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INDIAN



PANORAMA

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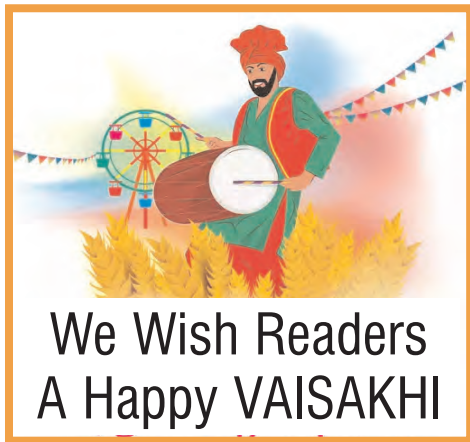
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# 1 Indian American Weekly : Since 2006

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We Wish Readers A Happy VAISAKHI



The INDIAN PANORAMA

Will bring out a profusely illustrated special edition to mark Vaisakhi- the Harvest Festival of Punjab and the Birth of the Khalsa (the Sikhs) on April 18, 2025.

Articles and advertisements may please be emailed to salujaindra@gmail.com by April 15, 2025.

For any questions, please call +1 646-247-9458, or email to editor@theindianpanorama.news

# TRUMP WARNS OF 'TRANSITION COST' FROM TARIFFS

White House clarifies that Chinese imports will be tariffed at 145%, not the 125% rate, once other previously announced tariffs were included

APRIL 11, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday, April 10, 2025, warned of the "transition cost" from his tariff policies, as Wall Street stocks fell again over the worsening trade war with China.

"There will be a transition cost, and transition problems, but in the end, it's going to be a beautiful thing," Mr. Trump said as he seeks to reorder the world economy by forcing manufacturers to base themselves in the United States.

Meanwhile, the White House clarified that Chinese imports will be tariffed at 145%, not the 125% rate that Mr. Trump had written about in his post on Truth Social on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, , once other previously announced tariffs were included.

Mr. Trump at his cabinet meeting expressed hope that he could get an agreement with China, though he didn't offer any specifics on what he was seeking.

"Well, we'll see what happens with China," Mr. Trump said. "I would love to be able to work a deal." Kevin Hassett, director of the White House National Economic Council, told Fox News' "Fox and Friends" on Wednesday, April 9, 2025 that the

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U.S. President Donald Trump warned of the "transition cost" from his tariff policies, as Wall Street stocks fell again over the worsening trade war with China. Photo Credit: AP

## Yoga at America's tallest building: World Trade Centre hosts session in run-up to Yoga Day



Members of the Indian diaspora and others come together for a yoga session at World Trade Centre in New York.

Photo: X/@IndiainNewYork

APRIL 8, 2025

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): Yoga mats were rolled out at the iconic New York city landmark World Trade Centre as a special event at the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere kickstarted the 75-day countdown to the 11th International Day of Yoga. The Consulate General of

India in New York hosted a special "75 days to go" yoga session, a countdown to the 11th International Day of Yoga, which will be commemorated globally on June 21. Overlooking expansive aerial views of Manhattan and New Jersey, the special yoga session was held early

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## Consul General Mr. Pradhan celebrates The Indian Panorama Holi/Hola with the Indian community and dignitaries



Consul General Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan and his wife Mrs. Monalisa Shuvadarsini being greeted by the organizing committee members

BY PARVEEN CHOPRA  
APRIL 6, 2025

JERICHO, NY (TIP): India's Consul General Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, along with his wife Mrs. Monalisa

Shuvadarsini, New York Assemblyman Edward Braunstein, and Town Clerk, Town of North Hempstead Ragini Srivastava, joined the Indian community

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## Judge allows requirement that everyone in U.S. illegally must register to move forward

APRIL 10, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): A federal judge is allowing the Trump administration to move forward with a requirement that everyone in the U.S. illegally must register with the federal government, in a move that could have far-reaching repercussions for immigrants across the country. In a ruling on Thursday, April 10, 2025, Judge Trevor Neil McFadden sided with the administration, which had argued that they were simply enforcing an already existing requirement for everyone in the country

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Federal judge allows Trump administration to enforce registration requirement for illegal immigrants, impacting immigrants nationwide. Photo for representation only



Andy Singh

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**COMMENT**

# Vaisakhi: From Harvest Festival to the Birth of Khalsa - A Legacy of Courage and Purity

By Indrajit Saluja



Vaisakhi, for centuries, was observed as a traditional harvest festival in Punjab—a celebration of the land's fertility, the joy of abundance, and the spirit of community. Farmers would come together to give thanks for the bountiful wheat harvest, marking the arrival of the Punjabi new year with vibrant festivities, music, and joy. However, on April 13, 1699, this festival took on a new, transformative meaning—one that would not only change the course of Sikh history but also leave a deep imprint on the spiritual and socio-political fabric of India.

It was on this day that Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth and final human Guru of the Sikhs, created the Khalsa Panth, a distinct spiritual and martial brotherhood committed to defending righteousness and upholding justice. What began as an agrarian festival became a sacred day of awakening, sacrifice, and empowerment. To fully understand the profound significance of this transformation, one must revisit the historical and political context in which the Khalsa was born.

**THE POLITICAL BACKDROP: A LAND UNDER SIEGE**

From as early as the 10th century, the Indian subcontinent—particularly the region of Punjab—was subjected to a series of invasions from the northwest. Invaders, mostly from Persia and Central Asia, swept through the land, looting, plundering, and returning to their homelands. But with the arrival of Babur in the early 16th century, the pattern changed. Babur established the Mughal Empire, and unlike earlier invaders, he stayed, expanding his dominion deep into North India, including Delhi and beyond.

As the Mughal Empire consolidated its power, it brought with it a system of governance marked by oppression, religious intolerance, and forced conversions—especially under emperors like Aurangzeb. The Mughal rulers often imposed harsh taxes on non-Muslims, desecrated places of worship, and sought to convert large swathes of the Hindu and Sikh population by coercion or brute force.

**THE GURU TRADITION OF RESISTANCE**

It was in this hostile environment that the Sikh faith emerged and evolved as a spiritual resistance movement. The Sikh Gurus, beginning with Guru Nanak Dev Ji, opposed tyranny not with arms, but with a powerful message of equality, compassion, and divine justice. Guru Nanak's teachings transcended caste, creed, and religion. He spoke fearlessly against the injustices of both Hindu orthodoxy and Islamic fanaticism, calling upon the rulers of

the time to abandon their oppression.

Over time, as Mughal persecution intensified, the Sikh movement too evolved—from a purely spiritual path to one that embraced the need for self-defense and righteous struggle. The Fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev Ji, was the first Sikh martyr. He was arrested and brutally tortured on the orders of Emperor Jahangir for refusing to convert to Islam and for giving voice to the oppressed. His martyrdom marked a turning point in Sikh history.

Later, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, the Ninth Guru, made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the religious freedom of the Kashmiri Pandits, who were being forcibly converted by Aurangzeb. Despite having the power to flee or save himself, Guru Tegh Bahadur chose martyrdom—laying down his life not for his own faith, but for the right of others to practice theirs. This powerful stand further embedded the values of dharma (righteousness), freedom, and sacrifice in the Sikh tradition.

**GURU GOBIND SINGH JI AND THE BIRTH OF KHALSA**

Guru Gobind Singh Ji ascended to the Guruship at the tender age of nine after his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, was executed. From a young age, he understood that spiritual resistance alone would not suffice in an era of violent persecution. A new kind of disciple was needed—one who combined saintly virtues with warrior courage.

Thus, on Vaisakhi of 1699, in a gathering of thousands at Anandpur Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh Ji issued a divine call. He stood before the congregation, sword in hand, and asked for five volunteers who were willing to give their heads for the cause of faith and justice. One by one, five men stepped forward. To the awe of the gathering, Guru Gobind Singh initiated them into the Khalsa, baptizing them with Amrit (sacred nectar) and giving them a new identity, free from caste, region, or background. These five became known as the Panj Pyare (Five Beloved Ones).

Guru Gobind Singh then performed a revolutionary act—he bowed before the Panj Pyare and asked them to initiate him into the Khalsa, thereby erasing the distinction between Guru and disciple. This act epitomized egalitarianism and humility, core values of the Khalsa.

The Khalsa was given a distinct identity—marked by the Five Ks (Kesh, Kara, Kirpan, Kachera, Kangha)—symbols of purity, discipline, and readiness to serve and protect. The

Khalsa were to be fearless, morally upright, and spiritually grounded. They were to rise against injustice, help the downtrodden, and live by the principles of truth and equality.

**KHALSA: THE IDEAL OF SANT-SIPAHI**

Guru Gobind Singh Ji envisioned every Khalsa as a "Sant-Sipahi"—a saint-soldier, someone who cultivates spiritual wisdom while being ever-ready to stand against tyranny. This dual role was revolutionary. In a world divided between ascetics and warriors, Guru Gobind Singh harmonized the two into a powerful force for good. The Khalsa was not to seek war, but never to shirk from it when righteousness was at stake.

This ideal continues to define Sikh identity today. Sikhs across the world are known for their community service, spiritual depth, and courage in defending justice—whether on battlefields, in humanitarian crises, or in everyday acts of kindness.

**THE RELEVANCE OF VAISAKHI TODAY**

In today's world—scarred by religious intolerance, social injustice, inequality, and authoritarianism—the message of Vaisakhi and the creation of the Khalsa are more relevant than ever. Guru Gobind Singh Ji's teachings remind us that true power lies not in domination, but in the moral courage to protect the weak and uphold what is right.

Vaisakhi is not just a day of celebration—it is a renewal of commitment to live by the Khalsa ideals of purity in mind, body, and soul. It is a reminder that faith must walk hand in hand with action, that spirituality without compassion is hollow, and that true devotion demands sacrifice.

As we celebrate Vaisakhi today, let us honor not only the joyous spirit of harvest, but the deeper legacy of courage, sacrifice, and spiritual awakening that this day represents. Let us remember the Khalsa as a symbol of unity, equality, and fearless resistance against oppression.

May we draw inspiration from Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the Sant-Sipahi who gave us the Khalsa, and strive to embody his message in our lives. Let us remain ever committed to justice, compassion, and purity, and carry forward the timeless legacy of Vaisakhi—not just in ritual, but in action.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!



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Mrs. Purnima Desai (2nd from the right) led the all-Faith Prayer.  
(L to R): Harcharan Singh Gulati, Gurdip Singh Narula, Narinder Mani Kapoor, Mrs. Purnima Desai, Prof. Indrajit Singh Saluja (host and MC)



Watching the program. (L to R): Mrs. Monalisa Shuvadashini, Consul General Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, Ms Ragini Srivastava, Town Clerk, Town of North Hempstead. In the back (L to R): Deputy Consul General Vishal Jayeshbhai Harsh, Sewang Gyalsen, Consul, Lovlien Kaurr, Jay Jasbir Singh. Behind: Sanjib Bhattacharya's Manipur dance group waiting to perform



A view of the gathering



Akal Gatra Group trainer and president Sardar Daler Singh is playing Gatra with his disciples



Consul General and Mrs. Monalisa Shuvadashini honored the Gatra players with certificated given by The Indian Panorama

at the celebration of festival of colors, Holi, and the festival of valor, Holi hosted by The Indian Panorama at the Cotillion Banquet on Long Island on

April 5. Guests were greeted with a dab of dry gugal on the cheeks and offered the traditional cardamom and crystal sugar.

Now in its 6th year hosting the event, The Indian Panorama combines the celebration of Holi Mohalla, which has significance in Sikh history, with Holi.

The highlight of this year's performances was a thrilling display of

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Display of Gatka, the Sikh martial art



Jyotika Patel giving a dance performance



Jyotika dance group with the Consul General, Ms Ragini Srivastava, Organizing Committee coordinator Jyoti Gupta, and Amita Karwal



Sanjib Bhattacharya, a dancer par excellence, gives a performance



Sanjib Bhattacharya group gives a dance performance



Jagannath of Sanjib Bhattacharya group mesmerized with his drumbeats



Sanjib Bhattacharya group dancers were honored with certificates given by The Indian Panorama



Sanjib Bhattacharya group with the Deputy Consul General Vishal Jayeshbhai Harsh and Sewang Gyalson, Consul.

the Sikh martial art called Gatka by Sardar Daler Singh's Gatka academy students.

Amb Pradhan and Mrs. Shuvadارشini (the latter attended the celebration for the first time) were enthralled by the 15-

minute performance as young kids wielded swords and other weapons as if on the battlefield.

In his address, Ambassador Pradhan

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Mrs. Monalisa Shuvadarsini addressing the gathering



The Organizing committee members presented a bouquet and a robe of honor to Mrs. Monalisa Shuvadarsini. Also seen in the picture is the Consul General



New York State Assemblyman Edward Braunstein is being honored by the Consul General



Assemblyman Edward Braunstein addressing the gathering



Prof. Indrajit S Saluja presenting a bouquet on behalf of the organizing Committee to the Consul General



Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan addresses the gathering



The Indian Panorama Holi / Hola Organizing Committee presenting a robe of honor to the Consul General



Assemblyman Edward Braunstein presenting a New York State Assembly Proclamation to the Consul General



Lovlien Kaurr presents a bouquet to Ms Ragini Srivastava, Town Clerk, Town of North Hempstead



RMs Ragini Srivastava addresses the gathering. Also seen in the picture is the Consul General of India Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan

thanked The Indian Panorama and its Editor-Publisher, Prof Indrajit Singh Saluja, for continuing with their

tradition of organizing the Holi/Hola and Vaisakhi events, the latter scheduled for April 11 at the Consulate.

Ambassador told the Indian community to beware of unscrupulous visa/passport agencies and scammers.

He said the consulate was sensitive to the community's expectations and needs of

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Prof. Indrajit S Saluja is honoring Deputy Consul General Vishal Jayeshbhai Harsh. Consul General is also seen in the picture



Deputy Consul General Vishal Jayeshbhai Harsh addresses the gathering



Prof. Indrajit Saluja honors Consul Sewang Gyalson



Surya Makkar is being honored by Mrs. Monalisa Shuvadarsini



Prachi Makkar is being honored by Mrs. Monalisa Shuvadarsini



Ashok Arora is being crowned the Mahamookha

efficient consular services, and keeping this in view, the Consulate was now providing emergency services even on weekends and holidays which means 365 days of the year.

Amb. Pradhan and Mrs Shuvadarsini were greeted with bouquets and honored with shawls by Prof Saluja and the Holi/Hola Organizing Committee. Mrs. Shuvadarsini said she was happy to attend the colorful celebration and kindly handed over the certificates of attendance to all performers.

Also representing the Indian Consulate were Vishal Jayeshbhai Harsh, Deputy Consul General, and Sewang Gyalson, Consul.

New York State Assemblyman Edward Braunstein graced the event, spoke briefly and presented Amb. Pradhan a citation from the assembly. He, in turn, was honored with a shawl by the Consul General.

Town of North Hempstead Clerk Ragini Srivastava also addressed the gathering, talking about her long association and support of the Indian community. She said it was a pleasure for her to participate in the Holi / Hola celebrations organized by The Indian Panorama, and that she did not miss any in the past. She was honored with a shawl.

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The coronation of Ashok Arora as Mahamookha is being celebrated



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It is dance time. Surya on Dhol and Prachi with Bolian and Tappe are inviting all to the dance floor.



Dancing with abandon



Harcharan Singh Gulati, General Secretary of Gurdwara Nanak Darbar, Hicksville, with Community leaders, gives comments to the media



HOLI HAI

Prof Saluja, in his introductory remarks, said that The Indian Panorama's Holi & Holi celebrations began in 2018, inspired by then Consul General Mr. Sandeep Chakravorty, to unite the Indian American community in celebrating the Festival of Colors and Love, and the Festival of Valor. What started as a modest event with a gathering of a hundred crème de la crème of the Indian Diaspora quickly evolved into a grand annual tradition, enriched with Gatka displays, vibrant singing and dancing performances, and

comic relief.

This year, for the first time, the program started with 'Sarva Dharma Prayers' led by Purnima Desai, founder of Shikshayatan Cultural Center, and Harcharan Singh Gulati, of Gurdwara Nanak Darbar in Hicksville. They were joined on the stage by Narinder Kapoor and Gurdip Singh Narula, who talked about the origins of Holi Mohalla festival.

A much-anticipated performance was by Sanjib Bhattacharya, an accomplished Manipuri dancer and

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CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA,  
NEW YORK

&amp;

The INDIAN PANORAMA  
EVER TRUTHFUL

Cordially invite you to

# VAISAKHI CELEBRATION

On Friday, April 11, 2025 at 6 PM  
At Consulate General of India, New York  
3 East 64 Street, New York NY 10065

**(Dinner will be served)**

PLEASE RSVP BY APRIL 7, 2025 TO

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Host and MC Prof. Indrajit S Saluja says thank you and goodbye until the next Holi / Hola

recipient of two President's awards in India. He did not disappoint as he was joined by his elaborately dressed troupe members including Jagannath Lairenjam, Jolly Moni Debi and Chaobi Thoi Leiranjam Debi.

A Holi dance performance by a group led by choreographer and dancer Jyotika Patel was appreciated by all. Her troupe included Anuradha Kumar, Brinda Soneiji, Shilpa Jayshil Patel, Sujini Govindrajan, and Vijaya Nyayapathi.

Towards the end, Ashok Arora, a lawyer in India's Supreme Court, earned the 'royal' crown as Mahamoorkh (The Biggest Fool). Arora sportingly cherished the new title and recited a couple of Urdu couplets about love and even sang a song, entertaining the crowd. Earlier winners of the dubious title have been Tirlokh Malik, Ravi Batra, Elango Balasubramaniam and H.P. Singh.

Dr. Bindeshwari Aggarwal provided comic relief with her humorous poems.

Then, Surya Makkar played on Dhol, and sister Prachi crooned boliyan and tappe, making ladies dance with abandon.

The Indian Panorama publisher and editor Prof. Saluja, who emceed the program, thanked the dignitaries, community leaders and guests for their gracious presence. He also thanked members of his organizing committee - Jyoti Gupta (coordinator), Shashi Malik, Dr. Jag Kalra, Abha Bhatnagar, Anju & Sanju Sharma, Amita Karwal, Gunjan Rastogi, Beena Kothari, Bina Sabapathy, Jaskiran Saluja and Parveen Chopra.

A sumptuous lunch after the program and snacks and thandai before were served.

*(A senior journalist, Parveen Chopra is the Founding Editor of ALotusInTheMud.com, the premier wellness and spirituality online magazine)*



## Thank you, Holi/Hola Organizing Committee

The Indian Panorama is grateful to each and every member of the Organizing Committee for helping with their time, effort and expertise in making the Holi/Hola event on April 5 at Cotillion Banquet a grand success.

Jyoti Gupta: Coordinator



Jyoti Gupta has worked in the corporate world and has won many accolades for her community service.

With a Masters in Political Science from Jabalpur University, she came to the US and worked in banking institutions like Barclays Bank, Kredit Bank and ING Bank, where she rose to the rank of Assistant Treasurer.

From 1996-2001, she ran Jwala Travel, specializing in discount travel to India and vacation packages to Europe and Caribbean countries. She went on to cofound social groups like Rafi Lata singing group, Divine Meditation, Adabi Sangam, Mehfile Sangeet, and Karaoke Club.

Jyoti founded Long Island Ladies Circle, aimed at Women Empowerment, and helping battered women. She is also active in India Association of Long Island, Indian American Forum, and India Day Parade.

She has received prestigious awards including: Town Of North Hempstead Community Service Award; Senator Anna Kaplan Community Service Award; Covid Hero Award by Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams; Community Service Excellence Award by Senator Kevin Thomas; Community Service Award by Congressman Tom Suozzi; Republic Day Community Service Award by County Executive and Independence Day Community Service Award by Nassau County.

Anju Sharma



Anju Sharma is a former professor, successful businesswoman, and community leader.

She is CEO of JBMS Inc, where she runs a free training program for interns for job placement.

In India, she taught at Kanya Maha Vidyalaya in Jalandhar for 16 years and was Director of Guru Nanak Dev University's Youth Festival Team for Inter University competition. She was an inter-university record holder in swimming.

She is currently President of the Long Island Indo-American Lions Club and has served as Jt. Treasurer Rotary Club Hicksville South, and IALI Cultural Chair. She is Secretary, Indo American Association for Community Development, Trustee of Long Island Ladies Circle, Board Member of Long Island Diversity Circle and Member of SAWAO. She is on the Advisory Board of Sanford Brown Institute, Member of United Cultural Society of NY & GCP Civic Association. She is Lifetime Sponsor of Each One Teach One in India.



Beena Kothari



As the incoming President of AIA-NY for 2025-2026, Beena Kothari's extensive involvement with both Indian and American communities has left a lasting impact. Her numerous contributions to various social and cultural non-profit organizations, often in leadership roles, have been truly remarkable. Guided by the ancient Indian philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbhakam", Beena strives to foster a sense of unity and inclusivity within the community. Her efforts aim to bring people together, ultimately serving the greater good of humanity.



Dr. Abha Bhatnagar



Dr. Abha Bhatnagar is an active member of several esteemed Indian organizations, including IDP, SEVA, and SAWAO, along with various scientific associations. Presently, she serves as the Secretary of SEWA and holds positions on the Executive Council of both IALI and SAWAO. As an author, she has written two books on Computer Education and has published numerous research papers in international journals, concentrating on Chemistry and Physics.

Bina Sabapathy

Bina Sabapathy has served three record terms as President of India Association of Long Island. She is Founder of Indo American Community Voice and has organized Ganesh Festival for past three years in Hicksville. She is a Trustee and Director of Vedic Heritage (Hanuman temple), former President of World Vegan Vision, and has been associated with AWB Food Bank and the Indian American Forum.

Bina grew up in Udupi, a holy town in Karnataka, graduated from SPP College with a double major in History & Economics and minor in Sociology. She migrated to the US in the 1980s with her mechanical engineer husband. Her hobbies include gardening and singing.

Amita Karwal

Amita Karwal works as Director of a Senior Adult Care center in Nassau County, which gives her an opportunity to serve and give back to the community, especially senior citizens living in Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

She has been a resident of Long Island for close to three decades. She is blessed with two beautiful kids who she is raising with her husband of 20+ years. "We all cherish the blissful life offered by the culturally diverse community that we live in on Long Island," she says.



Sanju Sharma



Sanju Sharma is known for selfless service and true leadership. She has a Double Master from Guru Nanak Dev University represented it at Youth Festivals, and was a national-level swimmer. A former computer teacher at Sacred Heart School, she has worked as an Administrative Manager. Above all, she loves to serve her community in charitable and social events and promote Indian culture and heritage.

She is the Founder of the Each One Teach One charity committee to provide education to students in need in India. She is Club Admin of LI Indo-American Lions Club, Joint Treasurer India Day Parade, Executive Member and Program Coordinator for Indo American Association for Change, Executive Member of Long Island Diversity Circle, Member of Sawao, and of GCP Civic Association. She is also Secretary of Indo American Association for Community Development, and Communication coordinator of Long Island Ladies Circle.

Shashi Malik



Shashi Malik is a businesswoman and manages her own IT Software Company, SD Services Inc. Earlier, she worked at the executive level for several Fortune 100 companies.

Currently, Shashi is the Founder and President of Seva Center for Humanity, which helps students, veterans, and needy families. She is also General Secretary for the Nargis Dutt Memorial Foundation and Executive Committee Member of the AIA-NY Chapter.

She has been actively involved in community organizations including IALI, India Day Parade, World Vegan Vision, Gift of Life USA, Rotary Club of Hicksville South, Suffolk County Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and INN Soup Kitchen.

Shashi Malik is a Member of the United Way Community Impact Council and of the Long Island Hate and Bias Prevention Regional Council for bringing awareness and preventing hate and bias incidents in New York state.

In 2013, she received the US President's Volunteer Service Award for her service to the community.

Shashi worked in the Indian Army on their first computer before coming to the USA. She co-authored a book on Cross System Product (CSP) - A Developer's Guide published by McGraw Hill.

Gunjan Rastogi



Gunjan Rastogi is an entrepreneur, community leader, and philanthropist. After moving to the US in 1980 after graduating from Miranda House in New Delhi, she worked as a software engineer with major Wall Street firms before pursuing her dream of owning a healthcare agency.

Gunjan holds several influential positions, contributing actively to the Indo-American and broader communities in New York. Her roles include: Chairperson of the National Indo-American Association for Senior Citizens (NIAASC), Vice President for the National Federation of Indian American Association (NFIA), Vice President for World Vegan Vision, National Secretary of the Association of Indians in America, Board Member for Queens County Board and Boys Scouts of America, Past President of IALI.

