will comply with it while it considers next steps, meaning the fee is not being collected as a formal matter. In practice, reports from employers and immigration practitioners suggest adjudication hasn't been entirely consistent even under that posture, with some petitions filed without the \$100,000 payment moving forward normally and others experiencing delays. Employers should not assume smooth, predictable processing just because the fee is currently unenforceable.

Because the renewed proclamation is a newly issued presidential action rather than simply a continuation of the one that was vacated, its relationship to the existing court rulings will likely require further legal analysis

and may generate additional litigation. Whether the same plaintiffs, or new ones, challenge this renewal on the same grounds, and how quickly, remains to be seen. Employers should not assume the litigation history is behind them just because a new proclamation has been signed.

A SECOND ACTION: NEW SCRUTINY TIED TO LAYOFFS

The fee renewal wasn't the only thing signed on September 18. President Trump also signed a separate Executive Order aimed at H-1B program integrity and interagency coordination. Unlike the proclamation, this order doesn't attach a new dollar figure to anything. Instead, it changes how H-1B petitions get evaluated behind the scenes.

The order directs the Secretaries of State, Labor, and Homeland Security to consult with the Secretaries of Commerce and Education, along with the Small Business Administration, to gather additional data on wages, industry conditions, and employment specialization for use in administering the H-1B program. More notably for employers, it also directs those same three agencies to factor in a petitioning employer's recent or planned layoffs of similarly situated U.S. workers when reviewing that employer's H-1B visa applications.

That layoff-related scrutiny is worth flagging on its own. An employer that has recently reduced its U.S. workforce in a role comparable to the one it's sponsoring may now face closer examination of its H-1B petitions specifically because of that layoff history, separate and apart from anything having to do with the \$100,000 fee.

HOW THIS FITS WITH THE SEPARATE \$103,265 FEE PROPOSAL

This proclamation is entirely separate from the proposed \$103,265 DHS regulatory fee on cap-subject H-1B petitions, which is still only a proposal.

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

Are elections, the festival of democracy, losing their credence and sheen?

BY
PRABHJOT
SINGH



OCTOBER 21, 2026
TORONTO (TIP)

Elections, the festival of democracy, have started losing both their credence and sheen the world over. Serious doubts have started questioning the credibility of the traditionally accepted mode of determining the popularity of political parties as well as their key players, the leaders.

The United States, considered one of the world's most vibrant democracies, has been rocked over the way the election of the most powerful man of the world - the President of the United States - is held. It became the subject matter of several petitions even in the Supreme Courts of the United States.

Rigging the polls is one of the oldest allegations facing the democratic process that gives each registered voter a right to exercise his franchise in a free and fair manner. The system,

Canada, for example, has been on forefront in accusing both China and India for interfering in its political processes. Though both India and China have declared the allegations "outrageous" but there cannot be any smoke without a fire.

Now, Canada is in the middle of holding municipal elections to five of its provinces, including Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba.

It is not Artificial Intelligence (AI). It is a common social media handle - Face Book - that has been cornering attention in the Municipal Elections being held in some provinces of Canada this month.

While posting news content on Facebook is prohibited in Canada, yet allegations are going wild over some Facebook pages - "I Love Surrey", "I Love Delta", and "Delta Speaks" - that have been the talking point in Surrey, Delta and Vancouver in British

by the India-based social media handles has given credence to the allegations.

The alleged foreign interference in political affairs of a friendly sovereign nation has been a major irritant that led to bitterness and even snapping of diplomatic ties between India and Canada less than two years ago. And the Canadian Municipal elections have been alluring a substantial number of candidates of Indian descent in the fray.

The month of October will keep people in these provinces busy to elect their Mayors, Councilors and School Board Trustees. Each province has chosen a special day like first Monday or second Monday or fourth Saturday to hold the elections.

Members of the Indian Diaspora have been evincing keen interest in municipal elections. A former

assumed special significance for more than one reasons. The foremost is the ongoing conflict over tariffs with the oldest trading partner and neighbor the USA.

The "tariffs" war apart, another disturbing trend that has shaken the municipal elections in British Columbia is the allegation of foreign interference with fingers pointed out at India. I am reproducing verbatim a social media post that has been hawking media attention in parts of British Columbia.

HERE GOES THE POST:

"Rupees for Reach? The Overseas Facebook Network Targeting B.C. Voters

Former Surrey Mayor Doug McCallum and the Safe Surrey Coalition have dropped a political bombshell, demanding an immediate federal investigation into alleged foreign election interference ahead of the October municipal elections.

HERE IS WHAT IS CURRENTLY UNFOLDING IN B.C. POLITICS:

The Network: A network of at least four to six Facebook pages-bearing names like "I Love Surrey," "I Love Delta," and "Delta Speaks"-has been posing as grassroots local news for Surrey, Delta, and Vancouver.

The Foreign Tie: According to the Safe Surrey Coalition, these pages are actually being operated out of India. The group claims the operations are funded in Indian rupees and billed to "ACTS at C-DAC Innovation Park, Pune," an entity linked to a Government of India research facility.

The Political Angle: McCallum's camp alleges this coordinated overseas content aims to sway Canadian voters and specifically paints current Surrey Mayor Brenda Locke in a positive light. For her part, Mayor Locke responded that she has absolutely no knowledge of these accounts or the alleged interference.

The Official Stance: McCallum is calling on CSIS, the RCMP, and Elections BC to investigate and demanding Meta take the pages down. However, Elections BC stated that because the paid "boosted" posts occurred outside of the official pre-campaign period, an initial review shows they do not violate the Local Elections Campaign Financing Act.

With the municipal elections rapidly approaching, the line between global digital marketing and election interference is under the microscope.

Should federal authorities be stepping in to regulate overseas pages operating in local elections? Share your thoughts below!"

After going through this post, you can draw your own conclusions.

(Prabhjot Singh is a Toronto-based senior journalist. Awarded a number of times for his journalistic performances, particularly in the field of sports, Prabhjot writes with equal ease on any subject under the Sun. He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)



however, came under severe criticism over the way the voters are registered with accusations running high that the political bosses stoop so low to leave out their opponents from the voters' lists.

As the system keeps evolving to get rigged of its drawbacks and to make it as transparent as possible, the concept of electronic voting machines (EVMs) was introduced about a couple of decades ago.

The EVMs, too, could not stay clear of the controversies.

Another issue that has great political ramifications and that has been threatening the credibility of the national elections is the "foreign interference.

Columbia.

The reason: Allegations of foreign interference.

Interestingly, while India as a nation is witnessing a fierce campaign to seek ouster of the Chief Election Commissioner on allegations of "managing voters' lists through SIRs and malpractices. The agitation has been spreading as hundreds of preventive detentions were made.

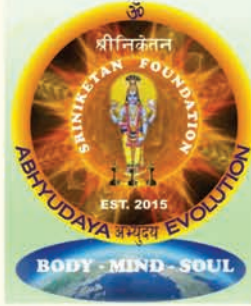
The eruption of violent protests may have nothing to do with the Municipal elections in several Canadian provinces, including British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Islands, and parts of Saskatchewan and North Western Territories. Yet accusations supported

Member of Parliament and legislator Jinny Sims is in the run for Mayoral post. In one municipal zone in Manitoba, there are four Patels in the ran from different wards. Candidates of Indian origin are contesting for Mayoral and Councilor positions.

In Ontario, Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto, Etobicoke, Milton, and many other areas have several candidates in the fray.

In fact, the number of candidates of Indian origin in all six provinces where all or some areas are in the severe grip of electioneering. Interestingly, polling in these civic elections have been dripping over the years.

This time these civic elections have



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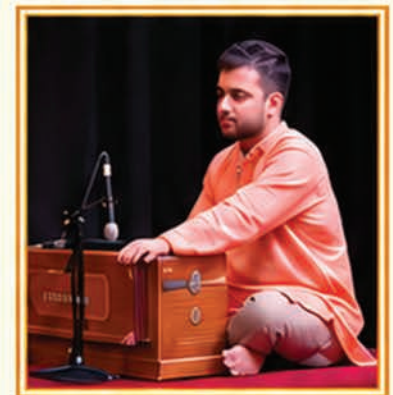
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HEALTH IS WEALTH

Netanyahu invites Modi, Smit to light Israel's I-Day torch

OCTOBER 23, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to light a ceremonial torch at Israel's Independence Day celebrations alongside Indian pilot Captain Smit Machchhar, who was seriously injured while thwarting an alleged attack aboard a Dubai-Tel Aviv flydubai flight.

Netanyahu reiterated the invitation during a phone conversation with Modi as the two leaders reviewed bilateral ties and discussed the need to restore peace and stability in West Asia.

Machchhar, a flydubai captain, came into the spotlight after an alleged attack by his co-pilot aboard flight FZ1073 on September 30. The aircraft, travelling from Dubai to Israel, reportedly lost altitude sharply during the incident before making an emergency landing in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia. The episode is under investigation by the authorities concerned.

According to reports, Machchhar was attacked inside the cockpit and sustained serious injuries. Despite being hurt, he managed to reach and open the cockpit door, enabling others to intervene. Other crew members and off-duty pilots helped bring the situation under control.

Netanyahu had first extended the invitation earlier this month, describing Machchhar as a hero of India, Israel and the wider world. He invited Modi to join the pilot in lighting the ceremonial flame, an honour traditionally associated with Israel's Independence Day celebrations. The final selection of torch-lighters is, however, subject to Israel's established process.

Cabinet Secretariat 'refused action' on ECs' complaints against officer over order 'to centralise powers': RTI

OCTOBER 23, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Cabinet Secretariat refrained from taking any action on complaints sent by two Election Commissioners against the conduct of an officer in the Commission, noting that the communications were in their "individual capacity" and in the absence of "any official communication from the Commission as a whole, any action at this stage may be inappropriate", according to an RTI disclosure.

Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had sent two separate communications on July 29 to the top bureaucrat of the country TV Somanathan, on the working of Senior Deputy Election Commissioner (Sr. DEC) Maneesh Garg, IAS, who was posted in the Commission by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on September 2, 2024, the letters provided in the RTI reply to activist Commodore Lokesh K Batra (retd) show.

Media reports had reported in September that Sandhu and Joshi wrote separately to Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan after issuance of a work allocation order within the poll body that "threatened to concentrate the powers" at the EC centrally to add or delete names and update records in the voters' list rather than allowing officials at the state level.

In a statement on September 26, the Election Commission (EC) had said that the work redistribution orders issued by the officer concerned were never implemented following directions from the two Commissioners.

The poll panel had said that the letters sent by Sandhu and Joshi to the Cabinet Secretary pertained to an officer on deputation, rather than policy or IT division matters.

"Both the ECs have stated that Shri Garg, after assuming the charge as link officer of DEC (Admn.), has issued an order regarding work allocation of equivalent and senior officers to him without discussing the revised work allocation with the Commission or the officers concerned. Further, the aforementioned ECs have stated that this has happened despite repeated oral and written instructions to all concerned officers against taking such actions without prior discussion/approval of the Commission," a Cabinet note provided in the RTI response said.

The Commissioners had flagged that Garg's actions were a clear violation of the Chief Election Commissioner and



Election Commissioners SS Sandhu (left) and Vivek Joshi with Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar (centre) in New Delhi.

Image credit/PTI file

Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.

A Cabinet note prepared on the complaint said acting on complaints raised by two Election Commissioners against an officer, without official communication from the Election Commission as a whole, could be construed as "interference in the functioning of the constitutional body".

"The Commission is a constitutional body and is insulated from executive interference by design to ensure that it functions independently and in a transparent manner. The working and functioning of the Commission are governed by the rules and guidelines of the Election Commission. The above communications are from the ECs in their individual capacity and, while they must be taken with due seriousness, they cannot be seen as a formal communication from the Commission as a whole," it said.

Although, Maneesh Garg has been appointed by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), he is now an officer of the ECI and his work and conduct is to be regulated and monitored by the rules and guidelines of the ECI, the note said.

Under Section 18 of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, the business of the Commission is to be transacted unanimously as far as possible, with differences of opinion decided by majority, the Cabinet note observed.

Source: TNS

OCTOBER 23, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): The BJP on Friday, Oct 23, claimed that an internal battle between Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka was playing out within the Congress, citing the Leader of the Opposition's silence on the controversy over the removal of photographs from Raihan Vadra's exhibition. BJP spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari questioned whether Priyanka had lost faith in her brother, alleging that she was seeking to "soft-launch" her son by manufacturing a controversy.

Rahul, who left for Vietnam last Sunday on a personal visit, has not posted anything on the controversy yet. The BJP has latched on to it to allege a rift between the Gandhi siblings. However, just days ago, Rahul and Priyanka jointly led protests against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar over alleged SIR irregularities.

"Priyanka Vadra's entire attempt was to soft launch her son by manufacturing a controversy. She has lost political faith in

Rahul Gandhi!" Bhandari tweeted.

"Rahul Gandhi, who from Vietnam is tweeting on every issue under the sun, has till now not openly done a single tweet in favour of Raihan Vadra. Its Priyanka vs Rahul in Congress!" he further said.

On Wednesday, Raihan, an artist and photographer, said the Bikaner House administration had taken down several of his photographs depicting recent student protests in Delhi ahead of his exhibition, titled 'No Idea is Final'. It invited a furious reaction from the Congress, with Priyanka calling it a bid to "muzzle" the voice of the youth.

Raihan said hours before his exhibition was due to open on Wednesday evening, he was asked by the Bikaner House



management to remove or replace 74 of his 105 photographs. When the exhibition started, only 35 frames remained.

Reacting to the controversy, Bikaner House stated that the photographs were

"found to be inconsistent" with the policy of the venue.

Sharing screenshots of the email exchange between Raihan and Bikaner House, the BJP said the initial exhibition proposal listed themes such as nature, wildlife, abstract artworks, portraits, and sculptures. Bhandari said there was no mention of any "political content".

"Raihan Vadra's email to Bikaner House dated June 10, and the proposal he sent to Bikaner House in the same mail had him declare the exhibition containing themes of nature, wildlife, artwork, sculpture," Bhandari posted.

Bikaner House accepted the proposal on June 30. The BJP suggested that the political photographs were added later.

Priyanka vs Rahul in Congress: BJP claims rift amid Raihan Vadra exhibition row

India slams Pak at UN over treatment of minorities, says Islamabad has no standing to lecture New Delhi

OCTOBER 23, 2026

NEW YORK: India slammed Pakistan at the United Nations over its treatment of religious minorities, accusing Islamabad of failing to protect vulnerable communities while attempting to lecture New Delhi on religious freedom, burial rights and the treatment of minorities.

Delivering India's statement during an interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief on funeral rights in exceptional circumstances, First Secretary of India's Permanent Mission to the UN, Bhavika Mangalanandan, questioned the report's approach to religious discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic and its advocacy for the funeral rights of terrorists.

Mangalanandan said the report appeared to attribute discriminatory practices and shortcomings during the pandemic primarily to countries in the Global South while overlooking similar tragedies in developed nations.

"As per the report, all discrimination and wrong practices during COVID-19 supposedly took place only in the Global South. What benefit does a report derive by not mentioning similar tragic situations in the developed world?" she asked. She cautioned against politicising human suffering and said reports on religious freedom should address violations impartially rather than selectively highlighting incidents for political purposes.

Parliamentary panel seeks gender-inclusive urban criteria

A parliamentary standing committee has called for a review of India's criteria for identifying urban areas, highlighting that one of the existing tests relies only on the share of male workers in non-agricultural employment and does not adequately reflect women's participation in the economy.

The panel has also flagged that while the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (ORGI) received the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs' (MoHUA) February 23, 2024 Office Memorandum and deemed the proposed regional relaxations to be non-objective, the ORGI never communicated this finding back to MoHUA or asked them to furnish objective criteria.

The Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs also pointed to a possible gap between India's conventional measure of urbanisation and estimates based on some international definitions.

India-China face-offs still on in Arunachal: ITBP chief makes first official confirmation

OCTOBER 23, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Director General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Shatrueet Kapoor, has said face-offs between Indian and Chinese forces in Arunachal Pradesh are still on, marking the first official confirmation of the reported clashes.

Addressing ITBP personnel, known as Himveers, in Alwar on October 22, Kapoor said the force's Shaurya Commando teams had performed exceptionally well during the confrontations.

"Recently, a situation arose in Arunachal Pradesh where a face-off occurred at several places, which is still on. There, our Shaurya Commando teams have done a tremendous job," the ITBP chief said.

The statement comes amid reports of multiple skirmishes in Arunachal Pradesh since July, with locals claiming that confrontations had taken place at several locations. The face-offs reportedly continued even during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to India for the BRICS summit in September.

He pointed to China's heavy investment in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and its media capabilities, saying Beijing had made advances in conventional warfare. However, he suggested drones could act as an equaliser in the changing battlefield.



Shatrueet Kapoor

Citing the prolonged Russia-Ukraine war, Kapoor said the damage inflicted by a smaller country like Ukraine on Russia over the past four years showed how warfare was evolving. He also referred to Iran as another example of the changing nature of conflict.

In response to the developments, the ITBP is aggressively altering its defensive footprint. The ITBP chief said that strike training for the entire force across units would be completed ahead of late 2027, with essential equipment made available across all forward border outposts to handle Galwan-like situations effectively. ITBP and Indian Army troops remain deployed across key flashpoints in high-altitude border areas to maintain security and defend the frontier. He added that the ITBP was

constructing reinforced underground infrastructure "in a big way" along the frontlines to withstand modern warfare contingencies.

The operational disclosures triggered immediate political reaction, with Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration's handling of border security and trade relations. In a post on X, Ramesh accused Modi and his establishment of maintaining a "deafening silence" on active developments along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Reacting to the ITBP chief's statement, the opposition Congress took a jibe at the government.

"While the self-styled Vishwaguru's calibrated concessions to China continue, the DG, ITBP, has lauded—and rightly so—its performance in recent face-offs with the PLA in Arunachal Pradesh, on which there has been a deafening silence from the PM and his establishment. Corps commander talks were held at Wacha and Damai in Arunachal Pradesh last month after the Taksing face-off. Locals had reported that patrolling points had been lost once again, as in Ladakh. China continues to rename our towns in Arunachal Pradesh and is building a 60,000-MW dam that threatens our ecological and water security," Congress Rajya Sabha MP Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X.

Due process to be followed if motion to impeach CEC Gyanesh Kumar moved: Speaker Birla

OCTOBER 23, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Amid the ongoing protests over the controversial Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and the clamour for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday said that due process would be followed once a motion to impeach the CEC was moved.

The Opposition INDIA bloc and the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) have been seeking the rollback of the SIR and the resignation of the CEC. "We will follow the process when the motion is moved. The process has been laid down for the CEC too, just as it has been for the judges. It will be followed if the Opposition moves a motion," Birla said while addressing a press conference in Parliament ahead of the BRICS Parliamentary meet.

It is pertinent to note that the CEC of India can only be removed by two methods, either through a Parliamentary



impeachment process identical to that for a Supreme Court judge, or if he resigns voluntarily by submitting a resignation letter to the President. The INDIA bloc has called for a mega rally on November 1 at Ramlila Maidan in Delhi to push for its demands regarding the SIR.

Birla further said that he would "expedite" the decision on the lawmakers of the 20 rebel TMC MPs who have joined the Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPI) once he receives representations from both sides. Last month, on September

23, the SC had had noted that it hoped the Lok Sabha Speaker to take an "expeditious" decision on the plea seeking disqualification of the rebel lawmakers. "We will hear from both sides. When the responses come from the members, we will expedite the process," the Speaker said.

Birla also expressed hope that the 12th BRICS Parliamentary Forum will adopt a joint declaration by consensus, drawing a parallel with the declaration issued at the BRICS summit in Brazil despite differences among member countries. The two-day forum will be held at Samvidhan Sadan on October 26 and 27.

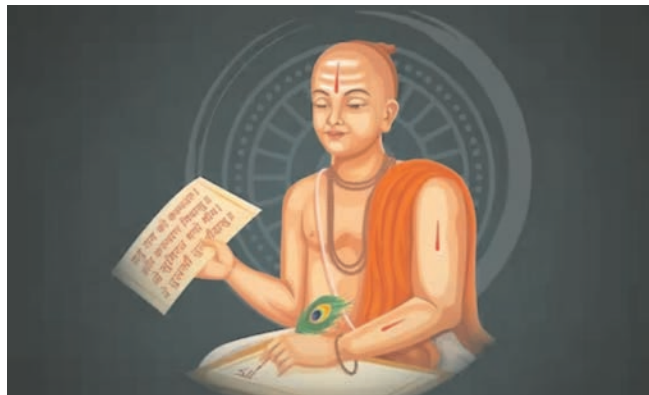
TMC leader and ex-MP Saket Gokhale accused the Election Commission of India of citing officials' workload as an excuse to reject RTI requests and withhold potentially inconvenient information. He said that accepting election-related work as a valid reason for withholding information would allow the ECI to evade its RTI obligations indefinitely.

India in history this Week

OCTOBER 23 TO OCTOBER 29

23 OCTOBER

1623 — Death of Tulsidas



The celebrated poet associated with Ramcharitmanas is traditionally recorded as having died on this date.

1764 — Battle of Buxar

The battle took place on 22 October 1764, with the defeat of the forces allied against the British East India Company. Some Indian historical calendars associate the aftermath with 23 October, so the battle itself should be dated 22 October.

1943 — Rani of Jhansi Regiment

The women's regiment of the Indian National Army undertook training in Singapore during the Second World War.

1974 — Birth of Aravind Adiga

The Indian author was born in Madras, now Chennai. His novel *The White Tiger* won the 2008 Booker Prize.

