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MODI IS A LEADER

PM Modi an inspirational leader, setting example for all around the world: Montana Governor



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

NEW DELHI: Montana Governor Greg Gianforte, who is currently leading a trade mission to India, hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "inspirational leadership" on Wednesday, which he said is "setting an example" for the rest of the world.

Speaking exclusively with the IANS, Gianforte congratulated PM Modi on completing 25 years of continuous leadership as head of government.

"Prime Minister Modi is a global leader. I just finished reading 'Power Within' about his leadership of India through tumultuous times and how India has emerged as a global leader in technology, making the transition from an agrarian state to one that is still based on agriculture but has incorporated so many new capabilities. I think Prime Minister Modi is an inspirational leader who is setting an example for all of us around the world," said Gianforte.



Montana Governor Greg Gianforte

"... You can look at the history. His leadership on the world stage and his commitment to the people, integrating his principles into leadership-first for India and Indians, and then globally around the world. And in the G20, his taking a leadership role has really been remarkable. But he had to get things right here at home first before he could extend himself to participate on a global basis, and he's done that very effectively," he added.

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Global leaders laud PM Modi on historic 25-year leadership milestone

BRUSSELS: Global leaders have extended warm congratulations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on marking 25 years of continuous leadership in government, spanning from his tenure in Gujarat to New Delhi.

Taking to X, Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever wrote: "I warmly congratulate Prime Minister @narendramodi on 25 years of continuous leadership in government, from Gujarat to New Delhi.

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Dr. Romesh Japra honored with Lifetime Award

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WB raises India's FY27 growth forecast to 7.1 pc

NEW DELHI: The World Bank has upgraded India's economic growth forecast for FY27, citing resilient domestic demand and continued strength in key sectors of the economy.

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Yami Gautam on her enhanced photos using AI

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This week's question

Can Trump win the Midterm elections?

Last week's result

Will US ever realize Pakistan's lies?

YES 14% NO 86%



Nana Patekar passes away at 75

MUMBAI: Veteran actor Nana Patekar, one of Indian cinema's most powerful and distinctive performers, passed away at the age of 75 on Thursday, October 8, 2026.

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Ind-origin student crowned Miss India Worldwide

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ISI moves to unite Bangladesh terror groups

NEW DELHI: With the western border becoming increasingly difficult to operate along, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is seeking to intensify activities on the eastern front.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to India Post, 3155 Kearney Street, Ste. 210, Fremont, CA 94538.

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Dr. Romesh Japra honoured



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MODI IS A LEADER

PM Modi an inspirational leader, setting example for all around the world: Montana Governor

NEW DELHI: Montana Governor Greg Gianforte, who is currently leading a trade mission to India, hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "inspirational leadership" on Wednesday, which he said is "setting an example" for the rest of the world.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

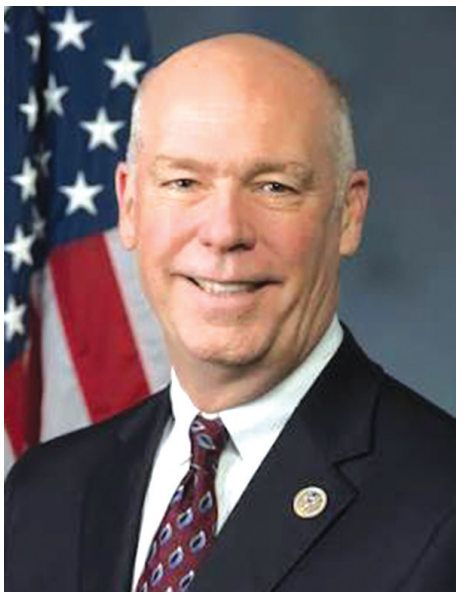
Speaking exclusively with the IANS, Gianforte congratulated PM Modi on completing 25 years of continuous leadership as head of government.

"Prime Minister Modi is a global leader. I just finished reading 'Power Within' about his leadership of India through tumultuous times and how India has emerged as a global leader in technology, making the transition from an agrarian state to one that is still based on agriculture but has incorporated so many new capabilities. I think Prime Minister Modi is an inspirational leader who is setting an example for all of us around the world," said Gianforte.

"... You can look at the history. His leadership on the world stage and his commitment to the people, integrating his principles into leadership-first for India and Indians, and then globally around the world. And in the G20, his taking a leadership role has really been remarkable. But he had to get things right here at home first before he could extend himself to participate on a global basis, and he's done that very effectively," he added.

The trade mission being led by Governor Gianforte is focusing on creating more stable market opportunities for Montana producers while expanding the relationship with India into advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, photonics, quantum technology, higher education, and investment.

"We have a delegation from Montana of more than 30 professionals from higher education and advanced technology, and we've been having very, very productive meetings. One thing that has really come home to me is that there are deep parallels. India is an agricultural country, and Montana is an agricultural state. Yet both are distinguished by innovation and technology. We're exploring those opportunities during this visit. We've had very, very productive meetings," he told IANS in an exclusive chat.