Gunjan is also a talented artist with awards in classical dance, singing, acting, and choreography. Her talents were showcased early on as a model for Campa-Cola and as a TV anchor for the children's program Nanhe Munne in Lucknow.

Jaskiran Saluja



Jaskiran Saluja embarked on her journey in India as a life coach, initially focusing and leading her work in Bangalore. Over time, her path led her to the United States, where she now serves as a Property Manager for residential properties. With a deep interest in personal relationships, Jaskiran excels in connecting with others and fostering positive environments.

An unexpected yet impressive skill she possesses is her talent in accounting, an area she has mastered with great proficiency. Beyond her professional endeavors, Jaskiran is a dedicated contributor to The Indian Panorama, specifically in their Indian American section, where she shares her insights and experiences.

As the daughter of Professor Indrajit Singh Saluja, Jaskiran has been influenced by strong community values and remains committed to active involvement in initiatives that support and uplift her community. Through her contributions, she strives to ensure that her community continues to be recognized for its achievements and excellence.



Dr. Jagmohan Kalra

A cancer and blood specialist, Dr. Jagmohan Kalra is a practicing hematologist and oncologist in New York. She is also involved in the community, doing health talks about cancer awareness and arranging entertainment activities like singing.



Parveen Chopra

Founder of alotusinthemud.com, Parveen Chopra is a seasoned media professional specializing in wellness, personal growth, and spirituality. A trained teacher of meditation, he founded Life Positive, India's first body-mind-spirit magazine, from New Delhi in 1996. Moving to the US, he edited The South Asian Times for over a decade and One World Under God interfaith journal. He also writes the column 'Lotus Pond' on Pathoes.com, a multi-religion platform. Earlier, he served as President of the American Press Club.





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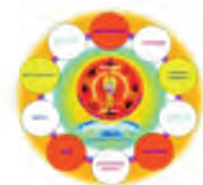
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**HEALTH IS WEALTH**



# THE OLIGARCHY WE SEE TODAY



By Atanu Biswas

In today's increasingly unequal world, empowered by tech marvels such as Artificial Intelligence, economic power invariably gets concentrated in a few hands

"An oligarchy is only "evil" if and when oligarchs violate the rule of law, remove the checks and balances on their own power, and prioritize their own interests over those of the people, as noted by Aristotle and Robert Michels. This is what happened historically. The Philippines is said to be an oligarchy because of its colonial past and powerful families. China defines itself as a communist 'People's Republic', but some have referred to it as an oligarchy, as a small number of people have held all the power for several decades. More recently, the term has been used to refer to affluent, powerful, and well-connected Russian businessmen. But in 2022, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders noted, "Of course the oligarchs run Russia. But guess what? Oligarchs run the United States as well."

In his farewell remarks as U.S. President, Joe Biden warned that an oligarchy was taking shape and threatening American democracy. Similar to Dwight Eisenhower's cautionary warning in 1961 about the "military-industrial complex", Mr. Biden highlighted a "tech industrial complex". He said that a new Gilded Age of "robber barons" was in danger of eroding hard-won freedoms.

As The Guardian noted in its editorial, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt "undermined the 'malefactors of wealth' by trust-busting, creating regulatory agencies and putting land off limits to commercial exploitation." Today, the question of who will rule the U.S. - the people or the new aristocrats - may ultimately be at stake, it said.

Everywhere, political and economic power are intertwined. However, the connection can occasionally turn bleak and dangerous. There are 13 billionaires in U.S. President Donald Trump's cabinet. Elon Musk, the first individual with a net worth of over \$400 billion, asked voters to brace for "temporary hardship" as his Department of



Guests including Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, Sundar Pichai and Elon Musk, arrive before the 60th Presidential Inauguration in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C. on January 20, 2025. Screenshot

Government Efficiency will reduce public spending. Mr. Musk invested \$200 million in Mr. Trump's election campaign. "Oligarchs" are already benefiting from their support for the fossil fuel-friendly President. At Mr. Trump's inauguration, among others, Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Apple's Tim Cook, and Meta's Mark Zuckerberg were present. Some of their businesses have significant contracts with the federal government.

## OLIGARCHY ACROSS THE AGES

The Greek philosopher Aristotle coined the word oligarchy to contrast the ruling of a wealthy few "for corrupt and unjust purposes" with that of the aristocracy, or elite upper class. Oligarchs usually acquire power by financial means, such as making large donations to politicians who then govern in ways that the oligarchs specify. But oligarchs can also become powerful because of their social standing, notoriety, education, military, religious, or political ties.

Political scientist Jeffrey A. Winters outlined the historical commonality of oligarchs in his 2011 book *Oligarchy*. How oligarchs respond to the threats they face, including how directly involved they are in supplying the coercion underlying all property claims, whether individually or collectively, all influence their pursuit of wealth defense, he said.

Nonetheless, there have been significant shifts in the nature of oligarchy across the ages. The U.S. media had likened Michael Bloomberg to the Roman oligarch Marcus Licinius Crassus as Mr. Bloomberg was vying for a third term as mayor of New York in 2009. But while for oligarchs such as

Crassus, becoming consul was one of the most crucial political moves favoring their fundamental oligarchic interests, for contemporary oligarchs, using private funds to purchase public office is motivated more by vanity than by oligarchic survival.

An oligarchy is only "evil" if and when oligarchs violate the rule of law, remove the checks and balances on their own power, and prioritize their own interests over those of the people, as noted by Aristotle and Robert Michels. This is what happened historically. The Philippines is said to be an oligarchy because of its colonial past and powerful families. China defines itself as a communist 'People's Republic', but some have referred to it as an oligarchy, as a small number of people have held all the power for several decades. More recently, the term has been used to refer to affluent, powerful, and well-connected Russian businessmen. But in 2022, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders noted, "Of course the oligarchs run Russia. But guess what? Oligarchs run the United States as well."

What is the nature of oligarchy then? In his 2017 book, *American Oligarchy: The Permanent Political Class*, historian Ron Formisano wrote about the emergence of a permanent political class on a scale never seen in American history. Rising inequality is a result of its corruption, nepotism, and self-dealing. In addition to politicians, Formisano explores the activities of lobbyists, consultants, appointed bureaucrats, pollsters, celebrity journalists, and billionaires working behind the scenes.

Economist Simon Johnson, however, perceived that the emergence of an

American financial aristocracy gained traction during the 2008 financial crisis. In 2015, former President Jimmy Carter described the U.S. as an "oligarchy with unlimited political bribery," as the *Citizens United v. FEC* Supreme Court ruling in 2010 lifted restrictions on political campaign donations.

Is oligarchy confined to a select few countries? As Mr. Sanders said, "...All over the world, we're seeing a small number of incredibly wealthy people running things in their favor." It would be unjust to blame only Mr. Trump for encouraging oligarchy. Several billionaires contributed to Mr. Biden's re-election campaign too.

## DEMOCRACY AND OLIGARCHY

Can democracy fight against oligarchy? Despite Aristotle's assertion in his book, *Politics*, that "democracy is safer and more free from civil strife than oligarchy," the German sociologist Robert Michels' early 20th-century 'iron law of oligarchy' contends that democracy is an oxymoron because it will inevitably turn into an oligarchy due to the necessity to divide labor.

More than 200 years ago, U.S. President John Adams had expressed fear about the 'power elite'. In today's increasingly unequal world, empowered by tech marvels such as Artificial Intelligence, economic power invariably gets concentrated in a few hands. This may lead to intense oligarchy.

*(Atanu Biswas is Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata)*



# JITO Washington DC and Embassy of India Celebrate Vishwa Navkar Mantra Divas and Mahavir Janma Kalyanak



From Left to Right: Rahul Jain, Bhupesh Mehta, Ambassador Vinay Mohan Kwatra, Dr. Sushil Jain, Sharad Doshi

APRIL 9, 2025

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** The Jain International Trade Organization (JITO), Washington DC Chapter, in collaboration with the Embassy of India, hosted a special celebration of Vishwa Navkar Mantra Divas and Mahavir Janma Kalyanak at the Embassy of India, uniting community members, spiritual leaders, and dignitaries for an inspiring evening of prayer, culture, and reflection.

The evening began with a warm reception and community dinner, allowing attendees to connect, network, and celebrate the spirit of Vishwa Navkar Mantra and Mahavir Janma Kalyanak together before moving into the formal program. The program officially opened with a beautiful dance performance on the Navkar Mantra by Ms. Kavya Zaveri and Ms. Harshvi Shah, setting a devotional and uplifting tone for the evening.

In addition to the public gathering, a closed group meeting was organized where community leaders met with His Excellency, Ambassador of India, Mr. Vinay Mohan Kwatra, to discuss the Jain community's contributions, ongoing activities, and future collaboration initiatives.

The JITO Washington DC leadership team - Dr. Sushil Jain, Mr. Bhupesh Mehta, Mr. Rahul Jain, Mrs. Minal Shah, Mrs. Renuka Jain, Mr. Sharad Doshi, and Dr. Gita Shah - took the opportunity to recognize and honor His Excellency, Ambassador of India, Mr. Vinay Mohan Kwatra, as well as Hon. Jag Mohan and Hon. Jigar Raval, for their support in strengthening community relations and promoting Indian culture and values.

Mr. Bhupesh Mehta, Chairman of JITO USA Washington DC, spoke about the event, saying:

"It's truly an honor to celebrate Vishwa Navkar Mantra Divas and Mahavir Janma

Kalyanak here at the Embassy of India. The Jain values of non-violence, truth, and compassion are universal and guide us toward a better and more peaceful world. Through JITO, we aim to bring these principles into global initiatives and make a meaningful impact."

Adding to that, Dr. Sushil Jain, Chairman of JITO USA, shared his thoughts on JITO's mission, saying:

"JITO has always been a platform that connects values with action. We are focused on nurturing leadership, encouraging ethical entrepreneurship, and supporting business development. Our goal is to promote sustainable growth while ensuring that our business practices reflect the core Jain values of non-violence, truth, and compassion."

The celebration paid tribute to Mahavir Janma Kalyanak, honoring Lord Mahavir's timeless teachings of non-violence, truthfulness, and compassion. His message, centered on spiritual awakening and care for all living beings, was echoed throughout the evening's reflections.

The program concluded with the audience collectively reciting the Navkar Mantra once again, bringing a powerful sense of unity, peace, and devotion to the occasion.

## ABOUT JITO WASHINGTON DC:



The JITO Washington DC leadership. Dr. Sushil Jain, Mr. Bhupesh Mehta, Mr. Rahul Jain, Mrs. Minal Shah, Mrs. Renuka Jain, Mr. Sharad Doshi, and Dr. Gita Shah

The Jain International Trade Organization (JITO) Washington DC Chapter is part of a global network that promotes entrepreneurship, education, leadership, and community service, all deeply rooted in Jain values. JITO empowers individuals to live ethically while fostering innovation and collective progress.

## Suozzi Leads on Legislation Cracking Down on Online Exploitation

The TAKE IT DOWN Act and the Romance Scam Prevention Act are Bipartisan Efforts that Target Internet Con Artists Preying on Women, Children, and Seniors

APRIL 8, 2025

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**(TIP):** Congressman Tom Suozzi (D-NY) is co-leading two bipartisan bills to combat the growing scourge of online exploitation: the TAKE IT DOWN Act, actively supported by First Lady Melania Trump, and the Romance Scam Prevention Act. Together, these bills address two deeply disturbing trends—the nonconsensual spread of intimate images, including AI-generated deepfakes, and the manipulation of vulnerable individuals through online dating scams.



Congressman Tom Suozzi (D-NY) is co-leading two bipartisan bills to combat the growing scourge of online exploitation

exploitative images - including AI-generated deepfakes - and the exploitation of online dating app users are both emblematic of the dark side of the digital age," said Suozzi. "As Americans increasingly turn online, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle must crack down on con artists everywhere they appear. Social media companies and online applications must alert people when a fraudster targets them and punish scammers when they succeed."

CONTD ON PAGE 38

## SENATOR JOHN LIU WELCOMES NYC PUBLIC SCHOOLS' PLAN TO HIRE 3,700 NEW TEACHERS

APRIL 10, 2025

**ALBANY, NY**

**(TIP):** State Senator John Liu, Chair of the Senate Committee on NYC Education, and sponsor of S9460 to reduce class sizes in NYC, stated the following about NYC Public Schools' plan to hire 3,700 new teachers.



"NYC Public Schools' plan to hire thousands of new teachers is a welcome and significant step toward finally reducing NYC's overcrowded classrooms. This investment represents real, tangible progress toward delivering the sound, basic education to which students are constitutionally entitled, and for which Foundation Aid is intended to support.

"For too long, NYC students have endured overcrowded classrooms that hinder learning, engagement, and potential. It's good to see the administration is beginning to use the

historic increase in Foundation Aid to do what it is meant to do: provide students with a sound, basic education.

"There is still more work to do to meet the full requirements of the class size law in the coming years, but today's announcement is an encouraging sign that the city is finally taking real steps toward complying with state law and using the tools and funding provided by the state to make a lasting difference in the future of NYC Public Schools. NYC remains the only place in the State of New York with excessively large class sizes, and NYC Public Schools must stay the course and continue working collaboratively with schools, families and communities to fulfill this commitment, particularly with regard to capital construction in the coming years."



# 17 yrs on, 26/11 survivors see hope for justice

NEW DELHI (TIP)

As one of the facilitators of the 26/11 terror attack Tahawwur Rana is set to be extradited to India, survivors and families of victims are once again confronted with painful memories. While some see his return as a long-awaited chance for justice—even demanding death penalty for Rana—others simply want answers to a question that still haunts them: “Why?”

Devika Rotawan, one of the youngest survivors of the 26/11 attacks says, “I just want to ask him why did he inflict that terror upon us?” Rotwan, now in her early 20s, was just 10 years old when she was shot at at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus as she and her family readied to travel to Pune. Rotwan was shot in the leg, an injury that has left her with permanent damage. “Even though I have healed, my leg still swells up if I walk for too long. There’s still a big gash on my calf where the bullet hit me,” she says. The then-10-year-old was one of the key witnesses who identified her shooter Ajmal Kasab in court.

“I don’t want to forget what happened. Forgetting feels like forgiving, and I can never forgive them. Rana should be hanged for what he did to so many innocent people,” she says.

Worli gallerist Kalpana Shah who lost her husband Pankaj Shah in the attack at the Trident at Nariman Point echoed Rotwan’s need for some sort of justice. “Justice may never bring closure—I will never get my husband back—but it’s a step toward accountability,” she said offering thanks to the Indian government for Rana’s extradition. “He is inhuman. People like him do not understand compassion or loss,” she added.



An Indian soldier takes cover as the Taj Mahal hotel burns during gun battle between Indian military and militants inside the hotel in Mumbai, India. (AP File)

According to the Mumbai police’s supplementary charge-sheet filed in September 2023, Rana, a 64-year-old retired Pakistani military doctor was a co-conspirator who helped the Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists execute the Mumbai terror attacks. Rana, a Canadian citizen, allegedly provided cover for the double agent David Coleman Headley aka Sayed Dawood Gilani, an American national of Pakistani descent. Rana opened a branch of his company, First World Immigration Services, in south Mumbai, and also helped Headley obtain a visa to travel to India and stay in the city.

Headley made five extended trips to Mumbai as an executive of Rana’s immigration firm in September 2006, February and September 2007, and April and July 2008 — each time making videotapes of various potential targets in the city, including those attacked in November 2008. Rana himself visited and stayed in the city for around a

fortnight from October 11 to October 21, 2008, to co-ordinate with Headley.

Rana who has been in the US for the last several years, lost his last legal recourse on Monday when the Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court John Roberts rejected his appeal for emergency stay on health grounds, said media reports.

Like Rotwan and Shah, Karuna Waghela, a conservancy worker and mother of three, lost her husband Thakur Waghela that same night. Waghela, a sanitation worker at GT Hospital, had returned home for dinner when Kasab arrived at their doorstep, asking for water. Moments later Kasab shot dead her husband.

“My husband gave water to that killer—and was shot dead in return,” Karuna says, her voice still shaky after all these years as she reminisces. “Kasab got what he deserved. Rana should too. Anyone who was part of the planning

## WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR 26/11 TERROR ACCUSED?

Tahawwur Hussain Rana, an accused in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, is likely to be lodged in a high-security ward of Tihar Jail upon his arrival in India, prison officials said. Authorities confirmed that necessary arrangements have been made for his secure confinement, and the final placement will be carried out in accordance with the court’s directive. Rana, 64, a Pakistani-born Canadian national, is a known associate of David Coleman Headley alias Daood Gilani—one of the key conspirators behind the Mumbai attacks. He is being brought back after the US Supreme Court rejected his final attempt to block extradition.

Tahawwur Rana is expected to be produced before a special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court at Patiala House in the capital. The NIA is likely to seek his custodial interrogation to confront him with key evidence, including emails, travel logs, and witness testimonies already gathered.

Sources said Rana’s questioning may help uncover fresh links to Pakistani state actors in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. If granted custody, the NIA may lodge him in a high-security cell at Delhi’s Tihar Jail, where security arrangements have been tightened in anticipation of his arrival.

and execution of those attacks deserves to be hanged. I don’t care what his name is or where he’s from—he took part in killing people like my husband. He should pay with his life.” *Source: HT*

## Navy to get 26 Rafale-M jets in Rs 63,000-cr deal

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Indian Navy will get French-origin Rafale-Marine fighter jets for its aircraft carriers, the deal expanding the force’s arc of offensive operations at sea and adding new capabilities such as long-range precision-strike missiles to hit ships and air targets.

In the event of a crisis, the Rafale-M jets can also be deployed to Indian Air Force (IAF) bases along the northern borders to bolster the IAF fleet of 36 Rafales.

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved the purchase of 26 Rafale-M jets. These aircraft will be procured from French aviation major Dassault at a cost of Rs 63,000 crore, according to sources.

Deliveries are expected to commence three years after the contract is signed. The entire fleet is anticipated to be with the Navy by 2031. The deal includes weapons, simulator, spares, associated ancillary equipment, crew training and



logistics support for the Navy. This will include India-specific add-ons such as establishing a maintenance repair and overhaul (MRO) hub, integration of India’s own Astra missile and sourcing from local suppliers.

The Rafale-M is capable of carrying ‘Scalp-EG’, a 650-km-range cruise missile. The jets, 22 single-seater and four twin-seater variants, will be deployed primarily on board indigenously built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant.

The Rafale-M purchase is one of the biggest military orders placed by the country after a tender was floated to get 97 Tejas Mark1A jets for Rs 65,000 crore.

There were immediate comparisons on the social media of the price difference between the deals for Rafale-M and the IAF’s purchase of 36 Rafales for Rs 59,000 crore in 2016.

Operationally, the Rafale-M, like naval jets, have reinforced landing gears as a jet landing on an aircraft carrier mid-sea does not have the luxury of a long runway to stall. Like the Navy’s existing Russian-origin MiG-29K fighter jets, Rafale-M features foldable wings. This allows more planes to be parked in the hanger below the carrier’s deck as 25 per cent of the wings get folded.

The Rafale-M is a major jet upgrade for the naval forces after the MiG-29K planes joined its fleet in 2011. Of the 45 MiG-29K jets imported at a cost of \$2 billion, five have crashed while the remaining operate from the INS Vikramaditya and the INS Vikrant. A few of the MiG-29K jets were forward located from their home base at INS Hansa to Adampur during the stand-off with China. *Source: TNS*

## Govt to regulate online betting, gaming sectors

The government is preparing to introduce new legislation aimed at regulating online gambling and betting platforms, in a move that seeks to curb fraudulent practices and support the legal gaming sector, said senior cabinet ministers said on April 9.

Home minister G Parameshwara announced on Wednesday that a committee comprising senior officials and industry stakeholders has been formed to draft the proposed law. “I chaired a meeting regarding online betting and gambling along with the IT Minister. Representatives from the industry were called. There is nothing to regulate them so far. They have agreed to the introduction of a licence system and a regulation as per law,” Parameshwara told reporters in Mandya.

The committee has been given a month to submit the draft bill.



## Efforts on for normal ties with China: EAM

Relations between India and China are moving in a "positive direction" after the more-than-four-year-long military standoff on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) though "there is work to be done" to normalise ties, external affairs minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday, April 9.



Jaishankar, who has met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi since the understanding last October, said at the News 18 Rising Bharat Summit 2025 that India and China are now focusing on issues such as the resumption of direct flights and the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage.

"I think we are moving in a positive direction," he said, indicating the process of normalising relations with China is "very arduous and painstaking".

"I think there is work to be done. We are at it," Jaishankar said.

# Russia invites PM Modi to attend 80th Victory Day Parade on May 9

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Wednesday, April 9, confirmed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had received invitation from Russia for participation in the country's 'Victory Day' celebrations.

Confirming the invitation from Russia, the MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "The PM has received an invitation from Russia. India will confirm the visit at appropriate time."

Earlier, Russian state media reported the possibility of the visit of Defense Minister Rajnath Singh to 'Victory Parade' celebrations. Russia has invited several countries for the upcoming event on May 9 in Moscow. There are also talks about the participation of the Indian contingent in the ceremony.

Notably, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko was quoted saying that Moscow was expecting the Indian PM at the parade on May 9, which would mark the 80th anniversary of Soviet Union's victory over Germany in World War II. He had further said the invitation was already sent and the visit was being worked out.

In July last, Prime Minister Modi visited Moscow to attend the 22nd Russia-India summit, his first trip to the country in nearly five years. He had visited the far eastern city of Vladivostok in 2019 to attend an economic conclave.

In October last, Modi visited the Russian city of Kazan for the BRICS summit. During his last visit, Modi invited Russian President Vladimir Putin to visit India.

Putin has already accepted Modi's invitation to visit India.



He is expected to travel to India this year as part of the established framework for reciprocal annual engagements between the leaders of the two nations. However, the dates of Putin's visit have not been revealed yet.

In his congratulatory message to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Modi on the occasion of India's 76th Republic Day in January, Putin had said that Russian-Indian relations were based on "special and privileged strategic partnership".

Putin and Modi maintain regular contact, holding telephone conversations once every couple of months. The two leaders have also held several in-person meetings, particularly on the side-lines of international events.

## After Muslims, BJP may turn to Christians & Sikhs, says Rahul

**Calls Waqf Act attack on religious freedom**

AHMEDABAD (TIP)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi warned on Wednesday, April 9, that the BJP, after successfully passing the Waqf (Amendment) Act in Parliament, would now turn its attention to Christian and Sikh religious institutions. Gandhi expressed his concerns during a one-day session of the All-India Congress Committee, where he also highlighted the potential economic crisis that could result from new tariffs introduced by US President Donald Trump, which he said would have disastrous consequences for the country.

Gandhi criticised the Waqf (Amendment) Act, calling it an attack on the freedom of religion and the Constitution. He pointed out that the RSS mouthpiece Organiser had recently published an article proposing similar legislation targeting land controlled by Christian institutions. "The Waqf Bill is not just an assault on Muslims but also on the principle of freedom of religion," Gandhi said. He also warned that the Sikh community could soon face similar attacks.

The Congress leader urged the public to understand that the Waqf Bill's implications went beyond the Muslim community. "This is a threat to religious freedom for all communities," he said. People across the country should realise this, he said.



Gandhi also expressed grave concerns over the economic situation in India, particularly the impact of new tariffs imposed by the US.

Recalling the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Trump during Modi's US visit, he said: "Did you see a photo of PM Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump hugging this time when the PM visited the US? Trump, whom PM Modi calls his friend, gave orders that this time they will not hug, rather new tariffs will be imposed. But PM Modi did not even utter a word. To divert the attention of the public, a drama was staged in Parliament for two days. The reality is that a financial storm is about to hit India," Gandhi said. He also highlighted the rising unemployment rate, which he claimed had reached a 50-year high.

## Rape convict Ram Rahim walks out of jail again, 13th temporary release since 2020

CHANDIGARH (TIP)

Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, who is serving a 20-year jail term for raping two of his disciples, walked out of Rohtak's Sunaria jail on Wednesday, April 9, after he was granted a 21-day furlough.

This is his 13th temporary release from jail since 2020 and he has sent 305 days out of jail until now.

According to jail officials, privy to the development, Gurmeet Ram Rahim has been given the furlough to attend the foundation day of Dera Sacha Sauda on April 29. The dera was founded in 1948 by Baba Shah Mastana.

"The dera chief is headed to Sirsa-based headquarters of the sect, which he is visiting for the second since his conviction in 2017. This is the first time that he will be spending his entire furlough period at the Sirsa-based sect," said a jail official, wishing anonymity.