24 OCTOBER

1579 — Thomas Stephens arrives in India

The English Jesuit missionary arrived in Goa, then under Portuguese rule. He became known for his contributions to Christian literature in Indian languages.

1605 — Jahangir becomes Mughal emperor

Prince Salim ascended the throne following the death of Emperor Akbar.

1775 — Birth of Bahadur Shah Zafar

The last Mughal emperor was born on this date. He later became a symbolic leader of the Indian Rebellion of 1857.

1914 — Birth of Captain Lakshmi Sahgal

A doctor and freedom fighter, she became a commander of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment of the Indian National Army.

1921 — Birth of R. K. Laxman



The renowned Indian cartoonist, famous for creating *The Common Man*, was born in Mysore, now Mysuru.

1954 — Death of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai

The Indian freedom fighter and politician died on this date.

1991 — Death of Ismat Chughtai

The celebrated Urdu writer, known for her influential short stories and novels, died on 24 October.

24 OCTOBER

1962 — Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) established

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) was established 24 October 1962, following the Sino-Indian War. It was raised under the CRPF Act primarily to create a resistance force from among the civilian population against foreign encroachments and infiltration. It had a strength of 4 battalions and was deployed in Himachal Pradesh and the areas of present-day Uttarakhand. It collected intelligence and worked on improving Indian communication systems along the Chinese border. ITBP is said to have taken part in 1965 Indo Pakistani War as well as the Indo Pakistani war of 1971.



24 October 1945 — United Nations officially comes into existence

This is an international milestone rather than an event specific to India.

25 OCTOBER

1802 — Battle of Hadapsar

Yashwantrao Holkar defeated the combined forces of Peshwa Baji Rao II and Daulat Rao Scindia near Pune. The defeat contributed to the political developments that led to the Treaty of Bassein in December 1802.

1924 — Subhas Chandra Bose arrested

British authorities arrested Bose in connection with revolutionary activities in Bengal.

1945 — United Nations conference period

India, still under British rule, participated in the international developments surrounding the establishment of the United Nations.

1951 — India's first general election begins

Voting commenced on 25 October in the country's first general election. Polling continued until February 1952.

1964 — Vijayanta tank named

India's first indigenously produced main battle tank received the name Vijayanta.

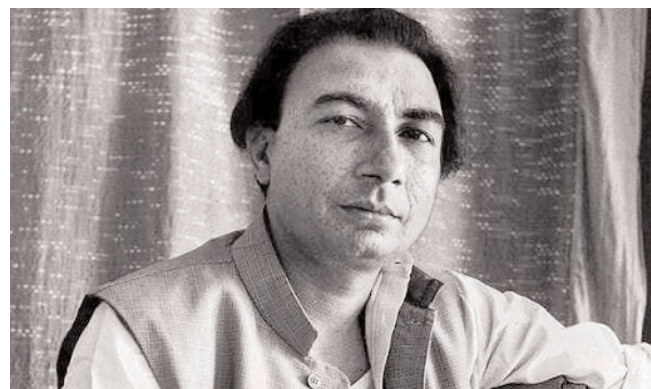
1971 — National Committee for Science and Technology established

The committee was created to help coordinate India's scientific and technological development.

1945 — Birth of Aparna Sen

The Indian actress and filmmaker was born on 25 October.

1980 — Death of Sahir Ludhianvi



The celebrated Urdu and Hindi poet and film lyricist died on this date.

2012 — Death of Jaspal Bhatti

The Punjabi comedian, actor and satirist died on 25 October.

26 OCTOBER

1946 — Muslim League and the Interim Government

The political negotiations surrounding the participation of the Muslim League in India's Interim Government continued during this period. The League formally entered the government in October 1946.

1947 — Instrument of Accession signed

Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession through which Jammu and Kashmir acceded to India. The document became a defining milestone in the region's modern political history.

1962 — National Emergency proclaimed

During the Sino-Indian War, President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan proclaimed a national emergency on grounds of external aggression.

1969 — Apollo 11 astronauts visit Bombay

Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin visited Bombay during their international goodwill tour following the first crewed Moon landing.

1972 — Birth of Raveena Tandon

The Indian actress was born on 26 October.

27 OCTOBER

1904 — Birth of Jatindra Nath Das

The Indian revolutionary was born in Calcutta. He later became known for his hunger strike in Lahore Central Jail in 1929, protesting the treatment of political prisoners.

1947 — Indian troops land in Srinagar

Indian Army troops were airlifted to Srinagar following Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India. The date is commemorated by the Indian Army as Infantry Day.

1987 — Sarkaria Commission report

The commission's work on Centre-State relations formed part of a significant period in the development of Indian federalism. Its report is generally dated 1987, although 27 October is not consistently established as its submission date.

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10/20, 10/21, 10/27, 10/30, 11/10, 11/13, 11/17, 11/18, 12/2, 12/4	1:30 p.m.-4 p.m.

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MULTI-HYPHENATE MUSICAL GENIUS AR RAHMAN WILL RENDER HIS AUDIENCE AN EXHILARATING EXPERIENCE

BY MABEL PAIS

International music icon, India's musical genius, A.R. Rahman: premier composer, singer-songwriter, music producer, musician, multi-instrumentalist and philanthropist - will join the New Jersey Symphony (<https://njsymphony.org>) at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) for the A.R. Rahman Symphonic Experience, with performances on Tuesday, November 3, and Wednesday, November 4, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.

Presented at the Prudential Hall on the Betty Wold Johnson Stage, these two evenings will bring Rahman's greatest hits to life with the power and richness of a live symphony orchestra. From intimate melodies to sweeping cinematic arrangements, audiences will experience the emotional force of his music on a grand scale.

A.R. Rahman: a visionary who helped redefine contemporary Indian music, blends Eastern classical traditions with electronic sounds, pop and world music. His compositions cross languages, cultures and generations, creating a musical world that is unmistakably his own. With more than 160 film soundtracks and albums spanning multiple languages, Rahman's extraordinary body of work includes iconic films such as "Roja," "Bombay," "Dil Se," "Taal," "Lagaan," "Jodhaa



A.R. Rahman -Credit: <https://njpac.org>

Akbar," "Ponniyin Selvan," "Slumdog Millionaire" and "127 Hours" as he'll be playing his greatest hits this fall at NJPAC. Experience the evening with the New Jersey Symphony as the orchestra joins Rahman to bring his genre-spanning compositions — ranging from Eastern classical, pop, world music, and rap — to breathtaking new heights.

Rahman's unprecedented international honors for a music composer of Indian origin includes two Academy Awards, two GRAMMY Awards, a Golden Globe and a BAFTA, four (Indian) National Film Awards, fifteen (Indian) Filmfare Awards and thirteen (Indian) Filmfare Awards South in addition to numerous other awards and nominations.

Described as the "world's most

prominent and prolific film composer" by Time magazine, his works are notable for integrating Eastern classical music with electronic music sounds, world music genres and traditional orchestral arrangements.

Director Baz Luhrmann notes:

"I had come to the music of A. R. Rahman through the emotional and haunting score of "Bombay (Dreams)" and the wit and celebration of "Lagaan." But the more I was to be amazed at the sheer diversity of styles: from swinging brass bands to triumphant anthems; from joyous pop to West-End musicals. Whatever the style, A. R. Rahman's music always possesses a

profound sense of humanity and spirit, qualities that inspire me the most."

His extensive body of work for film and the stage earned him the nickname "the Mozart of Madras" and several Tamil commentators and fans have coined the nickname "Isai Puyal" (English: Music Storm). In 2009, Time Magazine placed Rahman in its list of the World's Most Influential People.

Rahman's work spans Indian cinema, Hollywood, musical theater and orchestral performance. Recognized with the Government of India's Padma Bhushan in 2010, he has helped expand the global audience for Indian music while inspiring generations of artists.

Through the A.R. Rahman Foundation, the Sunshine Orchestra and KM Music Conservatory in Chennai, he also supports music education and opportunities for young musicians.

For longtime fans and audiences discovering his music for the first time, the A.R. Rahman Symphonic Experience promises an exhilarating encounter with one of the world's most distinctive musical voices.

TICKETS

Tickets are available at [NJPAC.org](https://njpac.org) or at the box office located at 1 Center Street in Newark, New Jersey or by calling 1-888-696-5722.

NILADRI KUMAAR AT NJPAC WILL PAY TRIBUTE TO HIS LONG TIME FRIEND-COLLABORATOR-MENTOR TABLA MAESTRO ZAKIR HUSSAIN

BY MABEL PAIS

Niladri Kumaar, sitar star and musical maverick, redefining the classical Indian sound for the next generation, will perform at the Victoria Theater of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) on Friday, November 6 at 7:30 PM.

In this concert, he pays tribute to his friend, mentor and frequent collaborator, the late tabla maestro Zakir Hussain. Before Hussain's passing, the sitar-tabla duo was captured in the wonderful 2017 documentary "The Space Between the Notes." Kumaar will perform original compositions and revisit some of his favorite collaborations with Hussain. He will be joined by charismatic tabla player Satyajit Talwalkar, jazz/electronic musician Agnelo Fernandes on keys and Sambit Chatterjee.

A fifth generation sitarist, son of guru pandit sitar player Kartick Kumar, Kumaar is hailed as the most enigmatic and trailblazing musician in India across generations. His contribution to the world of sitar, Indian music, classical and contemporary, is regarded by past and present legends as not just innovative, but deeply rooted in the traditional elements known of music.

Under the guidance and numerous years of training from the age of 4, under



Niladri Kumaar. -Credit: <https://niladrikumar.com>

his father and guru, Niladri has gained an in-depth understanding, technique and unmatched mastery over the sitar and developed his own distinct style. His music is greatly admired and he has earned a large following of ardent listeners across countries.

Being "sympathetic to pick up" new trends, Niladri decided to push the boundaries and go beyond his comfort zone to invent his own instrument - an electric sitar that he coined as the "Zitar".

Hailed as one of the serious exponents of Indian classical music on the one hand and reinventing the contemporary modern space on the other, the Zitar culturally redefined the way audiences viewed Indian classical music.

Sound has waves, but his Zitar created ripples. Each endeavor he undertook was molded towards infusing interest and

respect for the traditional art forms in the hearts and minds of the younger generation. The Zitar allowed him to express to a much more widespread audience, bridging the "age un-gap" as he calls it - where individuals from all walks of life can tune in and find a place in his music that they can call their own.

By amalgamating an equipoise between essence & trance sense, going beyond just the string, and striking the right chords of harmony between the golden scientific tradition & ever changing modern music, Niladri emerged as one of the finest and undisputed sitar & zitar masters.

Headlining this music metamorphosis and igniting a new route in the musical scene, he gained admiration for being able to stay true to his roots along with being able to create awareness and make his Indian heritage connect with many at

a global scale.

NILADRI'S VISION AND MESSAGE IS SUMMARIZED THROUGH HIS BRAND - "STAY UPROOTED"

His music is inviting, explosive and yet introspective.

With having featured in over 20 international and national albums, bagging numerous & prestigious awards, along with unparalleled performances across the globe, and an immense musical contribution to the Indian film industry, Niladri is one of the generation's brightest stars, with an illustrious and inspiring path for many.

Extracting the essence, relishing the purity & transforming with a zing, is what the panache performer has achieved and is much celebrated for.

TICKETS

For tickets to experience Niladri Kumaar and his musical team, visit [NJPAC.org](https://njpac.org) or the box office located at 1 Center Street in Newark, New Jersey or call 1-888-696-5722.

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJPAC)

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

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

LATIN GRAMMY WINNER EVA AYLLON WITH DANIELA DARACOURT WILL PRESENT PERUVIAN MUSIC & HERITAGE

BY MABEL PAIS

Eva Ayllon, legendary Peruvian singer, sharing the stage with salsa sensation Daniela Darcourt, will present an exclusive concert for the Reunion Tour at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) on Friday, October 30, 2026 at 8 PM

Ayllón is a celebrated Peruvian singer and composer, renowned for her contributions to Afro-Peruvian and criollo music. Her powerful performances and dedication to cultural preservation have earned her international recognition and countless awards.

Eva Ayllón carries her homeland, Peru, in her heart and in her spectacular songs. Known as the Queen of Landó, she's been a legend of Afro Peruvian music for over 50 years. In 2019, she won the much-deserved Latin GRAMMY® Lifetime Achievement Award, on top of 10 previous nominations for Best Folk Album.

Rising star (and Latin GRAMMY®



Eva Ayllon -Credit: <https://njpac.org>

nominee) Daniela Darcourt will add to the fun with her special flavor of Peruvian salsa. Dance, sing, and feel the rhythm of Peru with these two forces of nature! Daniela Darcourt is a young Peruvian salsa singer whose energetic

performances and emotive voice have won fans across the globe. She continues to innovate within the genre and inspire new generations of Latin music enthusiasts.

TICKETS

To witness this extraordinary celebration of Peruvian music and heritage of Eva Ayllón and Daniela Darcourt, visit <https://njpac.org> or <https://ticketmaster.com>

GLOBAL STAR FADO SINGER MARIZA WILL GRACE NJPAC'S STAGE

BY MABEL PAIS

Global star, Portugal's fado singer Mariza, will enthrall her fans and music enthusiasts when she graces the stage at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) on Sunday, November 1 at 6 p.m. Two remarkable special guests will accompany her: acclaimed guitarist Derek Gripper and the dynamic Duo Andalus.

Mariza has captivated audiences worldwide with her soulful interpretations of fado, Portugal's iconic musical tradition. With a career spanning over two decades, she has been hailed as "the greatest contemporary fado singer" (The Guardian) and has earned a Latin Grammy nomination along with gold and platinum-selling albums.

Mariza's artistry transcends genres, blending fado with jazz, gospel, and pop influences, and her collaborations include celebrated musicians such as Gilberto Gil, Lenny Kravitz, and Ivan Lins.

Her return to NJPAC offers fans an opportunity to witness her musical versatility and emotional depth firsthand.

Joining Mariza on this special evening are guitarist Derek Gripper and Duo Andalus. Derek Gripper, renowned for his innovative transcriptions of West African kora music for classical guitar, brings a unique blend of African rhythms and classical traditions. His artistry has been praised by NPR as "utterly mesmerizing" and has earned him international recognition.

Duo Andalus, featuring masterful musicianship and inventive arrangements, weaves together sounds from the Mediterranean and Middle East



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

to create a vibrant, cross-cultural musical tapestry. Their performances are known for their expressive improvisation, rhythmic energy, and evocative melodies that bridge traditions and cultures.

Mariza's worldwide acclaim is reflected in sold-out concerts at the Sydney Opera House, Carnegie Hall, and the Royal Albert Hall. She has been decorated with numerous awards, including BBC Radio 3's World Music Award for Best European Artist, and is universally praised for her "powerhouse voice and magnetic stage presence" (Billboard). Derek Gripper's albums have been lauded by Songlines Magazine and The New York Times, while Duo Andalus has received accolades for their innovative approach to world music festivals across Europe and North

America.

TICKETS

Tickets for this extraordinary event can be purchased online at <https://njpac.org> or at the NJPAC box office or by phone at 1-888-GO-NJPAC.

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), is a collaborative leader in Newark's cultural and civic life, a catalyst of the city's revitalization and a champion of its artistic spirit.

The Arts Center produces and presents world-class performances by music, dance, spoken word poetry and comedy artists, and hosts insightful conversations with creators and changemakers, on its own stages and in

venues across the region.

Through real estate development, NJPAC advances Newark's economic growth and cultural vitality. In addition, the Arts Center collaborates with local partners to deliver social impact initiatives that nurture the well-being and creativity of the communities it serves.

These offerings include arts education and career development opportunities for students and educators, programs that support community health and well-being through the arts and free creative experiences in neighborhoods across Newark and throughout the state.

NJPAC has attracted more than 12 million visitors (including more than two million children) since opening its doors in 1997. Visit <https://njpac.org> for more information.

NJPAC

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

Karva Chauth: A festival of faith, love and togetherness

As the October sky darkens and the moon rises above rooftops, a familiar scene unfolds across North India. Women dressed in crimson, maroon and gold gather with decorated prayer plates, their hands adorned with intricate mehendi. Earthen pots, flickering lamps and whispered prayers fill the evening air. Families wait eagerly for the moon, whose appearance marks the end of a long day of fasting.

This is Karva Chauth, a festival where age-old legends meet contemporary romance, religious devotion mingles with celebration, and centuries-old traditions continue to find new meaning in modern Indian life.

The Festival of Devotion

Celebrated predominantly in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and parts of Himachal Pradesh, Karva Chauth holds a special place in Hindu cultural and religious traditions. Many married Hindu women observe a day-long fast and pray for their husbands' health, safety and longevity. Some unmarried women also observe the fast in the hope of finding a suitable life partner, while some couples now choose to fast together as an expression of mutual affection and commitment.

Karva Chauth falls on the Chaturthi, or fourth day, of the waning lunar fortnight associated with Kartik in the Hindu lunisolar calendar. Depending on regional calendar traditions, its precise lunar-month designation may vary. The festival usually occurs in October, sometimes extending into early November.

The word karva refers to an earthen pot traditionally used to hold water, while chauth means the fourth day. The decorated pot remains an important element of the festival's worship and moon-offering rituals.

Beyond its religious significance, Karva Chauth brings together family customs, women's friendships, festive clothing, storytelling and shared memories. For some, it represents unwavering faith; for others, it is a cherished family tradition or romantic occasion.

Origins: History, Harvest and Community

The precise historical origin of Karva Chauth is difficult to establish. Like many Indian festivals, it appears to have evolved through a combination of regional customs, religious observances and oral traditions rather than a single historical event.

One interpretation connects the festival with agricultural communities in northwestern India. Autumn marked an important seasonal transition as rural communities prepared for the winter cropping season, known as the rabi season. The earthen karva, associated with storing water and other essentials, reflects the material culture of these communities. Although the precise connection between agricultural practices and the festival's origins remains uncertain, it offers a useful perspective on how rituals can develop within the rhythms of everyday life.

Another interpretation emphasises women's social relationships. Traditionally, marriage often meant leaving one's parental home to live with a



husband's family, sometimes in a distant village. Friendships with other women could provide companionship and emotional support as newly married women adjusted to unfamiliar surroundings.

Karva Chauth gatherings may have helped strengthen these relationships through shared prayers, storytelling and gift exchanges. These community networks remain an important aspect of the festival today.

Over time, regional observances became associated with devotional stories, elaborate rituals and distinctive festive practices. Cinema, television, fashion and social media have subsequently expanded the festival's public image. Its history is best understood as an evolving tradition shaped by religion, community life and changing ideas about marriage.

The Legends of Karva Chauth

The vrat katha, or devotional story recited during the observance, explains the festival's spiritual significance and celebrates faith, courage and perseverance. Several legends are associated with Karva Chauth, with details varying across regions and oral traditions.

Another legend tells of a devoted woman named Karva whose husband is attacked by a crocodile while bathing in a river. Determined to save him, she appeals to Yama, the Hindu god associated with death, asking him to punish the crocodile and spare her husband.

When Yama hesitates, Karva threatens to curse him unless he intervenes. Impressed by her determination, he agrees to save her husband and deal with the crocodile.

Unlike the Veervati story, which centres on a mistake and its consequences, this tale celebrates courage and active resistance to danger. Karva is portrayed not as a passive devotee but as a woman prepared to challenge formidable powers to protect her family.

Savitri and Satyavan: Love That Challenges Death

The story of Savitri and Satyavan is another important narrative associated with marital devotion, although it is not exclusively a Karva Chauth legend.

Savitri chooses Satyavan as her husband despite learning that his life will be short. When his foretold death arrives, she follows Yama, who has taken her husband's soul, and engages him in a conversation marked by wisdom and determination.

Impressed by her intelligence, Yama grants her several boons. Through her careful use of these wishes, Savitri ultimately secures Satyavan's return to life. Her story celebrates devotion, but it also portrays a woman who reasons with authority, challenges death and actively shapes her destiny.

Together, these legends represent faith, courage and perseverance, offering different interpretations of the values associated with Karva Chauth.

Rituals: A Day of Devotion and Celebration

Karva Chauth follows a familiar rhythm, from the pre-dawn meal to the eagerly awaited moonrise. Customs differ among families and regions, but several rituals are widely recognised.

Sargi: Blessings Before Dawn

Women observing the traditional fast rise before sunrise to eat sargi, a pre-dawn meal often prepared or sent by the mother-in-law. Particularly important in many Punjabi households, sargi nourishes the woman before the long fasting period begins.

The meal may include fresh fruits, almonds, cashews, raisins, sweets, coconut, vermicelli with milk, parathas and other homemade dishes. Clothing, jewellery or bangles may also accompany the meal as gifts.

Beyond its practical purpose, sargi represents affection, blessings and the relationship between generations of women. It is often one of the most cherished moments of the festival.

Veervati: Faith and Devotion

One widely recited story concerns Queen Veervati, a young woman deeply loved by her seven brothers. During her first Karva Chauth after marriage, she observes a strict fast and grows weak as evening approaches.

Unable to bear her suffering, her brothers create the illusion that the moon has risen. In some versions, a brother holds a lamp behind a sieve; in others, a light is arranged to resemble moonlight. Believing the moon has appeared, Veervati breaks her fast.

Soon afterwards, she learns that her husband has died or is gravely afflicted. Grief-stricken, she realises her mistake and prays for divine intervention. Through renewed devotion and penance, her husband is eventually restored to life in the commonly told version.