Montana Governor Greg Gianforte

On Tuesday, three US lawmakers introduced a bipartisan House resolution honoring Indian pilot Captain Smit Machchhar for fighting off an attack in the cockpit of a Flydubai flight and helping save over 174 people aboard, on September 30. Commending the move, Gianforte lauded the Indian pilot for his act of bravery, calling him as a "hero" who has set an example for the entire world.

"I think Congress has taken good action to recognize the heroism of this Indian pilot. Who could imagine the situation? He was attacked by his co-pilot, and literally the lives of every individual on that plane were in his hands. In addition to defending himself, he had the courage, bravery and strength to recognize that he needed help to fight off the attacker. And he did that. In the process, he saved the lives of every single individual who was on that plane. He is a hero, and it's appropriate to recognize him for his heroism. He set an example for the entire world. *IANS*




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Nana Patekar passes away: A look at the legendary actor's fine career, iconic performances and Marathi cinema legacy

MUMBAI: Veteran actor Nana Patekar, one of Indian cinema's most powerful and distinctive performers, passed away at the age of 75 on Thursday, October 8, 2026.

Born Vishwanath Patekar on January 1, 1951, in Murud-Janjira, Maharashtra, Nana Patekar went on to become one of the most respected actors in Hindi and Marathi cinema.

The legendary actor was known for his intense screen presence, distinctive voice, powerpack dialogue delivery and, ability to bring raw emotional depth to his characters. Nana Patekar enjoyed a career spanning nearly five decades with his association with acting beginning long before his film career.

For the uninitiated, the actor studied at the Sir J.J. School of Art in Mumbai and was actively involved in theatre.

He made his Hindi film debut with Gaman in 1978. His early years saw him moving between Hindi and Marathi cinema, with his Marathi film debut coming with Sinhasan in 1979. He then appeared in Marathi films including Bhalu, Raghu Maina and Savitri.

Nana Patekar had already appeared in many films, but his career gained significant momentum with N. Chandra's Ankush in 1986. The film saw him portraying a character rooted in the struggles and frustrations of ordinary people.



He then appeared in films such as Pratighaat, Mohre, Andhaa Yudh and Salaam Bombay! And eventually went on to be known for portraying layered characters rather than conventional romantic heroes.

One of the defining milestones of Nana Patekar's career came with Vidhu Vinod Chopra's Parinda in 1989. His portrayal of the ruthless crime boss Anna earned him the National Film Award for Best Supporting Actor.

Nana Patekar had already appeared in many films, but his career gained significant momentum with N. Chandra's Ankush in 1986. The film saw him portraying a character rooted in the struggles and frustrations of ordinary people

Nana Patekar continued to take on dramatically challenging roles through the 1990s with movies like Agni Sakshi, Khamoshi: The Musical, Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman, Angaar, Tirangaa, Ghulam-E-Mustafa, Yeshwant and Kohram.

In 2004, Nana Patekar delivered another career-defining performance in Ab Tak Chhappan, directed by Shimit Amin. He played Sadhu Agashe, a Mumbai Police encounter specialist, in a performance that combined restraint with his trademark intensity.

His work in Prakash Jha's Apaharan in 2005 earned him a lot of applause and awards. He also appeared in films including Taxi No. 9211, Welcome, Raajneeti, The Attacks of 26/11 and Kaala.

While the legendary actor was largely associated with intense dramatic roles, his performance as Uday Shetty in Welcome 2007 introduced audiences to another side of the actor.

His chemistry with Anil Kapoor and his comic timing turned Uday Shetty into one of the most memorable characters in mainstream Hindi comedy.

Despite becoming a major name in Hindi cinema, Nana Patekar never forgot his Maharashtrian roots and always retained a strong connection with Marathi theatre and cinema.

His Marathi filmography includes Sinhasan, Bhalu, Raghu Maina, Savitri, Pak Pak Pakaak, Deool, Natsamrat, Aapla Manus and Dr. Prakash Baba Amte: The Real Hero, among others. His performance in Natsamrat in 2016), based on V. V. Shirwadkar's celebrated Marathi play, became one of the most significant performances of his later career.

He essayed the character of Ganpat Belwalkar, a retired stage actor who struggles with ageing, family relationships and the loss of his place in society; Nana brought his theatrical background to the forefront.

Another important Marathi performance came in Dr. Prakash Baba Amte: The Real Hero, for which he won many awards and a lot of appreciation.

For the uninitiated, Nana Patekar also explored filmmaking behind the camera. He made his directorial debut with Prahaar: The Final Attack in 1991, a film centered on the Indian Army and the life of a highly disciplined commando.

In 2013, he was honored with the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian award, for his contribution to the arts and cinema. *IANS*





Global leaders laud PM Modi on historic 25-year leadership milestone

BRUSSELS: Global leaders have extended warm congratulations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on marking 25 years of continuous leadership in government, spanning from his tenure in Gujarat to New Delhi.