Gurmeet Ram Rahim's parole and furloughs have been a matter of contention as these have consistently come close to elections.

For instance, on January 28, just eight days before the Delhi assembly elections, Ram Rahim was released on a 30-day parole. During this, he spent 10 days at the Sirsa-based sect and the remaining at Baghpat dera in Uttar Pradesh.



On February 28, he was brought back to the Sunaria jail after his parole ended. Before that, he was given a 20-day parole before Haryana assembly elections in October last year. He was also released for 50 days in January last year. He got a 29-day parole in November 2023 before the Rajasthan assembly elections and was out on 30-day parole in July 2023 before the panchayat elections in Haryana.

In October 2022, he got a 40-day parole before the Adampur assembly byelections in Haryana. Besides, he got a 30-day parole in June 2022 before the Haryana municipal corporation elections and 21-day furlough in February 2022 before the Punjab assembly elections. *Source: HT*



# India in history this Week

## APRIL 11 TO APRIL 17

### 11 APRIL

1869 Kasturba Gandhi, wife of Mahatma Gandhi, was born in 1869.

1919 The International Labor Organization was established in 1919.

1921 The first live commentary of the Games was broadcast on radio.

1930 A 124-meter swinging bridge made of steel wires was opened to the public in Rishikesh. It was named Laxman Jhula.

1999 The Agni 2 missile was tested in 1999.

2011 Pulitzer Prize for Indian-origin American writer Jhumpa Lahiri for her debut work 'Interpreter of Melladies'.

1964 The Communist Party of India was divided into two parts. The main party is called the Communist Party of India and the second party that was divided was named Communist Party (Marxist).

1910 Anant Laxman Kanhere, one of the young revolutionaries who sacrificed his life for the independence of the country, died in 1910.

### 12 APRIL

1885 Birth of famous historian Rakhaldas Banerjee who discovered Mohenjodaro.

2007 Pakistan approves India on Iran Gas Pipeline.

1621 Birth of Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1621.

1955 The polio vaccine developed by Dr. Jones Sak was declared safe and effective.

1978 The country's first double-decker train Sinhagad Express was run from the Victoria Terminal of Bombay (now Mumbai) to Pune to mark 125 years of Indian Railways.

2008 Three people, including two Indian engineers, were killed in a suicide attack on a convoy of Indians in Afghanistan in 2008.



2014 The famous lyricist Gulzar was awarded the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for the year 2013 in 2014.

### 13 APRIL

1699 The tenth Sikh Guru Gobind Singh founded the Khalsa Panth. The festival of Baisakhi is made on this day every year.

1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre, indicative of the culmination of the atrocities of the British, was carried out.

1984 The Indian Army started a campaign of armed forces to occupy the Siachen Glacier in Kashmir.

1947 Diplomatic relations established between India and Pakistan.

1984 Indian cricket team won the Asia Cup for the first time by defeating Pakistan by 58 runs in Sharjah.

1648 Construction of the Red Fort was completed.

1939 The Hindustani Red Army (Indian Red Army) was formed in India in 1939 for an armed struggle with the British.

1978 The first flag carrier of the country "INS" was demoted to Delhi in 1978.

2000 Lara Dutta was elected Miss Universe in 2000.



2005 Vishwanathan Anand became 'World Chess Champion' for the fourth time in 2005.

### 14 APRIL

1891 Birth of father of Indian Constitution BR Ambedkar

2008 Start of passenger rail service between Kolkata in India and Dhaka in Bangladesh for the first time since 1965.

1659 Aurangzeb defeated Dara in 1659 at the Battle of Delhi.

1563 Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Sikh Guru, was born

1944 A ship loaded with weapons exploded in the port of Mumbai, killing more than 1200.

1962 Renowned Indian engineer M. Visveshwaraya, who was awarded Bharatharatna, died in 1962.



1995 India became the Asia Cup cricket champion for the fourth time in 1995.



2005 India and the US entered into an agreement to open their own flight areas to each other's airlines.

### 15 APRIL

1469 Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born in 1469.

1976 India announces sending its envoy to Beijing for the first time in 15 years.

1980 Six non-government banks were nationalized. Earlier also some banks were nationalized in the same way.

2010 Launch of the first cryogenic rocket GSLV-D3 built in India failed.



1948 The state of Himachal Pradesh was established on this day in 1948.

1994 Acceptance of 'Get' agreement in 1994 by 109 countries including India.

2004 LTTE militant V. Muralitharan, linked to the Rajiv Gandhi assassination, was killed in 2004 in Colombo.

### 16 APRIL

1853 In India, the first train ran from Mumbai to Thane in 1853.

1919 Gandhiji declared a fast on this day in 1919 to pay tribute to those who died in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.



2008 The statue of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi was unveiled in 2008 in London.

2004 India defeated Pakistan 2-1 in the series by winning the Rawalpindi Test.

### 17 APRIL

1952 The first Lok Sabha of the country was formed on this day in 1952.

1977 On this day in 1977, the Independence Party merged with the Janata Party and emerged as a big party.

1996 On this day in 1996, the Indian Railways had interrupted AIDS patients from traveling.

1983 India launched the SLV-3 rocket in 1983.

2003 The Indo-British Parliamentary Forum was formed in 2003 after 55 years.

2008 Four important agreements were signed between India and Brazil in 2008.

1975 India's first Vice President and second President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan died on 17 April 1975.





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# Vaisakhi, the Khalsa Sirjana Divas, and Canadian elections



By Prabhjot Singh

Will Vaisakhi, one of the biggest Indian festivals after Diwali, bring luck to 50-odd candidates of "East Indian" origin in the ensuing federal elections in Canada? It is the timing of the polls that assumes significance as the East Indian community in general and the Punjabi community in particular, gets fully involved in celebrations that mark the birth of "Khalsa", "Khalsa Sirjana Divas" in Punjabi parlance.

Celebrated with fervor and gaiety, Vaisakhi is fast becoming a global event. It has given the overseas Punjabis and the Sikhs a distinct socio-economic-cultural identity.

Besides its religious significance - birth anniversary of the Khalsa, the pure - it has traditionally been correlated to the start of harvesting season (of wheat crop) in north India reflecting in the process great socio-economic strides the farming community of North has made. Besides, for many Indian communities, it marks the start of a New Year.

After the Covid pandemic subsided, major public events, including commemorating Vaisakhi through City Parades or Nagar Kirtan processions, resumed in 2023 after a few years' hiatus.. They could not be organized in 2021 and 2022. Instead, special gatherings were held at Sikh temples - gurdwaras - by following the safety protocols of wearing face masks and maintaining a physical distance.

In 2022, the "Nagar kirtan procession" was replaced by a special congregation held in Toronto on April 24. Similarly, other major cities in North America also held special "Vaisakhi" celebrations by following the official guidelines.

It was on this day in 1699 that the 10th Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh, chose the historic town of Sri Anandpur Sahib in Punjab for the launch of the Khalsa. Though main religious celebrations are held at Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib (Sri Anandpur Sahib), Golden Temple (Amritsar) and Takht Sri Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo), the Sikhs all over the world mark the festivities not only by holding special congregations in gurdwaras but also in a global show of their progress in social, political, art, culture, sports, and economic fields as followers of one of the most recent and modern religions.

Since Sikhism had its origin in Pakistan - Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of the first Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Nanak Dev - groups of the devout also visit Sikh shrines there as a part of Vaisakhi celebrations that are held in the second week of April every year. After almost 230 years of the birth of Guru Nanak Dev, Sri Guru Gobind Singh had given the Sikhs new identity of the Khalsa by introducing the concept of Saint Soldier.

Vaisakhi celebrations' global significance can be measured from ever-expanding numbers of cosmopolitan and metropolitan cities the world over that reverberate to the beats of bhangra and display of traditional martial art of gatka as part of "Nagar Kirtan processions" or Sikh Parades. Sikhs pride in claiming to be one of the most affluent

minorities in the world

While Sikhs in India have Nagar Kirtan processions and special congregations on the Vaisakhi day, overseas Punjabis make it special with lavish celebrations. There, Nagar Kirtan processions or Sikh parades alone do not mark the celebrations. They come as a socio-cultural package comprising competitions in games, sports and cultural events, besides holding special religious congregations that continue for weeks together.

Holding of community kitchens, illumination of the entire route of the procession and distribution of literature about Sikhism, besides updated copies of telephone and business directories, have come to stay as an integral part of celebrations. One of the latest additions to the event witnessed in some major North American cities has been the use of smaller aircraft for showering floral



petals over the processions.

This year, the "Vaisakhi" celebrations will have added significance as Canada is all set to hold its Parliament elections, ending in the last week of April. The electioneering has been picking up pace and is expected to peak a week before the polling day. And a day before the poll day, there will be a massive Sikh Day Parade or Nagar Kirtan procession in the Greater Toronto Area.

Incidentally, more than 60 percent of all candidates of the "East India" origin participating in the 2025 federal elections are Sikhs.

Since the Sikhs are a growing political minority, leaders of various political parties, both at provincial and federal levels, make it a point to get their presence noticed during the celebratory processions or special congregations in major centers like Toronto, Vancouver, Surrey, Calgary, Edmonton, Brampton and several other Canadian cities.

Though celebrations are held worldwide, major focus remains on Sikhs in Europe (UK, Germany, Italy, France, Greece, the Netherlands and Sweden), the Americas (USA, Canada), Australia and New Zealand, Africa (Kenya) and Asia (Malaysia, Thailand and Fiji).

Besides the major Commonwealth nations like England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, several other countries have accorded recognition to some of the major Sikh festivals in general and

Vaisakhi in particular. In 2015, for example, the Malaysian government allowed Sikhs an off day on Vaisakhi day.

In 1999, when the entire world celebrated the tercentenary of the Khalsa, Canada became the first country other than India to take out a commemorative stamp to mark the occasion.

Vaisakhi celebrations are now held inside Parliament complexes, including Parliament Hill in Ottawa, besides several Provincial Parliaments in other Commonwealth nations. In the United States, Sikh Parades are held in almost every major city, including New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Yuba City.

In England, besides London, they are organized in several cities, the biggest being in Birmingham.

Historically, the Sikhs had to struggle hard not only to shrug off the blot of

tastefully decorated truck trailer that carries sacred Guru Granth Sahib in a golden or silver palanquin, followed by five baptized Sikhs (Panj Pyaras) who carry Kesari flags (Nishan Sahibs), Gurbani reciting groups or "Parbhat Pheris" besides Bhangra and gatka players.

The scale at which the Nagar Kirtan processions are now organized in North America started in 1978 when the Canadian Sikhs organized a massive Nagar Kirtan procession to mark the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Amar Das. Since then, the holding of the Sikh Parade has become an annual feature.

Many historians and social scientists subscribe to the view that the Nagar Kirtan or Sikh Parade paved the way for the consolidation of the overseas Sikh community as a strong political group that ultimately saw a turbaned Sikh - Gurbax Singh Malhi - in the Canadian House of Commons. It was he, who six years later, persuaded the then Liberals to hold inside the Parliament Hill a big celebration to mark the tercentenary celebrations of Khalsa on Vaisakhi Day. In May 1999, Canada issued a 49-cent special commemorative stamp to mark the tercentenary of the Khalsa.

Not only major TV channels but also the mainstream Media run special features and articles on Sikhs and their immense contribution to the economic growth of the new countries of their abode. Success stories of young Sikh boys and girls, too, are played up as a buildup for the Vaisakhi supplements.

Since then, Vaisakhi celebrations inside Parliaments and State Assemblies have become a regular feature both in the Commonwealth and some European and African nations.

The celebrations not only ensure the holding of competitions, tournaments, folk events and religious congregations but also the organization of lavish feasts where the local populace is invited as a part of the "know your neighborhood communities better" programme launched by some of the enterprising Overseas Sikh Organizations. This was necessitated more as a mode of defense and awareness to thwart growing incidents of hate violence witnessed in several parts of North America after the 9/11 terrorist attack.

Traditionally, religious celebrations comprise of taking out a nagar kirtan procession - that is normally done a day or two before the actual Vaisakhi day - besides holding a special religious congregation at gurdwaras, where at community kitchens - langars - jalebis are a special attraction.

Normally, one or more jathas (groups) of Sikhs go to Pakistan to join the Vaisakhi celebrations at Gurdwara Sri Janam Asthan, Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Sikhism, besides other historic shrines there. The political uncertainty notwithstanding, jathas of Sikh pilgrims went there this year also, though the size was much smaller.

*(Prabhjot Singh is a Toronto-based senior journalist. He can be reached at Prabhjot416@gmail.com)*

"second-rate citizens" in many parts of the erstwhile Commonwealth but also had to fight democratically for their rights and absorption in the mainstream of their new countries of abode.

In fact, the concept of the Nagar Kirtan processions, or the Sikh Parades, has proved to be an effective tool for the overseas Sikh community to introduce itself as a peaceful and hard-working group that has no qualms about making their present countries of abode their homes.

It has been this commitment that has helped them to script an unprecedented success story the world over. Though the Punjabis - described as Hindus - started reaching Canada in early 1900, they were denied voting rights in British Columbia from 1907 onwards. They had to wait for 40 long years to win back the right to vote. In 1947, the requirement to be a voter was changed to Canadian citizenship in addition to being a British subject. It was in 1950 that the first Sikh - "Giani" Niranjjan Singh Grewal - was elected to the City Council of Mission in British Columbia.

The first ever-Sikh Parade or Nagar Kirtan procession was organized on January 19, 1908, along Second Avenue in Vancouver. On August 28, 1912, Hardial Singh Atwal earned the distinction of becoming the first Canadian-born Sikh.

Each Nagar Kirtan Procession comprises, among other things, a



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# Ambedkar Jayanti: Honoring the 'Architect of Modern India'

**Ambedkar Jayanti or Bhim Jayanti is observed on 14 April to commemorate the memory of B. R. Ambedkar, widely known as the architect of the Indian Constitution and a champion of social justice.**

Ambedkar Jayanti, observed annually on April 14th, commemorates the birth anniversary of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, fondly known as Babasaheb. A social reformer, jurist, economist, educator, and political leader, Dr. Ambedkar is most renowned for his pivotal role as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution. Ambedkar Jayanti is not merely a celebration of a birth; it is a tribute to a visionary who dedicated his life to fighting social injustice and advocating for equality and human rights. As India continues to strive towards a more inclusive society, Dr. Ambedkar's teachings and legacy remain more relevant than ever.

## Early Life and Struggles

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was born on April 14, 1891, in the town of Mhow in the Central Provinces of British India (now in Madhya Pradesh). He belonged to the Mahar caste, which was considered 'untouchable' in the traditional Hindu caste hierarchy. From an early age, Ambedkar experienced the sting of caste-based discrimination. Denied access to equal educational opportunities, public resources, and even drinking water, his early years were marked by severe social exclusion.

Despite these obstacles, Ambedkar's determination and brilliance shone through. Encouraged by his father, who believed in the transformative power of education, Ambedkar pursued his studies with dedication. His early education was riddled with challenges, including being forced to sit separately in classrooms and facing widespread prejudice from both peers and teachers. These formative experiences would deeply influence his later activism and ideological commitments.

## Academic Brilliance and Global Education

Ambedkar's academic journey was nothing short of extraordinary. After completing his matriculation from Elphinstone High School, he pursued a degree in Economics and Political Science from the University of Bombay. Recognizing his potential, the Maharaja of Baroda sponsored him to study abroad.

Ambedkar earned a master's degree and a Ph.D. in Economics from Columbia University in the United States. His thesis, "The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India," was groundbreaking. Later, he moved to the London School of Economics (LSE), where he further earned a D.Sc. in Economics. During this period, he also studied law at Gray's Inn and was called to the Bar.



These academic achievements made Ambedkar one of the most educated Indians of his time. More importantly, his exposure to liberal democracies and modern philosophies profoundly shaped his vision for India. His time abroad gave him a comparative perspective on issues of social justice, governance, and human rights.

## Social Reform and the Fight Against Caste Discrimination

Upon returning to India, Ambedkar took up various teaching and administrative roles. However, his primary focus remained social reform. He launched numerous campaigns against caste discrimination and untouchability. In 1924, he founded the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha (Outcastes Welfare Association) to promote education and socio-economic upliftment among the depressed classes.

Ambedkar's activism took a more assertive turn in the 1920s and 1930s. The Mahad Satyagraha of 1927 was a watershed moment. Ambedkar led thousands of Dalits to drink water from a tank in Mahad, which was prohibited for them. This act of defiance was a direct challenge to the caste order. Later, in 1930, he led the Kalam Temple entry movement, demanding the right for Dalits to enter Hindu temples.

Perhaps his most controversial act was the public burning of the Manusmriti, an ancient Hindu text that codified caste discrimination. Ambedkar saw this as a symbolic

rejection of the religious and cultural basis of social inequality.

## Political Journey and the Poona Pact

Ambedkar's political journey was deeply intertwined with his social activism. In 1932, he engaged in intense negotiations with Mahatma Gandhi during the British-sponsored Round Table Conferences. The British had proposed separate electorates for Dalits, which Gandhi opposed. This led to a historic compromise known as the Poona Pact. Instead of separate electorates, the agreement provided reserved seats for Dalits within the general electorate.

While the Poona Pact was a political compromise, Ambedkar was dissatisfied. He believed separate electorates were essential for genuine political representation of the marginalized. Nevertheless, he continued his political work and founded the Independent Labour Party in 1936 and later the Scheduled Castes Federation.

## Architect of the Indian Constitution

The most enduring aspect of Ambedkar's legacy is his role as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution. After India gained independence in 1947, the Constituent Assembly was tasked with framing a new constitution for the country. Ambedkar was appointed to head the committee due to his legal acumen, intellectual prowess, and deep

understanding of Indian society.

Under his leadership, the Constitution of India was drafted with an emphasis on justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. It abolished untouchability, guaranteed fundamental rights to all citizens, and established the framework for a secular, democratic republic.

## Some of the key provisions influenced by Ambedkar include:

- Article 15: Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.
- Article 17: Abolition of untouchability.
- Article 46: Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other weaker sections.
- Provisions for affirmative action and reservations in education and public employment.

Ambedkar believed that political democracy must be accompanied by social and economic democracy. He warned that mere legal equality would not suffice if deep-rooted social hierarchies remained intact.

## Conversion to Buddhism

In the later years of his life, Ambedkar grew increasingly disillusioned with the Hindu social order. He believed that the caste system was intrinsically linked to Hindu religious doctrine and that true liberation for Dalits was impossible within its framework.

On October 14, 1956, in a historic event at Nagpur, Ambedkar converted to Buddhism along with over half a million of his followers. This mass conversion marked the beginning of the Dalit Buddhist movement. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism for its emphasis on rationality, compassion, and egalitarianism. He authored "The Buddha and His Dhamma," which remains a seminal text for modern Buddhist thought in India.

## Legacy and Impact

Dr. Ambedkar passed away on December 6, 1956. However, his legacy has only grown stronger with time. He is remembered not only as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution but also as a symbol of resistance against oppression. His thoughts and writings continue to inspire generations of social reformers, academics, and political activists.

Ambedkar Jayanti is marked by processions, lectures, cultural events,



and tributes across India. Statues of Ambedkar are garlanded, and his contributions are remembered with reverence. The day is particularly significant in states like Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu, and among the Dalit Buddhist community.

### Ambedkar's Writings and Philosophical Contributions

Ambedkar was a prolific writer and thinker. His works covered a wide range of topics, including economics, law, religion, politics, and social theory. Some of his most important writings include:

- "Annihilation of Caste": A scathing critique of the Hindu caste system, originally prepared as a speech but published after it was deemed too controversial.
- "The Problem of the Rupee": His doctoral thesis that offered insights into monetary policy and financial stability in colonial India.
- "Who Were the Shudras?" and "The Untouchables": Historical analyses that challenged orthodox interpretations of Indian social history.
- "The Buddha and His Dhamma": A re-telling of Buddhist philosophy with a focus on social ethics and rational thought.

His philosophical outlook combined liberalism, pragmatism, and a deep commitment to social justice. He was influenced by Western thinkers like John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, and the Buddha, among others.

### Ambedkar and Modern India

In contemporary India, Ambedkar's influence is visible in multiple spheres. From the legal framework to affirmative action policies, his ideas have shaped the country's democratic ethos. Movements for social justice, anti-caste activism, and Dalit rights often draw upon Ambedkarite thought.

His image is ubiquitous - on posters, murals, academic syllabi, and even currency notes. Universities, public institutions, and even global bodies like the United Nations have acknowledged his contributions. In 2015, the Indian government launched the "Stand Up India" scheme inspired by Ambedkar's vision of entrepreneurship and economic empowerment for marginalized communities.

### Global Recognition

Dr. Ambedkar's legacy is not confined to India. He is recognized globally as a champion of human rights and social justice. Statues and memorials dedicated to him exist in countries like the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Japan. His works are studied in international academic institutions, and his ideas resonate with movements against racial, ethnic, and social discrimination worldwide.

In 2016, the United Nations celebrated Ambedkar's 125th birth anniversary, underlining his global relevance. His philosophy of peace, tolerance, and justice aligns with the core principles of



Ambedkar seated in the middle with members of the drafting committee of the Constitution in August 1947.



Ambedkar with a group of women activists at his Mumbai (then Bombay) house on his birthday, 14 April 1942.

the UN Charter.

## Ambedkar's Contributions to Indian Society & Governance

### 1. Architect of the Indian Constitution

One of Ambedkar's most significant contributions was his role as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution. As the principal architect of the Constitution, he played a key role in framing laws that emphasized justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity.

#### Key constitutional provisions influenced by Ambedkar include:

- Abolition of untouchability (Article 17)
- Fundamental Rights ensuring equality and non-discrimination (Articles 14-16)
- Directive Principles of State Policy
- Affirmative action and reservation policies for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

His vision laid the foundation for a democratic and inclusive India.

### 2. Champion of Social Justice

Ambedkar was a relentless crusader against the caste system and untouchability. He launched several movements and organizations to uplift the marginalized sections of society. Notable among them were:

- Mahad Satyagraha (1927) for access

to public water resources

- Kalaram Temple Entry Movement (1930) demanding entry for Dalits
- Burning of Manusmriti to protest caste-based discrimination

He founded the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha in 1924 to work for the education and economic improvement of the "Depressed Classes."

### 3. Advocate for Women's Rights

Ambedkar was ahead of his time in advocating gender equality. As the first Law Minister of independent India, he introduced the Hindu Code Bill, which aimed to grant women equal rights in marriage, inheritance, and property. Though the bill faced opposition and was not passed during his tenure, it laid the groundwork for future reforms in women's rights legislation.

### 4. Economic Thought and Labor Reforms

Ambedkar was a trained economist and contributed significantly to economic thought in India. His doctoral thesis at Columbia University, "The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India," provided deep insights into fiscal decentralization.

As a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, he:

- Introduced labor reforms including an 8-hour workday and maternity benefits
- Advocated for state control of industries and social welfare

policies

- Proposed the establishment of the Reserve Bank of India, which was later set up in 1935

### 5. Education and Institution Building

Ambedkar believed education was the key to empowerment. He founded several institutions and emphasized universal education for the marginalized. He established:

- People's Education Society (1945)
- Siddharth College in Mumbai
- Milind College in Aurangabad

His efforts laid the foundation for educational reforms that aimed to bridge social disparities.

### 6. Political Leadership and Representation

Ambedkar worked tirelessly to ensure political representation for Dalits and other marginalized communities. He participated in the Round Table Conferences in London and advocated for separate electorates for Dalits. Though the Poona Pact altered this arrangement, it led to the reservation of seats for Dalits in legislatures.

He also founded:

- Independent Labour Party (1936)
- Scheduled Castes Federation (1942)
- Republican Party of India (posthumously based on his ideology)

### 7. Religious Philosophy

Disillusioned with caste-based discrimination in Hinduism, Ambedkar converted to Buddhism in 1956 along with over half a million followers. He embraced Buddhism as a rational and egalitarian faith and authored "The Buddha and His Dhamma," a reinterpretation of Buddhist teachings focused on social ethics.

This marked the beginning of the Dalit Buddhist movement, which continues to influence Indian society.

### 8. Contributions to Law and Jurisprudence

Ambedkar's legal scholarship contributed to the development of Indian jurisprudence. He emphasized the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, and the importance of constitutional morality. His legal writings and speeches are widely studied in Indian law schools.