The story traditionally emphasises sincerity, faith and the importance of religious vows. It also reflects the human desire to protect loved ones and the hope that devotion can overcome despair. It is a folkloric religious narrative rather than a documented historical account.

Karva and the Crocodile: Courage and Resolve

The Fast and Festive Adornment

After the pre-dawn meal, the traditional fast begins. Many women refrain from food and water until the moon is sighted, observing what is known as a nirjala vrat. For devotees, the fast expresses discipline, faith and prayers for their husbands' well-being.

Practices vary, and some women adapt the fast according to their health, beliefs and circumstances. Prolonged fasting without water is not suitable for everyone. Pregnant women and people with medical conditions or medicines affected by food and fluid intake should seek medical advice before undertaking such a fast.

As the day progresses, festive preparations begin. Women apply intricate mehendi designs featuring flowers, paisleys and other motifs. Red, maroon, pink and gold are popular colours for saris, lehengas and suits, while bangles, bindis, earrings and necklaces complete the traditional look.

This adornment, often called shringar, can express cultural belonging, personal style and the joy of celebrating with friends and family.

Puja Thali and Evening Worship

The decorated puja thali is central to the evening ceremony. Depending on family traditions, it may contain a karva filled with water, a diya, roli or kumkum, rice, sweets, offerings and a sieve used during the moon ritual.

Women gather at homes, temples or community spaces to worship Goddess Parvati, also known as Gauri, who is associated with marital auspiciousness. Lord Shiva may also feature in the observance.

The women offer prayers, listen to the vrat katha and participate in regional customs. In Punjab and some other communities, thali batana involves passing or rotating prayer plates while devotional songs and traditional verses are recited. Older women often guide the ceremony, passing down stories and customs to younger participants. These gatherings preserve oral traditions while strengthening friendships and neighbourhood connections.

Moonrise and Breaking the Fast

As darkness settles, women gather on balconies, terraces or in courtyards to await the moon. Once it becomes visible, they perform the customary arghya, or water offering, and recite prayers according to their family's traditions.

Many women look at the moon through a sieve, or chhalni, and then look at their husbands through it. The husband traditionally offers his wife water and a sweet, helping her break the fast.

The ritual varies across communities, but the moonrise ceremony has become one of the festival's most recognisable images. The evening continues with a family meal, conversations and celebrations. After a day of restraint and anticipation, sharing food becomes an expression of togetherness. For newly married couples, the occasion may mark a memorable first celebration; for others, it is a familiar ritual connecting another year of married life with those that came before.

Karva Chauth Across India and Abroad



Although strongly associated with North India, Karva Chauth is not celebrated identically everywhere.

In Punjab, sargi, festive clothing, mehendi, decorated thalis and communal prayers are prominent. Mothers and mothers-in-law may exchange gifts with daughters and daughters-in-law, while gatherings often include the recitation of the vrat katha and the passing of prayer plates.

In Haryana and Rajasthan, local customs shape the evening worship, storytelling and exchange of gifts. Gatherings led by older women help maintain continuity while accommodating differences between families and generations.

In Uttar Pradesh, fasting, traditional attire, prayers and family gatherings are common, although specific practices vary across communities.

The festival has also travelled with Indian communities to the United Kingdom, North America and other parts of the world. Families living abroad may prepare sargi at home, organise community celebrations or join relatives through video calls. These adaptations allow people to preserve cultural connections while observing the festival in different surroundings.

Karva Chauth in Modern India

Karva Chauth has evolved from a predominantly regional observance into a widely recognised celebration of marriage and romance. Cinema, television, advertising, fashion and social media have

played a significant role in this transformation.

Bollywood, Fashion and Social Media

Hindi films frequently portray women in elaborate saris waiting for the moon, followed by emotional reunions and romantic gestures. These scenes have created a familiar visual identity for the festival, influencing how some couples celebrate the occasion.

The fashion and beauty industries have also embraced Karva Chauth. Shops display festive clothing, jewellery, cosmetics and decorated puja accessories, while salons and mehendi artists offer special services. Contemporary celebrations combine traditional bridal styles with pastel colours, fusion wear and personalised accessories.

For many women, these preparations are enjoyable expressions of personal style and cultural identity. However, commercialisation can create pressure to purchase expensive outfits, elaborate decorations or costly gifts. The value of the festival does not depend on extravagant spending.

Social media has added another dimension. Photographs of mehendi, coordinated outfits, decorated thalis and moonrise rituals allow families to share their celebrations across distances. Yet carefully staged images can also create unrealistic expectations.

Often, the most meaningful moments are simpler: a mother preparing sargi, friends sharing prayers or a couple enjoying a quiet meal after the fast.

Love, Equality and Personal Choice

Perhaps the most important question surrounding Karva Chauth today is what the festival means to those who observe it. For many devotees, fasting remains a cherished religious practice and a sincere expression of love. Others value the festival as a cultural inheritance, a family tradition or an opportunity to reconnect with friends.

At the same time, contemporary discussions about gender equality have encouraged couples to reconsider whether expressions of love should rest on one partner alone.

Some husbands now fast alongside their wives, while others participate in the rituals, share household responsibilities or make time for the evening ceremony. Some couples adapt the observance to include prayers for each other's health, happiness and longevity.

These approaches need not diminish the festival's traditional significance. Instead, they reflect the ways in which customs can evolve as relationships and social expectations change.

Critics have also questioned the gendered expectations surrounding the fast, particularly the idea that a wife's sacrifice should be necessary for her husband's well-being. For some women, the observance represents devotion freely chosen; for others, social pressure makes participation more complicated.

Recognising these different perspectives allows a more inclusive understanding of the festival. Religious traditions can be meaningful without being compulsory, and personal choice deserves respect.

Ultimately, a strong marriage depends on mutual care, trust, respect and shared responsibility. Whether couples observe Karva Chauth traditionally, adapt its rituals or choose not to participate, the underlying values of affection and commitment can be expressed in many ways.

A Tradition That Continues to Evolve

Karva Chauth brings together devotion, folklore, family relationships and celebration in a distinctive cultural observance. Its stories of Veervati, Karva, and Savitri and Satyavan preserve ideals of faith, courage and perseverance, while its rituals connect generations through food, prayer, storytelling and shared memories. From the pre-dawn sargi to the moonrise ceremony, the festival creates moments of anticipation and togetherness. Its contemporary expressions, shaped by cinema, fashion and digital communication, demonstrate how inherited customs continue to adapt to changing lives. For some, Karva Chauth remains a deeply religious vow. For others, it is a celebration of love, friendship or cultural identity. Its significance can also be reinterpreted through equality, mutual care and individual choice.

Ultimately, the enduring appeal of Karva Chauth lies not simply in the fast or the sight of the moon through a sieve, but in the human relationships that give these rituals meaning. As each generation makes the tradition its own, the festival continues to connect the past with the present, preserving familiar customs while leaving room for new understandings of love and commitment.

(The Indian Panorama Bureau,
with inputs from Al-Noor)



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Lea Michele in Talks for 'Glee' Return in Disney+/Hulu Revival

Lea Michele is in talks to reprise her role as Rachel Berry in the series, which Disney+ and Hulu announced Wednesday. Where the character will be in the present remains to be seen: There are next to no details about the show other than it has a series order and that 20th Television is producing.

Even the names of Glee creators Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk and Ian Brennan weren't mentioned in Disney's press release early Wednesday, though sources say that's likely just a matter of all i's being dotted.

Reps for Disney and Murphy declined to comment, and messages to Michele's reps weren't returned by publication time. Variety first reported Michele's potential casting.

Michele starred in all six seasons of Glee's original run from 2009-15 as Rachel, the very talented and occasionally off-putting star vocalist of the McKinley High School show choir, New Directions. Rachel dreamed of Broadway stardom, which she eventually achieved; the 2015 series finale shows her winning a Tony Award.

Michele had appeared in several Broadway productions, notably starring in Spring Awakening before joining Glee. She most recently starred in a revival of Chess on Broadway and had a run in Funny Girl in 2022-23.

Murphy told The Hollywood Reporter in August that he was "considering" returning to Glee: "For many, many people now in their 20s, they grew up on that show and it meant something to them," he said. "The music meant something. So, let's kick it around and see what we get." In September, he said in an interview with Entertainment Tonight that he, Falchuk and Brennan had finished a script for a new version of the series.

The Rings of Power Season 3 trailer: It promises war, darkness and Sauron's rise

The battle for Middle-earth is about to get darker, and Charlie Vickers' Sauron is ready to take centre stage. The new trailer for The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power Season 3 sets up a war that could decide the fate of every kingdom, with the Dark Lord inching closer to his ultimate goal of forging the One Ring and ruling them all.

Set five years after the fall of Eregion, the third season finds Sauron's armies having conquered much of Middle-earth. What makes the trailer particularly exciting is the shift in his ambition. No longer content with manipulating others from the shadows, Sauron is now consumed by the need to forge the master ring that will give him control over the free peoples. "Let the hunt begin," he declares, unhinged.

But Sauron's pursuit of absolute power is not the only story worth watching. The arrival of Jamie Campbell Bower as Celeborn, Galadriel's long-lost husband, adds a fresh emotional complication to the narrative. Galadriel (Morfydd Clark) has spent much of the series grappling with her complicated connection to Sauron, and Celeborn's presence could change the equation. It is a fascinating dynamic, although the real question is how the show balances Galadriel's personal life with the war threatening Middle-earth.

Clark, meanwhile, continues to bring determination and vulnerability to a character caught between duty, loss, and the consequences of her choices.

The trailer also gives us glimpses of the other kingdoms caught in Sauron's expanding shadow. Numenor, already fractured by political upheaval, looks set for more turmoil. With Pharazon in power and Elendil and the Faithful facing



an uncertain future, the kingdom's internal divisions could prove just as consequential as the war unfolding elsewhere.

Khazad-dum, meanwhile, faces dangers both within and beneath its mountain halls. The Balrog is a particularly intriguing presence. After being revealed in Season 2, the creature is set to play a more prominent role this time, and there is a major addition to its mythology: Simon Pegg voices the Balrog, who will speak for the first time in the series. The creature's connection to Sauron's quest for the One Ring adds an unexpected twist, while the Dwarves' struggle to protect their kingdom makes their storyline increasingly important to the larger conflict.

'Made me who I am': Ektaa Kapoor, Smriti Irani's emotional posts as Kyunki wraps up

Television producer Ektaa Kapoor got emotional as Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi aired its final episode on October 20. Reflecting on the show's journey, Ektaa shared a video featuring moments from the original series and its latest season, calling it a project that shaped her life and career.

Sharing the video on Instagram, Ektaa wrote, "Last ep of Kyunki today! Some goodbyes are hard, but there is love in my heart for Kyunki forever. It's made me who I am. It's time to say bye to the show that we were to do for 167 eps but ended up doing for 450 eps. Love always for my Kyunki. Until we meet again."

Actor and politician Smriti Irani, who played Tulsi Virani in the iconic show, responded to Ektaa's post. She wrote, "An emotion, a journey of 26 years till we meet again #grateful for the love." Amar Upadhyay, who returned as Mihir Virani in the new season, also thanked Ektaa for bringing him back to the show. "As the show wraps up today, I wanted to send a huge thank you, Ekta, for letting me step into Mihir's shoes again. It has been an absolute honor to work on such an incredible project. Thank you for your continued trust and support," he wrote.

Actors Parth Samthaan and director Muzammil Desai also reacted to Ektaa's post with heart emojis.

Smriti Irani also marked the end of the show by sharing a video featuring behind-the-scenes moments from the sets of Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi. Reflecting on the experience, she described it as an emotional journey filled with memories, familiar faces and new experiences.

"It was nothing short of a roller coaster of emotions. Memories made, stories revisited, and new chapters woven



into a journey that explored both familiar and uncharted flavours of life," she wrote.

Smriti added that the experience had created memories that would stay with the cast and crew long after the show ended.

"Until our stories find each other again #kyunki hum hai raahi pyaar ke phir milenge chalte chalte," she added.

Actor Hiten Tejwani, who played Karan Virani, responded to her post, writing, "Superb will miss this."

Mouni Roy, who made her television debut with the show, also shared an emotional message. "My first show. My first di, my first family in mumbai. Ily," she wrote.

The second season brought back several familiar faces while introducing a new generation of characters to the Virani family. Gauri Pradhan returned as Nandini Virani, alongside Hiten Tejwani as Karan, Shakti Anand as Hemant, Ketaki Dave as Daksha and Sumeet Sachdev as Gautam.



No Republic Day or Independence Day release for Salman Khan's Maatrubhumi

Actor Salman Khan's *Maatrubhumi: May War Rest in Peace* is currently awaiting clearance from the censor board. However, India Today has learnt that once the film gets clearance, Khan is not eyeing a national holiday for its release. The development comes amid several reports suggesting that the makers are trying to obtain clearance from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) and are eyeing a January 26 release.

An industry source told us that Khan is not interested in cashing in on the national holiday window at the box office, simply because he believes the film's content is so strong that it could generate patriotic fervor among audiences on any day. The source said, "*Maatrubhumi* could have chosen August 15 or January 26 to release the film, as those would have been ideal occasions. But Salman Khan strongly believes that patriotism is not something to be celebrated on just one particular day."

This also means that the makers will not be targeting the August 15 release window either. This is a significant decision, given that the Independence Day window is considered a major opportunity to attract audiences to theatres. The source added that Khan feels, "Love for your country should be felt, expressed and celebrated every single day. For us, whichever day the film releases is a patriotic day. Just like you don't love your mother only on Mother's Day, you cannot limit your love for your nation to Independence Day or Republic Day. True love, whether for your mother or your motherland, goes beyond symbolic gestures. It is something you carry in your heart every single day."

India Today has also learnt that the film is not intended to be a war saga. While the war remains in the backdrop, the larger idea is to highlight family bonds, the delicacy of relationships and the development of friendships.

Maatrubhumi: May War Rest in Peace, based on the Battle of Galwan, is directed by Apoorva Lakhia. The film features Chitrangada Singh opposite Salman Khan in the lead. It was earlier reported that the film's Indo-China content had drawn the censor board's attention, contributing to the delay.

Akshay Kumar to play tiger hunter in Priyadarshan's 1970s comedy

Actor Akshay Kumar is set to team up with veteran filmmaker Priyadarshan for a new comedy project, where he will portray a quirky tiger hunter against a 1970s backdrop. Marking the director's 99th feature film, the yet-untitled venture, produced by Ramesh Taurani, reunites the successful actor-director duo following their earlier collaborations.

The project is slated to go on floors in the final week of November, according to a report by Hindustan Times. The report mentioned that the three-month shooting schedule will take place across wildlife locations in Rajasthan and a set in Mumbai, with the production team also scouting locations in Bhopal.

The ensemble cast features veteran actors Annu Kapoor and Rajpal Yadav, while casting for the female lead remains underway. The script has been co-written by Priyadarshan and Rohan Shankar, who previously collaborated on *Bhooth Bangla*.

According to HT, Priyadarshan remained tight-lipped, saying, "Let the project get locked then I will talk."

Akshay and Priyadarshan recently collaborated in the psychological thriller, *Haiwaan* (2026), which also featured actor Saif Ali Khan. Jointly produced by KVN Productions and Thespian Films, the film serves as an official adaptation of the 2016 Malayalam thriller *Oppam*. The plot centres on a blind man, played by Saif, who must protect a young girl from an antagonist, portrayed by Akshay. *Haiwaan* also featured actors Boman Irani, Shriya Pilgaonkar, and Saiyami Kher in key roles.

Priyadarshan also directed Akshay in the horror-comedy *Bhooth Bangla* (2026). The film was jointly produced by Balaji Motion Pictures and Cape of Good Films. *Bhooth Bangla* also featured actors Paresch Rawal, Rajpal Yadav, Tabu, and Wamiqa Gabbi. The narrative revolves around supernatural occurrences inside a haunted mansion. Co-written by Priyadarshan, Abhilash Nair, and Rohan Shankar, the film premiered in worldwide cinemas on April 17, 2026.



Tough to get solo release: Yami Gautam on Nayyi Navelli releasing with Jailer 2

Actor Yami Gautam Dhar recently talked about the release of her film *Nayyi Navelli* alongside Rajinikanth's *Jailer 2*, saying it has become difficult for films to secure a solo release window. In a recent post on X, she said she was grateful to audiences for giving her film a chance and called it an honour to release alongside a Rajinikanth-starrer. *Nayyi Navelli* arrived in theatres on October 16, a day after *Jailer 2*.

Yami shared her views while responding to a social media user who praised *Nayyi Navelli* but questioned its release timing. The user wrote, "Movie badhiya hai (The movie was great). Timing with *Jailer 2* was not optimum."

Responding to the comment, Yami said, "Nowadays to get a solo or just 2 films release window is difficult. It's very difficult to make a successful film today, hence I appreciate everyone's effort to have done their best :) And I couldn't be more grateful to audience for giving us a chance (sic)."

She also expressed her admiration for Rajinikanth, adding, "Having said that, just like millions of people I am also a huge Rajni sir fan. It was indeed an honour for me to have my small film release along with sir's, which I am myself looking forward to watch soon (sic)." *Jailer 2*, which released on



October 15, has grossed over Rs 475 crore worldwide in five days. Directed by Nelson Dilipkumar, the film follows Tiger Muthuvel Pandian (Rajinikanth) as he takes on a larger idol-smuggling syndicate linked to the gang he defeated in the 2023 film *Jailer*.

Meanwhile, *Nayyi Navelli* marks Tamil director Balaji Mohan's Hindi debut. Yami plays Mohini, a woman suspected of being a daayan, or witch, by her new in-laws.



Kylie owns the ramp, Timothee owns the cheer squad at Victoria's Secret show

Actor Timothee Chalamet swapped his usual front-row role for that of a cheering boyfriend as Kylie Jenner made her debut at the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show in Los Angeles on Sunday, October 18. The Oscar-nominated actor was clicked applauding Jenner from the audience as she took over the runway in the brand's latest Fantasy Bra.

The show returned to Los Angeles, with the latest edition lighting up Sony Pictures Studios in Culver City. While Jenner is no stranger to high-profile Hollywood events, this time it was her turn to command the spotlight, with Chalamet cheering her on from the front row. Seated beside Jenner's mother, Kris Jenner, the *Dune* star appeared to be enjoying the moment as his girlfriend modelled the dazzling creation.

Jenner's runway debut came with a particularly extravagant fashion moment. Her diamond-studded lingerie featured a striking yellow diamond centrepiece and an elaborate arrangement of natural diamonds, created in collaboration with luxury jewellery brand Jacob & Co.

The piece was initially described as being worth USD 22 million. However, Jacob & Co. later said that it was "valued at USD 50 million", calling it the "most valuable Fantasy Bra ever made."

Shortly after the event, Kris shared a post on Instagram and expressed her admiration for her younger daughter. "My angel girl, so proud of you (sic)," she wrote.

The evening also featured performances by Megan Thee Stallion and Tate McRae, while veteran models, including Bella Hadid and Adriana Lima, returned to the runway alongside newer faces. But for Jenner, the show marked a milestone of her own, with Chalamet among those cheering her on as she made her Victoria's Secret debut.

Timothee Chalamet and Kylie Jenner began dating in 2023 and have largely kept their relationship out of the public eye. While the couple rarely speak about their romance, they have continued to show up for and support each other.

Jennifer Lopez-Brett Goldstein spark romance buzz after denying dating rumors

Jennifer Lopez and Brett Goldstein may have given their Office Romance chemistry a little extra screen time in real life. The former co-stars, who previously denied dating each other, are now reportedly seeing each other casually. Call them Brettifer, if you will.

According to Page Six, the pair were seen arriving at and leaving a talent manager's party in Los Angeles in the same car on October 16. They reportedly entered the venue separately, though, because apparently even a shared car ride needs a little mystery.

A source told the publication that Lopez, 57, and Goldstein, 46, have a shared love for parties and restaurants. The insider even took a swipe at Lopez's ex-husband Ben Affleck, claiming that Goldstein enjoys going out more than Affleck, who allegedly looked less than thrilled during public outings with Lopez. The dating buzz isn't exactly new. The pair were seen watching the Broadway show *Oh, Mary!* together in March 2025, before filming for their Netflix romantic comedy began. Earlier this year, Lopez also gave Goldstein a rather enthusiastic review on *Watch What Happens Live* with Andy Cohen, saying he was the "best kisser" after working with him on the film.

Goldstein, meanwhile, has been a Lopez admirer for years. On his *Films To Be Buried With* podcast in December 2019, he marvelled at her age while discussing *Hustlers*, exclaiming, "F**king hell. Fifty! She's 50. I love her."

Still, the pair were quick to shut down romance speculation while promoting



Office Romance on *Today*. When host Savannah Guthrie asked whether they were dating, Lopez replied, "Not dating," while Goldstein backed her up with a firm, "Correct." Lopez also noted that people tend to link her romantically with anyone she works with.

Lopez filed for divorce from Affleck in August 2024 after two years of marriage. Goldstein, whose only publicly known relationship was with actress Beth

Rylance in 2021, has kept his personal life relatively private.

Representatives for both stars haven't responded to requests for comment. For now, this reported romance remains casual. But between the shared outings, the kissing compliment and Goldstein's long-standing admiration, Office Romance might just have a little competition from its own off-screen storyline.

Dwayne Johnson looks unrecognisable as 70-year-old in Benny Safdie's Lizard Music

Despite taking a massive, unsuccessful swing with Benny Safdie's sports film *The Smashing Machine* last year, Dwayne Johnson has decided to team up with the filmmaker for his next film. Their new collaboration, *Lizard Music*, is on the other end of the spectrum — a children's film — although Dwayne has once again experimented with his look. In this one, he plays a 70-year-old.