### 9. Global Recognition and Influence

Ambedkar's contributions have received global acknowledgment. His thoughts on social justice resonate worldwide. Statues and memorials dedicated to him exist in the UK, USA, and Japan. In 2016, the United Nations commemorated his 125th birth anniversary, recognizing him as a global icon of equality and justice.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contributions to India are vast and enduring. As the principal architect of the Constitution, a champion of the oppressed, and a visionary leader, he reshaped Indian society. His work in law, economics, education, and social reform continues to inspire millions. Honoring his legacy means striving toward a more just, equal, and democratic India-an India that realizes the dreams of its greatest nation-builder, Babasaheb Ambedkar.



# CONVERSATIONS ABOUT DEMOCRACY IN NJ AND ACROSS THE US

BY MABEL PAIS

On April 16, a day of programming dedicated to examining the state of democracy in New Jersey and across the United States will be hosted by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice and The Fund for New Jersey and held at NJPAC at the Chase Room.

America and New Jersey are experiencing a moment of transition, one that may profoundly change our country for years to come.

And those changes will have a unique impact on all New Jerseyans, especially those of color.

This day of conversations, presentations, speeches and panel discussions - across two distinct but related events at NJPAC - will examine the current state of American democracy through the lens of civic, social and racial justice, with a special focus on the issues most important to New Jersey.

## SESSION I - 1-5 PM

Sherrilyn Ifill, esteemed civil rights lawyer and former leader of NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF), will open the afternoon event



Sherrilyn Ifill

Photo / Courtesy, njpac.org

'Doubling Down on Democracy: Conversations about the Way Forward' (njpac.org/event/doubling-down-on-democracy-forum) with a keynote address at 1PM. She is a respected attorney, scholar, thought leader and author whose forthcoming book, 'Is this America?' (Penguin), deals with race and the pressures reshaping American democracy.

This being an afternoon of conversation and clarity, Ifill's speech will be followed by two panel discussions, exploring this moment in the American experiment. Lunch is included.

## IMMIGRATION PANEL

The first panel will discuss immigration, and the impact of new federal policies governing deportation and naturalization.

## DEMOCRACY PANEL

After a short break, the panel reconvenes for a deep dive into the state of democracy in New Jersey, examining the Garden State's laws and policies regarding voting rights, ballot design, the census and more.

"At The Fund for New Jersey, we believe democracy thrives when all voices are heard and empowered to confront the pressing issues of our time," says Brandon McKoy, President of The Fund for New Jersey. "We are proud to support this NJPAC event, which fosters dynamic and interactive discussions that create space to reflect on our democracy and engage with leaders and policy experts shaping its future.

With New Jersey's decisions carrying national significance this year, it is more important than ever for voters to be informed, engaged and ready to make choices that address the needs and challenges facing all of our communities."

This event will conclude at 5PM.

## TICKETS

Tickets for Session I can be purchased at njpac.org/event/doubling-down-on-democracy-forum. Lunch is included.

## SESSION II - 6:30 PM



NJ Gubernatorial Race

Photo / Courtesy, njpac.org

New Jersey is one of two states (the other is Virginia) scheduled to hold gubernatorial elections in 2025 and campaigning is taking place amid rapid changes introduced by a new presidential administration. The results of these off-year elections in the Garden State are often considered a bellwether for broader national elections.

The conversation will continue at 6:30PM with a free 'social justice forum' (njpac.org/event/the-race-for-nj-governor-social-justice-candidate-forum)

featuring candidates running for Governor in New Jersey.

All of the candidates campaigning for Governor were invited. Six will appear at this event: Mayor of Newark Ras J. Baraka, NJ State Sen. Jon Bramnick, Mayor of Jersey City Steven Fulop, U.S. Rep. Mikie Sherrill, New Jersey Education Association Pres. Sean Spiller and former NJ Senate Pres. Steve Sweeney.

This bipartisan group of candidates will share their perspectives on a range of important social justice topics.

"NJPAC has always been proud to serve as a town square, where the residents of our city and our state gather to discuss the issues that matter most to us all," says John Schreiber, President and CEO of the Arts Center.

"During the last two gubernatorial elections, NJPAC hosted debates between candidates. This election season, we're pleased to present this unique chance for voters to meet multiple candidates and hear their views on important issues before the June primaries.

New Jerseyans have a big decision to make, and talking directly to those who hope to lead us is the best way for voters to make an informed decision."

"We are facing a democracy crisis in America, and it's essential that we build and exercise power from the ground up here in New Jersey," says Ryan Haygood, President & CEO of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice. "We are excited to partner with NJPAC, The

Fund for New Jersey and others on a day of programming that will engage New Jerseyans on the pressing social and racial justice issues of the day, including by hearing from gubernatorial candidates for the upcoming election."

## REGISTRATION

Session II is free to attend but advance registration is required. RSVP at njpac.org/event/the-race-for-nj-governor-social-justice-candidate-forum/#register

## NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJPAC)

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), located in downtown Newark, New Jersey, is among the largest performing arts centers in the United States. It is the artistic, cultural, educational and civic center of New Jersey - where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day. As New Jersey's anchor cultural institution, NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the state's and the world's best artists while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has attracted more than 12 million visitors (including more than two million children) since opening its doors in 1997 and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. Visit njpac.org for more information.

## NJPAC

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

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## FOLLOW NJPAC'S STANDING IN SOLIDARITY SERIES ONLINE:

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

## CROSSROADS NJ CONVERSATIONS

On April 16 at NJPAC with a democracy and a gubernatorial candidate forum, 'Crossroads NJ Conversations' is a four-part discussion series presented by The Fund for New Jersey ahead of the 2025 gubernatorial elections. The statewide series offers residents the opportunity to engage in live discussions with elected officials, community leaders, and national policy experts on critical issues such as voting rights, criminal justice reform, environmental justice, education, housing, and more. By fostering dialogue and civic engagement, 'Crossroads NJ Conversations' encourages residents to ask questions, influence policy, and drive action toward creating the New Jersey we deserve.

## NEW JERSEY INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice is a cutting-edge racial and social justice organization that seeks to empower people of color by building reparative systems that create wealth, transform justice and harness democratic power-from the ground up-in New Jersey. Known for its dynamic and independent advocacy aimed at toppling load-bearing walls of structural inequality to create just, vibrant and healthy communities, the Institute is committed to exposing and repairing the cracks of structural racism in our foundation that erupt into earthquakes in communities of color. The Institute advocates for systemic reform that is at once transformative, achievable in the state and replicable in communities across the nation.

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



## NJPAC CELEBRATES GOV TOM KEAN'S MILESTONE BIRTHDAY WITH DINNER AND BROADWAY SALUTE

BY MABEL PAIS

(Photo of Governor Kean here)

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) will celebrate the birthday of New Jersey Governor Thomas H. Kean with a dinner and evening of musical theater at 5:30 PM on his 90th birthday, April 21, 2025.

### PROGRAM

The Broadway Birthday Salute Honoring Gov. Thomas H. Kean will include dinner on the Betty Wold Johnson stage in NJPAC's Prudential Hall, and a performance by quartet of the musical theater world's brightest young stars presenting songs by New Jersey's most beloved Broadway composers and lyricists, including Jerry Herman (Showboat), Jerome Kern (Hello, Dolly!) and Stephen Schwartz (Wicked).

### GOV KEAN & NJPAC

Governor Kean first imagined creating an Arts Center in downtown Newark more than a generation ago, during his second term in office. This special evening, curated by leading Broadway musical director, conductor and pianist Andy Einhorn (currently leading the orchestra for Gypsy at the Majestic Theatre), is a tribute to Governor Kean's service to the citizens of New Jersey and his lifelong love of musical theater.

"New Jersey has been blessed to have a passionate and committed advocate for the arts in Governor Kean, who has always believed that everyone in New Jersey deserves the opportunity to experience and benefit from the arts," says John Schreiber, NJPAC's President

and CEO. "We couldn't be more grateful to the Governor for inventing and supporting the Arts Center, and we're thrilled to be able to celebrate this landmark occasion with him."

The performance will feature four acclaimed young Broadway stars including:

Christine "Christy" Altomare, who made her Broadway debut as Sophie in 'Mamma Mia!' and originated the title role in the premiere Broadway production of 'Anastasia.'

Nicholas Christopher, who made his Broadway debut in the ensemble of 'Motown: The Musical,' performed in the Broadway revival of 'Miss Saigon' and portrayed George Washington in 'Hamilton.'

Mandy Gonzalez, who originated the role of Nina Rosario in Off-Broadway and Broadway productions of 'In the Heights.' She has since played Elphaba in the Broadway production of 'Wicked,' Angelica Schuyler in the Broadway production of 'Hamilton,' and is starring as Norma Desmond in the current revival of Andrew Lloyd Webber's 'Sunset Boulevard.'

Zachary Noah Piser, who originated the role of Spenser in both the La Jolla Playhouse and Broadway productions of the current hit musical Redwood. He's also been seen in the musicals Kpop, Dear Evan Hansen and Wicked.

### ARTS FUNDRAISER

In addition to honoring Governor Kean, the evening will serve as a fundraiser for NJPAC's extensive social impact programming, including its arts education programs that reach almost 50,000 children and families every year,

community engagement programs that offer more than 200 free events and performances across Greater Newark each season, and Arts & Well-Being initiatives that deliver everyone access to the healing power of the arts through efforts like in-hospital performances and one of the nation's first arts-on-prescription programs.

### TICKETS

Both tables and individual tickets to attend the celebration are available. To reserve tickets or inquire about sponsorship opportunities, visit NJPAC's website at [njpac.org/event/kean](http://njpac.org/event/kean) or contact Stacey Joseph at [sjoseph@njpac.org](mailto:sjoseph@njpac.org).

### NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJPAC)

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), located in downtown Newark, New Jersey, is the most diverse performing arts center in the country, and the anchor cultural institution for both the city of Newark and the state of New Jersey. It is an artistic, cultural, educational and civic center where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day. NJPAC brings communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the state's and the world's best artists, while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has attracted more than 12 million visitors (including more than two million children) since opening its doors in 1997, and nurtures



Governor Thomas H. Kean  
Photo / Courtesy njpac.org

meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. Visit [njpac.org](http://njpac.org) or call 888.GO.NJPAC (888.466.5722) for more information.

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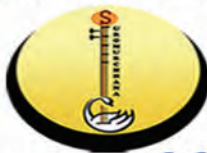
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Youtube: Standing in Solidarity playlist

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

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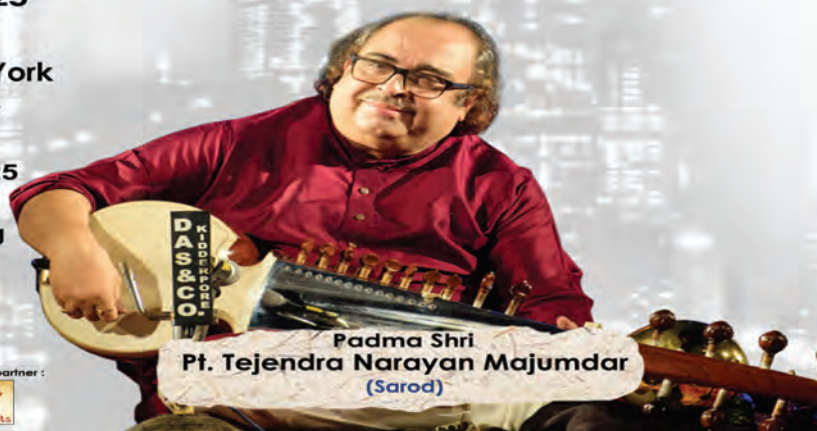
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Suromurchhana's programmes are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.



Pt. Tanmoy Bose  
(Tabla)



Padma Shri  
Pt. Tejendra Narayan Majumdar  
(Sarod)





## Mom-To-Be Kiara Advani To Make Her Red Carpet Debut

**K**iara Advani is all set to welcome her first child with her actor-husband Sidharth Malhotra. Reportedly, the actress will make her Met Gala debut this year.

At Cannes last year, Kiara was a part of the Women In Cinema panel. The panel, hosted by the Red Sea International Film Festival, took place at La Plage Des Palmes.

Kiara Advani attended the event in an elegant orange ruched gown, accentuated with gold earrings. Her hair was styled in a braided updo with a middle parting.

ICYDK, the couple announced the pregnancy last month. They shared a picture wherein they can be seen holding white baby socks in their hands. The caption read, "The greatest gift of our lives. Coming soon."

As soon as the couple dropped the post, B-town celebrities flooded the comment section with congratulatory messages.

Kiara and Sidharth married on February 7, 2023. The couple's wedding, held in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, was an intimate and dreamy affair, attended by close friends and family, including Karan Johar, Shahid Kapoor, Mira Rajput and Manish Malhotra.

# Bollywood has to own its mess and clean it: Nushratt Bharuccha

**A**ctor Nushratt Bharuccha, who is currently promoting *Chhorii 2*, got candid about the post-pandemic slump in Hindi cinema, the rise of pretense on social media, and why Bollywood needs to reclaim its audience.

In an exclusive interaction with India Today Digital, the actor offered her take on the evolving landscape of Hindi cinema. She addressed the industry's current struggles and said, "I think like an audience because I go to theatres to watch a film like one. But there are a lot of other factors that have played a part in where we are today."

"Do we have great content? We don't. Do we have content like we used to a few years ago? No, we don't. But let's not forget—we went through a pandemic. A global event where nobody knew what to do. And I don't mean just cinema. I mean us, as a nation. Have we even processed that trauma? Have we really come out of it?" she added.

Nushratt further pointed out a growing disconnect between creators and consumers. "We don't know from which film we'll get that feeling that 'this is it.' We don't know what's going to stick. The audience is not understood right now—not by the makers, not by anyone. And it's not that they don't want to make good films. Everybody wants to work. But there's no clarity on what's actually working," Bharuccha opined.

"We haven't fully processed what we've collectively been through during the pandemic. Have we all experienced trauma? Yes. So now, maybe we want to watch only comedy, fluff, or supernatural stories that are far from reality. We don't want to confront our



truth," she added.

Alongside this emotional upheaval, the actor noted how social media has warped perceptions of reality. Elucidating upon the same, she said, "In those two-three years of lockdown, social media exploded. But what do we see there? Just pretense. Nobody's sitting there crying, telling you what they're going through. Even someone who may not know where their next meal is coming from is making dance reels, makeup tutorials, and product reviews. Everyone is trying to escape their reality."

"So how are we supposed to know what the audience wants? Should we show them realism? Should we make them laugh? Scare them? What should

we do?," she stressed.

She continued, "I feel like the industry is not able to identify what will work. Sure, you have purists who say, 'I want to make this film because I believe in it.' And I support that. Let's do it. Tell me there's no budget—fine, I'm happy to do it. But then the film also needs to be released. If it just sits in a box, what's the point?"

The Sonu Ki Titu Ki Sweeti actor emphasised that the lack of commercial viability is stalling creativity. "There's an economics to it. And that's why we're not seeing great content. There's no balance, no outcome. If one or two films do well, we get some hope. But then everyone starts making the same kind of film again," she said. *Source: India Today*

## Taapsee Pannu shares cryptic post; sparks speculation about new project

**K**nown for her consistent presence in content-driven films, Taapsee Pannu dropped a simple update that has quickly become a talking point across social media. The actress has set off a fresh wave of speculation among fans and film watchers after posting a cryptic message on her Instagram story.

Taapsee Pannu shared a short text post that read, "Off We Go." While she offered no further context or details, the message has led many to believe that she may have started work on a new project. Although no official announcement has been made, fans have already begun guessing whether this could be related to her upcoming film *Gandhari* or an entirely new venture. The cryptic post has only added to the buzz, particularly as the actress has been relatively quiet on social media in recent weeks. Whether this signals the start of a new shoot schedule or is connected to *Gandhari* in some way remains to be seen.

Over the years, Taapsee has made a place for herself in Indian cinema through a range of roles

that challenge conventional narratives. From *Pink* to *Thappad* and *Rashmi Rocket*, her film choices have often centered around strong female leads and socially relevant themes. She also made headlines by becoming the first Indian actress to lead her own OTT franchise with *Haseen Dillruba*, which gained a strong following on digital platforms.

On the professional front, Taapsee is gearing up for the release of *Gandhari*, directed by Devashish Makhija. The film also stars Ishwak Singh and focuses on a mother's desperate journey to find and rescue her kidnapped daughter. The storyline is expected to explore themes of revenge, trauma, and redemption. With a dark and intense premise, *Gandhari* has already generated curiosity among audiences.

Given her track record, any hint from Taapsee about upcoming work is enough to capture attention. Fans will now be closely watching her social media for further updates or a possible project reveal in the coming days.





# Ben Affleck seen wearing wedding ring after Jennifer Lopez divorce

Hollywood star Ben Affleck was seen wearing a wedding ring in Los Angeles and internet started buzzing with questions. Only months after finalising divorce with popstar Jennifer Lopez, the timing has sparked speculations.

Ben, who is currently filming a thriller, sparked a renewed interest in his personal life. Ben recently stated that his divorce with the pop star has been a calm affair rather than scandalous as people would want it to be.

Recently, Ben returned in front of the cameras while shooting for his upcoming Netflix film *Animals*, which will also mark his return as actor, director and writer since 2023's *Air*. The actor was spotted on a break from filming with the wedding ring on. Page Six posted pictures of the star on X (formerly Twitter) which created quite a buzz.

According a report in *People.com*, the 52-year-old star plays a married mayoral candidate along with Kerry Washington who will be seen playing his onscreen wife.

"He's both acting and producing. He's always great to work with," a source told *People*, noting that Ben is playing "a married mayoral candidate" in the movie. The actor and filmmaker was photographed wearing a wedding band on the movie's set in recent photos. "Filming just kicked off, but it's been great so far. Ben's been in a great mood and super fun to work with," the source added.

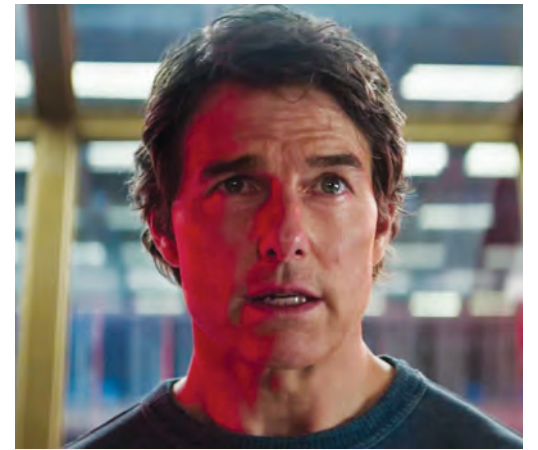
Although, it is unclear it seem like the wedding band belongs to Ben's onscreen character rather than him personally.

Ben is also producing the film which started shooting in March this year



through is and actor-friend Matt Damon's production house Artist Equity. While Damon was also supposed to be a part of the cast, however he has been busy filming Christopher Nolan's

next *The Odyssey*. *Animals* stars Gillian Anderson, Steven Yeun, Luis Gerardo Méndez, Adriana Paz, Ray Fisher, Mark Kassen and Christopher Woodley in a key roles. *Source: HT*



## Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning headed to Cannes Film Festival

Tom Cruise-starrer *Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning* will be presented Out of Competition at the 78th annual Cannes Film Festival.

According to a press release from the organisers, the premiere of the eighth film in the popular spy thriller film franchise will be held at the Grand Theatre Lumiere on May 14.

Cruise, who also serves as producer on the film, will walk the steps of the Palais des Festivals along with long-time collaborator, screenwriter, and director Christopher McQuarrie and the cast.

The Hollywood action legend previously came to the Cannes Film Festival with Ron Howard's *"Far and Away"* (1992) and *"Top Gun: Maverick"* in 2022.

*"Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning"* also stars Hayley Atwell, Esai Morales, Henry Czerny, Simon Pegg, Pom Klementieff, Vanessa Kirby, Hannah Waddingham, Nick Offerman, Katy O'Brian and Tramell Tillman.

Presented by Paramount Pictures and Skydance, the film will be released in Indian cinemas on May 23 in English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu in IMAX.

# Robert Pattinson in talks to play shadowy antagonist against Timothee Chalamet's Paul Atreidis in *Dune 3*



Actor Robert Pattinson might just be the latest addition to the stellar star cast of *Dune 3*. Filmmaker Denis Villeneuve is all set to return with Timothée Chalamet, Zendaya and Florence Pugh in the final part of the super hit movie franchise. The filming is set to begin this summer and recent reports suggest that Robert is in early talks to join and play a pivotal role.

According to a news report in *Deadline*, the *Batman* star is being considered to play the antagonist in *Dune 3*, an adaptation of Frank Herbert's 1969 book *Dune: Messiah*. Robert is reportedly being eyed to play Scytale, a shadowy, shape shifting figure who conspires to take over Paul Atreidis, character played by Timothée in the Oscar winning franchise.

Following the massive success of *Dune: Part 2*, which earned USD 12 billion and a combined eight Oscars from 15 nominations, Legendary studio confirmed that

development on *Dune 3* was officially underway.

In a previous interview with *Vanity Fair*, director Denis clarified that the *Dune* franchise won't go ahead after the threequel. He said, "It's important that people understand that for me, it was really a diptych. It was really a pair of movies that will be the adaptation of the first book. That's done and that's finished. If I do a third one, which is in the writing process, it's not like a trilogy. It's strange to say that, but if I go back there, it's to do something that feels different and has its own identity."

Robert is currently filming Christopher Nolan's adaptation of *The Odyssey*. He has recently wrapped A24 film *The Drama*, which also stars Zendaya. He also finished Lynne Ramsay's film *Die, My Love* in which he stars opposite Jennifer Lawrence. The film is slated to release later this year.



## VIDEO SHOWS FOUR CAPTIVE UKRAINIAN TROOPS KILLED BY MEN IDENTIFIED AS RUSSIAN FORCES

10 APR 2025

**ROME (TIP):** The Ukrainian soldiers clambered from the ruined house at gunpoint—one with arms raised in surrender to the Russian troops—and lay face-down in the early spring grass.

Two drones—one Ukrainian and one Russian—recorded the scene from high above the southern Ukrainian village of Piatykhvatky. The Associated Press managed to get both videos.

They offer very different versions of what happened next.

The Ukrainian drone video, which AP obtained from European military officials, shows soldiers with Russian uniform markings raising their weapons and shooting each of the four Ukrainians in the back with such ferocity that one man was left without a head.

"Out of all the executions that we've seen since late 2023, it's one of the clearest cases," said Rollo Collins of the Center for Information Resilience, a London group that specializes in visual investigations and reviewed the video at AP's request.

"This is not a typical combat killing. This is an illegal action."

The Russian drone video, which AP located on pro-Kremlin social media, cuts off abruptly with the men lying on the ground—alive.

"As a result of the work done by our guys, the enemy decided not to be killed and came out with their hands up," wrote a Russian military blogger who posted the video.

Two videos. Two stories.

In one, the prisoners appear to live. In the other, they die.

As evidence of potential war crimes continues to mount, many in Ukraine worry that the Trump administration's about-face on the war will make it more difficult to establish a firm historical narrative about what has happened since Russia's 2022 invasion and whether those most responsible for atrocities will ever be held accountable.

On March 13, the day European officials say the incident in Piatykhvatky took place, US representatives landed in Russia for ceasefire talks with President Vladimir Putin.

US President Donald Trump, who has signaled that a prospective deal could see Ukraine surrender some territory and echoed Moscow's talking points, called for a quick peace deal. His administration has pulled back support for Ukraine, including war crimes investigations, and is rebuilding relations with Putin—the very man many victims and prosecutors want to see in court.

"Whatever a peace agreement would be, Ukraine is not ready to forgive everything which happened in our territory," Yurii Bielousov, head of the war crimes department for Ukraine's prosecutor general, told AP. (AP)

# Israel releases Palestinian youth Ahmed Manasra, who developed schizophrenia in prison after being arrested at age of 13

10 APR 2025

**JERUSALEM (TIP):** Israel on Thursday released Palestinian youth Ahmad Manasra, who was arrested at the age of 13, under horrific circumstances and was allegedly subjected to brutal torture and denied medical care in custody, leading to the development of serious mental illnesses, including schizophrenia.

Manasra was arrested at the age of 13, for being with his 15-year-old cousin Hassan Manasra, who allegedly stabbed two Israeli settlers near the illegal settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev in occupied East Jerusalem in 2015.

Hassan was shot dead by an Israeli settler while Ahmad was run over by a car, beaten and taunted by Israeli passers-by. A video showing Ahmad lying in the street, bleeding from the head and pleading for help while Israelis taunted him, garnered widespread attention.

Another video of Manasra undergoing harsh interrogation in Israeli custody also sparked outrage.