Pictures of Dwayne Johnson from the set of *Lizard Music* in Brooklyn, New York on Tuesday made it to the internet, and fans couldn't believe the elderly man, wearing a beige jacket and bucket hat, a blue shirt underneath, and a printed tie around his neck, was actually the former WWE champion-turned-Hollywood action star.

Dwayne and Safdie have gone down the prosthetic route for him once again. In *The Smashing Machine*, Dwayne hulked up to play former Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) player Mark Kerr in his biopic. But in *Lizard Music*, prosthetic is used to age the 54-year-old by 16 years so that he can play a character called the Chicken Man.

Lizard Music, an adaptation of Daniel Pinkwater's 1976 popular children's novel of the same name, revolves around a young boy who "stumbles upon strange lizard musicians on late-night TV, leading him to befriend a peculiar man with an elderly chicken", as per the official synopsis. The film also stars Rachel McAdams, Colman Domingo, Jeff Goldblum,



Alicia Silverstone, and Regina Hall among others.

To get the job done, Safdie hired prosthetic artist Kazu Hiro, who most recently designed the transformation of another A-list action star, Tom Cruise, into a 65-year-old American oil tycoon in Alejandro Inarritu's satire *Digger*. Much like *The Smashing Machine*, which earned only \$21.1 million at the worldwide box office on a budget of \$50 million, *Digger* also bombed at the box office.

UAE closes all beaches in Umm Al Quwain after tanker oil spill detected

OCTOBER 23, 2026

ABU DHABI (TIP): The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has temporarily closed all beaches and coastal areas in Umm Al Quwain after detecting an oil spill from a tanker that has caused marine pollution, the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment said.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has temporarily closed all beaches and coastal areas in Umm Al Quwain after detecting an oil spill from a tanker that has caused marine pollution, the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment said.

The Ministry also confirmed that oil-spill-related odours had been noticed in Sharjah, Ajman and Umm Al Quwain, while assuring residents that the odours posed no health risks.

"Immediately after the pollution was detected, in coordination with the relevant local and federal authorities, [the Ministry] began implementing measures to contain the pollution and cordon off the affected areas," the Ministry said.

As a precautionary measure, authorities have temporarily shut all beaches and coastal areas in Umm Al Quwain. The closures will remain in effect until technical teams complete their assessments and identify the necessary measures to ensure public safety and protect the marine environment. The Ministry said cleanup and remediation work was underway to limit environmental damage. Coastal surveys, monitoring operations and technical assessments are continuing across Umm Al Quwain to determine the extent of the pollution and assess its impact on the marine ecosystem.

'Ready to negotiate, seek solutions': Putin says Ukraine agreement 'can be reached'

OCTOBER 23, 2026

MOSCOW (TIP): Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday, Oct 22, said that Russia is still ready to negotiate and seek solutions to what he described was a difficult and complicated situation in Ukraine.

Speaking to Russian journalist Pavel Zarubin, Putin—who recently held extensive talks with US negotiators Steve Witkoff, said that Russia and US had agreed to resume trilateral contacts.

"I think we can reach an agreement... But if someone wants it differently, fine, it will be different. But in any case, we will achieve our objectives, and all the goals of the special military operation will be achieved. Regarding our talks with the US administration representative, yes, we agreed that we are ready to resume our trilateral contacts. The goal of these talks will be to discuss ensuring the security of Ukraine and Russia after the conclusion of a final peace agreement, not as a result of a brief suspension of hostilities. We are ready to resume these contacts to achieve this goal," Putin said.

"The US administration representative emphasized that if we are to discuss issues related to ensuring future security for both Ukraine and Russia, then, naturally, we will also need to discuss the European security architecture as a whole. And I agree with this. Well, we'll see how the situation develops in the coming days," he added.

Putin claimed that Russia always advocated for a peaceful resolution while it was Ukraine that had unleashed a war.

"We've always advocated for a peaceful resolution, from the very first days. We already talked about this in 2014: let's help you reach an agreement with the southeast of what was then Ukraine. No, they used guns and planes against civilians; they practically unleashed a



war. Then came the Minsk agreements. We always wanted them to reach an agreement with that part of Ukraine that disagreed with the coup. No, they rejected that. Then, before we began our actions to protect people in Donbas, we also told them: let's avoid any excesses, let's reach an agreement—no, we'll fight. Fine," Putin said

"I want to say that we are still ready to negotiate and seek a solution to this difficult, complex situation, in the sense that these are people very close to us, you understand? The latest genetic research shows that Russians and Ukrainians are truly one people. Okay, some people want to think differently, to think differently. Fine, we agree. That's how the history of historical Russia unfolded, and that's the reality of today. But everything can be agreed upon," he added.

Putin's affirmation comes even as Ukrainian President Zelenskyy took a jibe at what appears to be a climb-down in the US stance on Russia.

"My attitude to Putin is very clear. I think that if we lift sanctions, we will make him stronger. It's not something personal between me and President Trump, and of course I'm against any lifting of sanctions," Zelenskyy told CNN.

Earlier on Thursday, Zelenskyy had alleged that Russia continued to attack Ukrainian cities with ballistic missiles and cluster warheads.

Zelenskyy says Ukraine ready to 'freeze' conflict along current front line, move to diplomacy

KYIV (TIP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated on Wednesday that Ukraine stands prepared to freeze the conflict along the current front line and transition towards diplomatic negotiations as part of initiatives to end the war with Russia.

In an interview with Fox News, Zelenskyy remarked that Kyiv subsequently intends to pursue security guarantees from the United States and European nations.

"Yes. Right now we have to freeze, and I think this is a real way to end this war," he stated, further noting that a ceasefire represents the baseline expectation Ukraine holds regarding Russia.

He explained that Kyiv would subsequently engage American and European leaders to demand security guarantees, emphasising that peace alongside security remain paramount priorities.

When questioned regarding whether Ukraine would consent to ceding the Donbas region in exchange for concluding hostilities, Zelenskyy dismissed the notion that Moscow holds battlefield superiority, asserting instead that Russian authorities aim to coerce Kyiv into abandoning its territory.

"In 2026, they didn't have success. They are not winning on the battlefield," he asserted. Zelenskyy conceded that the populace experiences exhaustion stemming from hostilities, yet maintained that the nation cannot simply relinquish its lands.

World's oldest cave paintings in Indonesia under threat of wildfires

OCTOBER 23, 2026

MAROS-PANGKEP (TIP): The world's oldest cave paintings on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi are under threat as heat and smoke from the country's worst wildfires in more than a decade risk accelerating the deterioration of the more than 67,000-year-old works of art, researchers said.

Indonesia is battling its most intense forest and land fires since 2015 as a severe El Niño drives up temperatures and reduces rainfall, leaving its forest and peatland vulnerable to fire.

While the islands of Sumatra and Borneo are the worst affected by the disaster, fires have also spread on the island of Sulawesi, including in South Sulawesi where limestone caves house the world's oldest prehistoric art.



A rock painting depicting a pig at a cave in Maros-Pangkep, South Sulawesi province, Indonesia, on October 12, 2026. Reuters

In a cave in South Sulawesi's Maros-Pangkep, an artwork depicting human-like figures interacting with a pig was dated by researchers from Australia's Griffith University to be at least 51,200 years old. In a cave on Muna island, off

Sulawesi, a reddish-coloured hand stencil was dated to at least 67,800 years.

Near the Maros-Pangkep cave, firefighters worked to put out fires as smoke drifted over the dramatic karst landscape that is a defining feature of the national park and UNESCO Global Geopark surrounding the cave.

Firefighter Muhammad Ikfar said fires burned near the site for more than a week earlier this month and came within 800 metres (2,625 feet) of the cave.

More than 270 hectares (667 acres) of the national park burned between September 30 and October 18, Ikfar said.

"The first and most destructive effect is the heat. Even without direct fire touching the paintings, it could ruin them because it changes the temperature around the paintings and

accelerates the process of corrosion," said Griffith University archaeologist Basran Burhan.

The smoke also creates soot.

"They create soot on the paintings and cover them, so that the paintings will become blurred and difficult to identify," he said.

On Thursday and Friday, firefighters were working to put out fires in other parts of the park, firefighter Ikfar said, adding that the conditions were dry with no rain yet.

"If we don't do something about this quick, if there isn't any tactical mitigation efforts for this incident we will lose one of the most amazing evidence of human history in Maros-Pangkep," Burhan said. "And that is a great shame."

French authorities ban some student protests after weekend looting and clashes

OCTOBER 23, 2026

PARIS (TIP): Dozens of protesters took to the Paris streets on Thursday, Oct 22, despite bans on demonstrations ordered in multiple French cities following a weekend of clashes and widespread looting that marked France's most violent unrest in years.

Organizers of the Paris protest said an administrative court in the city overturned a ban issued by police. The Paris police prefecture previously said the ban was necessary, given the risk of street violence after groups of masked youth clashed with police forces, looted shops and torched cars over the weekend.

The Paris court ruling was not immediately made public.

More bans were expected in the coming days. French President Emmanuel Macron said such measures aim to protect city centers, businesses and public buildings.

The right to demonstrate in France is protected by the French Constitution, and the ban on demonstrations planned for Thursday in Paris, Lyon, Lille and Grenoble was seen by some as an infringement on French people's right to protest.

High school and university student groups said they will continue to mobilize, even though the autumn school break started this week.

France's Macron tightens curbs on protests, blaming hard left for unrest

OCTOBER 23, 2026

PARIS (TIP): French President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday, Oct 22, that "illegitimate" protests would be banned in the coming days and blamed "seditious" ultra-left groups and vandals for last weekend's riots and looting.

Speaking after a meeting with intelligence chiefs and senior ministers, Macron said demonstrations organised by groups such as trade unions would be allowed to go ahead but could be diverted along alternative routes to protect businesses.

"Last Saturday we had political and seditious acts by ultra-left groups whose aim is to bring down the Republic," Macron said.

His comments came as authorities across France prepared for fresh protests following some of the country's worst urban unrest in years.

All protests planned for Saturday in Lyon, France's second-largest city, have been banned, local authorities said. Yet fresh demonstrations are already taking shape ahead of what officials fear could be another volatile weekend.

France's main student union, UNEF, has called for rallies on Saturday, while the Yellow Vest movement, the anti-establishment force that emerged in 2018, has filed plans for a march through central Paris.

Businesses in central Paris have begun boarding up their shop windows in case of violence. Luxury goods group Hermes said it had stepped up security measures at its French stores.

Elsewhere, authorities in the northern city of Orleans were bracing for potential



France has a history of violent protests even before immigration became a topic of discussion. AFP

unrest as the far-right National Rally was due to hold an annual meeting and unions and left-wing groups planned demonstrations.

A student protest called for Thursday in Paris was banned, though metro stations in central Paris were nonetheless shuttered by transit authorities in anticipation of unauthorised gatherings.

France was rocked on October 17 by some of its worst urban unrest in years, on the fringes of nationwide protests, exposing the depth of public anger and raising questions about the security services' ability to keep order.

Two people have been arrested over an arson attack on Limoges city hall, French officials and media said.

A third consecutive night of local curfews passed without major incidents in areas affected by the violence, offering the government some respite ahead of the weekend.

The unrest has laid bare a deeper malaise in France, where soaring energy costs, pressure on household budgets and concerns over deteriorating public services have fuelled growing frustration among workers and younger people.

The French political class has also descended into a bitter blame game, with the government accusing far-left political groups of stoking the unrest.

Highlighting investor unease, yields on France's 10-year government bonds rose above those on equivalent US Treasuries on Thursday for the first time since 2013.

Greece passes social media ban for children under 15

OCTOBER 23, 2026

ATHENS (TIP): Greece's parliament approved a bill on Friday that bans the use of social media platforms for children under 15 amid growing concerns over their impact on the health and safety of minors.

The ban comes into force on January 1, 2027. Australia was the first country to pass legislation to curb the use of social media by minors, doing so last year. A similar law passed in France was struck down by the country's Constitutional Council in August.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said social media platforms have 2-1/2 months to devise a way to verify users' ages and protect their privacy.

Greece is among seven European Union countries seeking an age verification solution with the European Commission. Greece says it is standing by parents to help curb the "endless scrolling" that deprives children of sleep, concentration and time with their friends.

Thousands march for school funding in Greece

Thousands of students and teachers have rallied across cities in Greece, demanding more funding for education, including better facilities and smaller class sizes.

The demonstrations echo a wave of youth-led



protests across Europe this month, including in France and Albania, where anger over rising costs and alleged corruption has led to clashes with police and major property damage.

Greek police said about 10,000 demonstrators, including school and university students, rallied peacefully in central Athens and the capital's suburbs on Wednesday.

"From Greece to France, we want public, free

education," protesters chanted as they gathered outside Parliament, where students staged an overnight sit-in nearby before the rally.

Others joined the protests in Thessaloniki, Patras, Larissa and other cities across Greece in solidarity with growing demonstrations in France and elsewhere in Europe, where rallies demanding educational resources have morphed into angry demonstrations over soaring living costs.

In Greece, the protests add pressure to Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and his centre-right government as the country prepares to hold elections in mid-2027 amid a weakening economy.

Greece struggled with a serious debt crisis from 2009 to 2018, during which the government agreed to spending cuts in exchange for three European Union and International Monetary Fund bailouts worth about 290 billion euros (\$326bn).

But the measures have impacted Greek workers, who are among the poorest in Europe and struggle with stagnant wages, high rents and rising energy costs.

The average monthly salary of 1,500 euros (\$1,685) sits at 2009 levels, with many young Greeks having been priced out of housing in cities by skyrocketing rents.

Awami League, Jamaat-e-Islami joined hands to fuel unrest, alleges Bangladesh PM

OCTOBER 23, 2026

DHAKA (TIP): Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has accused the deposed Awami League regime and an opposition political force of joining hands to create unrest in the country, alleging that one side is financing disruptive activities from abroad while the other is working to generate instability domestically.

Speaking at a public rally in Rajshahi on Tuesday, October 20, Rahman said intelligence reports indicated that the ousted regime was providing money to stir up unrest, including attempts to provoke labor disputes at factories in different parts of the country. His remarks appeared to refer to the activity-banned Awami League, led by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, and the opposition Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.

"These two parties have united," Rahman said, warning that their alleged activities could disrupt efforts to stabilize the country and improve people's economic conditions.

The prime minister alleged that the ousted political establishment was supplying funds from across the border to support efforts to create disorder in Bangladesh. He also accused a political group operating within the country of spreading misinformation and attempting to mobilize unrest. Rahman said attempts had been made to create labor unrest at several factories and industrial establishments. He urged citizens to remain vigilant against activities that could undermine economic recovery and obstruct government initiatives.

The allegations have not been independently established in the reports.

Pak defense minister Khawaja Asif questions loyalty of bureaucrats over plans to settle abroad

OCTOBER 23, 2026

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan's Defense Minister Khawaja Asif has questioned the loyalty and commitment of senior bureaucrats, alleging that several government officials planned to settle abroad while still serving in public office, according to a report by The Express Tribune.

In a post on social media platform X, Asif alleged that a significant number of Pakistani officials had made arrangements to relocate overseas while continuing to serve the government. He questioned whether officials preparing to establish permanent homes abroad remained fully committed to their responsibilities towards the country.

The minister's remarks have brought renewed attention to concerns surrounding the accountability of Pakistan's civil service, overseas residency arrangements among influential officials and the relationship between public service and personal interests.

Portugal Emerges as a Preferred Destination

Asif said that several Pakistani bureaucrats had settled in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and other European countries over recent years. He specifically identified Portugal as a destination that had gained popularity among officials seeking permanent residency abroad.

According to the defense minister, some officers had planned their relocation while employed by the Pakistani government. He added that officials reportedly linked to these



Khawaja Asif

arrangements had occupied influential positions and maintained close relationships with successive governments.

Asif acknowledged that Pakistan's bureaucracy included capable and honest officers but argued that the alleged preparations by some officials to move abroad raised questions about their commitment during their years in government service.

Allegations of Financial Fraud

The minister also alleged that an individual involved in facilitating permanent residency arrangements had fled after collecting substantial sums of money from several wealthy and influential bureaucrats.

However, Asif did not identify the individual or the officials allegedly involved, nor did he provide

documentary evidence to substantiate the claims in his public statement.

The allegations have not been independently verified, and the reports available do not establish whether a formal investigation has been initiated into the alleged arrangements or financial transactions.

Questions Over Public Service and Accountability

Asif questioned whether senior officials who had enjoyed positions of authority, public recognition and opportunities to accumulate wealth remained committed to Pakistan while preparing to settle overseas.

His remarks have renewed debate about the responsibilities of senior civil servants, potential conflicts between public duties and personal interests, and the broader issue of accountability within Pakistan's administrative system.

The controversy also raises questions about whether overseas residency plans among serving officials should be subject to greater scrutiny, particularly when public confidence in government institutions is at stake.

As of the latest reports, the minister had not publicly named the officials concerned or presented evidence establishing wrongdoing by specific individuals.

The allegations therefore remain claims made by the defense minister rather than independently established findings. Further clarification from the government or any formal inquiry would be needed to determine the extent of the alleged arrangements and whether any rules or public-service obligations were violated.

Maldives entering Pak orbit? Muizzu signs defence deals, calls for Saarc revival

OCTOBER 16, 2026

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI (TIP): On a three-day visit to Pakistan, Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu met the who's who of the Islamic Republic. He met everyone from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy PM Ishaq Dar to the powerful army chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir. Muizzu even donned a robe to receive an honorary doctorate from an Islamic university.

The three-day state visit, from October 20 to 22, saw the Maldives and Pakistan sign 20 agreements covering defence, maritime security, policing, trade and other sectors. Muizzu called for reviving the largely dormant South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc), whose last summit was held



Field Marshal Asim Munir paid a visit to Mohammed Muizzu during the latter's visit to Pakistan. (Image: Social Media/ISPR)

in Kathmandu in 2014. His meeting with Pakistan's powerful army chief has added a strategic dimension to the diplomatic outreach. The developments have raised questions about whether the Indian Ocean island nation is moving closer to

Islamabad, and what that means for New Delhi.

The international waters around the Maldives, located along vital Indian Ocean shipping routes, have traditionally been within New Delhi's immediate strategic neighbourhood and its sphere of influence. India maintained military personnel in the archipelago to operate and maintain aircraft used for humanitarian assistance and medical evacuations, but Muizzu's government secured their replacement with civilian technical personnel in May 2024.

The outreach to Pakistan comes against the backdrop of tensions with India, stoked by Muizzu himself, who rode the "India Out" campaign to power in 2023 but has since been working to repair the strained

bilateral relationship.

At a joint press conference on Wednesday (October 22), Muizzu said, "The Maldives firmly believes in the value of Saarc, and in the tremendous potential of our region to address shared challenges through collective action." He also declared that Pakistan and the Maldives had agreed to "turn a new leaf, to build a new era of partnership on the foundations of our six decades of friendship". Pakistan, meanwhile, used Muizzu's visit to raise its own disputes with India. According to an October 21 statement from Pakistan's Press Information Department, Sharif shared Islamabad's perspectives on Jammu and Kashmir and the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), although Muizzu did not publicly endorse either position.

Sikh History This Week

OCTOBER 23 TO OCTOBER 29

OCTOBER 23

1506: Birth anniversary of Baba Buddha Ji



Baba Buddha Ji, born in 1506 according to traditional Sikh historical accounts, was one of the most revered figures in early Sikh history. Born as Bura in the village of Kathu Nangal, near Amritsar, he came into contact with Guru Nanak Dev Ji at a young age and devoted his life to the Sikh faith. His spiritual wisdom earned him the name Buddha, meaning an enlightened or wise person. Baba Buddha Ji served the first six Sikh Gurus and played a significant role in the development of the Sikh community. He was entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the succession ceremony for several Gurus, marking the transfer of spiritual authority. He also became the first head granthi of Sri Harmandir Sahib after the installation of the Adi Granth in 1604. His life remains an example of humility, devotion, wisdom, and selfless service.

1783: Passing of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia



Sikh historical calendars also mark the passing anniversary of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia on October 23. He was one of the most influential Sikh military and political leaders of the 18th century and played a central role in the rise of Sikh power in Punjab. As a prominent leader of the Dal Khalsa and the Ahluwalia misl, Jassa Singh helped organize Sikh forces during a period of repeated Afghan invasions and Mughal decline. His leadership contributed to the consolidation of Sikh political authority and the emergence of the Sikh misls as a major force in northern India.

OCTOBER 24

1781: Sikh forces attack Anupshahr

Some Sikh historical chronologies record an attack by the Khalsa Dal on Anupshahr, in present-day Uttar Pradesh, on October 24, 1781. The account states that Sikh forces captured a British commander, identified as Lieutenant Colonel Stuart.

The episode belongs to the broader history of Sikh military expansion beyond Punjab during the 18th century. Sikh forces were increasingly active across northern India as the Mughal Empire weakened and

regional powers competed for territory and influence.

1953: Punjabi Suba movement

A Punjabi Suba convention held in Amritsar is also listed in Sikh historical chronologies for October 24, 1953. The movement sought the reorganization of Punjab along linguistic lines, with Punjabi-speaking people forming a distinct administrative unit.

The demand became one of the most consequential political movements in post-independence Punjab. The struggle involved sustained political mobilization by Sikh organizations and leaders, and eventually contributed to the reorganization of Punjab in 1966.

OCTOBER 25

1922-1923: The Babbar Akali movement

The Babbar Akali movement emerged from the political and religious ferment surrounding the Gurdwara Reform Movement of the early 20th century. Its supporters opposed colonial rule and challenged religious and political authorities they believed had compromised Sikh institutional independence.

Sikh historical records associate October 25 with events involving Babbar Akali activists, including the revolutionary Dhanna Singh Behlauri, who died in a confrontation with police in 1923.

The movement reflected the increasingly militant currents within the wider struggle against British rule. Its members sought to mobilize Sikhs against colonial authority, although their methods and political approach differed from those of the mainstream Akali leadership.

OCTOBER 26

1619: Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji and Bandi Chhor Diwas



Sikh historical chronologies associate late October with the release of Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji from Gwalior Fort, alongside 52 Hindu rulers who had been detained there by the Mughal emperor Jahangir. The episode is remembered as Bandi Chhor, or the liberation of prisoners.

Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, the sixth Sikh Guru, developed the concept of Miri-Piri, symbolizing the relationship between temporal responsibility and spiritual authority. He emphasized that Sikhs should cultivate spiritual discipline while also possessing the courage to defend justice and resist oppression.

According to Sikh tradition, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji secured the release of the 52 rulers along with his own. The episode became an enduring symbol of compassion, freedom, and standing up for others.

Bandi Chhor Diwas is commemorated with prayers, devotional singing, and illumination at gurdwaras, particularly Sri Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar. It is closely associated with the period of Diwali, although the Gregorian date varies by year and calendar.

Date clarification: October 26 appears in some older historical chronologies for this episode. It should not be treated as the universally accepted date of Bandi Chhor Diwas in 2026. The University of Southern California's Sikh holyday calendar lists Bandi Chhor Diwas for November 8 in 2026.

OCTOBER 27

Parkash Purab of Guru Ram Das Ji



October 27, 2026, is listed in the Nanakshahi calendar as the Parkash Purab of Sri Guru Ram Das Ji, the fourth Sikh Guru. The anniversary falls on 11 Katak in the Sikh calendar.

Born in 1534, Guru Ram Das Ji was originally named Bhai Jetha Ji. He became the fourth Sikh Guru in 1574, succeeding Guru Amar Das Ji. His teachings emphasized humility, devotion, honest living, service, and equality.

One of his most enduring contributions was the establishment of the settlement that developed into Amritsar, now one of Sikhism's most important spiritual centers. The city grew around the sacred pool associated with the future Sri Harmandir Sahib.

Guru Ram Das Ji also made a lasting contribution to Sikh devotional music. His hymns, included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, explore divine love, humility, spiritual discipline, and the soul's relationship with God.

OCTOBER 29

1921: The Keys Affair

October 29 is associated in some Sikh historical accounts with the developing controversy over the keys of the Toshakhana, or treasury, at Sri Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar. The dispute became a major episode in the Gurdwara Reform Movement.

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), established in 1920, sought greater Sikh community control over historic gurdwaras. The keys controversy arose when the colonial administration intervened in the management of the Golden Temple treasury, provoking widespread opposition.

The dispute became a powerful symbol of the struggle for religious autonomy. Sikh leaders and volunteers organized protests and faced arrests, while the controversy drew wider attention to demands for elected Sikh management of historic shrines.

The wider Gurdwara Reform Movement led to the passage of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act of 1925, which established a statutory framework for the management of important Sikh religious institutions.

Why the episode matters: The Keys Affair demonstrated how the Sikh community's campaign for control of its religious institutions became intertwined with the broader struggle against colonial authority. It also helped strengthen the SGPC's position as a central institution in Sikh religious affairs.



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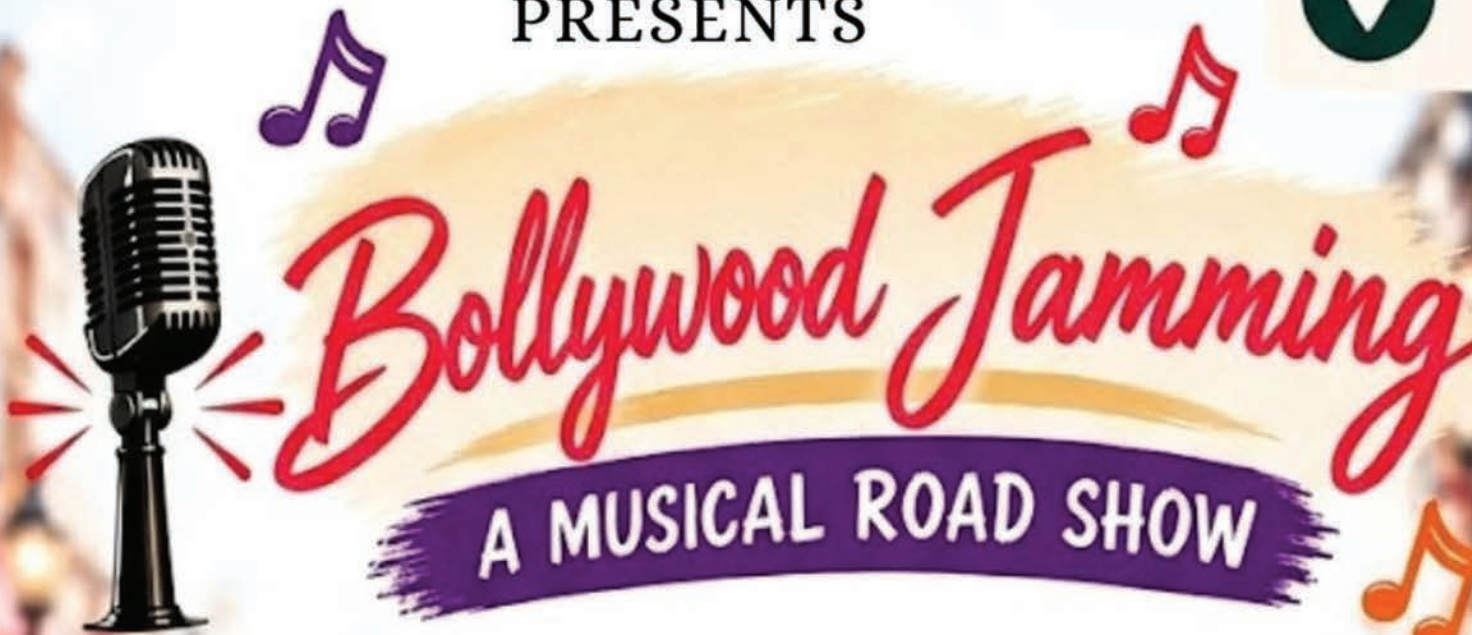
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From matcha to kiwi: Foods that nourish your skin

Healthy, glowing skin begins with good nutrition. While skincare products can help maintain the skin's appearance, a balanced diet rich in vitamins, minerals, healthy fats and antioxidants also plays an important role in keeping it nourished and healthy.

Foods containing vitamin C support collagen production, while antioxidants help protect skin cells from oxidative stress. Including nutrient-rich fruits, vegetables, nuts and beverages in your daily routine can support skin health over time.

Blueberries

Blueberries are rich in antioxidants, including anthocyanins, which help protect cells against oxidative stress. Naturally low in calories and easy to incorporate into everyday meals, they make a nutritious addition to your diet. Add half a cup to yogurt, oatmeal or cereal, or enjoy them as a snack. Whole blueberries are preferable to juice because they provide more fiber.

Spinach

Spinach is packed with essential nutrients, including vitamins C and E, folate, iron and beta-carotene. It also contains lutein, an antioxidant that supports eye health. These nutrients contribute to normal tissue maintenance and help protect cells from oxidative damage. Add spinach to salads, soups, smoothies or cooked dishes for a simple nutritional boost.

Matcha



Matcha is powdered green tea that contains catechins, a group of antioxidants that have been studied for their potential health benefits. These compounds may help protect cells against oxidative stress. Matcha also provides small amounts of certain vitamins and minerals. Enjoy it as a tea or add it to smoothies. However, claims that matcha can stop aging or prevent cancer are not established, and it should not be considered a substitute for medical treatment.

Walnuts

Walnuts provide plant-based protein, fiber, copper, manganese and healthy unsaturated fats, including omega-3 alpha-linolenic acid. These nutrients support overall health and normal tissue function. A small handful of walnuts makes a satisfying snack, while chopped walnuts can add crunch to salads, oatmeal and yogurt. Regularly including nuts in a balanced diet can also support heart health.

Kiwi

Kiwi is an excellent source of vitamin C, which is essential for collagen formation and helps protect cells from oxidative damage. The fruit also supplies fiber and other beneficial nutrients. Enjoy kiwi on its own, add it to fruit salads or combine it with Greek yogurt. Eating vitamin C-rich foods regularly can help support the skin's natural structure and overall health.

Turmeric

A staple in Indian kitchens, turmeric contains curcumin, a compound studied for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Turmeric can add flavor and nutritional variety to everyday meals, including dals, soups and vegetable dishes. However, evidence that applying turmeric directly to the skin reliably reduces pigmentation or treats acne is limited. Topical preparations may also irritate sensitive skin, so patch-testing is advisable before use.

Coconut Water

Coconut water provides fluids and electrolytes, including potassium, making it a refreshing option for hydration. Adequate fluid intake helps prevent dehydration, which can affect the skin's appearance. However, there is limited evidence that coconut water specifically removes blemishes, treats acne or directly moisturizes the skin from within. Choose unsweetened coconut water and remember that plain water is also an excellent hydration option.

FOOD CORNER

Handi chicken

Ingredients

750 gms Chicken on Bone, 3 big Tomatoes, 2 medium sliced Onions, 1 1/2 tbslp ginger garlic paste, 1/2 cup Curd, 1/2 cup Full Cream, 2 tbsp Coriander Powder, 1 tsp Turmeric Powder, 1 tsp Red Chilly Powder, 1 tsp Fenugreek Leaves (Kasthuri Methi), Salt To Taste, 3-4 tbslp Ghee / Oil

2 tsp Garam Masala

For Garam Masala:

3 tsp Cumin Seeds (Jeera), 3 tsp Coriander Seeds (Sookha Dhania), 1 1/2 tsp Black peppercorns, 4 Cloves (Laung), 1 " Cinnamon Stick piece, 3 Brown Cardmom, 2 tsp Fennel Seeds (Saunf), 1 Star Anise, 2 Dry Red Chillies

Method

- Heat ghee or oil in a heavy bottom pan, add chicken pieces and fry till they are done. Take them out on a paper towel. In the remaining ghee add the onions sliced and saute them till light brown. Make sure not burn them.
- Add the ginger garlic paste and cook till all the raw smell disappears. Now add all the dry spices - Red Chilly Powder, Coriander Powder, Turmeric Powder. Add a tablespoon of water so that the spices do not burn. Once the masala is nicely cooked add the tomato puree and cook it till the oil separates.
- Now add beaten curd and cook till the curd gets fully incorporated in the gravy.
- When the oil starts to separate add the chicken pieces and mix well so that all the pieces are fully smeared with the masala. Let the chicken simmer for few minutes in this masala. Once the chicken is fully done add the cream and kasuri methi and garam masala.
- Cook for just 2 minutes on low flame and then take it out in a serving dish.



Glow from within: Foods that support collagen production

While collagen supplements have become increasingly popular, a balanced diet can help support the body's natural collagen production. Certain foods provide collagen directly, while others supply essential nutrients, including vitamin C, zinc and amino acids, that help the body produce and maintain this vital protein. Here are seven foods to include in your diet for healthier-looking skin.

Bone Broth

Bone broth is made by simmering animal bones and connective tissues in water, allowing collagen and other compounds to be released into the liquid. It can provide amino acids and varying amounts of minerals, depending on how it is prepared. Add herbs and spices for flavor, and choose broth from a reputable source.

Chicken

Chicken contains connective tissue and collagen, particularly in its skin, cartilage and other connective-tissue-rich parts. It also provides protein and amino acids that the body uses to maintain and repair tissues. Chicken can be included in a balanced diet through soups, stews and other preparations.

Fish and Shellfish

Fish and shellfish provide protein and nutrients that support skin health. Fish skin, bones and scales contain collagen, which is also used to produce marine collagen supplements. Fatty fish, such as salmon and sardines, additionally supply omega-3 fatty acids that help support the skin's barrier.

Egg Whites

Egg whites do not contain the



connective tissues found in meat, but they provide protein and proline, an amino acid involved in collagen production. Eggs can help meet your daily protein requirements, which are essential for maintaining healthy tissues.

Citrus Fruits

Oranges, lemons, grapefruit and limes are rich in vitamin C, a nutrient essential for collagen synthesis. Vitamin C helps the body form and stabilize collagen, making it an important part of a skin-supportive diet. Enjoy whole fruits, add citrus segments to salads or squeeze lemon over meals. Eating whole fruit also provides fiber and other beneficial nutrients.

Berries

Strawberries, blueberries and other berries provide vitamin C and antioxidant compounds that help protect cells from oxidative stress. Since oxidative stress can contribute to skin damage, including antioxidant-rich foods in your diet is a sensible way to support overall skin health. Add berries to oatmeal, yogurt or smoothies for a nutritious and refreshing option.

Walking alone may not be enough: Why strength training matters for bone health

Walking is excellent for overall health, but stronger bones need more than daily steps. Here's why resistance exercises, balance training and a bone-friendly diet deserve a place in your fitness routine. Walking is one of the simplest ways to stay active. It supports cardiovascular health, improves stamina, helps manage body weight and can contribute to maintaining healthy bones. But if walking is your only form of exercise, you may be missing an important part of the fitness equation: strength training.

Bones are living tissues that constantly break down and rebuild themselves. As we age, this process can gradually favor bone loss, increasing the risk of osteopenia, osteoporosis and fractures. Hormonal changes, particularly after menopause, can accelerate this decline. Although regular walking helps maintain bone health, it may not provide sufficient stimulus to strengthen all the bones in the body.

This is where strength training comes in.

Why walking may not be enough

Walking is a weight-bearing activity, meaning your bones and muscles work against gravity to support your body. It is beneficial for maintaining mobility and can help preserve bone health, particularly when performed regularly.

However, walking generally places a relatively modest load on the skeleton. Once your body adapts to your usual walking pace and distance, the stimulus may not be sufficient to produce substantial improvements in bone density.

Walking also does not challenge every part of the skeleton equally. While it loads the hips and legs, it provides less stimulus to the upper body, including the wrists and arms. These areas are important because fractures can occur in the wrists, hips and spine, particularly in people with osteoporosis.

This does not mean walking is ineffective. Rather, it highlights why a well-rounded exercise routine that includes resistance and balance training can offer broader benefits.

How strength training helps build stronger bones

Strength training involves working your muscles against resistance. This resistance may come from dumbbells, resistance bands, weight machines or your own body weight.

When muscles contract and pull on bones, they create mechanical forces that stimulate the bones to adapt. Over time, appropriately prescribed resistance exercise can help maintain or improve bone mineral density, preserve muscle mass and increase strength.

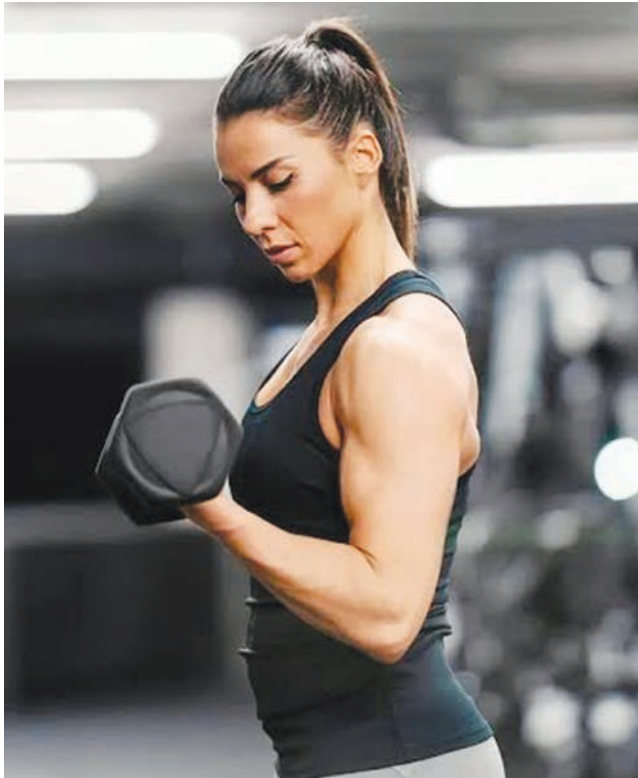
Stronger muscles also support joints and improve the body's ability to perform everyday movements, from climbing stairs to lifting groceries.

Research suggests that progressive resistance training can be particularly beneficial for maintaining bone health as people age. The effects depend on factors such as exercise intensity, consistency, age, baseline bone density and the specific exercises performed.

Strength training also helps address sarcopenia, the age-related loss of muscle mass and strength. Since weaker muscles can contribute to falls, maintaining muscular strength is an important part of reducing fracture risk.

Exercises to include in your routine

You do not necessarily need an expensive gym membership to begin strength training. Depending on



your fitness level and health status, simple exercises can help build strength and improve function.

Squats or chair sit-to-stands

These exercises strengthen the thighs, hips and gluteal muscles. Begin by standing up from a sturdy chair and sitting down slowly. As your strength improves, you may progress to supported squats or add resistance under professional guidance.

Resistance-band exercises

Resistance bands can be used for rows, chest presses and other movements that strengthen the upper body. These exercises help develop muscular strength in areas that receive relatively little loading during walking.

Step-ups

Stepping onto a low, stable platform challenges the muscles of the legs and hips. Start with a low step and use a handrail or other secure support if needed.

Calf raises

Standing calf raises strengthen the muscles of the lower legs and ankles. Hold a sturdy support and slowly rise onto your toes before lowering your heels. This exercise can also help improve functional stability.

Wall push-ups

Wall push-ups strengthen the chest, shoulders and arms. They are a useful starting point for people who are new to resistance training or prefer a lower-impact alternative to floor push-ups.

For generally healthy adults, strength training on two or more days per week is a useful goal. Begin with manageable resistance, focus on proper technique and increase the challenge gradually as your body adapts.

People with osteoporosis, a history of fragility fractures or significant back pain should seek guidance from a healthcare professional or physiotherapist before beginning a new exercise program. Certain movements, particularly forceful or repeated spinal bending and twisting under load, may be unsuitable for some people with fragile bones.

Bloating after eating? Possible causes you shouldn't ignore

Gastrointestinal conditions such as constipation, food intolerances and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) can contribute to recurring bloating. In some cases, persistent symptoms may indicate another digestive disorder that requires medical evaluation.

Bloating is the sensation of fullness, pressure or swelling in the abdomen. Some people experience bloating without visible enlargement, while others notice that their abdomen becomes visibly distended.

Several factors can contribute to the problem.

Eating too quickly

Eating in a hurry, talking while chewing or drinking through a straw can cause you to swallow more air. This may contribute to gas, belching and abdominal discomfort. Large meals can also stretch the stomach and create a sensation of excessive fullness. Eating slowly, chewing thoroughly and choosing smaller meals may help reduce symptoms.

Gas-producing foods

Certain carbohydrates are difficult for some people to digest completely. When these reach the large intestine, gut bacteria ferment them, producing gas. Common triggers include beans, lentils, onions, cabbage, cauliflower, some fruits, carbonated beverages and certain dairy products. These foods are not inherently unhealthy; the amount consumed and an individual's digestive sensitivity can determine whether symptoms develop. Keeping a food diary can help identify patterns without unnecessarily eliminating nutritious foods.

Lactose intolerance

People with lactose intolerance have difficulty digesting lactose, the natural sugar in milk. When lactose is not adequately broken down, it can lead to bloating, gas, abdominal cramps and diarrhea. Symptoms may appear after drinking milk or consuming ice cream and other dairy products. Some people can tolerate yogurt or small amounts of certain dairy foods better than others. If lactose intolerance is suspected, a healthcare professional can help determine whether dietary adjustments or testing are appropriate.

Constipation

Bloating is frequently associated with constipation. When stools move slowly through the digestive tract, people may experience abdominal pressure, discomfort and a feeling of incomplete bowel movements.

Low fiber intake, insufficient fluid consumption, inactivity and certain medications can contribute to constipation. However, increasing fiber suddenly can worsen gas and bloating in some people. Gradual dietary changes are usually better tolerated.

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Japan launches spacecraft to mysterious moons of Mars in a bold mission to bring home soil samples

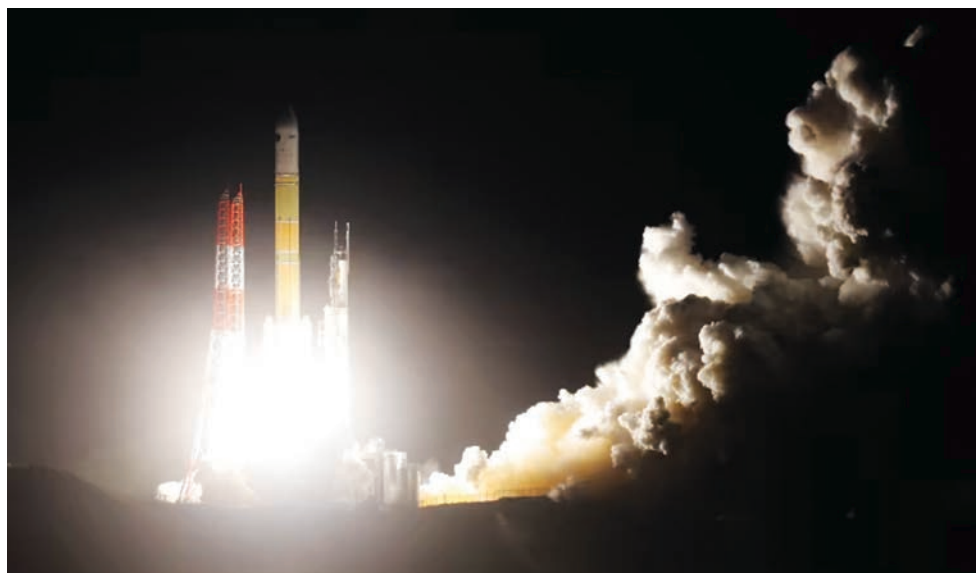
A Japanese spacecraft rocketed toward Mars on Oct 20 on a quest to explore its mysterious moons and bring back samples.