He was later convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to nine and a half years in prison, despite not being directly involved in any crime. According to doctors, Manasra developed schizophrenia in solitary confinement and has repeatedly tried to harm himself.

Palestinian activists have accused Israel of subjecting Ahmed to harsh incarceration that led to serious and potentially permanent mental illness. His lawyer, Khaled Zabarqa, said he was released after completing his nine-and-a-half-year sentence.

Appeals to Israel's Supreme Court for his early release were repeatedly denied. The courts ruled that he was ineligible, regardless of age or mental condition, because he was "convicted of terrorism."

Zabarqa said he did not have immediate information about Manasra's condition after his release, but said he was with his parents.

"We know in jail he's been very ill. We're waiting to know his health



situation now," Zabarqa said.

Authorities first moved Manasra to isolation in November 2021, following a scuffle with another inmate. In interviews the following year, his family and lawyers said he was locked in a small cell for 23 hours a day and suffered from paranoia and delusions that kept him from sleeping. His lawyer said Manasra had tried to slit his wrists.

His family said he was transferred to the psychiatric wing of another prison every few months, where doctors gave him injections to stabilize him. A physician who was allowed to visit him when he was 18 diagnosed him with schizophrenia and attributed it to the toll of being in prison, warning that continued incarceration could lead to permanent disability.

Rights groups say conditions inside Israeli prisons have become far more harsh since the beginning of Israel's recent genocidal war on Gaza. Palestinian prisoners released during a recent ceasefire often appeared gaunt and ill, and many went straight to local hospitals for treatment.

A teenager from the occupied West

Bank who was held in an Israeli prison for six months without being charged died last month after collapsing in unclear circumstances, becoming the first Palestinian under 18 to die in Israeli detention.

Several Palestinian detainees were released by Israel today, according to Al Jazeera. At least ten of them were in poor health and have been hospitalised at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central city of Deir el-Balah.

Meanwhile, Gaza's health ministry on Thursday issued an urgent plea for medicine, stating Israel's more than a month-long blockade of the Strip has left hospitals with 'dangerous' and 'unprecedented' low stocks.

At least 35 Palestinians were killed on Wednesday, in Israel's latest attack on the Shujayea district in northern Gaza City. At least 55 Palestinians were wounded in the attack while another 80 remain missing.

Israel has so far killed at least 1,523 people and wounded another 3,834 after it broke a ceasefire with the Palestinian resistance group Hamas on March 18, 2025. (With inputs from AP)

## German conservative, center-left parties reach deal to form new government after weeks of talks

09 APR 2025

**BERLIN (TIP):** Conservative and center-left parties reached a deal to form a new German government on Wednesday after weeks of negotiations. The agreement paves the way for new leadership in Europe's biggest economy after months of political drift.

Friedrich Merz, the leader of the center-right Christian Democratic Union, is expected to become Germany's next leader under the agreement, replacing outgoing Chancellor Olaf Scholz. The parties involved sent an invitation to a news conference on the coalition deal at 3 p.m. (1300 GMT).

Merz's two-party Union bloc emerged as the strongest force from Germany's

election on Feb. 23. Merz turned to the Social Democrats, Scholz's center-left party, to put together a coalition with a parliamentary majority.

It's still going to be a little while before parliament can elect Merz as chancellor, perhaps in early May. Before that can happen, the coalition deal will need approval in a ballot of the Social Democrats' membership and by a convention of Merz's CDU.

Details of the agreement weren't immediately available.

But already last month, the two sides pushed plans through parliament to enable higher defense spending by loosening strict rules on incurring debt and to set up a huge infrastructure fund that's aimed at

boosting the stagnant economy.

That was an about-turn for Merz, whose party had spoken out against running up new debt before the election without entirely closing the door to future changes to Germany's self-imposed "debt brake."

The election took place seven months earlier than planned after Scholz's unpopular coalition collapsed in November, three years into a term that was increasingly marred by infighting and widespread discontent.

The market turbulence caused by US President Donald Trump's announcement of sweeping tariffs added to pressure for Merz's Union and the Social Democrats to bring their coalition talks to a conclusion. (AP)



## South Korean opposition leader opens presidential bid following Yoon's ouster

10 APR 2025

**SEOUL (TIP):** South Korean opposition leader Lee Jae-myung, widely seen as the frontrunner in a presidential by-election triggered by the removal of President Yoon Suk Yeol last week, officially announced a presidential bid on Thursday, vowing to heal a starkly divided nation through economic growth.

Lee, who narrowly lost the 2022 election to Yoon, led the liberal Democratic Party's campaign to oust the former president over his December declaration of martial law.

Lee recently stepped down as the party's chairman to focus on campaigning for the June 3 election. He is considered the clear frontrunner in party's primary. Kim Dong-yeon, the Democratic governor of Gyeonggi province and a longtime financial policymaker, also told reporters Wednesday that he intends to run for president.

Yoon's downfall has left the conservative People Power Party in disarray, with roughly 10 politicians expected to seek the nomination, reflecting a split between Yoon loyalists, who still control the party's leadership, and reformists calling for a fresh start.

In a video message, Lee said that Yoon's martial law saga exposed the country's deep divisions and social conflicts, and argued that the root cause was a widening rich-poor gap. He promised aggressive government spending to jolt economic growth and ease income polarization.

"We have more than we did in the past, but wealth is too concentrated in certain areas," Lee said. "With economic growth rates declining worldwide, it has become difficult to maintain and develop an



economy solely on the strength of the private sector. However, with government-led talent development and extensive investments in technological research and development, we can revive the economy."

Lee said it was crucial to maintain a robust alliance with the United States and to pursue three-way cooperation with Japan, but he stressed that South Korea's national interest should come first in "every decision."

Lee, who has served as a lawmaker, provincial governor and city mayor, is adored by supporters for his outspoken style and has long positioned himself as an anti-elitist. His critics view him as a populist who stokes division and demonizes conservative opponents while failing to offer realistic funding plans to achieve his ambitious goals.

Kweon Seong-dong, floor leader of the People Power Party and a staunch Yoon loyalist, said that if Lee becomes president, he will "ruthlessly wield the sword of dogmatism and retribution"

and further deepen the country's divisions.

Lee also has his own set of legal troubles, facing five different trials for corruption and other criminal charges.

Earlier this month, the Constitutional Court upheld Yoon's impeachment by the legislature and formally removed him from office over the martial law decree, triggering a presidential by-election within 60 days. The next president will serve a full 5-year term.

Former PPP leader Han Dong-hoon, who heads the party's anti-Yoon faction, was expected to announce his presidential bid on Thursday. Among the conservatives' presidential hopefuls, former Labor Minister Kim Moon Soo is considered to be the most pro-Yoon.

Kim, Daegu Mayor Hong Joon-pyo and senior PPP lawmaker Ahn Cheol-soo—a former computer software entrepreneur and three-time presidential candidate—have declared their intentions to run for president. Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon is expected to enter the race later. (AP)

## TAIWAN DETECTS 2 CHINESE AIRCRAFT SORTIES, SIX NAVAL VESSELS NEAR ITS TERRITORY

APR 11, 2025

**TAIPEI [TAIWAN] (TIP),** April 11 (ANI): Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) detected two sorties of People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft and six vessels from the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) operating around Taiwan until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) on Friday.

According to the MND, both aircraft sorties crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's southwestern and eastern Air Defence Identification Zones (ADIZ).

"2 sorties of PLA aircraft and 6 PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 2 out of 2 sorties crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's southwestern ADIZ. We have monitored the situation and responded accordingly," MND stated in an X post.

Meanwhile, the MND further reported the launch of Chinese satellites from Xichang Satellite Launch Centre, whose flight path was over central Taiwan towards the Western Pacific. However, it posed no threat, as its altitude was beyond the atmosphere as per MND.

"At 0:47 a.m. (UTC+8) today, China launched satellites from XSLC, with the flight path over central Taiwan toward the Western Pacific. The altitude is beyond the atmosphere, posing no threat. ROC Armed Forces monitored the process and remain ready to respond accordingly," MND further stated. (ANI)

## French President Macron's ally admits 'immense disappointment' over presidency

10 APR 2025

**PARIS (TIP):** France's parliamentary speaker has written of her "immense disappointment" over the methods used by President Emmanuel Macron -- an ally -- during his almost eight years in power.

Yael Braun-Pivet, a senior figure in Macron's centrist party, expressed the view in a book published on Thursday, becoming one of the first figures within the ruling elite to air such grievances publicly.

Her book, "A ma place" ("In my Place"), covers the challenges she faced on becoming the first woman speaker of the National Assembly and the sexism she had to overcome -- as well as her assessment of the president's style of rule.

"While I have immense respect for Emmanuel Macron, I can't help but also feel immense disappointment over the method," said Braun-Pivet.

"From the very beginning, there were insiders from the palace who managed to take control more easily by restricting



access for others," she said.

Such complaints have long circulated in Paris about Macron, but behind the scenes, never published openly by a Macron ally such as Braun-Pivet.

She accuses Macron's powerful chief of staff Alexis Kohler of seeking to

convince her not to stand for the post of speaker, followed by then prime minister Elisabeth Borne.

In 2017, a close Macron ally, Stephane Sejourne, who would later become a foreign minister and is now an EU commissioner, tried to insist she not take

a position at the head of a parliamentary commission, invoking sexist arguments including that she would not have time for her five children, she alleged.

In the book, Braun-Pivet gives no concrete hint over whether she could stand in France's 2027 presidential elections, in which Macron cannot compete because of a two-term limit.

But she stated that "women need to take the lead," and said she is determined to "fight... so that the Republican promise is kept for everyone".

Her intervention comes at a delicate time for Macron, who is seeking to regain fresh momentum domestically and internationally ahead of his final two years in office.

In a major change, Kohler is stepping down from the post he held since the head of state was first elected in 2017.

A series of articles in Le Monde in late 2024 accused Macron of making racist, homophobic and sexist remarks behind closed doors at the Elysee. His office vehemently rejected the allegations in the articles. (AP)



## EARTHQUAKE OF MAGNITUDE 4.1 JOLTS MYANMAR

APR 11, 2025

**NAYPYITAW [MYANMAR] (TIP),** April 11 (ANI): An earthquake of magnitude 4.1 on the Richter Scale jolted Myanmar on Friday, a statement by the National Center for Seismology (NCS) said.

The earthquake occurred at a shallow depth of 10km, making it susceptible to aftershocks.

In a post on X, the NCS said, "EQ of M: 4.1, On: 11/04/2025 08:02:14 IST, Lat: 18.34 N, Long: 95.89 E, Depth: 10 Km, Location: Myanmar."

India continues Operation Brahma in response to the deadly earthquake that took place in the region on March 28 and the country issued a rare plea for help.

The Indian assistance team assessed 6 sites in Naypyitaw on Thursday, the Indian Embassy in Myanmar said.

In a post on X, the Embassy said, "Widening Operation Brahma. After assessing 6 affected sites in Mandalay, the safety & demolition engineers team from India assessed 6 sites in Naypyitaw today. And an Orthopedic surgeon from our Medical team is assisting treatment of 70 patients at a Naypyitaw Hospital." (ANI)

## 'Tahawwur Rana helped co-conspirator David Headley obtain Indian visa'

11 APR 2025

**MUMBAI (TIP):** Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a key accused in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack case, had helped co-conspirator David Coleman Headley to obtain an Indian visa, a Mumbai police official familiar with the probe has said.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday evening formally arrested Rana, who was brought to India after being "successfully extradited" from the US.

A special court in Delhi subsequently remanded him in the custody of the agency for 18 days.

Rana had served in the Pakistan Army medical corps before emigrating to Canada in the late 1990s and started an immigration consultancy firm. He later moved to the US and set up an office in Chicago.

Through his firm, Rana gave cover to Headley to carry out a reconnaissance mission in Mumbai prior to the November 2008 attacks and helped him get a ten-year visa extension, the police official said on Thursday.

During his stay in India, Headley used the front of running an immigration business and was in regular contact with Rana.

There were more than 230 phone calls



between the two during this period, the official said.

Rana was also in touch with 'Major Iqbal', another co-conspirator of the attacks during this period, as per the NIA charge sheet.

Rana himself visited India in November 2008, days before the terror attack.

As per the charge sheet filed by Mumbai police against Rana in 2023 in the 26/11 attack case, he lived in a hotel in Powai and had a discussion about

crowded places in South Mumbai with a person who has been listed as a witness in the case.

Subsequently, some of these places were targeted by the Pakistani terrorists during the deadly attacks that claimed 166 lives.

The terrorists targeted multiple iconic locations in Mumbai, including the Taj Mahal and Oberoi hotels, Leopold Cafe, Chabad House and Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus train station, each of which Headley had scouted in advance (PTI)

## India ends trans-shipment facility for Bangladesh exports as Dhaka warms to China; Nepal, Bhutan exempted

09 APR 2025

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** India has revoked a key trans-shipment facility that permitted Bangladesh to export goods to third countries via Indian land customs stations. This decision follows remarks by Bangladesh's interim government chief adviser, Muhammad Yunus, during his recent visit to China.

Yunus described India's northeastern states as a "landlocked region with no access to the ocean" and portrayed Bangladesh as the "only guardian of the ocean in the region," suggesting this as an opportunity for China to extend its economic influence.

However, the External Affairs Ministry clarified that these measures do not affect Bangladesh's exports to Nepal or Bhutan transiting through Indian territory and explained that the decision was made due to logistical delays and higher costs, which were hindering India's own exports and causing backlogs.

"To clarify, these measures do not impact Bangladesh exports to Nepal or Bhutan transiting through Indian territory," he further said. The facility, introduced in June 2020, had streamlined trade for Bangladesh's exports to third countries including Bhutan, Nepal, and Myanmar. This move, which effectively cuts off access to Indian ports and airports for such shipments, comes at a time when the United States has imposed extensive reciprocal tariffs on several countries, including 37 per cent on Bangladesh.



"It has been decided to rescind the aforesaid Circular No. 29/2020-Customs dated 29.06.2020, as amended with immediate effect. Cargo already entered into India may be allowed to exit the Indian territory as per procedure given in the Circular No. 29/2020-Customs," the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs' circular, dated April 8, said.

The 2020 circular had permitted the trans-shipment of export cargo from Bangladesh to third countries through Indian Land Customs Stations (LCSs) on its way to Indian ports and airports.

Indian exporters, mostly those in the textile sector had previously urged the government to withdraw the facility, citing competitive concerns. Textile, mostly ready-made garments, account for 80 per cent of Bangladesh's total

exports.

Bangladesh is a big competitor of India in the textile sector.

"Now we will have more air capacity for our cargo. In the past, exporters have complained about lesser space due to the transshipment facility given to Bangladesh," Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Director General Ajay Sahai said.

### WHAT IS THE TRANS-SHIPMENT FACILITY?

The 2020 order by India's customs department allowed Bangladesh to export goods to third countries via the Delhi air cargo complex.

This gave Bangladeshi exporters easier access to countries in the neighbourhood like Nepal, Bhutan and

"THE TRANSSHIPMENT FACILITY EXTENDED TO BANGLADESH HAD OVER A PERIOD OF TIME RESULTED IN SIGNIFICANT CONGESTION AT OUR AIRPORTS AND PORTS. LOGISTICAL DELAYS AND HIGHER COSTS WERE HINDERING OUR OWN EXPORTS AND CREATING BACKLOGS. THE FACILITY, THEREFORE, HAS BEEN WITHDRAWN WITH EFFECT FROM APRIL 8, 2025," EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON RANDHIR JAISWAL SAID.

Myanmar.

However, it led to greater congestion at the cargo terminal at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi, delaying shipments of Indian goods and leading to a rise in air freight rates for Indian exporters.

The move by India to cancel the facility is likely to raise the costs of Bangladeshi exports to these countries and increase the transit time, making them less competitive. (ANI)





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# Stop the skin-ageing process

No matter how old you become, you still feel like a young version of yourself. This is the view most psychologists have. When we age and look at ourselves in the mirror, there is a sense of shock and disbelief. "I am supposed to be 25. Where did those wrinkles come from?" How does one reconcile the self-image with reality? The rise of anti-ageing technology and therapies allow us to recapture our youthful look. Ageing cannot be stopped entirely but there are means to help reduce its ravages.

## More than skin deep

Where do the signs of ageing show up? The skin is divided into three layers—the epidermis, the dermis and the subcutaneous layer—and no layer is spared the effects of time. As we age, the skin cells become less regulated. Our epidermal barrier weakens, our melanocytes behave badly, and our skin stops looking supple, bright and clear. We get freckles or age spots, pigmentation, and the skin gets dry and sensitive, and dull. This all occurs in the epidermis and dermis. Then as our fibroblasts also become less effective, collagen and elastin, the building blocks of youthful skin, are produced less, and what is still there becomes damaged. There are pores and fine lines and the skin texture deteriorates. The skin starts to sag and the facial fat reduces. Now when you are trying to look younger, you have to reverse the signs of ageing on all three layers.

## The art of reverse ageing

To improve the intrinsic youthfulness of the skin and keep the epidermis and dermis looking bright and clear, good genes therapy is a must. Now what is this? A combination of micro dermabrasion, micro needling, vacuum assisted vitamin infusion and LED, the therapy stimulates the same collagen we had as a baby. It also helps the skin cells regulate themselves so they stop behaving badly. A course of the therapy can help your



skin regain its natural youth and suppleness while also improving pigmentation, pores, lines and glow. So, consider this the basic foundation of your anti ageing routine.

Now it's time to go a little deeper. Those deep lines, larger pores and deeper discolourations need stronger results. So, look for therapies such as focus toning, CLAD, or simple PHOTOHD photo facials. These will target errant pigmentation while also boosting collagen secretion making your skin significantly clearer, without lines and pores. For those with severe lines that occur when you use muscles such as the frown lines, forehead lines, and crow's feet, you can consider botox done every three to six months.

Finally, let's get down to the deepest layer. Sagging affects us all and those horrid lines near our mouths, deep under eye circles, thinning lips, the loss of our jawline and the appearance of neck lines reveal our age to all those around us. Look for therapies that target collagen in the deepest layers such as ulthera and thermanite.

## Habits that can make you look younger

Forget aging gracefully—here's how to age youthfully. Keep a healthy glow, a spring in your step, and a radiant appearance with tips from the experts.

### Smile, wide

Young, middle-aged, and older individuals studied thousands of photographs and were asked to guess the age of models with various facial expressions. Neutral expressions yielded the most accurate results, and fearful expressions made subjects look older; happy faces were rated as younger than they really were.

### Eat more grapes

Sorbitol, which gives grapes, berries, plums, and pears their sweetness, is a humectant, a substance that attracts water when applied to the skin, helping it absorb and retain moisture. That's one of the reasons why grapes are among the 30+ foods that are even better for you than you realized.

### Cleanse and moisturize regularly

Cleansing and moisturizing helps protect skin and keep it healthy; but banish regular soap, which can be drying for older skin. Instead, use a cleanser that gently washes without stripping skin of its natural moisture. Avoid skin toners, especially those with a stringent or alcohol base. Follow with a good moisturizer, morning and night.

### Give yourself a hand or two

A study showed that people could accurately guess women's ages by looking at their hands. Use a good



hand cream frequently, preferably one that contains SPF for daytime. Brighten dull hands by exfoliating regularly: Mix sea salt with lemon juice and gently scrub into your hands with a soft toothbrush.

### Eat more greens and reds

Vitamin K—in kale and other green vegetables—helps your blood coagulate, reducing the impact of bruising. Lycopene in tomatoes gives the skin powerful protection against UV rays. Fruit and veggie consumption resulted in better skin complexion, according to a study.

## FOOD CORNER



## Murgh Musallam

### Ingredients

- 3 pounds (1.5 kilograms) chicken (thigh fillet, cut into 2-inch cubes), 2 green chilies, 20 cloves garlic
- 2 3-inch ginger, 1 teaspoon garam masala, 1 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 cup plain yogurt, 1 teaspoon red chili powder, 6 cardamom pods (large and brown/ badi elaichi)
- 10 cloves, 1 stick cinnamon, 10 peppercorns
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds, 2 teaspoons coriander seeds
- 15 almonds (blanched)
- 12 to 15 tablespoons oil
- 3 large onions (very thinly sliced)
- 3 tablespoons tomato purée
- 2 teaspoons salt (or to taste)
- 2 tablespoons cilantro (fresh, chopped)

### Method

- Put the chicken into a large, deep, non-metallic mixing bowl.
- Grind the green chilies, half the garlic cloves, and 1 of the pieces of ginger into a smooth paste in a food processor.
- Mix this paste with the garam masala powder, 3/4 tsp of salt, turmeric powder, yogurt, and half of the red chili powder. Mix well to make the marinade for the chicken.
- Pour the marinade over the chicken and mix well to coat the pieces completely. Keep aside for later.
- While the chicken is marinating, heat a shallow pan or griddle on medium heat and when hot, roast the cloves, peppercorns, cinnamon, badi elaichi, blanched almonds, cumin seeds, and coriander seeds on it. Stir frequently until the spices begin to turn slightly darker in color. Take off from heat and allow to cool.
- Now heat 4 tablespoons of the vegetable cooking oil in a deep pan, on medium heat. When hot, add the sliced onions and the remaining half of the garlic to it. Sauté, stirring frequently, until the onions are pale golden in color. Use a slotted spoon to drain the onions and garlic and remove them from the oil. We will use this remaining oil and pan again a little later.
- Put the fried onions and garlic into a food processor along with the above-roasted spices and the remaining piece of ginger. Grind to a thick, smooth paste, only adding water as required to facilitate the grinding.
- Now (using the same pan you used to fry the onions), add 4 tablespoons of cooking oil to the pan and set up on medium heat. Brown only the pieces of chicken (in batches), reserving the marinade for later use. When this is done, keep the chicken aside. Add 2 to 3 tablespoons more of the cooking oil and when it is hot, add the ground paste you made above.
- Sauté for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring continuously. Add the marinade, chicken pieces, tomato puree, remaining red chili powder, and salt to taste. Add 1/2 cup of hot water and stir well.
- Reduce heat to a simmer and cook until chicken is tender—most of the liquid will have dried up.
- Garnish your Murg Musallam with chopped, fresh coriander leaves and serve with jeera rice and a salad! Naan bread also goes brilliantly with Murg Musallam!



# Vitamin D and gut health: Why it matters for kids and teens

You've likely heard about vitamin D's important role in maintaining strong bones and teeth. But it also plays several other important roles to keep your body healthy – including the function of your gut.

As part of our research on how a dietary fiber supplement affects bone mass in children and adolescents, the MetA-Bone Trial, we are also studying gut health.

For this study, we recruited 213 children and adolescents from South Florida, primarily Hispanics, though some were Black. Before having them start taking the fiber supplement, we measured their vitamin D levels to ensure they had adequate amounts. Surprisingly, we found that 68% of these children had suboptimal vitamin D levels.

Considering South Florida is an area with plenty of sunshine year-round, this was both startling and concerning. While vitamin D can be obtained from foods, most people in the US get this vitamin primarily from skin exposure to sunlight. For youth approaching or experiencing puberty – a period of profound physiological changes, including rapid changes in bone mass – vitamin D deficiency could lead to several health issues.

Vitamin D is involved in so many bodily functions because there are vitamin D receptors in different organs. These receptors act like docking stations for vitamin D to bind to and trigger different effects in the skin, intestine, bone, parathyroid gland, immune system and pancreas, among others.

Vitamin D regulates calcium levels in the body, which is key for not only building and maintaining bone mass but also the basic functioning of the nervous system.

Vitamin D also stimulates cell differentiation, a process in which cells become specialised to carry out specific functions. It is also essential to insulin secretion to control blood sugar levels, blood pressure regulation, muscle repair and regeneration, immune function and nutrient absorption, among many other functions.

The vitamin D receptors in your gut improve calcium absorption and strengthen your intestinal barrier.

The intestinal barrier is a layered wall that allows your gut to absorb nutrients and keep out harmful bacteria. This wall is composed of intestinal cells and



proteins called tight junctions that act like bricks sealing these cells together. Tight junctions play an important role in maintaining the structure of your intestinal barrier.

Vitamin D receptors help your gut produce tight junctions to maintain your intestinal barrier. Research suggests that vitamin D deficiency reduces production of the receptors the nutrient binds to, subsequently reducing the seal of the intestinal wall.

This weakening of the gut barrier may allow substances from the intestine to pass into the blood, causing inflammation. Disruption of the intestinal barrier is linked to many diseases, including liver disease, Type 1 diabetes, obesity and gastrointestinal conditions such as celiac disease, inflammatory bowel disease and colon cancer.