Five of the world's space agencies joined forces for the five-year mission that will attempt to land a robotic prospector plus a rover on Phobos, the larger and closer of Mars' two pint-sized moons.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, which is leading the bold sampling effort, launched the spacecraft before dawn from the country's main spaceport on Tanegashima Island. Officials declared success an hour later when the spacecraft separated as planned from the rocket's upper stage. Flight controllers burst into applause and jumped to their feet, shaking hands and embracing. While NASA has successfully landed nine spacecraft on Mars over the past 50 years and China scored a 2021 touchdown, no one has ever reached Phobos or its sidekick Deimos. And no one has managed to fetch samples from Mars, let alone its moons.

If successful, bits of dust, soil and rocks from Phobos will arrive on Earth in 2031. "There's a lot of adrenaline and a lot of excitement and a lot of wow," said NASA astrophysicist Tom Statler, who's involved with the project.

Japan has an edge going in, with two asteroid sample returns already under its cosmic belt. Phobos is a lumpy, potato-shaped rock just 22 kilometers (14 miles)



or so across. Examining pieces of it can explain how Mars' moons — and possibly moons elsewhere — came to be.

Dubbed MMX for Martian Moons Exploration, the \$578 million mission features a hefty 5-ton spacecraft that should reach Mars by late next summer. It will sync up with Phobos' tight orbit around the red planet, before ejecting the French-German rover that's named Idefix after the white terrier in the Asterix comics. No bigger than a microwave oven, Idefix will plop onto Phobos by itself, bouncing for several minutes before coming to a halt in the moon's extraordinarily low gravity.

The four-wheeled rover is designed to

right itself if it lands upside down. All bets are off, though, if it sinks into soft soil or gets wedged between rocks, said the French Space Agency's Julien Baroukh. Once the rover's solar panels are deployed, the vehicle can no longer right itself, he added, which is why it will move at a glacial 1 millimeter per second (0.04 inches per second).

Idefix will serve as a "scout for safety," according to Baroukh, as it prowls around Phobos for 100 days. Japanese flight controllers want to avoid powdery soil and rough terrain when the mothership — a four-legged stationary lander — descends to the surface to gather samples in late 2028 or 2029.

Google releases massive Chrome update fixing over 350 security flaws

Google has rolled out a major security update for its Chrome browser, and it is highly recommended that you update your computer right away. Google released Chrome 156 for Windows, macOS, and Linux on October 20, 2026, fixing 353 security flaws, including six critical bugs across graphics, accessibility, rendering, and communication features.

Google mentioned that this update will reach all users over the coming days and weeks. The safe and patched versions you need to look for are 156.0.8078.47 for Linux users, and 156.0.8078.47 or 156.0.8078.48 for Windows and Mac users.

Out of the 353 bugs, six have been marked as critical, which is the highest threat level. Five of these critical issues are related to memory corruption in different parts of the browser, such as the Skia graphics engine, CSS styling, Paint component, WebRTC, and Accessibility features.

The sixth critical bug is a use-after-free flaw in the Accessibility section. These types of bugs happen when the software mishandles its memory, potentially allowing bad actors to run harmful code or crash your browser. However, there is some good news.

The company's security advisory does not state that any of these six critical bugs are being actively used by hackers in real-world attacks right now. Access to the exact bug details is also being kept a secret until most people have updated their browsers.

A very interesting part of this massive update is how some of the security flaws were discovered. While Google's own team reported issues like the Skia graphics bug, artificial intelligence also played a big role.

Security researchers used AI tools to find some of the most dangerous problems. For instance, a researcher at Anthropic used their Claude AI to help find the critical use-after-free bug in Accessibility.

Similarly, OpenAI Codex Security, known as kylebot, found the critical WebRTC vulnerability. While AI tools are now working alongside human researchers to secure browsers, it is important to note that these discoveries were not completely automated by AI alone.

Updating your browser is a very simple process that takes only a few minutes. First, open Google Chrome on your computer. Next, click on the three-dot menu located in the top-right corner of your screen.

From there, choose the Help option and click on About Google Chrome. This will open a new page where Chrome will automatically check for any available updates and download the latest version.

Microsoft says Chinese hackers used AI agents to attack hundreds of organisations worldwide

Artificial intelligence is no longer just for writing emails or creating images. Cybercriminals are now using AI to launch fast and highly destructive cyberattacks. According to a new warning from Microsoft, a hacking group linked to China has used an AI-powered tool to break into hundreds of companies across the globe.

The hacker group, identified by Microsoft as "Storm-0940", used an artificial intelligence tool to automate their attacks. This gave them deep and high-level control over company cloud networks in less than three hours.

The hackers did not attack the companies directly. Instead, they used a backdoor method known as a supply chain attack. They targeted ConnectWise, a popular IT services company, specifically focusing on its Cloud Backup service.

ConnectWise CEO Manny Ravelo said that a China-aligned group appears to be behind the attack. To stop the damage,



ConnectWise paused the affected application connections and is now restoring services slowly. However, Ravelo warned that just stopping the connections does not automatically kick out the hackers if they have already established access inside a customer's network. Customers will need to review their systems separately.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington has not yet commented on the incident. However, the Chinese government regularly denies any involvement in cyber theft and hacking activities.

To carry out this massive campaign,

the hackers used an open-source software called ARTEX. Normally, ARTEX is a legitimate penetration testing framework used by security professionals to find weaknesses in networks. However, Storm-0940 misused its AI capabilities to automate malicious tasks like scanning systems and stealing data.

Microsoft's report explicitly states that Storm-0940 used the ARTEX AI tool to automate both the initial password spraying campaign and the subsequent OAuth application abuse. The AI was used right from the start to accelerate the password guessing at machine speed; it was not a traditional manual effort before they switched to AI.

They used the AI tool to abuse the trusted digital keys that ConnectWise already used to connect to Microsoft 365 accounts. Because these backup apps were already trusted, the hackers bypassed standard login screens completely.

Brent crude surges 4% to \$113 as Saudi attacks heighten oil supply risks

OCTOBER 23, 2026

SINGAPORE (TIP): Global oil prices surged to a five-month high on Thursday, October 22, with Brent crude settling at \$113.17 a barrel, as escalating Houthi attacks in Saudi Arabia heightened concerns over potential disruptions to Middle East energy supplies. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude also advanced, closing at \$99.47 a barrel.

Brent futures gained \$4.35, or about 4%, while WTI rose \$2.32, or 2.4%, reflecting an increase in the geopolitical risk premium as investors assessed threats to oil infrastructure and critical shipping routes. The rally gathered momentum after Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi militants launched fresh attacks on Saudi targets, prompting Washington to order some non-essential diplomatic personnel and family members of US government employees to leave the Kingdom. The developments raised fears that the widening regional conflict could affect crude production, transportation and exports.

Saudi Aramco Evacuates Headquarters

Saudi Arabia's energy sector came under increased scrutiny after Saudi Aramco instructed employees to evacuate its headquarters in Dhahran and work remotely, according to Reuters. The move followed attacks in the surrounding region and renewed concerns over the security of critical energy infrastructure.

The latest escalation has heightened market sensitivity to developments across the Gulf, where any sustained disruption could have significant consequences for global energy prices.

Shipping security is another major



concern. The Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb strait are strategically important routes for international energy trade. Threats to vessels operating in and around these waterways can increase freight and insurance costs, delay deliveries and prompt buyers to seek alternative supplies.

Supply Concerns Drive Market Volatility

Although crude exports from the Middle East have remained substantial, traders are increasingly concerned about whether current shipment levels can be sustained if attacks intensify.

Market participants are weighing the risk of future supply disruptions against recent export data. Analysts have warned that attacks on vessels and energy infrastructure could outweigh the reassuring effect of higher current shipments, keeping prices elevated amid uncertainty over the conflict's trajectory.

The price increase also highlights the influence of geopolitical developments on oil markets, where expectations of future shortages can drive prices higher even before a significant reduction in physical supply occurs.

Implications for Businesses and the Global Economy

Higher crude prices could increase operating costs for airlines, shipping companies, road transport operators and energy-intensive manufacturers. Refiners may also face changes in crude procurement costs and margins, depending on the availability and pricing of alternative supplies.

For major oil-importing economies such as India, sustained prices above \$110 a barrel could increase the import bill, put pressure on the rupee and add to inflationary risks. The eventual impact on consumers will depend on currency movements, domestic fuel pricing policies and the duration of the rally.

Investors will also monitor the implications for inflation and interest-rate expectations. If elevated energy costs persist, central banks could face renewed challenges in balancing price stability with economic growth.

Market Outlook

Oil markets are likely to remain volatile as traders assess the risk of further attacks, the security of maritime routes and the resilience of regional exports. Any additional disruption to Saudi production or Gulf shipping could support prices, while diplomatic progress or a reduction in hostilities could ease the geopolitical premium.

For businesses, the immediate priority is managing exposure to energy costs and potential supply-chain disruptions. With Brent crude closing at its highest level since May, the direction of oil prices will depend increasingly on whether the latest escalation develops into a sustained threat to global energy supplies.

Google rolls out new Gemini tools to help small businesses manage marketing, finances

OCTOBER 23, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Google has announced new tools in its Gemini artificial intelligence (AI) assistant for small businesses, including a dedicated business landing page that brings together brand development, financial analysis and customer insights, aiming to reduce the time entrepreneurs spend on routine tasks.

The new features will allow business owners to connect Gemini with Google services such as Google Business Profile, Google Ads and Google Workspace, as well as third-party applications including Adobe, Canva, Dropbox, Shopify, Wix, Zoho and Xero, according to a blog post by Google.

The business landing page will serve as a central hub for managing daily operations, while new features will allow users to upload their websites, brand kits, fonts and colour palettes to establish a consistent brand style within Gemini. Combined with Google's Nano Banana 2.1 image-generation model, the platform can create visual material for product launches and marketing campaigns while retaining the specified brand style. This is intended to help small businesses generate consistent marketing assets without repeatedly providing their design guidelines.

Gemini will also help business owners analyse financial information by turning spreadsheets, receipts and purchase records into visual summaries and interactive models. The tool is designed to make financial information easier to understand and help entrepreneurs draw insights from their business records.

Jio IPO breaks record, becomes first public offer globally to cross 1 crore applications

OCTOBER 23, 2026

MUMBAI (TIP): Jio Platforms' mega IPO has become the first public offer in the world to cross one crore applications, sources said on Friday, Oct 23.

The figure beats the previously reported global record of about 97 lakh applications, set by Waaree Energies. It also tops earlier Indian record-setters such as Bajaj Housing Finance.

Sources said Jio Platforms' IPO has become the first public offer in the world to cross one crore applications, with five hours still remaining before the issue closes. They said the response reflects deep investor interest in Jio Platforms.

Jio Platforms' IPO had drawn bids for 136.32 crore shares, against 19.75 crore shares on offer, by 12:03 pm on Friday. That is an overall subscription of almost seven times.

Institutional demand is leading. Qualified Institutional Buyers bid 70.85 crore shares against 4.90 crore reserved, or 14.46 times. Domestic financial institutions (banks, FIs and insurers) accounted for 34.51 crore shares and foreign institutional investors for 26.95 crore. Mutual funds were much smaller at 4.40 crore.

Non-Institutional Investors were at 9.45 times.



Retail Individual Investors bid 17.19 crore shares against 8.50 crore shares on offer, or 2.02 times. Shareholders' reservation portion is at 5.68 times, while the employee reservation is at 2.48 times.

The IPO comprises an entirely fresh issue of 27 crore shares. At the upper end of the price band, Jio Platforms will raise about Rs 30,213 crore and command a valuation of roughly USD 108 billion.

Neither parent Reliance Industries Ltd nor its other existing shareholders are selling shares in the offering. Jio Platforms had already raised about Rs 8,110 crore

from 212 anchor investors on October 19, allotting shares at Rs 1,119 a piece, the upper end of the price band.

The anchor book reportedly attracted bids exceeding Rs 2.5 lakh crore, more than 30 times the allocation available. Investors included global asset managers and sovereign wealth funds such as BlackRock, Fidelity Investments, GIC and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority. Jio Platforms plans to use up to Rs 27,500 crore of the proceeds to repay borrowings at Reliance Jio Infocomm, its wholly-owned subsidiary. The remaining proceeds will support capital expenditure, including investments in technology and digital services, and working capital requirements.

JPL Managing Director Akash Ambani had recently said that Jio Platforms is betting that its technology, artificial intelligence and cloud ambitions will drive growth beyond telecom.

"There is no either-or at Jio: the network is our technology," Ambani said in an interview with PTI, highlighting the company's in-house 5G core, cloud-native radio access network and software platform serving 533.3 million customers.

"Connectivity was the first product we built on that platform. Digital services, AI and cloud are what we are layering on top of it now," he had said.

Under the autumn moon: The spiritual magic of Sharad Purnima

Celebrated under the luminous full moon of autumn, Sharad Purnima is a sacred Hindu festival that symbolizes divine love, spiritual fulfillment, prosperity and the nourishing power of nature. From the enchanting legend of Lord Krishna's Raas Leela to the tradition of offering kheer beneath the moonlight, this auspicious night invites devotees to turn inward and celebrate the bond between the human soul and the divine.

When the monsoon clouds begin to recede and the autumn sky opens to reveal a brilliant full moon, a special spiritual atmosphere descends across India. Known as Sharad Purnima, this night holds a cherished place in Hindu religious tradition, bringing together devotion, mythology, fasting, prayer and the quiet beauty of moonlit nature.

Falling on the full moon, or Purnima, of the Hindu lunar month of Ashwin, Sharad Purnima is also known by names such as Kojagari Purnima, Kaumudi Purnima and Raas Purnima in different regions and traditions. The festival is associated with Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, and Lord Krishna, whose divine dance with the gopis is celebrated as an expression of the soul's longing for union with God.

At its heart, Sharad Purnima is more than a celebration of the moon. It is a reminder that spiritual abundance comes not only from material prosperity but also from gratitude, purity of intention, love and inner awakening.

Origin and spiritual significance

The word Sharad refers to the autumn season, while Purnima means the full-moon day. Sharad Purnima marks the first full moon of autumn in the traditional Hindu calendar and is celebrated with particular devotion in many parts of India.

The festival's religious significance has developed through several strands of Hindu tradition, including Vaishnava accounts of Krishna's divine play, popular stories associated with Goddess Lakshmi and regional customs that honor the full moon.

In Indian spiritual thought, the moon has long been associated with calmness, beauty, emotional balance and the rhythms of life. Its waxing and waning cycles are linked symbolically with change, renewal and the passage of time. The bright full moon of Sharad Purnima represents completeness and illumination, making it a fitting symbol for spiritual fulfillment.

The night also arrives at a seasonal turning point. After the rains, the air often feels clearer, the landscape becomes refreshed and the moon appears particularly luminous against the autumn sky. This natural beauty has inspired centuries of poetry, devotional music and religious observances.



Important information

Sharad Purnima 2026

Sunday, 25 October 2026

Purnima Tithi Begins : 25 October 2026 at 11:55 am

Purnima Tithi ends : 26 October 2026 at 09:41 am

Sharad Purnima therefore brings together the spiritual and the seasonal: the light of the moon, the abundance of the harvest season and the aspiration to cultivate clarity and contentment within oneself.

The legend of Lord Krishna's Maha Raas Leela

One of the most enchanting legends associated with Sharad Purnima is the Maha Raas Leela of Lord Krishna, described in the Bhagavata Purana, particularly in its Tenth Canto.

According to the Vaishnava tradition, on a beautiful autumn night in Vrindavan, the radiance of the full moon illuminated the forests, while the gentle breeze carried the fragrance of blooming flowers. Lord Krishna played his divine flute, whose captivating melody reached the hearts of the gopis, the cowherd women of Braj.

Drawn by their profound love for Krishna, the gopis left their everyday activities and gathered in the forest. Krishna welcomed them and performed the Raas Leela, a celestial dance symbolizing divine love and the relationship between the individual soul and the Supreme Being.

When the gopis became conscious of their special closeness to Krishna, he disappeared for a time, allowing them to experience the intensity of separation and longing. Their yearning deepened their devotion, and Krishna eventually reunited with them.

In the spiritual interpretation of this episode, the Raas Leela is not merely a dance or a romantic tale. It represents bhakti - unconditional devotion and the soul's desire to experience the divine

presence. The full moon becomes a symbol of divine illumination, while Krishna's flute represents the call of God that awakens the heart. The story reminds devotees that genuine spiritual love requires humility, surrender and freedom from ego.

This association has made Sharad Purnima especially significant in Vrindavan and the Braj region, where devotional performances, temple celebrations, music and recitations commemorate Krishna's divine play.

Goddess Lakshmi and the legend of Kojagari Purnima

Sharad Purnima is also deeply associated with Goddess Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth, prosperity, fortune and abundance.

In many traditions, the festival is known as Kojagari Purnima, a name derived from the Sanskrit expression *Ko jagarti?*, meaning "Who is awake?"

According to the traditional Kojagari legend, Goddess Lakshmi travels through the world on this auspicious night, asking who remains awake in devotion. Those who keep vigil, worship the goddess and remember the divine with sincerity are believed to receive her blessings.

A popular account tells of a poor Brahmin named Valit, whose life was marked by financial hardship. Through his observance of the Kojagari ritual and the blessings associated with Goddess Lakshmi, his fortunes eventually changed. Different regions tell variations of this story, but its central message remains the same: devotion, vigilance and faith are spiritually valuable.

The word "awake" also carries a deeper meaning. Beyond remaining physically awake throughout the night, it can symbolize being alert to one's duties, opportunities and spiritual responsibilities.

The legend encourages devotees to overcome laziness, greed and carelessness, and to cultivate discipline, gratitude and generosity.

In eastern India, particularly West Bengal, Odisha and Assam, Kojagari Purnima is observed with special Lakshmi Puja. Families decorate their homes, prepare offerings and pray for prosperity, peace and well-being.

Rituals and traditions of Sharad Purnima

Sharad Purnima is celebrated in different ways across India. While the details vary by region and family tradition, the observance generally combines worship, fasting, offerings and appreciation of the full moon.

Early-morning bath and prayer

Devotees traditionally begin the day with a bath, wear clean clothes and offer prayers at their home altar. Some decorate their homes and place flowers, incense and lamps before their chosen deity.

Worship of Goddess Lakshmi

Devotees worship Goddess Lakshmi with flowers, lamps, sweets, fruits and other customary offerings. Prayers seek prosperity, harmony and freedom from financial hardship. In some traditions, devotees also worship Lord Vishnu and the Moon God, Chandra.

Preparing kheer under the moonlight

One of the festival's best-known customs is preparing kheer, a sweet dish made with milk, rice and sugar, and placing it under the moonlight. After prayers, it is shared as prasad among family members and devotees. In some Swaminarayan traditions, a preparation of milk and flattened rice is offered instead.

Moon worship and night vigil

Families gather to admire the full moon, offer prayers and spend time in devotional activities. Some observe a night vigil, chant mantras, sing bhajans or listen to the Sharad Purnima vrat katha. The vigil is particularly important in Kojagari traditions.

Fasting, charity and sharing prasad

Some devotees observe a fast, following their family or regional customs, and break it after worship. Giving food, clothing or other assistance to people in need is another meaningful way to mark the occasion. The emphasis is on sincere devotion rather than elaborate displays.

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BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

ARIES



Ganesha says this week will generally be positive for Aries. You will feel motivated to maintain balance in various aspects of your life, bringing peace and tranquility. You will strive to strengthen your position in society, which will give you a lot of energy and confidence. Your network will also expand, providing opportunities to make new friends and relationships. This is a time when positivity will surround you, and your ideas will be appreciated. Time spent with family will be particularly enjoyable, providing a good opportunity to strengthen bonds. This week, be open to sharing your thoughts, as your ideas can inspire others. Your artistic and creative abilities will also shine, motivating you to start new projects. Remain steadfast in your intentions and keep moving towards your goals. This week will be overall pleasant and successful.

TAURUS



Ganesha says this week may be somewhat challenging. You may experience some instability in various aspects of your life. Some disagreements or misunderstandings in relationships are possible, which may increase tension between you and your partner. This is a time to show patience and understanding. Remember that communication is key. This week, try to understand your partner's feelings. Calm discussions can strengthen the relationship. However, maintaining honesty and transparency with each other is essential. This period may be difficult, but it is also an opportunity to further strengthen your relationship. Keep your expectations realistic and maintain a positive attitude towards each other. Focus on your personal growth to navigate this situation. With a positive mindset and dedication, you can achieve better results in your relationships.

GEMINI



Ganesha says this week will be full of growth and opportunities. Your charm and communication skills will attract those around you. Meeting and interacting with new people will add energy and enthusiasm to your social life. This week, your thoughts will be clear, and you will be able to express yourself easily. Your creativity will be at its peak, allowing you to come up with new ideas. Furthermore, your intelligence and reasoning during interactions with

others will be highly appreciated. Your relationships with those around you will become even stronger. While you may face some challenges, you will overcome them with patience and understanding. This week will be filled with meaningful and positive experiences, boosting your confidence. Since this period is very good for your overall well-being, you will have the confidence to face every challenge.

CANCER



Ganesha says this week may bring some challenges. Your personal life may experience some ups and downs. There could be some difficulties in relationships, which may cause you stress. Romantic relationships and friendships may face some issues when you expect everything to be fine. Open communication and sharing your feelings with your partner will be important. Maintaining emotional control is crucial this week; avoid unnecessary stress over minor matters. Talk openly with your loved ones to clear any misunderstandings. Patience and understanding are key in relationships right now. Even small efforts can bring great joy. Taking the right steps now can strengthen your relationships in the future. Remember that every challenge also presents an opportunity. Try to bring positivity to your love life and relationships this week.

LEO



Ganesha says this week will bring mixed results. You may face some instability and challenging situations in your life. Ups and downs in relationships are normal, but don't worry. This is a time to control your emotions. Be careful when communicating with others, as small things can escalate into big arguments. You need to be wise and patient to maintain harmony in your relationships. Try to spend time with your loved ones; this will bring you peace of mind. This week, try to channel your energy positively. Meditation and yoga can be very helpful. Try to express your feelings clearly to avoid any misunderstandings. The main message for this week is: Stay calm and try to strengthen your relationships with an open mind.

VIRGO



Ganesha says this week will bring positive energy into your life, leading you towards new opportunities and possibilities. Overall, it's a great time for you. You will feel ease and love in your relationships. You will be able to spend more time with your loved ones, which will strengthen your bonds. Your confidence will increase, and you will be able to express your feelings clearly. This is a time of cooperation and mutual understanding; if you feel any disagreements, this is the right time to resolve them. Note that

your skills and work style will also improve, making you more attractive. Don't forget to focus on your personal development this week. It's also a time for introspection, where you can understand your priorities and desires. Overall, this week will be pleasant and positive, where you will feel happiness and satisfaction in your life.

LIBRA



Ganesha says this week is inspiring and positive. You will feel balance and harmony in your life, leading you towards your ideal state. You will feel renewed energy in social interactions, which will strengthen your relationships. Spending time with friends and family will bring you joy and satisfaction. Your communication skills will shine this week, allowing you to express your thoughts clearly. This will not only improve your existing relationships but can also lead to new connections. Express your feelings openly and try to maintain harmony with others. Honest communication will enrich your life at this time. Remember, your relationships are important, so strengthen them with small gestures. Be sensitive to those around you and cherish the moments you spend with them. This week is excellent for love and relationships; you will spend quality time with your loved ones.

SCORPIO



Ganesha says this week may bring a mix of positivity and challenges. Overall, the atmosphere may not be particularly favorable, making it difficult to understand the energy and situations around you. Challenges in relationships will persist, and you will need to address them. Communication may be strained, so patience and calmness are essential. Be cautious when talking to loved ones, as your mood may fluctuate this week. You might feel lonely, but remember that this is just a temporary phase, and things will improve. Listen to your heart and try to strengthen the relationships that matter to you. Overall, this week requires caution and understanding. Face the challenges and try to resolve problems gradually. This could be a time for experimentation and introspection, which will yield better results in the future.

SAGITTARIUS



Ganesha says this week may be somewhat challenging. You might experience some instability and mental stress. This is an important time for your personal growth and self-discovery, but it will require patience and courage. Your social and personal relationships may see some ups and downs. There might be some hesitation or misunderstandings in your communication with loved ones. This is a time to bring clarity to your relationships so you can move forward in a positive direction. Practice

meditation and yoga to manage stress and find inner peace. Try to strengthen relationships through good communication, as this can reduce negativity. Maintain a positive attitude and be prepared to face challenges. Rays of hope will gradually emerge, inspiring you to move forward. Remember, every difficulty offers an opportunity to learn something new from your experiences.

CAPRICORN



Ganesha says this week will be very positive. Your positive energy and confidence will attract people around you. You will feel a new charm in your personality, which will further strengthen your relationships. Your social connections can bring new opportunities into your life. Spending time with friends and family will bring you joy and satisfaction. This is a good time for meaningful conversations with loved ones and strengthening emotional bonds. However, some minor challenges may arise, but your understanding and patience will help you resolve them easily. This week will bring a sense of harmony and balance. It is a great time to improve communication and understanding, which will make your relationships even better. The overall experience of this week will be pleasant for you and your loved ones. This is a great opportunity to strengthen your relationships.

AQUARIUS



Ganesha says this week is very positive. You will experience new dimensions of sociability and friendship. You will have a special charm in your personality that will attract people to you. This is an ideal time to make new connections and strengthen existing relationships. Your communication skills will improve, allowing you to express your feelings more effectively. Spending time with friends and family and enjoying their company will bring you mental peace. Feelings of love and empathy will flow from your heart, bringing you closer to your loved ones. Positive energy and good thoughts around you will create a pleasant atmosphere. This positive influence will inspire you to move forward not only in personal relationships but also in your overall life. It seems that the people and relationships you cherish will bring a new light into your life. Simply embrace the energy of this week and spread joy around you.

PISCES



Ganesha says this week may be somewhat challenging. Some difficult situations may arise around you this week, which could affect your mood. Your relationships may experience some ups and downs. This is a time to communicate openly and

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : OCTOBER 26 TO NOVEMBER 1 BY ASTROLOGER CHIRAG DARUWALLA

OCTOBER 26

Ganesha says the task you undertake this time will provide you with a lot of satisfaction. They would be supportive, and some of them would end up being your closest friends. You would make good money from your job, but it would be difficult for you to keep your profits. There will be nice romantic entanglements and good opportunities to form a marriage union. Expect to get gifts and treats in both cash and kind. Some of you have plans to travel abroad for business.

OCTOBER 27

Ganesha says for your efforts, you can anticipate receiving fantastic benefits. You would spend extra on comforts and amusement to mark your triumph especially. Your income would increase, and you would make some wise long-term investments. Better communication between you and your partner would make every time you share truly special. Your parents' health could be a source of worry and concern.

OCTOBER 28

Ganesha says for best results, make your plans far in advance. Long-term gains will be attained as a result of your efforts during this time when investing in real estate is advantageous. Your priority list will include romance. A new arrival also appears to be a possibility. As you take a job with more responsibility and position, your financial situation will get better. The entire family's spirits will rise if some exciting news comes in from distant relatives.

OCTOBER 29

Ganesha says although there will be financial improvements, the increase in expenses will prevent you from being able to save. Your professional improvement should have your whole attention because it will rapidly produce the necessary effects. Business people will establish useful contacts. Children and spouses will be extremely demanding but supportive. Minor health conditions like backaches, stiff necks, or body aches will cause issues. If you get out and participate in clubs and social

gatherings, your social life will go smoothly.

OCTOBER 30

Ganesha says to achieve the clear goal of success; you are likely to take advantage of all the opportunities that come your way as soon as possible. You keep up the good effort and attempt to imitate it constantly. It will be successful if you make an effort to change your sour attitude. Sometimes you became lost in pleasant ideas that gave you a boost. Messy situations could make you feel anxious, yet supportive grins from your loved ones can make you feel better. You always have the best of intentions for your family members.

OCTOBER 31

Ganesha says you must examine your vacillating and spreading modes. You have a wide range of skills. Wherever you go, people will notice you. Because of your bewilderment trait, you successfully attempt to recover your former appeal. When you are a channel anchor, you will eventually have well-



planned interactive sessions with some well-known individuals. Your knowledge will be needed to do that. You are modern and a strong follower of Western culture where there is no room for superstitions.

NOVEMBER 1

Ganesha says you enjoy going to events and parties, mixing with people, and being around a large number of people. You will have an enjoyable time with your family, which will make you feel better. You'll be blessed on all fronts. Without many hassles or delays, you will get whatever you want. You always decide to choose to work on your projects before doing anything materialistic. You are a guy of your word. Gather all of your thoughts and sift out the most significant issues.

CONTD FROM PAGE 40

share your feelings. Face the challenges, but maintain a positive outlook. People around you may find it difficult to understand your emotions. Therefore, patience and avoiding negativity are essential. Steer clear of any arguments. The environment around you may present some challenges, so introspection and

deep thinking will be necessary. This week is about fostering open communication and understanding in relationships. Think about new ways to strengthen yourself and your relationships. Remember that challenges can be overcome through unity and collaborative effort.

Author Bio

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

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CONTD FROM PAGE 1

"Not negotiating": Trump...

drawn up plans for renewed strikes on Iran after the American midterm elections, while Tehran has threatened to unveil a weapon it calls the "father of all bombs" amid escalating tensions in West Asia.

According to The New York Times, the US and Israeli militaries have developed specific plans for a short but intensive operation targeting Iran's energy infrastructure, nuclear facilities, and missile and drone arsenal. Citing US officials and other people briefed on the deliberations, the report said the two militaries have stepped up exercises, including flying aircraft over Iraq to practice strike maneuvers.

US War Secretary Pete Hegseth met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel this week to discuss potential renewed strikes, according to the news report. Some US officials believe another round of "attacks" could push Iran's economy to the brink and force Tehran to make diplomatic concessions after nearly eight months of conflict.

Amid the possibility of renewed strikes, Iran has warned that it would respond to any renewed military action. According to Iranian state-affiliated media outlet Student News Network (SNN), Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) spokesperson Hossein Mohebbi said, "The United States has the 'Mother of All Bombs.' We will show them the 'Father of All Bombs,' and it will definitely be something new for them."

But Tehran has not provided details about the weapon or clarified what the threat entails.

The warning follows reports that US President Donald Trump has considered using the 22,000-pound GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB), known as the "Mother of All Bombs", against Iran's deeply buried Pickaxe Mountain nuclear facility.

According to The New York Times, the United States is assembling a substantial military force expected to be fully in place by early November, including three aircraft carriers, thousands of Marines, fighter jets and Special Operations forces. Officials have cited political considerations, including Trump's earlier pledge not to strike Iran before the midterm elections, as reasons the operation could be delayed.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, meanwhile, has highlighted the situation as a major challenge for Tehran. In an address to the Iranian Parliament, Pezeshkian said, "The memorandum of understanding we signed was very good; we hadn't given anything. The current situation is neither good for us, nor for the region, nor for the world."

He added, "We are in a super-challenge, not a challenge. America didn't think we would stand firm despite the pressure and war, but we stood firm, and we will continue to stand firm."

Iran's representative to the United Nations also alleged, as cited by the SNN, that "Starlink has been used to identify and target in military attacks against Iran...The country's space and scientific infrastructure has been targeted in attacks."

The New York Times report said

Washington was seeking to use the prospect of renewed military action as leverage in negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme and control over the Strait of Hormuz. However, Iranian negotiators have resisted making concessions on the nuclear issue, insisting that the matter be deferred until later in the talks.

As military preparations and diplomatic efforts continue, the possibility of renewed strikes has raised concerns about a wider regional conflict, with uncertainty persisting over Trump's final decision and Iran's potential response. (Source: ANI)

Scientists petition to scrap...

not represent their institutions. About 130 million names have been removed under the revision, which has sparked mass protests across the country along with demands by Opposition parties and youth groups to remove the Chief Election Commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar. After weeks of protests, the Election Commission has ordered fresh verification in some states, including Delhi.

The scientists' objections are on the grounds that eligible voters, especially the poor, migrant workers and marginalized communities, are being deleted arbitrarily or without justification and how affected citizens face cumbersome procedures. They remark that there are inadequate safeguards for restoring names to the rolls and that citizens are denied a meaningful opportunity to establish their eligibility. They underline that the periodic revision of rolls lacks transparency and accountability. The letter draws a parallel with the legal presumption of innocence, arguing that no genuine revision can strip citizens of their vote through such procedures.

(Source: The Hindu)

Mamdani celebrates Navratri...

We danced garba, performed aarti, witnessed Sindoor Khela, and honored the Goddess Durga," he said.

"It was an honor to come together in joy, faith, and community in temples across our city -- especially after the attempted mass shooting at a Hindu temple in Illinois last week," Mamdani added.

Calling for collective action against hatred, the mayor said, "May we all join together in our shared responsibility to stand against hate and care for one another. Jai Mata Ki."

Navratri, the nine-night Hindu festival dedicated to Goddess Durga and her nine forms, was celebrated from October 11 to October 19 this year, with Vijayadashami falling on October 20. (Source: ANI)

Organization founded 80...

ever harder to command authority in a world that has moved far beyond 1945.

"The cost is already visible. Eighty years on, the Organization is struggling to deliver peace and reconciliation in some of the gravest conflicts before the Council," Mr. Parvathaneni said addressing the 'Question of Equitable representation on and increase in the membership of Security Council' in the UN General Assembly here.

India voices concern over UN's

liquidity situation in 2026, says unpaid assessment are at 'unacceptably high levels'

The Indian envoy said that the "authority derived from a victory eight decades ago cannot compensate for the deficit in legitimacy of an unrepresentative Security Council today."

Mr. Parvathaneni highlighted the inadequacies and failures of a global organization founded in the aftermath of the Second World War in addressing contemporary geopolitical challenges and conflicts.

"No war, especially one that took place over 80 years ago, should determine today's state of the world," he said, adding that the year 1945, when the UN was founded, cannot be held as the "sole reference point" for today's United Nations.

'Partners for Multilateralism': India to attend new non-superpower grouping's inaugural session at UN

He said today's generation is far removed from the time when this organization was formed.

"History can be a guide for what not to do. It cannot determine today's choices for what needs to be done to face contemporary challenges. We cannot reasonably drive into the future by constantly looking at the rearview mirror," he said.

He said that the credibility of the United Nations is "called into question" as conflicts multiply and the council struggles to respond.

"The citizens of today want to look ahead to what the future has in store for them and not at the distant past. They want equality, rights, fraternity of international cooperation in its truest sense. Let this organization not send them back in a time machine to 1945 every time it discusses Peace and Security," the Indian envoy said.

India also called out the deliberate suppression of sacrifices made by nations in the world wars while an organization "crafted of the victors, for the victors and by the victors" did not include concerns of the victims.

"Sacrifices made in the World Wars have been countless, unrecognized and in some cases, deliberately suppressed," he said, adding that around 2.5 million Indians took part in the war and around 90,000 of them died in military service.

Over four million were killed in the infamous Bengal famine due to colonial war policies. "An organization crafted of the victors, for the victors and by the victors did not, obviously, care to include the concerns of the victims. The times have changed and the UN Security Council must also evolve - for the sake of its own relevance," he said.

India bats for greater Global South representation in UNSC

"Reform is not the settlement of old scores. It is an investment in a Council that all Member States can trust, and which would be stronger as a result," he said.

India, which is vying for a non-permanent UNSC seat for the 2028-29 term, said that the Asia-Pacific Group accounting for more than 60% of the world's population has no choice but to be limited in its representation in the council to one permanent member and an elected membership varying between one and two members every year.

Africa and Latin America also remain



under-represented. By contrast, Europe has two permanent members and three elected members.

"Nowhere else would the injustice of this gross under-representation have continued for so long," he said

The 15-nation council has five permanent veto-wielding members - China, France, Russia, the UK and the U.S. while 10 members are elected to sit at the horseshoe high-table for two-year terms.

India has been calling for an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of UNSC membership, as Parvathaneni emphasized that a reform that expands only the non-permanent category leaves the central imbalance untouched and further entrenches the status quo.

Mr. Parvathaneni said the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) process cannot be fundamentally different from other UN processes, in which negotiations proceed on the basis of a text.

The IGN framework is an informal body of UN member states working within the United Nations General Assembly to reform the UNSC.

"For well over a decade and a half, we have exchanged prepared statements, session after session, and rolled the exercise over by consensus, with no text, no timeframe and no defined end goal.

"That is not negotiation; it is merely perpetuation of status quo. In any multilateral process, a text is the precondition to a negotiation and not its conclusion. We remain baffled by this inversion of the sequence of negotiation process," he said.

"Convergences are not consensus, and the search for a lowest common denominator must not become an excuse for cosmetically tinkering with the existing structure while calling it reform," he said.

Speaking on the veto process, he said India's position is principled and unchanged. "As long as it exists, it must be held by all permanent members, new and old alike, as a matter of fairness. A two-tier permanent membership would only institutionalize inequality."

On Working methods, he said India supports a more transparent, accountable and efficient Council, greater openness on listing decisions, and a stronger voice for troop- and police-contributing countries in shaping mandates. (Source: PTI)

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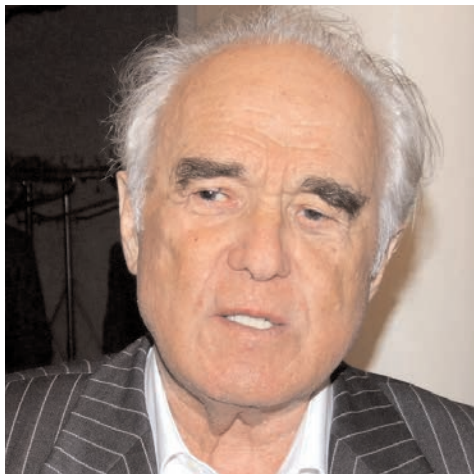
OCTOBER 23

October 23, 1942 - British General Bernard Montgomery launched a major offensive against German forces under Erwin Rommel at El Alamein, Egypt.

October 23, 1956 - A Hungarian uprising against Communist rule began with students and workers demonstrating in Budapest. Soviet Russians responded by sending in tanks and put down the revolt after several days of bitter fighting.

October 23, 1983 - Terrorists drove a truck loaded with TNT into the U.S. and French headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon, exploding it and killing 241 U.S. Marines and 58 French paratroopers.

October 23, 1989 - Hungary declared itself a republic 33 years after Soviet Russian troops crushed a popular revolt against Communist rule.



October 23, 1990 - Ukrainian Prime Minister Vitaly Masol resigned after mass protests by students, becoming the first Soviet official of that rank to quit under public pressure.

OCTOBER 24

October 24, 1929 - "Black Thursday" occurred in the New York Stock Exchange as nearly 13 million shares were sold in panic selling. Five days later "Black Tuesday" saw 16 million shares sold.



October 24, 1931 - Chicago gangster "Scarface" Al Capone was sentenced to 11 years in jail for Federal income tax evasion. In 1934, he was transferred to Alcatraz prison near San Francisco. He was paroled in 1939, suffering from syphilis. He retired to his mansion in Miami Beach where he died in 1947.

October 24, 1945 - The United Nations was founded.

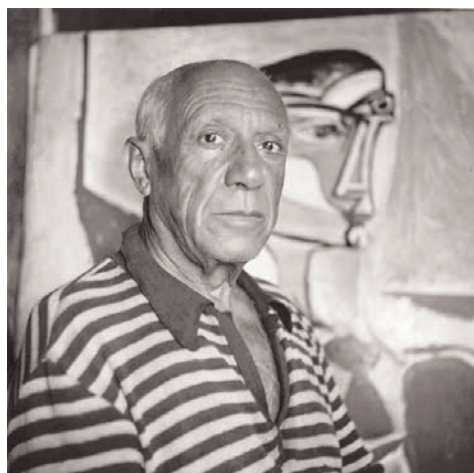
October 24, 1980 - Communist authorities in Poland granted recognition to the trade union "Solidarity." It was subsequently outlawed in 1981 after the government imposed martial law. In 1989, it was re-legalized.

October 24, 1994 - For the first time in 25 years, British troops were absent from the streets of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, following cease-fires by Irish Republican Army (IRA) and pro-British forces.

OCTOBER 25

October 25, 1955 - Austria reassumed its sovereignty with the departure of the last Allied forces. The country had been occupied by the Nazis from 1938-45. After World War II, it was divided into four occupation zones by the U.S., Russia, Britain and France.

October 25-30, 1983 - The Caribbean island of Grenada was invaded by the U.S. to restore "order and democracy." Over 2,000 Marines and Army Rangers seized control after a political coup the previous week had made the island a "Soviet-Cuban colony," according to President Ronald Reagan.

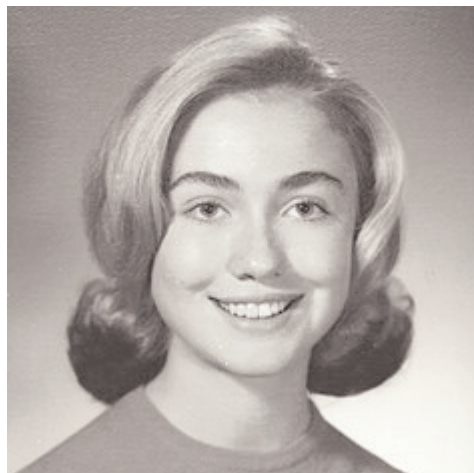


Birthday - Artist Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) was born in Malaga, Spain. He was an experimental painter and also became a fine sculptor, engraver and ceramist.

OCTOBER 26

October 26, 1951 - Winston Churchill became Britain's prime minister for a second time, following his Conservative Party's narrow victory in general elections. In his first term from 1940-45 he had guided Britain through its struggle against Nazi Germany.

October 26, 1955 - Ngo Dinh Diem proclaimed South Vietnam a republic and declared himself president.