After discovering that so many of the participants in our MetA-Bone Trial had suboptimal vitamin D levels, we became interested in understanding how this nutrient might be affecting their gut health. For this, we also measured the strength of their intestinal barrier and associated this to their vitamin D levels in blood.

We found that children with suboptimal vitamin D levels had a higher risk of damaging their intestinal barrier compared with children with optimal vitamin D levels. This finding suggests that even in healthy children, suboptimal levels of vitamin D may compromise the gut and potentially increase the risk of developing chronic diseases at an early age.

Source: PTI



## Are afternoon naps bad for you? Here's what science says

In the afternoon, many people see a normal dip in alertness, mostly between 1 pm to 4 pm. Though some believe it's because of a heavy lunch, experts reveal that the body naturally undergoes cycles of wakefulness and tiredness throughout the day.

The body clock usually experiences a time of fatigue during early afternoon. Studies suggest that to counteract this period, a short nap not just boosts alertness, it also improves cognitive function.

These "power naps" helps the brain to rest without slipping into deep sleep.

But there's a catch: napping too long could result in waking up feeling worse than before. The duration of these naps plays a crucial role in determining their benefits and potential drawbacks.

Taking an afternoon nap can boost energy and focus, but if it's too long, it might do more harm than good. Sleeping for more than 30 minutes can lead to "sleep inertia", that heavy, groggy feeling after waking up from deep sleep.

This can leave you feeling more tired and confused than before, especially if you need to do something important right after.

Once a nap goes beyond half an hour, your brain enters deep sleep.

Waking up during this stage can make you feel sluggish for up to an hour. Also, napping too late in the day can make it harder to fall asleep at night.

Research backs up the benefits of short naps. NASA found that a 26-minute nap improved alertness in flight crews by 54% and boosted performance by 34%.

Athletes often nap to help their muscles recover and to improve reaction time and stamina.

People in high-stress jobs, like doctors and pilots, also use short naps to stay sharp and avoid mistakes.

Experts say the best naps last 10 to 20 minutes and should happen before 2 pm. A cool, dark, and quiet place is ideal. If that's not possible, eye masks and noise-cancelling headphones can help.

But napping isn't for everyone, according to Talar Moukhtarian, Assistant Professor in Mental Health, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, who wrote in The Conversation.

## Natural ways to prevent nighttime heartburn

Nighttime heartburn, also known as nocturnal acid reflux, can rob you of quality sleep and leave you feeling groggy and uncomfortable the next day. It occurs when stomach acid flows back into the esophagus, causing a burning sensation in the chest. While over-the-counter medications can help, many people prefer natural remedies to avoid dependency and side effects. Here's a look at safe, effective ways to prevent nighttime heartburn naturally.



acid leakage into the esophagus. This position helps keep your stomach below your esophagus, aided by gravity.

### Chew Food Thoroughly

Proper chewing aids digestion and reduces the workload on your stomach, lowering the chances of acid reflux.

### Aloe Vera Juice

A small amount of aloe vera juice before meals may soothe the esophagus and reduce inflammation. Be sure to choose a decolorized, purified product that is safe for internal use.

### Deglycyrrhizinated Licorice (DGL)

DGL is a supplement made from licorice root that helps increase the mucus lining of the esophagus, offering protection from acid. It's best taken chewed 20 minutes before meals.

### Elevate Your Upper Body While Sleeping

Gravity is your friend when it comes to preventing acid reflux. Elevating the head of your bed by 6-8 inches or using a wedge pillow can stop stomach acid from flowing upward during the night.

### Sleep on Your Left Side

Sleeping on your left side reduces the likelihood of

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## Google fixes Android security flaws actively exploited in targeted attacks by hackers

Google has released fixes for two security bugs in Android devices that were found to have been actively exploited, which means that hackers used these vulnerabilities to gain access to Android systems.

The security flaws “may be under limited, targeted exploitation,” Google said in a security bulletin published on the Android blog on Monday, April 7.

Since the hackers may have exploited the Android security bugs before developers knew about it and released patches for it, the security attack could be termed as a zero-day attack. Google also suggested that one of the two security flaws was a zero-click vulnerability, meaning that user interaction was not required to compromise the security of targeted Android devices.

“The most severe of these issues is a critical security vulnerability in the System component that could lead to remote escalation of privilege with no additional execution privileges needed,” the security bulletin read.

Google further said that source code patches for these issues will be released to the Android Open Source Project (AOSP) repository in the next 48 hours. Android partners are generally notified of all such issues at least a month before a security bulletin is released, it added.

The second zero-day security flaw termed as ‘CVE-2024-53197’ was also flagged by Google’s security team that primarily monitors State-backed cyberattacks. This vulnerability was reportedly found in the kernel or core of the Android operating system.

# AI isn’t what we should be worried about - it’s the humans controlling it

In 2014, Stephen Hawking voiced grave warnings about the threats of artificial intelligence.

His concerns were not based on any anticipated evil intent, though. Instead, it was from the idea of AI achieving “singularity.” This refers to the point when AI surpasses human intelligence and achieves the capacity to evolve beyond its original programming, making it uncontrollable.

As Hawking theorised, “a super intelligent AI will be extremely good at accomplishing its goals, and if those goals aren’t aligned with ours, we’re in trouble.” With rapid advances toward artificial general intelligence over the past few years, industry leaders and scientists have expressed similar misgivings about safety.

A commonly expressed fear as depicted in “The Terminator” franchise is the scenario of AI gaining control over military systems and instigating a nuclear war to wipe out humanity. Less sensational, but devastating on an individual level, is the prospect of AI replacing us in our jobs – a prospect leaving most people obsolete and with no future.

Such anxieties and fears reflect feelings that have been prevalent in film and literature for over a century now.

As a scholar who explores post-humanism, a philosophical movement addressing the merging of humans and technology, I wonder if critics have been unduly influenced by popular culture, and whether their apprehensions are misplaced.

### Robots vs humans

Concerns about technological advances can be found in some of the



first stories about robots and artificial minds.

Prime among these is Karel Capek’s 1920 play, “R U R”. Capek coined the term “robot” in this work telling of the creation of robots to replace workers. It ends, inevitably, with the robot’s violent revolt against their human masters.

Fritz Lang’s 1927 film, “Metropolis,” is likewise centred on mutinous robots. But here, it is human workers led by the iconic humanoid robot Maria who fight against a capitalist oligarchy.

Advances in computing from the mid-20th century onward have only heightened anxieties over technology spiraling out of control. The murderous HAL 9000 in “2001: A Space Odyssey” and the glitchy robotic gunslingers of “Westworld” are prime examples.

The “Blade Runner” and “The Matrix” franchises similarly present dreadful images of sinister machines equipped with AI and hell-bent on human destruction.

### An age-old threat

But in my view, the dread that AI evokes seems a distraction from the more disquieting scrutiny of humanity’s own dark nature.

Think of the corporations currently

deploying such technologies, or the tech moguls driven by greed and a thirst for power. These companies and individuals have the most to gain from AI’s misuse and abuse.

An issue that’s been in the news a lot lately is the unauthorised use of art and the bulk mining of books and articles, disregarding the copyright of authors, to train AI. Classrooms are also becoming sites of chilling surveillance through automated AI note-takers.

Think, too, about the toxic effects of AI companions and AI-equipped sexbots on human relationships.

While the prospect of AI companions and even robotic lovers was confined to the realm of “The Twilight Zone,” “Black Mirror” and Hollywood sci-fi as recently as a decade ago, it has now emerged as a looming reality.

These developments give new relevance to the concerns computer scientist Illah Nourbakhsh expressed in his 2015 book “Robot Futures,” stating that AI was “producing a system whereby our very desires are manipulated then sold back to us.” Meanwhile, worries about data mining and intrusions into privacy appear almost benign against the backdrop of the use of AI technology in law enforcement and the military. In this near-dystopian context, it’s never been easier for authorities to surveil, imprison or kill people.

I think it’s vital to keep in mind that it is humans who are creating these technologies and directing their use. Whether to promote their political aims or simply to enrich themselves at humanity’s expense, there will always be those ready to profit from conflict and human suffering. *Source: PTI*

## Selling your old laptop or phone? You might be handing over your data too

You’re about to recycle your laptop or your phone, so you delete all your photos and personal files. Maybe you even reset the device to factory settings. You probably think your sensitive data is now safe. But there is more to be done: hackers may still be able to retrieve passwords, documents or bank details, even after a reset.

In fact, 90% of second-hand laptops, hard drives and memory cards still contain recoverable data. This indicates that many consumers fail to wipe their devices properly before resale or disposal.

But there are some simple steps you can take to keep your personal information safe while recycling responsibly.

Discarded or resold electronics often retain sensitive personal and corporate information. Simply deleting files or performing a factory reset may not be sufficient. Data can often be easily

recovered using specialised tools. This oversight has led to alarming incidents of data leaks and breaches.

Why standard factory resets are not enough Many people believe performing a factory reset fully erases their data. But this is not always the case.

An analysis of secondhand mobile devices found that 35% still contained recoverable data after being reset and resold. This highlights the risks of relying solely on factory resets.

On older devices or those without encryption, residual data can still be recovered using forensic tools.

iPhones use hardware encryption, making resets more effective, while Android devices vary by manufacturer.

### Best practices for secure disposal

To protect your personal and organisational information, consider these measures before disposing of old devices: Data wiping



Personal users should use data-wiping software to securely erase their hard drive before selling or recycling a device.

However, for solid-state drives, traditional wiping methods may not be effective. This is because solid-state drives store data using flash memory and algorithms, which prolong a device’s lifespan by distributing data across memory cells and can prevent direct overwriting.

Instead, enabling full-disk encryption with software such as BitLocker on Windows or FileVault on Mac before resetting the device can help to ensure data is unreadable.

On Android phones, apps such as Shreddit provide secure data-wiping options. iPhones already encrypt data by default, making a full reset the most effective way to erase information.

Businesses that handle customer data, financial records or intellectual property must comply with data protection regulations. They could use certified data-wiping tools that meet the United States National Institute of Standards and Technology’s guidelines for media sanitisation or the US Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers’ standard for sanitising storage. These guidelines are globally recognised.

Many companies also choose third-party data destruction services to verify compliance and enhance security.



# With a 104% tariff on China, Trump's trade war begins

US President Donald Trump's sweeping "reciprocal" tariffs—most notably a stunning 104% levy on Chinese imports—came into force on Wednesday, April 9, starting a global trade war, shaking markets, triggering alarm from economists, and creating fissures within the Republican Party.

In response, China is raising its retaliatory tariff on US goods to 84%, up from 34%, effective April 10, the finance ministry said on Wednesday. "The tariff escalation against China by the United States simply piles mistakes on top of mistakes (and) severely infringes on China's legitimate rights and interests," the ministry said. The ministry emphasized its resolve, saying, "If the US insists on further escalating its economic and trade restrictions, China has the firm will and abundant means to take necessary countermeasures and fight to the end."

So far, Chinese President Xi Jinping has not shown any interest in bargaining with Trump.

## Why it matters

Trump's trade war isn't just an economic experiment—it's a full-blown political gamble that may unravel his presidency, the Republican hold on Congress, and the global trade system built after World War II.

"Unless he suddenly changes direction, which is unlikely, Donald Trump is committing political suicide," writes economist Swaminathan Aiyar in *The Economic Times*, calling it a "Riveting Political Suicide Show." "Such an outcome is to be wished devoutly," writes Aiyar. "It will mean the end not just of Trump, but of Trumpism."

The tariffs, billed by Trump as a righteous strike against "unfair" trade, are already causing deep economic reverberations, with Wall Street crashing, Treasury yields surging, and even Trump loyalists expressing discomfort.

Senator Ted Cruz warned the fallout



could be a "blood bath" for Republicans in the 2026 midterms, paving the way for Democratic control of both houses. That, he said, would cripple Trump's presidency in its final two years and potentially spark a rebellion within the GOP itself.

Former treasury secretary Larry Summers issued a starker warning: the tariffs are likely to induce a US recession, potentially costing 2 million jobs and \$5,000 per family in lost household income.

Trump tariffs may hit China's GDP growth, which will impact global trade.

## The big picture

Markets in meltdown: Hedge fund titan Bill Ackman called the tariff math "stupidity." JPMorgan's Jamie Dimon warned in his investor letter that a recession is now probable. BlackRock's Larry Fink was even blunter: "The economy is weakening as we speak."

China's counteroffensive: Beijing accused Washington of "bullying practices" and vowed "firm and forceful" retaliation. It may ban key US imports—like poultry, soybeans, and Hollywood films—and cut cooperation on fentanyl

and IP protection.

Allies alienated: Even countries with zero tariffs on US goods—like Israel—have been slapped with new duties. Others like Vietnam and Taiwan offered to reduce their tariffs to zero, only to be rebuffed.

Trump's trade logic is simple but dangerous: Any bilateral trade deficit implies unfair trade. Economists call this "economic illiteracy."

## Between the lines

Trump believes tariffs will fund income tax cuts, restore US manufacturing, and create a new economic order with the US at the helm.

He's openly idolized President William McKinley, who funded federal spending in the 1890s entirely through import duties. Trump's team estimates \$600 billion in tariff revenue—enough to slash or eliminate income taxes. But this assumes imports don't collapse, which contradicts Trump's goal of reducing them. A classic contradiction.

"He cannot both slash imports and gain massive tariff revenue," notes Aiyar. "None in the Cabinet dares tell

## RBI lowers GDP growth projection to 6.5% for FY26

The Reserve Bank on Wednesday cut India's growth forecast to 6.5 percent from 6.7 percent estimated earlier for the current financial year on account of impact of global trade and policy uncertainties.

Prospects of agriculture sector remain bright on the back of healthy reservoir levels and robust crop production in 2025-26, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said while unveiling the outcome of the first bi-monthly Monetary Policy Committee meeting for the current financial year.

Manufacturing activity is showing signs of revival with business expectations remaining robust, while services sector activity continues to be resilient, he said.

Investment activity has gained traction and it is expected to improve further on the back of sustained higher capacity utilisation, government's continued thrust on infrastructure spending, healthy balance sheets of banks and corporates, along with the easing of financial conditions, he said.

"Merchandise exports will be weighed down by global uncertainties, while services exports are expected to remain resilient. Headwinds from global trade disruptions continue to pose downward risks," he said.

Taking all these factors into consideration, he said, real GDP growth for 2025-26 is now projected at 6.5 per cent, with Q1 at 6.5 per cent; Q2 at 6.7 per cent; Q3 at 6.6 per cent; and Q4 at 6.3 per cent.

"While the risks are evenly balanced around these baseline projections, uncertainties remain high in the wake of the recent spike in global volatility. It may be noted that the growth projection for the current year has been marked down by 20 basis points relative to our earlier assessment of 6.7 per cent in the February policy," he said.

This downward revision essentially reflects the impact of global trade and policy uncertainties, he said.

# Home, vehicle loans to become cheaper as India's central bank cuts repo rate

Home, auto and other loans are likely to cost less as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cut interest rates on Wednesday for a second consecutive time and signalled more easing to come as it sought to bolster the economy that is facing further pressure from damaging US tariffs.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), consisting of three central bank members and an equal number of external members, voted unanimously to cut the repurchase or repo rate by 25 basis points to 6 per cent. It had reduced rates by an equal measure in February—the first cut since May 2020.



The repo rate is the rate at which the RBI lends money to banks to meet their short-term funding needs. With a 25 bps

cut in the repo rate, all external benchmark lending rates (EBLR) linked to it will come down. And if the banks fully pass on this to the borrowers, equated monthly instalments (EMIs) on home, auto and personal loans will decline by 25 bps.

The move lowers borrowing costs to the lowest level since November 2022, amid easing inflation and a fall in oil prices.

RBI changed its policy stance to "accommodative" from "neutral", indicating the possibility of more rate cuts in future, Governor Sanjay Malhotra said while announcing the

MPC decisions.

The rate cut came on a day when the full 26 per cent additional tariffs on Indian goods exported to the US came into effect. The US tariffs exacerbate uncertainties, with some economists predicting a 20-40 basis point drag on Indian GDP growth in the current fiscal year that started on April 1.

RBI also lowered its estimate for economic growth to 6.5 per cent for 2025-26 fiscal year from 6.7 per cent earlier. The inflation projection was also lowered to 4 per cent from 4.2 per cent, keeping it within the target range of 2-6 per cent.



## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - APRIL 14, 2025 TO APRIL 20, 2025

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA



## ARIES

Ganesha says this week will be full of new opportunities for you. Your confidence will increase, which will prove to be helpful in both personal and professional spheres. Your problems at the workplace will be resolved, and your hard work will pay off. In social life, you will be active and will be able to build new relationships. Spending time with friends and family will make you happy. However, some fluctuations in emotional state are possible. Talking to someone close will give you mental relief. It is important to be health conscious. Regular exercise and adopting the right diet will increase energy. Overall, this week is a sign of hope and positivity for you. Go ahead and recognize your possibilities!



## TAURUS

Ganesha says this week is likely to bring positive changes in your life. You will be able to strike a balance between your personal and professional life. Your solid decisions and hard work will take you forward. You will also get a good opportunity to spend time with family, which will strengthen your relationship even more. Your financial condition may improve, but it is important to maintain control over expenses. Pay attention to work-related issues, as your dormant skills may come to light now. There will be an opportunity to unleash your creativity, so don't miss it. Be health conscious and take up yoga or meditation to avoid mental stress. Take care of your emotional state and seek support from your loved ones when needed. This week will be a good opportunity for your personal growth, so move forward with positivity.



## GEMINI

Ganesha says this week's horoscope for Gemini is quite encouraging. There will be clarity in your thoughts and you will be able to take your creativity to new heights. This is the time to pursue your interests and complete the projects you are already working on. Activities will also increase in social life, which will provide opportunities to make new contacts and friendships. Your communication skills will be very impressive at this time, which will allow you to put your point across to others in a precise manner. Personal relationships will be stable, but this is the right time to improve some issues. Communicate with those with whom you have been away for some time; this conversation can help



## CANCER

Ganesha says this week many positive changes will come in your life. This is the time to focus on your health and well-being; you can achieve mental peace through meditation and yoga. Spending time with family members will help you strengthen your relationships. On the work front, collaborating with colleagues will bring success to your projects. Your communication skills will be sharp this week, which you will be able to benefit from in both personal and professional spheres. This is a good time for new ideas and plans, so do not hesitate to share your thoughts. However, you are likely to be a little sensitive emotionally. Give yourself time to improve your state of mind. Some old worries may bother you but try to keep yourself positive. Self-love and meditation will be important for you during this period. Amidst all this, don't forget to enjoy the little joys. This week is a time of growth and new possibilities for you.



## LEO

Ganesha says this week, many exciting opportunities will come your way. Trust your confidence as your leadership skills and creativity are set to touch new heights. Your efforts at work will be appreciated, which will make you feel more positive energy. Your social life will also be bustling. Try to spend time with friends and family as it will be beneficial for your mental health. Clarity and courage in your conversations can make you an inspiration among others. Personal relationships are also likely to improve. If you are thinking of connecting with someone special, then this is the right time. Do not hesitate to express your feelings as it can make your relationship even stronger. Take time to give yourself some rest at the end of the week. Meditation and yoga will help you maintain your mental balance. Keep the fire within you burning this week, and see how all your plans come to fruition.



## VIRGO

Ganesha says this week indicates prosperity and growth. Your hard work at the workplace is likely to be rewarded, which will make you feel content and confident. During this time, you will be inspired to adopt new ideas, which will further enhance your creativity. In your personal life, this is a good opportunity to spend time with your loved ones. Promote openness and understanding in conversations with

family members. Strengthening communication will make relationships even sweeter. In terms of health, a little harder work and attention will be required. Focus on regular exercise and a balanced diet. Practice activities like meditation and yoga for mental health. This week will allow you to re-establish your goals. Whatever decision you make will have an impact on your future. Move forward with positive thinking and face challenges with confidence. Remember, every day brings a new opportunity. Believe in your abilities and keep moving forward.



## LIBRA

Ganesha says this week will be very positive and encouraging for Libra. You will get the fruits of your dedication and hard work, which will increase your confidence. You will be able to balance your personal and professional life. Social contacts will increase, and you will get a chance to spend time with your friends and family. You may also make some new friends. There will be novelty and creativity in your thoughts, which can lead you to new opportunities. This week will also be good in terms of health. Doing meditation and yoga will give mental peace. But take time to relax to relieve mental stress. Your work will be appreciated in your professional life, which will open the way for progress in your career. Do not delay in sharing your ideas and suggestions. This week indicates a new beginning for you, in which you can work to fulfil your wishes. This time is very suitable for realizing your dreams.



## SCORPIO

Ganesha says this week you are going to see many new opportunities and directions. Your hard work and dedication can give you pleasant results. On an emotional level, this is the time to spend some time with your loved ones. If you are in a relationship, it is necessary to strengthen communication. Express your thoughts and feelings openly. This week there may be challenges in the workplace, but the line in your horoscope will help you maintain your confidence. Focus on your work and try to solve problems with positivity. In terms of health, there is a need to be a little cautious. Yoga and meditation will give you mental peace and energy. Have faith in yourself and maintain a positive attitude this week. This will be the key to your success.



## SAGITTARIUS

Ganesha says this week, Sagittarius natives are in for a new start. Your ideas and positive attitude will make your interactions with other people more enjoyable. Your ideas will be appreciated at the workplace and collaborations with colleagues will bring satisfactory results. For businessmen, this is the time to

consider investments and new projects. If you are working on a new idea, believe in yourself and move forward. Your strength and creativity will bring you success this week. In personal life, harmony and love will increase in relationships. Try to spend time with your loved ones, as it will increase your emotional stability. Interact with family members and share good moments with them. In terms of health, take care of regular exercise and a balanced diet. Resort to meditation or yoga to avoid mental stress. Overall, this week is for you to enjoy new opportunities and positive changes. Channel your energy in the right direction, and keep moving forward.



## CAPRICORN

Ganesha says this week, Capricorn natives will have a generally positive atmosphere. You are expected to get some new opportunities in your workplace. Your hard work and dedication will be appreciated this week, which will enable you to make a special place among your colleagues. This is a good time for your relationships. Spending time with family and increasing mutual communication will make you happy. The health and educational progress of children can make you happy. There is a need to be careful in terms of health. A little carelessness can make you feel tired. Regular exercise and a balanced diet will be beneficial for you. Financially, your hard work done in the last months will now pay off, which will improve your financial condition. Keep your entire focus on creating a balance between your work and personal life. This week will fill you with new possibilities and positive experiences.



## AQUARIUS

Ganesha says this week will be a time of positivity for you. Your creativity and thoughtfulness will give rise to new opportunities. Your participation in social activities will give you a chance to make new friends. Keep in mind this week that it is important to express your thoughts in the right way. People around you will be able to understand your vision and appreciate your ideas. From a business point of view, good conditions are being created to participate in some new projects. Along with hard work, be patient as well, because success will come gradually. In financial matters, take steps carefully before making decisions. In personal life, there will be harmony in relationships. Promote communication with your partner; this will deepen the understanding between you. In terms of health, give priority to mental health and resort to ways to reduce stress. This week, a new path is likely to open toward fulfilling your hopes and dreams. Emphasize positive thinking and welcome new opportunities.



## BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : APRIL 14 TO APRIL 20 BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

### APRIL 14

Ganesha says today is a day of boundless creativity and unwavering ambition for you. Your imagination knows no limits, and you have the power to transform your ideas into reality. Embrace the challenges you face, for they will only fuel your determination. Remember to balance your work and personal life to ensure long-term success and fulfilment.

### APRIL 15

Ganesha says your magnetic personality shines brightly today, as you are destined to lead with confidence and enthusiasm. Others are naturally drawn to your charisma and energy. Trust your instincts and make use of your natural organizational skills to bring structure to your endeavors. Take some time to rest and recharge, as it is essential to maintain your energy levels.

### APRIL 16

Ganesha says your wisdom and intuition are your greatest assets today.

Trust the deep understanding you possess and let it guide your actions. Your empathetic nature and ability to connect with others will lead you to success. Embrace your inner wisdom and use it to make thoughtful decisions. Remember to engage in self-reflection and self-care to nurture your intuitive gifts.

### APRIL 17

Ganesha says today, your attention to detail and practicality will set you apart from the crowd. You have a keen eye for opportunities and a knack for finding efficient solutions. Embrace your analytical nature and let it guide your decision-making process. Your dedication and discipline will pave the way for success. Stay adaptable and open to new ideas while maintaining your methodical approach.