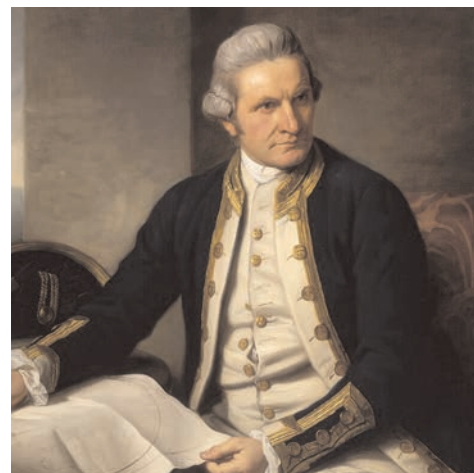


Birthday - Hillary Rodham Clinton was born in Park Ridge, Illinois, October 26, 1947. She was First Lady from 1993-2001 during the presidency of her husband Bill Clinton. In 2000, she became the only First Lady ever elected to the U.S. Senate, serving as a Democrat from New York. She was re-elected in 2006 and then began a presidential campaign, hoping to become America's first female president. She lost the Democratic

nomination to Barack Obama who went on to win the general election and appointed her as U.S. Secretary of State in 2008.

OCTOBER 27

October 27, 1978 - The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded jointly to Menachem Begin of Israel and Anwar Sadat of Egypt.



Birthday - British navigator James Cook (1728-1779) was born in Yorkshire, England. He explored New Zealand, Australia, and the Hawaiian Islands.

Birthday - Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) the 26th U.S. President was born in New York City. He succeeded to the presidency following the assassination of President William McKinley. Roosevelt served from September 14, 1901 to March 3, 1909. Best remembered for stating, "Speak softly and carry a big stick."

Birthday - Welsh poet and playwright Dylan Thomas (1914-1953) was born in Swansea, Wales. His works included; The World I Breathe, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog, The Doctor and the Devil and the drama Under Milk Wood.

OCTOBER 28

October 28, 1886 - The Statue of Liberty was dedicated on Bedloe's Island in New York Harbor. The statue was a gift from the people of France commemorating the French-American alliance during the American Revolutionary War. Designed by Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, the entire structure stands 300 feet (92.9 meters) tall. The pedestal contains the words: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

October 28, 1949 - Helen Anderson became the first woman ambassador, appointed by President Harry Truman to be Ambassador to Denmark.

October 28, 1958 - Cardinal Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, Patriarch of Venice, was elected Pope, taking the title John XXIII. Best known for undertaking the 21st Ecumenical Council (Vatican II).

October 28, 1962 - The Cuban Missile Crisis ended with the announcement by Soviet Russia's leader Nikita

Khrushchev that his Soviet government was halting construction of missile bases in Cuba and would remove the offensive missiles. President Kennedy immediately accepted the offer then lifted the U.S. naval blockade of Cuba.

October 28, 1971 - The British House of Commons voted 356-244 in favor of joining the European Economic Community.

Birthday - Dr. Jonas Salk (1914-1995) was born in New York City. In 1952, he developed a vaccine for the dreaded childhood disease Polio (poliomyelitis, also known as infantile paralysis). His vaccine reduced deaths from Polio in the U.S. by 95%.

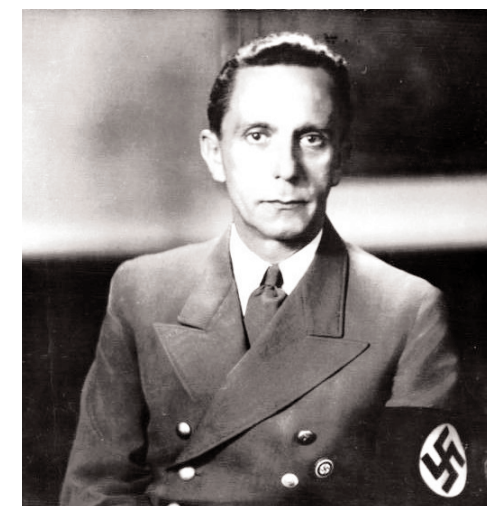


Birthday - Microsoft founder Bill Gates was born in Seattle, Washington, October 28, 1955. In 1975, he co-founded Microsoft with Paul Allen, designing software for IBM computers. By 1980, Microsoft became the leading software company for IBM compatible computers. Gates became a billionaire by age 31 and remains one of the world's wealthiest individuals.

OCTOBER 29

October 29, 1618 - British explorer Sir Walter Raleigh was executed in London for treason on orders from King James I.

October 29, 1929 - The stock market crashed as over 16 million shares were dumped amid tumbling prices. The Great Depression followed in America, lasting until the outbreak of World War II.



Birthday - Nazi propaganda minister Paul Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945) was born in Rheydt, near Dusseldorf, Germany. Considered a master propagandist, he controlled all Nazi newspapers, radio and film production. He was a virulent anti-Semite who advocated the extermination of the Jews. Devoted to Hitler until the end, he died at Hitler's Berlin bunker in 1945 after poisoning his six children.

Sailing through serenity: Backwater destinations in Kerala

Drift through palm-fringed canals, emerald paddy fields and tranquil lagoons as you discover Kerala's timeless waterways, where traditional houseboats, village life and spectacular landscapes create an unforgettable travel experience.

Kerala's enduring appeal as a tourist destination lies in its remarkable diversity. From tropical beaches and mist-covered hills to wildlife sanctuaries, historic forts and rejuvenating Ayurvedic retreats, the state offers experiences for every kind of traveler. Yet, among its most captivating attractions are the backwaters - a beautiful network of lakes, lagoons, rivers and canals that winds through lush countryside and traditional settlements.

Lined with swaying coconut palms, green paddy fields and picturesque villages, Kerala's waterways offer a glimpse into a slower, more peaceful way of life. Here, fishermen cast their nets, boats glide past riverside homes, and birds skim across waters reflecting the tropical landscape.

The quintessential way to experience this world is aboard a traditional houseboat, known as a kettuvallam. Originally used to transport rice, spices and other goods, these boats have been transformed into floating accommodations, often featuring bedrooms, dining areas and open decks. Cruising aboard one allows visitors to explore waterways, watch village life unfold and enjoy freshly prepared Kerala cuisine.

Whether you are seeking a romantic escape, a family holiday or a quiet retreat amid nature, Kerala's backwaters promise an experience that lingers long after the journey ends.

Here are some destinations to discover on your next Kerala holiday.

Kumarakom Backwaters - A paradise for birdwatchers

Best for: Nature lovers, birdwatching and peaceful houseboat stays

Nestled along the shores of Vembanad Lake, Kumarakom is one of Kerala's most picturesque backwater destinations. Its network of canals, lagoons and waterways meanders through coconut groves, paddy fields and small settlements, offering visitors an intimate encounter with rural Kerala.

The Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary is a major attraction, drawing birdwatchers hoping to spot herons, egrets, kingfishers and migratory species. Early mornings are particularly rewarding, when birds emerge from the wetlands and the landscape comes alive with their calls. A boat ride across Vembanad Lake offers spectacular views of the surrounding greenery. Visitors can also explore village life, enjoy freshly prepared local seafood and spend a night aboard a houseboat.

Alappuzha (Alleppe) Backwaters - The



classic houseboat experience

Best for: First-time visitors, couples and overnight cruises

Often described as the heart of Kerala's backwater tourism, Alappuzha is famous for its intricate waterways, traditional houseboats and spectacular landscapes. The destination offers a quintessential Kerala experience, where life unfolds along canals bordered by coconut palms and traditional homes.

Modern houseboats evolved from the kettuvallams once used to carry rice and other goods. Today, many feature comfortable bedrooms, dining spaces and open decks from which visitors can watch the countryside drift past.

Cruises around Punnamada Lake and the surrounding waterways reveal village life, fishing boats and stretches of lush vegetation. Depending on the route, travelers may also see paddy fields, churches, temples and small markets along the banks.

For a particularly memorable experience, choose an overnight cruise and watch the sunset paint the water in shades of gold before settling down to the gentle sounds of the backwaters.

Kozhikode Backwaters - Discover

the charm of northern Kerala

Best for: Culture, local food and quieter waterways

Kozhikode, historically known as Calicut, offers a different perspective on Kerala's waterways. Renowned for its maritime heritage and distinctive Malabar cuisine, the city combines historical attractions with tranquil stretches of water.

The Canoli Canal and Kallai River are among the waterways associated with the region. A leisurely boat ride provides glimpses of riverside settlements, local fishing activity and the everyday rhythms of life in northern Kerala.

Kozhikode is also a rewarding destination for food lovers. After exploring the waterways, visitors can sample Malabar biryani, traditional seafood preparations and the region's famous sweet delicacies. Unlike the more widely publicized houseboat circuits of Alappuzha, the experience here can be more closely connected to the region's local culture and urban heritage.

Kasaragod Backwaters - An escape into tranquility

Best for: Seclusion, photography and slow travel

For travelers seeking quieter landscapes away from busy tourist hubs, the backwaters of Kasaragod in northern Kerala offer a compelling alternative. The Valiyaparamba Backwaters are known for their network of waterways, small islands, coconut groves and lush coastal scenery. The landscape creates a sense of remoteness, with boats moving gently through narrow channels and the surrounding greenery reflected on the water.

Visitors can explore the area by boat, photograph its peaceful landscapes and observe the relationship between local communities and the waterways that sustain them.

This part of Kerala is particularly appealing to those who prefer unhurried holidays, nature photography and a more intimate experience of the state's coastal countryside.

Ashtamudi Backwaters, Kollam - Where waterways meet heritage

Best for: Scenic boat journeys, local culture and nature

The expansive Ashtamudi Lake is one of Kerala's best-known wetland destinations. Its name refers to its eight-armed or branching appearance, reflecting the lake's distinctive network of waterways.

The lake is surrounded by coconut groves, villages and lush vegetation, creating a landscape that changes character as boats move from broad stretches of water into narrower channels. Fishing is an important part of local life, and visitors may encounter traditional fishing methods and boats returning with their catch.

Kollam also offers opportunities to explore the lake through organized tourist boat services, including journeys to nearby waterways and islands.

For those seeking an extended journey, the backwater route between Kollam and Alappuzha offers a memorable way to appreciate Kerala's waterways over several hours.

Kochi Backwaters - A blend of history and coastal life

Best for: History, harbor views and cultural experiences

Kochi combines the beauty of the backwaters with a rich history shaped by centuries of maritime trade. Its waterways connect islands, fishing settlements, busy harbors and historic neighborhoods, creating a fascinating blend of traditional and contemporary life.

A boat ride around the Kochi waterfront offers views of the famous Chinese fishing nets, locally known as cheena vala, as well as fishing boats, passenger ferries and larger vessels moving through the harbor. Visitors can combine a backwater excursion with a walk through Fort Kochi, where colonial-era buildings, heritage streets, art spaces and cafés reflect the city's multicultural past.



BY
PRABHJOT SINGH

At last, big Hockey comes to Punjab

It was almost 100 years ago that Punjab created waves on the international hockey horizon when it sent players like Thakur Singh from Sansarpur to New Zealand on a first ever tour down under.

Though Punjab's contribution to global hockey has been immense, this border State, once known as the sports arm of India, never got a chance to host the top hockey playing nations in a major tournament recognized by the International Hockey Federation (FIH).

Since then, a lot of water has flown down the Sutlej.

Now, when finally, Punjab has got the opportunity to hold its first ever international hockey tournament - Hero Asian Champions Trophy for Men at Jalandhar and Mohali from October 27 to November 5 featuring top six teams of the Aichi Asian Games 2026 - it would miss its strongest rival and neighbors Pakistan.

Pakistan had ended with a bronze medal in the Aichi Asian Games where India created waves and scripted history. It is for the first time that India won a hockey "double" by winning both men and women's titles.

While men's hockey was introduced in 1958, women's competition was made a part of the Asian Games curriculum in 1982 when New Delhi played host to the Continental Games.

The decision of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) not to send its Asian Games bronze medalist team to Mohali and Jalandhar for the inaugural Asian Champions Trophy Hockey Tournament is least surprising. Instead, its place went to Bangladesh.

The six nations in the fray for honors in the inaugural tournament will be hosts India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan, Korea and Bangladesh.

Absence of Pakistan will deprive this first ever FIH sponsored international tournament on the Punjab soil much of its glory and sheen while the AAP Government has been excited to jump on the hockey bandwagon to boost its electoral chances in the ensuing Assembly elections early next year.

After India finished a poor eighth in the FIH World Cup for men at Amstelveen, questions were raised about the selection of the Indian team. Some players, many critics opined, though already over the hill, were still retained in the team. Their performance remained under a scanner.

The national selectors, - R P Singh, Balwinder Singh Shammi, Mohammad Riaz and M M Somaya - instead of a jerk reaction, persisted with the same team for the Asian Games where India men not only retained the gold but also earned the passport to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

The selectors, including Olympian Balwinder Singh Shammi of Amritsar, and representing the hosts of the Hero Asian Champions Trophy, Hockey



Punjab, congratulated both men and women teams for their excellent show in the Aichi Asian Games for their "double" gold.

Punjab has taken a leaf from several other states, including Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, who claimed to have

drawn favorable feedback from followers of sports in their respective territories.

Since the elections to the State Assembly must be completed before the end of March next year, the possibility of rescheduling this major hockey mega event in Punjab does not arise.

Organizing the State's first ever

international hockey event at the end of the hockey calendar has not met approval of many of the hockey experts. After the 2026 FIH World Cups, both for men and women, in Amsterdam (the Netherlands) and Wavre (Belgium) in August closely followed by the Aichi Asian Games 2026 in September has satiated the appetite of hockey lovers of the subcontinent.

Though holding such a mega event is. Welcome, yet it would have been better if it was scheduled at the beginning of a new hockey calendar year, say many of hockey Olympians and international hockey players of the state,

"Why spend so much when the top hockey events have concluded in the just recent past. Those who competed in the FIH World Cup and the Asian Games must have been at different stages of fatigue. No one can and no one should expect them to give out their best after a hectic and tiring year in competitive hockey.

Players have no choice as they must appease their political masters and hence their consent matters the least.

The first phase of the tournament - round robin group matches with each of six teams playing against the rest of the five teams - will be at Olympian Surjit Singh Hockey Stadium in Jalandhar.

The classification games to decide first to sixth positions will be played at the Mohali Hockey Stadium after a day's break.

The participating teams - India, Malaysia, China, Japan, Korea, and Bangladesh - will enjoy Punjab's warm and cordial hospitality. It will also boost Punjab's sports goods industry at Jalandhar.

Before the synthetic surface was introduced in the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games, the leather balls used on the grassy playfields, especially used to come from Jalandhar or Sialkot in Pakistan. But once the playing surface changed, the leather balls went out of competitive international hockey as they were replaced by Dimple balls that initially came from Australia.

With the inaugural Asian Champions Trophy coming to Punjab, the sports goods industry, especially the hockey stick manufacturers of Jalandhar and Meerut, must be excited to get endorsements from Asian stars during their week-long sojourn in Jalandhar.

The allied sports industry associated with hockey, including protective wear, that has also changed significantly, will also get a chance to renew its stakes in the international arena.

(Prabhjot Singh is a senior Toronto-based, award-winning independent journalist, who worked with The Tribune, Reuters, and several media groups in a career spanning nearly five decades. He has written extensively about Diaspora, Politics, Business, Aviation, Health, Public and Private Sectors and Sports. He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)

India resist New Zealand fightback to win record-setting T20 cricket opener

OCTOBER 23, 2026

CHRISTCHURCH (TIP): India overcame a spirited New Zealand fightback after a blazing start to secure a thrilling four-wicket victory in Christchurch on Thursday, Oct 22, and take a 1-0 lead in the five-match T20 series.

India survived a mid-innings wobble in a 226-run chase after openers Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma laid the platform, with Shreyas Iyer's contribution reviving the chase and Naman Dhir applying the finishing touches to seal victory in 19.4 overs.

"When they [the openers] click, they set up the game for us, and the rest of us try to steady the ship and finish," India captain Iyer said. "He [Dhir] gives us lots of options. I personally feel the calm and composed nature he showed tonight, it was magnificent."

Put in to bat, New Zealand made the most of favourable conditions as openers Tim Seifert and Finn Allen set the tone before Glenn Phillips produced a dazzling knock to propel the hosts to 225-4.

The total was New Zealand's biggest T20 score against India on home soil, but the visitors completed their highest-ever successful run chase despite a stuttering middle phase.

Samson and Abhishek stitched together a 93-run opening stand, with Samson hammering 67 off 33 balls, including eight fours and four sixes, as India surged to 94-1 in the powerplay.

New Zealand hit back by removing three batters in quick succession, but Iyer countered with 42 off 28 balls to wrest back the momentum, before a late flourish from Dhir (42 not out) took India over the line.

"They [Indian openers] put us under pressure. Another big powerplay from them. We were not at our best," New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner said.



Sanju Samson's blistering half-century put India on course before a sensational finishing masterclass by Naman Dhir secured a thrilling four-wicket victory over New Zealand in the opening T20I at Hagley Oval, taking a 1-0 lead in the five-match series. Photo: ICC

"In the middle, we did well to squeeze them. Tight game and both teams might look at things that could have gone here or there."

Seifert and Allen had earlier given New Zealand a solid platform, helping the hosts reach 65-1 in the powerplay, with Allen blasting 45 off 24 balls.

Phillips then took charge, producing an unbeaten 82 off 40 deliveries, including eight fours and three sixes, while Bevon Jacobs added 31 before being run out.

India's bowlers struggled to contain the scoring, with all five used going at 10 runs an over or more.

AFC makes U-turn, backs Gianni Infantino for fourth term as FIFA president

OCTOBER 23, 2026

TOKYO (TIP): The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has thrown its weight behind Gianni Infantino's bid for a fourth term as FIFA president, reversing its stance barely two months after accusing the world governing body's leadership of a "fundamental breach of trust". AFC president Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa announced the decision at the confederation's extraordinary congress in Tokyo on Friday, handing Infantino a significant boost ahead of the March 2027 election.

The endorsement marks a sharp change in the AFC's position following the fallout over FIFA's abandoned \$4.2 billion plan to sell a minority stake in a new company managing the commercial rights of World Cup competitions. In August, the AFC had joined UEFA and CONCACAF in criticising the proposal, raising concerns over governance, transparency and the lack of consultation with FIFA's member associations.

The AFC's support is particularly significant given its 47 member associations and their voting power in the presidential election.

Sandeep, Haney's world record golds take India's medal tally past 100 in Asian Para Games

OCTOBER 23, 2026

NAGOYA (TIP): India crossed the 100-medal mark at the Asian Para Games 2026 after Sandeep Singh Maan and Haney produced world-record performances to win gold medals in athletics in Nagoya on Friday, October 23. Sandeep, competing in the men's 400m event, delivered a sensational performance at the Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium to win gold and set a world record. Moments later, Indian javelin thrower Haney added another world record to the tally, winning the men's F37/38 event with a throw of 60.49m.

Sandeep, competing in a combined men's 400m event featuring athletes from the T44, T42 and T64 classifications, led the race from the start and held his advantage despite a late surge from Saudi Arabia's Alsana Noor. He clocked 52.28 seconds to claim gold, bettering his personal best by more than a second and helping India cross the 100-medal milestone.

The victory also gave India its 25th gold medal at the competition, taking the country to within two of its best-ever gold medal haul of 27, achieved at the previous edition in Hangzhou.

Sandeep was not the only Indian medallist in the event. Ajay Kumar, running in Lane 5, won bronze with a time of 53.61 seconds, adding another medal to India's tally.

Haney followed Sandeep's gold with a record-breaking performance in the men's javelin F37/38 event. The Indian thrower saved his best for his final two attempts, registering throws of 59.72m and 60.49m to leave the field behind.



Sandeep Singh Maan wins gold medal with world record timing in the Asian Para Games 2026. (PCI Photo)

His winning distance shattered the longstanding world record of 57.81m, set by China's Xia Dong in 2008. Haney's 60.49m effort marked a significant milestone in his career and gave India a second world-record gold in quick succession.

Sandeep Singh Maan, born on July 16, 1993, is an international para-athlete from Hanumangarh, Rajasthan. He was born with a structural impairment in his left hand that limits its range of motion. Competing in para-athletics, he has built a career across sprint events, including the 100m, 200m and 400m, as well as the long jump.

Sandeep developed his running skills under national athletics coach Satyapal Singh at the Jawaharlal Nehru

Stadium in New Delhi. Through years of training and competition, he established himself on the domestic and international circuits, becoming a national record holder and one of India's experienced para-athletes.

His career has included several major international medals. Sandeep won silver at the Asian Para Games in Guangzhou in 2010 and repeated the achievement at the 2014 edition in Incheon. He added a bronze medal at the 2018 Games in Jakarta, continuing his presence on the continental podium.

Sandeep also enjoyed success at the IWAS World Games, winning gold medals in 2009 and 2011. His achievements have been recognised with the Arjuna Award, one of India's highest sporting honours, as well as the Maharana Pratap Award and the Aravali Award.

Haney is an Indian para-athlete from Haryana who specialises in throwing events, particularly the javelin and discus. He competes in the F37 classification, which covers athletes with coordination and movement impairments associated with conditions such as hypertonina, ataxia or athetosis.

He trains under coach Sunil Phogat at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium in Rohtak. Haney emerged as a promising young thrower on the domestic circuit before establishing himself in India's senior para-athletics contingent.

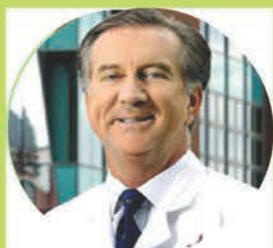
Haney had already made his mark at the Asian Para Games, winning gold in the men's javelin F37/38 event at the Hangzhou edition. He has also competed in the discus, finishing fourth at the World Para Athletics Championships.



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