### APRIL 18

Ganesha says today, your charismatic and charming aura will captivate those around you. Your words hold immense

power, and you can inspire and uplift others. Embrace your gift of expression and use it to spread positivity. Your optimistic outlook will help you overcome challenges with ease. Remember to stay true to yourself and maintain authenticity as you navigate through life's adventures.

### APRIL 19

Ganesha says today, your nurturing and compassionate nature will be your guiding light. You have a natural ability to provide comfort and support to those in need. Embrace your empathetic qualities and let them shine through your actions. Your intuition will be your trusted companion as you navigate through complex situations. Remember to prioritize self-care alongside caring for others, as your well-being is equally important.

### APRIL 20

Ganesha says today, your adventurous spirit and thirst for knowledge will lead you on a remarkable journey. Embrace



VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR  
BEJAN DARUWALLA

your love for learning and exploration, as they are your keys to personal and professional growth. Your adaptability will be your greatest asset, allowing you to thrive in new and unfamiliar situations. Remember to celebrate each milestone along the way and enjoy the beauty of the journey itself.

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### CONTD FROM PAGE 34

### PISCES

Ganesha says this week has many possibilities for you, Pisces. You will try to establish harmony in your personal and professional life. This is the time to express your thoughts and feelings clearly, as communicating with others will create new opportunities. Your creativity will be at its peak this week. If you are into art or any creative project, this can be a particularly fruitful time for you. Bring out the artist in you and use your talent. There will be happiness in family life. By participating in group activities, you can strengthen your close relationships. If there was an old problem, then the time has come to solve it. It is important to be health conscious. Include yoga and meditation in your routine, it will give you mental peace and freshness. You will also get opportunities to make new friends in social life. People will be attracted to you due to your open and sympathetic nature. This week, the doors of new possibilities will open for you, so



new opportunities. Your creativity will be at its peak this week. If you are into art or any creative project, this can be a particularly fruitful time for you. Bring out the artist in you and use your talent. There will be happiness in family life. By participating in group activities, you can strengthen your close relationships. If there was an old problem, then the time has come to solve it. It is important to be health conscious. Include yoga and meditation in your routine, it will give you mental peace and freshness. You will also get opportunities to make new friends in social life. People will be attracted to you due to your open and sympathetic nature. This week, the doors of new possibilities will open for you, so

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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](http://chiragdaruwalla.com). He is available for consultations on WhatsApp number +91 8141566266 or by email: info@chiragdaruwalla.com



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# Sikh History This Week

## APRIL 11 TO APRIL 17

### 11th April

1748a Jassa Singh Ahluwalia killed Salabat Khan, then Governor of Amritsar. Diwan Kodha murdered Lakhat Rai on April 13, 1748 and an intense battle erupted among the Manawala and Deburji.

Sardar Kapur Singh moved with his forces towards Lahore. Meanwhile whatever Jagir that fell into the hands of the Sikhs was used for Guru Ka Langar.

1748b Meer Manu became Punjab's Governor.

1762 Ahmed Shah Abdali blew off Sri Harmandir Sahib, desecrated and filled the sarovar (sacred tank) with garbage.

In 1755, Ahmad Shah Abdali attacked India for the fourth time. After looting Mathura, Bindraban, Agra, and Delhi, he brought back jewelry, gold and thousands of young Hindu men and women. In order to liberate the enslaved Hindus, Baba Deep Singh and his associates attacked Durani near Peepli and Markanda (now in Haryana). The infuriated Abdali, made his son, Tamur Shah, as the subedar of Punjab and Jahan Khan as his General. He ordered them to kill all Sikhs and demolish Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. Following orders, Jahan Khan went to Amritsar with heavy artillery. Baba Gurbaksh Singh along with 30 other Sikhs fought back, but unfortunately, Jahan Khan demolished Darbar Sahib, its surrounding buildings and filled the sarovar with garbage.

1883 Khalsa Diwan founded at Amritsar.

Khalsa Diwan was founded at Amritsar. This body too like the previous ones, from its very inception, was torn by internal dissensions, and the tussle for supremacy between the Amritsar and the Lahore parties wrecked it. This led to the formation of an independent Khalsa Diwan at Lahore in 1886. The leaders of the Lahore Diwan were progressive whereas the Amritsar Diwan was the stronghold of the conservative elements mainly the aristocrats and Mahants. The latter failed to appreciate the wind that was blowing to restore Sikhism to its pristine glory. Nonetheless during this period, the Sikhs were able to co-operate despite mutual acrimony and dissensions.



1801 Ranjit Singh himself declared Maharaja of Punjab.

### 12th April

1759 Sikhs gathered in huge numbers for Baisakhi in Amritsar. Hukamnama was issued in the name of the Sikhs from Sri Akal Takht for the collection of Daswand and to engage in religious deeds.

1759b Maratha Sabaji and the Sikhs together attacked Jahan Khan.

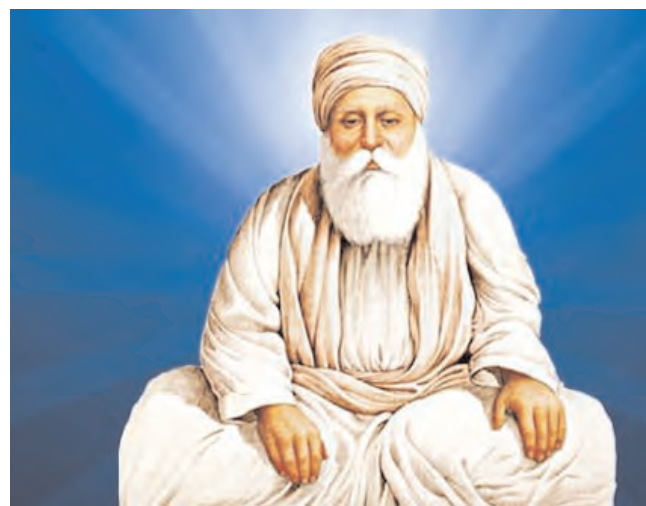
1801 Coronation of Ranjit Singh as Sarkar-i-Wala.

Ranjit Singh's was proclaimed ruler by Baba Sahib Bedi, a descendant of Guru Nanak. At the coronation ceremony Sardar Ranjit Singh assumed the title Sarkar-i-Wala. Although the ceremony was conducted in accordance with the ancient ceremony of Hindu

monarchy, "abhisekha," he never sat on a throne in respect to the concept of Sikh sovereignty, for sovereignty belonged only to Guru Khalsa Panth and not any individual. He asked all non-Sikhs to address him as Maharaja and all Sikhs as Singh Sahib. He struck "NanakShahi" Silver Rupee coins, symbolising sovereignty the same year. The legend "Deg Tegh Fateh" of 1765 on Lahore mint Rupees was changed to the legend that existed on Amritsar coins of 1775 and coins of Banda Bahadur of 1710. Ranjit Singh adopted the same couplet and exactly in the same form as it appeared on 1784 Amritsar coins, without any modifications.

1876 Maharaja Mohinder Singh of Patiala passed away.

### 13th April



1559 Guru Amar Das Patshah established the Vaisakhi Mela traditions.

1746 Panth Khalsa passed a resolution on the Vaisakhi day, not to be part of the Afghan kingdom and actively work against any such designs.

1814 Nirankari Chief, Baba Darbara Singh, son of Baba Dyal Ji was born.

1861 Baba Ram Singh started the Namdhari movement.



1919 Jallianwala massacre took place, 379 unarmed killed and 2,000 wounded.

### 14th April

1634 Battle of Amritsar took place between Mughals and Sikhs, led by Guru Hargobind Ji. The immediate cause of this battle was the seizure of royal hawk by Sikhs hunting near village Gumtala in the vicinity of Amritsar. The royal hawk had actually strayed away while on a hunt. Sikh tradition holds that the royal hawk was trying hard to capture its target and was flying up and down in the sky time and again. The target was

almost caught when it came to the notice of the Sikhs hunting nearby who moved by compassion set off their own hawk which pounced upon the royal hawk. The royal hawk fell and was captured by the Sikhs. The royal soldiers approached the Sikhs and demanded the return of the royal hawk but on account of their insolent manners, they were refused. The matter was reported to the concerned local authorities with the result that a clash took place between the Mughal troops and the Sikhs.

1772 Sikh forces had crossed Indus and plundered Peshawar city. On this day Ahmad Shah died.

1892 Khalsa College Council established at Amritsar.

1923 Babbar's appeal to the people to swell their ranks. This appeal was distributed through "Babbar Akali Doaba" newspaper.

1930 Civil disobedience movement initiated in the Punjab.

1949 Sirdar Kapur Singh I.C.S was suspended by government of Gopi Chand Bhargava on frivolous charges. His real crime was being a committed Sikh.

1984 Surinder Singh Sodhi, a right-hand man of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala, was killed.

### 15th April

PRAKASH UTSAV, Patshahi First, Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Guru Nanak Dev Ji Patshah came to this planet in Talwandi, also known as Nankana Sahib, situated about 48 miles westward from Lahore, Pakistan. He was born in the house of Kalu Chand Bedi and Mata Tripta. Today is the actual date of birth, though Guru Khalsa Panth observes it in Nov.

1634 Bhai Ballu Ji accepted Shahadat while fighting the Turks in Amritsar.

1940 Master Tara Singh declares his opposition to the establishment of Sikh rule.

1980 Sikh Bank, the Punjab and Sind Bank, Nationalised.

### 16th April

1764 Sikhs captured Lahore and issued their own coins.

1781 Sikhs attack Shahdara Patpat, Delhi.

1961 The passing away of Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh Ji.

### 17th April

1766 Conquest of Pahar Ganj, Delhi by Khalsa Forces.

In 1727 Nawab Kapur Singh took charge of the political affairs of the Sikhs. At that time the Sikh Nation was in disarray. The Mughal Governor, Zakria Khan's policy to annihilate the Sikhs had forced them to disperse towards the hills and jungles.

But it did not take long and the Sikhs once again started to reappear and consolidate their forces. The credit to reorganize the Sikh Polity, and institutionalize it into specific units, goes to Nawab Kapur Singh. He realized that the support group was equally necessary to keep the supply-line open for the forces in combat. Consequently, he divided the Khalsa society into two groups. The name of Taruna Dal was designated to the armed forces and the combat troops. Mostly the people under the age of forty were taken in it.

1841 Mehan Singh, Governor of Kashmir, murdered by mutinous troops asking for the arrears of their salaries. Gulab Singh was sent to crush mutinous troops who used very repressive measures. Shaikh Ghulam Muhiud-din made Governor of Kashmir.



# Hanuman Jayanti: A celebration of devotion and strength

Every year, Hanuman Jayanti, the birth of Lord Hanuman, is observed on the full moon day of the Hindu month of Chaitra. This year, it will be celebrated on April 12, 2025

**H**anuman Jayanti is one of the most celebrated festivals in the Hindu calendar, dedicated to the birth of Lord Hanuman—the ultimate symbol of strength (bala), unwavering devotion (bhakti), knowledge (gyan), and humility. A deeply spiritual occasion, it reflects the core values of courage, service, and spiritual discipline.

Hanuman is not only a central character in Hindu mythology but also a living presence in the daily spiritual practices of millions. Celebrating his birthday is both a devotional act and a reaffirmation of one's faith in righteousness and moral strength.

## Hanuman the Chiranjeevi: The Immortal Devotee

In Hindu tradition, Chiranjeevi means an immortal being. Lord Hanuman is one of the seven legendary immortals (Chiranjeevis) who are destined to live until the end of the current age (Kali Yuga). He was blessed with immortality by Lord Rama for his unwavering devotion, courage, and service.

Hanuman's immortality signifies his eternal presence on Earth. It is believed that he continues to live in a subtle form, aiding devotees, protecting the righteous, and responding to the sincere chanting of Rama's name. He is called Sankat Mochan (remover of troubles) and is worshipped for strength, protection, wisdom, and inner peace. He plays an active role in the spiritual lives of millions even today, offering comfort and power to overcome challenges. His timeless presence reminds devotees that divine help is always near, especially in difficult times.

## The Divine Birth of Hanuman

According to Hindu scriptures, Hanuman was born to Anjana, an apsara who was cursed to live on Earth, and Kesari, a monkey chief and a great warrior. Anjana prayed fervently to Lord Shiva for a child. Pleased with her devotion, Shiva granted her the boon of a powerful son.

At the same time, King Dasharatha of Ayodhya was performing a yagna to beget sons, and he received divine pudding (payasam) from the fire god Agni. As the story goes, a portion of this divine offering was carried by the Wind God (Vayu Dev) to Anjana, who consumed it and conceived Hanuman. Thus, Hanuman is also considered the spiritual son of Vayu, earning him the name Vayuputra.

## Astrological Significance

Hanuman Jayanti is celebrated during



the full moon (Purnima) of the Chaitra month (March-April), as per the Hindu lunar calendar. This day is astrologically significant because it's believed that Hanuman was born during the Chitra Nakshatra, on a Tuesday, a day that remains sacred to him.

## Legends and Heroic Feats

Hanuman's life is a series of incredible episodes filled with miracles and service to dharma:

- **Childhood Pranks and Powers:** As a child, Hanuman mistook the sun for a ripe mango and flew up to swallow it, causing cosmic chaos. The gods had to intervene, and his powers were temporarily subdued to prevent misuse—restored only later when required in Rama's service.
- **Service to Lord Rama:** Hanuman played a key role in the Ramayana. He leapt across the ocean to Lanka, found Sita, burned Lanka with his tail, and brought the Sanjeevani herb to save Lakshmana's life.
- **Symbol of Immortality:** It is believed that Hanuman is Chiranjivi (immortal) and still roams the Earth, especially wherever Lord Rama's name is chanted.

## Devotional Practices

### 1. Fasting (Vrat)

Many devotees undertake a strict fast from sunrise to sunset, abstaining from grains and consuming only fruits and milk. The fast is a symbol of self-discipline and spiritual cleansing.

### 2. Mantra Chanting

Devotees recite:

- Hanuman Chalisa (composed by Tulsidas)
- Sundarakanda (from Ramayana)
- Bajrang Baan, Anjaneya Dandakam, and other stotras

These hymns are believed to remove obstacles, protect from evil, and bring inner peace.

### 3. Temple Worship

Special pujas are conducted at Hanuman temples. The idol is often smeared with sindoor (vermilion) mixed with ghee, a sacred offering representing purity and energy. Devotees offer flowers, bananas, sweets like boondi or laddus, and light diya (lamps).

### 4. Sankirtan and Bhajans

Devotional songs and group chanting (kirtans) are organized. Some temples hold Akhand Ramayana Path (non-stop recitation of the Ramayana) throughout the day and night.

## Regional Celebrations

### North India

- Celebrated on Chaitra Purnima with fasting, prayers, and large temple gatherings.
- Delhi's Hanuman Mandir and Varanasi's Sankat Mochan Temple see massive footfall.

### Maharashtra

- Devotees perform 41-day Hanuman sadhana leading up to Jayanti.
- Applying sindoor to idols is highly popular, especially in Mumbai and Nashik.

### Andhra Pradesh & Telangana

- Celebrated for 41 days starting from Chaitra Purnima to the 10th day of Krishna Paksha in Vaishakha.
- Known as Hanuman Deeksha.

### Tamil Nadu & Kerala

- Observed in Margazhi month (Dec-Jan) as Hanumath Jayanthi.
- Devotees visit temples like Namakkal Anjaneyar Temple (Tamil Nadu) and Chowalloor Sri Hanuman Temple (Kerala).

### Karnataka

- Celebrated on Shukla Paksha Trayodashi in Vaishakha month.
- Special prayers and processions are common.

## Modern-Day Relevance

Hanuman's popularity is timeless. In modern times, his image is associated with:

- **Strength and Endurance:** Athletes, bodybuilders, and martial artists look up to Hanuman as the original embodiment of physical prowess.
- **Protection:** Amulets, lockets, and even vehicle decals of Hanuman are believed to ward off evil.
- **Mental Focus:** Students and professionals invoke him for concentration and clarity.
- **Social Inspiration:** Hanuman inspires youth to engage in service, stand up for justice, and stay grounded in values.

## Interesting Facts

- Hanuman is worshipped on Saturdays and Tuesdays, considered especially auspicious.
- He is also a master of the nine forms of devotion (Navadha Bhakti).
- Several martial arts schools in India, including Kalaripayattu, honor Hanuman as their patron deity.
- Hanuman Chalisa is among the most recited spiritual texts in the world.



CONTD FROM PAGE 1

## Trump warns of 'transition cost' from tariffs

administration already has "offers on the table from more than 15 countries."

Mr. Hassett said the next step will be determining exactly what Mr. Trump wants out of the negotiations.

"We have a meeting today with all the top principals where we're going to present to the president a list of what we think

his priorities might look like," Mr. Hassett said. "And I'm sure he's going to, you know, have his own ideas about where to move things."

U.S. stocks are diving on Thursday, April 10, 2025, and surrendering a chunk of their historic gains from the day before as Mr. Trump's trade war continues to confuse and threaten the economy, even if its temperature has cooled a bit.

The S&P 500 was down 3.6% in afternoon trading, slicing into Wednesday's surge of 9.5% following Mr. Trump's decision to pause many of his tariffs worldwide. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 1,135 points, or 2.8%, as of 1:56 p.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 4.3% lower. (Agencies)

## Yoga at America's tallest building: World Trade Centre hosts session in run-up to Yoga Day

morning on a rainy Monday on the 102nd floor of the One World Observatory at the 1,776 feet tall One World Trade Centre, built near the site of the Twin Towers that were destroyed in the 9/11 terror attacks. Consul General of India in New York Binaya Pradhan told the participants that the over the hour-long session celebrates the 75-day countdown to the International Day of Yoga.

The special yoga session at the One World Observatory was led by eminent yoga and meditation instructor Ruchika Lal of the Art of Living Foundation and attended by Deputy Consul General of India in New York Vishal Harsh, members of the Indian diaspora, students, yoga enthusiasts and practitioners.

Pradhan "kickstarted the countdown with a soulful Yoga session on the 102nd Floor" of One World Trade Centre - "the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere and a symbol of resilience and hope", the Consulate said in a post on X.

"The session included meditation, Yogasanas, breathwork & self-awareness techniques - a powerful way to begin the day with peace and positivity. The session brought together members of the Indian Diaspora and friends of India in a shared celebration of health, harmony and holistic living," the post added.

Lal said that a "venue that had the most gruesome act of terrorism is now bringing people together in yoga".

Describing the session as "amazing", she said a yoga session "from the top of the world" is the best way to be counting down to the International Day of Yoga.

Before commencing the yoga session, Lal told the participants that the One World Trade Center location had a violent history, making a reference to the 9/11 attacks, but added that "yoga is all about bringing people together, bringing minds together. That we are all coming here together in peace is quite incredible."

In the run-up to the Yoga Day commemoration in June, several events will be held across the US - from the Times Square and the UN headquarters to other iconic destinations - culminating in grand Yoga Day celebrations.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had led a historic Yoga Day commemoration at the North Lawn in the UN headquarters in 2023, nine years after first proposing from the UN General Assembly podium to mark International Yoga Day on June 21 as an annual commemoration. (Source: PTI)

## Judge allows requirement that everyone in U.S. illegally must register to move forward

who wasn't an American citizen to register with the government.

The requirement goes into effect on Friday, April 11.

The Department of Homeland Security announced on February 25 that it was mandating that all people in the United States illegally register with the federal government, and said those who didn't self-report could face fines or prosecution. Failure to register is considered a crime, and people will be required to carry registration documents with them or risk prison time and fines.

Registration will be mandatory for everyone 14 and older without legal status. People registering have to provide their fingerprints and address, and parents and guardians of anyone under age 14 must ensure they registered.

The registration process also applies to Canadians who are in the U.S. for more than 30 days, such as so-called snowbirds who spend winter months in places like Florida.

Federal immigration law has long required that people who aren't American citizens and live in the U.S., including those here illegally, register with the government. Those laws can be traced back to the Alien Registration Act of 1940, which came amid growing fears of immigrants and political subversives in the early days of World War II. The current requirements stem from the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952.

But the requirement that people illegally in the U.S. register has been enforced only in rare circumstances. In fact, advocates opposing the government say it hasn't been universally used since it was first introduced in the mid-1940s.

It was used in a limited way after Sept. 11, 2001, when the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System required that all noncitizen males 16 and older from 25 countries - all but one of them majority Arab or Muslim - register with the U.S. government.

The program led to no terrorism convictions but pulled more than 13,000 people into deportation proceedings. It was suspended in 2011 and dissolved in 2016.

The Trump administration has argued that the registration requirement has always existed and that officials are simply enforcing it for everyone.

The groups that sued say this registration process is expressly to facilitate President Donald Trump's aim of carrying out mass deportations of people in the country illegally.

The plaintiffs also say the government should have gone through the more lengthy public notification process before bringing about the change.

They argue that the registry puts people who work, contribute to the economy and have deep family ties in America into a deep bind: Do they come forward, register and essentially give up their location to a government intent on carrying out mass deportations, or do they stay in the shadows and risk being charged with the crime of not registering?

The government has already asked people subject to the registration requirement to create an account on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website.

(Agencies)

CONTD FROM PAGE 12

## Suozi Leads on Legislation Cracking Down on Online Exploitation

"I applaud the First Lady for bringing attention to these issues," Suozzi continued. "The Problem Solvers Caucus will work with her across party lines to pass the TAKE IT DOWN Act to address these reprehensible acts."

The TAKE IT DOWN Act, which Suozzi co-sponsored, is endorsed by both the entire Problem Solvers Caucus, of which Suozzi is co-chair, and Suozzi himself. The Problem Solvers Caucus is a group of 50 Members of Congress-split between Democrats and Republicans-committed to finding common ground and working together to solve the country's most complicated problems. By endorsing this legislation, the entire Caucus has committed to voting for it when it comes to the floor.

The bill criminalizes the publication or threat to publish nonconsensual intimate imagery-whether real or AI-generated. It also requires websites to remove such content within 48 hours of notification by a victim. The legislation specifically targets the explosion of AI deepfakes used to create fake pornographic images of women and minors, many of whom are being harassed and traumatized by images they never consented to.

Senators Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) have introduced companion legislation to the TAKE IT DOWN Act.

The Romance Scam Prevention Act, co-led by Suozzi, mandates that online dating platforms inform users when they have interacted with someone banned for fraud. This empowers potential victims with vital information before they may face financial or emotional exploitation. It also mandates that dating services provide clear warnings against sending money or financial information to other users. The Federal Trade Commission reported that "romance scams" resulted in the loss of \$1.1 billion in 2023 alone.

Senators Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) and John Hickenlooper (D-CO) have introduced companion legislation to the Romance Scam Prevention Act.

Suozzi, a member of the House Ways and Means Committee and Co-Chair of the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, has consistently pushed for legislation that defends personal dignity and to close loopholes that allow abuse. He emphasized that these measures put decency, privacy, and accountability at the forefront of modern digital life.

Both bills have garnered bipartisan support and reflect a growing consensus in Congress that the law must keep pace with technology to protect the American people.

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# Nanda Vrat: A sacred observance in devotion to Lord Shiva

In the vast and diverse tapestry of Hindu religious practices, vratas (vows or fasts) hold a place of deep reverence. Among these, Nanda Vrat—also known as Nandavrata—is a spiritually enriching observance dedicated to Lord Shiva, one of the principal deities of the Hindu Trinity. While not as widely known as some other vratas like Karva Chauth or Ekadashi, Nanda Vrat carries profound historical and devotional significance, particularly for those seeking marital harmony, personal fulfillment, and divine blessings.

## The Mythological Origins of Nanda Vrat

The Nanda Vrat finds its roots in ancient Hindu scriptures, particularly the Sivapurana. It is closely associated with the tale of Goddess Sati, the daughter of King Daksha, and her unwavering devotion to Lord Shiva. According to the legends, Sati was deeply in love with Shiva and aspired to marry him despite her father's disdain for the deity. To win Shiva's heart and gain his favor, Sati undertook the sacred Nanda Vrat with intense devotion, penance, and spiritual discipline. Pleased with her sincerity and love, Shiva granted her wish and accepted her as his consort. This tale not only exemplifies the power of devotion but also established the Nanda Vrat as a means of achieving divine union, especially for women seeking a virtuous and spiritually aligned life partner.

## The Spiritual Significance

At its core, the Nanda Vrat is a Shiva-centric vow observed with the intent of:

- Attaining a righteous spouse (especially by unmarried women).
- Enhancing marital bliss and harmony (for married women).
- Achieving inner spiritual strength and personal growth.
- Gaining protection and blessings from Lord Shiva.

While originally associated with feminine devotion, today, Nanda Vrat is observed by both men and women who seek the blessings of Shiva for various personal and spiritual goals.

## When is Nanda Vrat Observed?

Nanda Vrat is unique in that it is not limited to a single day of the year. Instead, it is observed multiple times annually, on specific tithis (lunar days) in the Shukla Paksha (waxing phase of the moon) across various months of the Hindu calendar. These include:

- Ashwin (September-October): Shukla Ashtami (8th day)
- Kartik (October-November): Shukla Chaturdashi (14th day)
- Margashirsha (November-December): Shukla Ashtami (8th day)
- Pausha (December-January): Shukla Saptami (7th day)



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**Nanda Vrat, Chaitra Chaturdashi of Shukla Paksha: Friday, 11 April 2025**

**Chaturdashi Begins - 11 March 2025 at 01:00 am**

**Chaturdashi Ends - 12 March 2025 at 03:21 am**

- Magha (January-February): Purnima (Full moon) and Shukla Tritiya (3rd day)
  - Chaitra (March-April): Shukla Chaturdashi (14th day)
  - Jyeshtha (May-June): Purnima (Full moon)
- Some traditions also specify that the vrat must be observed for 16 consecutive weeks or on select auspicious days chosen by a priest or based on personal faith.

## How is Nanda Vrat Performed?

### 1. Preparation

Devotees begin with spiritual cleansing, often including bathing early in the morning and wearing clean or new clothes. Homes and places of worship are tidied and decorated with flowers and lamps.

### 2. Setting Up the Puja

An altar is set up with an idol or image of Lord Shiva, often accompanied by representations of Goddess Parvati, Nandi (Shiva's bull), and a Shivalinga—symbolizing Shiva's eternal, formless essence. A pot (Kalash) filled with sacred water may be placed, and the Shivalinga is often made from mud, clay, or silver during the vrat.

### 3. Offerings

- Devotees offer:
- Bilva leaves, considered highly

- sacred to Shiva
  - Flowers, especially white and blue
  - Fruits, particularly seasonal ones
  - Naivedya (sacred food offerings), including rice, milk, ghee, sugar, and items like malpua on specific days
  - Incense sticks and ghee lamps
  - Chanting and Meditation
- Mantras dedicated to Shiva are chanted, such as:
- "Om Namah Shivaya" - the Panchakshari Mantra
  - Verses from the Shiva Purana, Shiva Tandava Stotram, or Rudrashtakam
  - Reading or hearing the story of Sati and Shiva from scriptures
- Many devotees observe a fast during the day, consuming only fruits, milk, or water, and break it after sunset or at the end of the puja.

### 5. Charity and Compassion

A significant part of the vrat includes donating to the needy, feeding Brahmins or the poor, and practicing kindness and humility. This enhances the spiritual merit (punya) gained from the observance.

## Benefits of Observing Nanda Vrat

Nanda Vrat is believed to bestow numerous physical, emotional, and spiritual benefits upon the devotee

### 1. Fulfillment of Desires

Particularly for women seeking an

ideal husband, the vrat is believed to yield divine results, just as it did for Sati.

### 2. Marital Bliss

For married individuals, it helps strengthen the bond between partners, foster love, and remove obstacles or disharmony in the relationship.

### 3. Spiritual Purification

The observance purifies the mind and heart, leading to clarity, peace, and a closer connection with the divine.

### 4. Protection and Prosperity

Devotees believe that Lord Shiva, pleased with the devotion shown, grants blessings that protect the devotee from misfortune and ensure prosperity.

## The Symbolism of Nanda Vrat

The Nanda Vrat is deeply symbolic:

- Shiva as the Eternal Ideal: Shiva represents the highest form of spiritual consciousness. By aligning oneself with his attributes—detachment, compassion, wisdom—a devotee moves closer to self-realization.
- Sati's Devotion: Her determination, penance, and love reflect the power of feminine energy (Shakti) in attaining divine grace.
- The Shivalinga: Symbolizes the infinite, formless reality. Worshiping it reflects surrendering to the greater cosmic truth.

## Nanda Vrat in Modern Times

Though an ancient observance, Nanda Vrat continues to hold meaning in today's world. Many young women still observe it with the hope of finding a life partner with qualities that mirror Shiva's—wise, strong, just, and spiritually inclined. Married couples often do it together to enhance love and understanding in their relationship.

With the increasing accessibility of digital resources, guided rituals and virtual pujas have also made it easier for devotees across the world to participate in the vrat, even outside India.

## Differences Across Regions

Like many Hindu observances, the practice of Nanda Vrat may differ slightly based on regional traditions:

- In North India, the focus may be more on fasting and storytelling.
- In Western India, particularly among Gujarati and Rajasthani communities, the vrat is observed with extended family participation.
- In South India, although not commonly practiced by all communities, similar vratas for Lord Shiva exist with overlapping themes of devotion and purity.



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# History This Week APR 11 - APR 17

APRIL 11



April 11, 1968 - A week after the assassination of Martin Luther King, the Civil Rights Act of 1968 was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The law prohibited discrimination in housing, protected civil rights workers and expanded the rights of Native Americans.

April 11, 1970 - Apollo 13 was launched from Cape Kennedy at 2:13 p.m. Fifty-six hours into the flight an oxygen tank exploded in the service module. Astronaut John L. Swigert saw a warning light that accompanied the bang and said, "Houston, we've had a problem here." Swigert, James A. Lovell and Fred W. Haise then transferred into the lunar module, using it as a "lifeboat" and began a perilous return trip to Earth, splashing down safely on April 17th.

April 11, 1983 - Harold Washington became the first African American mayor of Chicago, receiving 51 percent of the vote. Re-elected in 1987, he suffered a fatal heart attack in his office seven months later.

Birthdays - American orator Edward Everett (1794-1865) was born in Dorchester, Massachusetts. In 1863, at the dedication of the Gettysburg Battlefield, he delivered the main address, lasting two hours. He was then followed by President Abraham Lincoln who spoke for about two minutes delivering the Gettysburg Address.

APRIL 12

April 12, 1861 - The American Civil War began as Confederate troops under the command of General Pierre Beauregard opened fire at 4:30 a.m. on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina.



April 12, 1945 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt died suddenly at Warm Springs, Georgia, after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage. He had been

President since March 4, 1933, elected to four consecutive terms and had guided America out of the Great Depression and through World War II.

April 12, 1961 - Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human in space. He traveled aboard the Soviet spacecraft Vostok I to an altitude of 187 miles (301 kilometers) above the earth and completed a single orbit in a flight lasting 108 minutes. The spectacular Russian success intensified the already ongoing Space Race between the Russians and Americans. Twenty-three days later, Alan Shepard became the first American in space. This was followed in 1962 by President Kennedy's open call to land an American on the moon before the decade's end.

April 12, 1981 - The first space shuttle flight occurred with the launching of Columbia with astronauts John Young and Robert Crippen aboard. Columbia spent 54 hours in space, making 36 orbits, then landed at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

APRIL 13

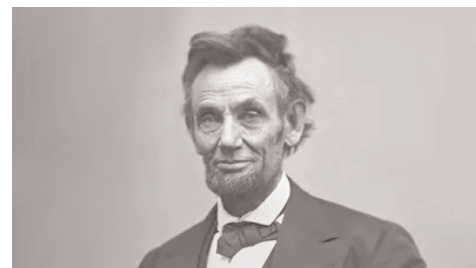


Birthdays - Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) was born in Albermarle County, Virginia. He was an author, inventor, lawyer, politician, architect, and one of the finest minds of the 1700's. He authored the American Declaration of Independence and later served as the 3rd U.S. President from 1801 to 1809. He died on July 4, 1826, the same day as his old friend and one-time political rival John Adams.

APRIL 14

April 14, 1775 - In Philadelphia, the first abolitionist society in American was founded as the "Society for the relief of free Negroes unlawfully held in bondage."

April 14, 1828 - The first dictionary of American-style English was published by Noah Webster as the American Dictionary of the English Language.

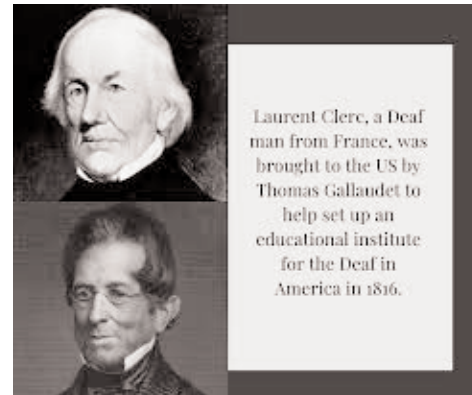


April 14, 1865 - President Abraham Lincoln was shot and mortally wounded while watching a performance of Our American Cousin at Ford's Theater in Washington. He was taken to a nearby house and died the following morning at

7:22 a.m.

April 14, 1986 - U.S. warplanes, on orders from President Ronald Reagan, bombed the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi in retaliation for the April 5th terrorist bombing of a discotheque in West Berlin in which two American soldiers were killed. Among the 37 person killed in the air raid was the infant daughter of Muammar Qaddafi, Libya's head of state.

APRIL 15



Laurent Clerc, a Deaf man from France, was brought to the US by Thomas Gallaudet to help set up an educational institute for the Deaf in America in 1816.

April 15, 1817 - The first American school for the deaf was founded by Thomas H. Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc in Hartford, Connecticut.

April 15, 1912 - In the icy waters off Newfoundland, the luxury liner Titanic with 2,224 persons on board sank at 2:27 a.m. after striking an iceberg just before midnight. Over 1,500 persons drowned while 700 were rescued by the liner Carpathia which arrived about two hours after Titanic went down.

APRIL 16

April 16, 1862 - Congress abolished slavery in the District of Columbia and appropriated \$1 million to compensate owners of freed slaves.



April 16, 1995 - Iqbal Masih, a young boy from Pakistan who spoke out against child labor, was shot to death. At age four, he had been sold into servitude as a carpet weaver and spent the next six years shackled to a loom. At age ten, he escaped and began speaking out, attracting worldwide attention as a featured speaker during an international labor conference in Sweden.



Birthdays - American aviation pioneer Wilbur Wright (1867-1912) was born in Millville, Indiana. On December 17, 1903, along with his brother Orville, the Wright brothers made the first successful flight of a motor driven aircraft. It flew for 12 seconds and

traveled 120 feet. By 1905, they had built a plane that could stay airborne for half an hour, performing figure eights and other aerial maneuvers. Wilbur died of Typhoid fever in May 1912.

Birthdays - Film comedian Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977) was born in London. He began in vaudeville and was discovered by American film producer Mack Sennett. He then went to Hollywood to make silent movies, developing the funny 'Little Tramp' film character. Chaplin's classics include The Kid, The Gold Rush, City Lights and Modern Times. In 1940, he made The Great Dictator poking fun at Adolf Hitler, who bore a resemblance to Chaplin. In his later years, Chaplin had a falling out with Americans, but returned in 1972 to receive a special Academy Award. In 1975, he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II.

APRIL 17

April 17, 1961 - A U.S.-backed attempt to overthrow Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba failed disastrously in what became known as the Bay of Pigs fiasco. About 1,400 anti-Castro exiles invaded the island's southern coast along the Bay of Pigs but were overrun by 20,000 Cuban soldiers and jailed. Trained and guided by the U.S., the exiles had expected support from U.S. military aircraft and help from anti-Castro insurgents on the island. Instead, due to a series of mishaps, they had fended for themselves with no support. The failed invasion heightened Cold War tensions between Cuba's political ally, Soviet Russia, and the fledgling administration of President John F. Kennedy. The following year, the Russians brazenly installed nuclear missiles in Cuba resulting in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

April 17, 1989 - The Polish labor union Solidarity was granted legal status after nearly a decade of struggle, paving the way for the downfall of the Polish Communist Party. In the elections that followed, Solidarity candidates won 99 out of 100 parliamentary seats and eventually forced the acceptance of a Solidarity government led by Lech Walesa.



Birthdays - American financier John Pierpont (J.P.) Morgan (1837-1913) was born in Hartford, Connecticut. He displayed extraordinary management skills, reorganizing and consolidating a number of failing companies to make them profitable. His extensive interests included banking, steel, railroads and art collecting. In 1895, he aided the failing U.S. Treasury by carrying out a private bond sale among fellow financiers to replenish the treasury.



You can dig your feet in the sand at any given beach in Andhra Pradesh, but making it to the best beaches is a whole new experience. Some of the beaches are rich in culture, history, water sports, exotic food and the works to keep you busy, that you'll end up soaking plenty of Vitamin D without realising how the hours passed so effortlessly. Whatever be your agenda to visit a beach, these shores are good for the quiet-types and groups alike.

#### Baruva

This beach in the Srikakulam district is situated near the confluence of the Mahendra Tanaya river and the Bay of Bengal sea. Do not miss the sunrise and sunset moments. There is also a lighthouse here and a few old temples here. Not far from Sompeta town, it is not much known beyond the state. You can approach Baruva from Brahmapur (70km away) in neighbouring Odisha.

#### Bheemunipatnam

Popularly known as Bheemili, this is a town with many historical associations. The town lies at the confluence of the Gosthani River with the Bay of Bengal. Only 20km from Vishakhapatnam city (Vizag), it is a sprawling lonely beach. Carry drinking water and snacks.

#### Manginapudi

About 75km away from Vijaywada, and near Machilipatnam town, this is one of the popular beaches of Andhra Pradesh and can be quite crowded during holidays. In the morning, you can watch the fishermen bringing in their catch from the sea. Bathing in the sea is discouraged after the beach was devastated during the 2004 tsunami. Chilakalapudi village near the beach is known for its imitation jewellery business.

#### Mypadu

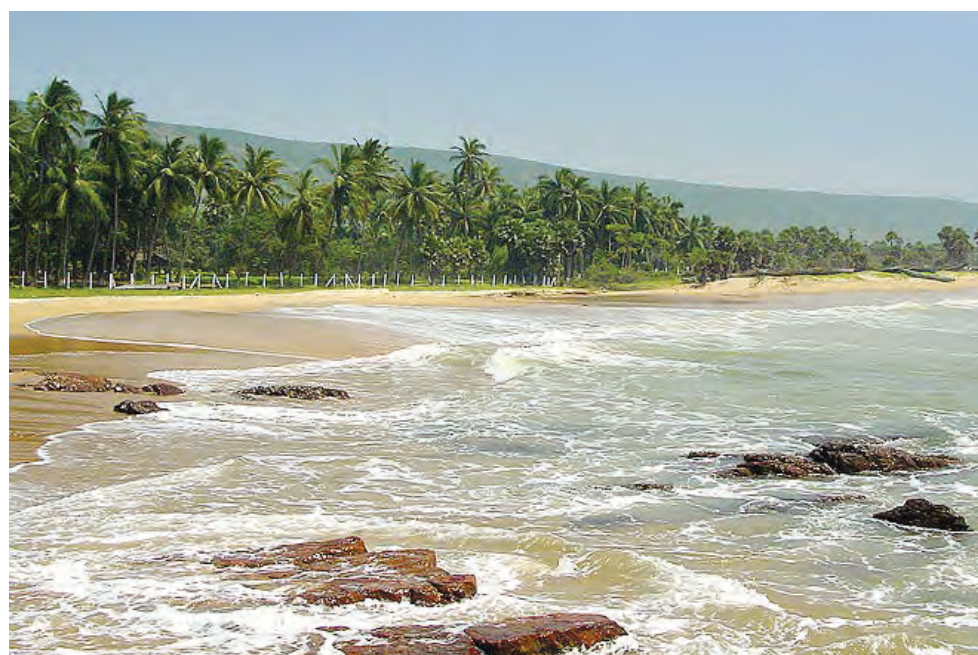
Located about 25km away from Nellore city, Mypadu beach is one Andhra's most picturesque beaches. The tree-lined golden sandy beach slips into the blue waters of the Bay of Bengal sea. Bask in the sun or bathe in the sea or take walk along the beach; round up your visit with a snack break at the beachside stalls. The speedboats are the newest addition.

#### Ramakrishna Beach

Located on the seaward end of Vizag city, this is one of the most popular and hence crowded beaches of the state. It takes its name from the Ramakrishna Mission and the Kali Temple across the road from the beach. The food vendors are almost all over the beach. Part of the beach is rocky and one has to be careful here. The rock jutting into the sea at a distance is called the Dolphin's Nose because of its shape.

#### Rushikonda

Located on the outskirts of Vishakhapatnam, about 8km away from the main city, beach is also very popular and junk piles are not uncommon. The state tourism is promoting water sports activities here. Besides taking a ride in the speedboats, you can water ski, windsurf, etc. Since this beach is a little away from town, most visitors leave by late evening.



#### Suryalanka

Located in Guntur district, near Bapatla (50km away from Guntur city), this little known beach is not yet on the regular tourist circuit though local people flock to the beach during weekends.

#### Thummalapenta

Shaded by palm groves, the beach dips into the gentle sea. The beach is located near Kavali town in Nellore district. Local people come for a dip especially during Karthika pournami

# Explore the beaches of Andhra Pradesh

and other religious festivals.

#### Uppada

One of the lesser known beaches, it is located about 5km away from Kakinada town. Apart from the sprawling beach, the nearby parks and eateries make this place a popular family getaway. Go swimming or join the local people playing cricket or football on the beach.

#### Vodarevu

Nearly 6km away from Chirala (100km from Vijaywada), this beach is not much known beyond the state. Walk through the coconut groves to reach the yellow sand beach. Catch the sunrise or the sunset at the beach. The beach lies at the edge of a fishing village. During early morning and evening, as the fishing boats come in with their catch, the beach becomes noisy as people unload the fish, auction them and the fish are carried away by the buyers. Some of the fishing boats can also take you on a jaunty ride in the sea; negotiate the rate first.

#### Vakalapudi

Also near Kakinada town, the beach has been renamed as NTR Beach. Besides enjoying the uncrowded beach, you can also explore the mangrove forest here. The annual Kakinada Beach Festival is also held here.

#### Yarada

Located about 15km away from Vizag town, this lonely beach is best visited on weekends when there are local visitors around. Apparently this is a private beach and you have to pay an entry fee. Arrange for transport as this is an off route destination. According to latest visitor reports, the road to Yarada is bad in patches.



## IPL 2025

# Sai Sudharsan masterclass powers Gujarat Titans to top spot

AHMEDABAD (TIP)

Sai Sudharsan's classy fifty combined with a collective bowling effort powered Gujarat Titans to a commanding 58-run win over Rajasthan Royals in their IPL clash here on Wednesday, April 9.

Sudharsan lit up the evening with a dazzling 53-ball 82, while explosive cameos from Jos Buttler (36), Shahrukh Khan (36), and Rahul Tewatia (24) propelled GT to a formidable 217/6.

The bowlers then kept chipping away, striking at regular intervals to keep Rajasthan on the back foot despite fighting knocks from Shimron Hetmyer (52) and skipper Sanju Samson (41).

The visitors were eventually bowled out for 159 in 19.1 overs.

Sudharsan was in sublime touch, effortlessly finding gaps and punishing anything loose. His fluent knock, laced with eight boundaries and three sixes, formed the bedrock of GT's imposing total.

Defending 217, pacers Mohammed Siraj (1/30) and Arshad Khan (1/19) struck early to give GT the perfect start. Arshad drew first blood, removing the dangerous Yashasvi Jaiswal (6) who slashed at a wide one and picked out Rashid Khan at deep third.

In the very next over, Nitish Rana (1) attempted an upper-cut off Siraj but met the same fate, guiding it straight to the fielder at deep third man.

But Samson and Riyan Parag (26) launched a fiery counterattack. Parag smoked three no-look sixes, while Samson dispatched anything loose to the boundary with casual ease, taking RR to 57/2 in the powerplay.

The momentum swung again as Impact Sub Kulwant Khejroliya (1/29) had Parag caught by Buttler, before Rashid Khan



removed Dhruv Jurel (5) to leave Rajasthan tottering at 68/4.

Samson and Hetmyer added 48 runs to keep hopes alive, but Prasad Krishna (3/24) dealt the killer blow.

He first dismissed Samson as the wicketkeeper tried to steer one behind square but only managed to skew it high towards Sai Kishore, who held on calmly at the edge of the circle.

Krishna then returned to snare Hetmyer. Earlier, after leaking plenty of runs initially in the IPL, Jofra Archer (1/30) is well and truly back to his best.

With the new ball in hand, he cranked it up to 152.3 kph in his first over, then returned in his second to clean up Shubman Gill (2) with a steaming 147.7 kph inswinger that beat the inside edge and crashed into Gill's off stump.

Archer then greeted Buttler with a sharp bouncer, but the former England captain responded a couple of balls later

with a crisp four to the deep-cover boundary.

With Sudharsan taking charge, Buttler joined the party with back-to-back boundaries off Fazalhaq Farooqi (0/38) in the seventh over. In the next over, he sliced Maheesh Theekshana (2/54) through the off side for a four, before lofting him straight down the ground for another boundary.

But Theekshana had the last laugh, trapping Buttler leg-before, ending an 80-run partnership. Rajasthan skipper Sanju Samson immediately turned back to Archer in a bid to stem the flow of runs, and the Barbados-born pacer repaid the faith with a tight over that went for just six.

But Shahrukh exploded into action in the very next over, slamming consecutive boundaries before muscling one over deep extra cover to inject some much needed momentum into the GT innings.



## 'Great feeling': Priyansh Arya on his maiden IPL century

Punjab Kings batter Priyansh Arya expressed his joy for applause after his maiden century in the Indian Premier League 2025 against the Chennai Super Kings on Tuesday, April 8, and said such performances boost his confidence.

"These things give me a lot of confidence. It's a great feeling because I'm getting a name among all the legends. Well, I can tell you the first practice game we played...It feels really good. It's an out-of-the-world feeling. Obviously, scoring a run is a different thing and scoring a hundred is a different thing. So it feels really good." Priyansh Arya said per a video posted by IPL. He also spoke about the level of competition.

"I thought that if it was in my slot, I would take that shot. I would back myself. It's not like I'm going to take a single. Even if the wickets fall, I'll back myself. I mean, I think I can clear the boundary. It feels really good. There's a little more pressure here. There's a crowd. I mean, obviously, every bowler you're getting internationally who's been playing for many years, you're getting legends," he said.

"It feels good to perform against them. This is what I always learn. I mean, no matter how many times I get out, they don't say anything to me. They're always positive. They don't teach me anything that I can do this. They used to say, if you get the next ball here, hit it out of the ground. So that gives me a lot of confidence. Everything is positive," he added.

## World Boxing Cup Brazil 2025

# Hitesh Gulia punches gold as India finish with six medals

FOZ DO IGUACU (TIP)

The Indian contingent bagged six medals, including a gold and a silver, at the World Boxing Cup Brazil 2025 at Foz Do Iguacu.

Hitesh Gulia became the first Indian boxer to clinch a gold medal in the World Boxing Cup. He was handed a walkover in the final of the men's 70kg weight category as opponent, Odel Kamara of England, was injured and couldn't take to the ring.

Abhinash Jamwal, the other Indian boxer to reach the final in the 65kg category, gave his best against local favourite Yuri Reis but had to settle for a silver medal.

Four Indian boxers, including Jadumani Singh Mandengbam (50kg), Manish Rathore (55kg), Sachin (60kg) and Vishal (90kg), bagged bronze medals after going down in the semi-finals.

Like in Olympic boxing, both losing semi-finalists received bronze medals at the Brazil meet.



After winning his gold, Hitesh Gulia credited the 10-day preparation camp in Brazil ahead of the tournament as something that helped him and the team a lot. "The camp helped me learn a few tactical nuances

that helped me a lot in the competition. This tournament has provided us fantastic exposure at the highest level and I am happy that I could grab the gold medal," said Hitesh.

Over 130 boxers, including Olympians from 19 different countries, participated in the first World Boxing Cup of the year. Competitions were being held for both men and women but India only had representation in the 10 men's weight categories.

The women missed out on the meet on account of the senior nationals being held earlier this month.

The Brazil meet is one of the three World Boxing Cups scheduled for this year. Kazakhstan and India will host the other two in June-July and November, respectively.

Ranking points will be on offer at each meet with the top-ranked boxers qualifying for the season-ending World Boxing Cup Finals.





## An Eye Institute in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh combatting avoidable blindness in children.

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**Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins**



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In 2018 Prasanth, Sushanth and Nisanth were diagnosed and treated for Prematurity Retinopathy. An illness in premature babies which can cause blindness.

Luckily through GEMROP an initiative funded by EFA to screen premature babies throughout hospitals in India, the triplets were able to receive an expensive surgery free of charge. The boys are now the age of 4 with perfect vision.