Taking to X, Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever wrote: "I warmly congratulate Prime Minister @narendramodi on 25 years of continuous leadership in government, from Gujarat to New Delhi. Following my productive visit to India last month, I look forward to further deepening the strong partnership between our two countries."

Dominican Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit also shared a congratulatory message on X: "My dear friend, Prime Minister @narendramodi, I warmly congratulate you on 25 years of continuous service as Head of Government, a journey that began in Gujarat and has continued through your leadership of India. As you mark this milestone, I wish to express my appreciation for the friendship you have extended to Dominica and the generosity shown to our people. I value the bond between our nations and look forward to building on it in the years ahead. On behalf of the Government and people of Dominica, and personally, I wish you good health, strength and continued success in your service to the people of India."

Additionally, the Presidency of Nigeria shared an official message from President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, commemorating the 25th anniversary of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as Head of Government. In the official statement, President Tinubu noted, "On behalf of the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and on my own behalf, I extend warm and fraternal congratulations to His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, on a truly historic milestone. Today, 7 October 2026, marks 25 years since he first assumed office in 2001 as Head of Government and Chief Minister of Gujarat."

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi similarly extended her warmest congratulations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on completing 25 years in office as head of government, highlighting his longstanding dedication to the development of Indian society

The messages highlight international recognition of PM Modi's leadership and the strengthening of bilateral ties across global partner nations.

Adding to the global tributes, Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay published a reflective tribute titled "'Modi's leadership reflects wisdom, courage, empathy'".

Recalling his interactions beginning as a private citizen in July 2019 when he had no longer been represented in Parliament, Tobgay praised PM Modi's governance journey from his 13 years governing Gujarat to the national stage. Highlighting PM Modi's dedication to a developed India (Viksit Bharat) by 2047, Tobgay noted that India's assistance during successive Five-Year Plans helped his government deliver ambitious development programs. Furthermore, he commended the deep bilateral ties encapsulated in the "B4B" (Bharat for Bhutan, Bhutan for Bharat) framework, alongside Bhutan's highest honor, the Order of the Druk Gyalpo, conferred upon PM Modi.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi similarly extended her warmest congratulations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on completing 25 years in office as head of government, highlighting his longstanding dedication to the development of Indian society. *ANI*

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US, Indian military leadership meet in New Delhi to boost defense ties

NEW DELHI: The United States Embassy in India hosted a high-level gathering of top US and Indian military leadership at Roosevelt House in New Delhi, underscoring the deepening momentum in the India-US Major Defense Partnership.

The event brought together Admiral Samuel Paparo, Commander of the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM); Greg Gianforte, Governor of Montana; Chief of Defense Staff General N. S. Raja Subramani; Chief of the Army Staff General Dhiraj Seth; and other senior Indian defense officials.

Following the gathering, the US mission posted on X, "It was a true pleasure to host Admiral Paparo, Governor Greg Gianforte, Chief of Defense Staff General N. S. Raja Subramani, Chief of the Army Staff General Dhiraj Seth, and other highly distinguished Indian defense officials at Roosevelt House. USPACOM Commander Adm. Samuel J. Paparo's visit highlights the growing strength of the US-India Major Defense Partnership."

Admiral Paparo arrived in New Delhi on October 3 for a six-day official visit to strengthen bilateral defense ties.

During the visit, Defense Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh held talks with Admiral Samuel Paparo in New Delhi, where both sides explored ways to deepen strategic cooperation and shared perspectives on regional and global developments.

Following the meeting, the Ministry of Defense posted on X, "Defense Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh met with Admiral Samuel Paparo, Commander of the US Pacific Command, who is on a visit to India. During the meeting, both sides discussed strengthening India-US defense and strategic cooperation and exchanged views on regional and global issues."

Earlier, Admiral Paparo met several Indian defense chiefs during his visit, a development highlighted by US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor.

Ambassador Gor stated on X, "Honored to host Admiral Samuel Paparo in India. One of America's most consequential military leaders, Admiral Paparo commands US Pacific Command, the nation's oldest and largest geographic combatant command, overseeing approximately 400,000 military and civilian personnel across a region spanning roughly half the globe." *ANI*



Defense Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh during a meeting with US Pacific Command Commander Admiral Samuel Paparo to discuss about strengthening India-US defense and strategic cooperation, in New Delhi. *(@SpokespersonMoD X/ ANI Photo)*

Capt Smit Machchhar making steady recovery, continues to regain health

ABU DHABI: Indian pilot Captain Smit Machchhar, who fought against the attacking co-pilot in a Flydubai aircraft and helped save 174 people onboard, is continuing to make steady progress and is regaining his health, the Indian Embassy in the UAE said recently.

"Health Update: Capt Smit continues to make steady progress and is regaining his health. The Embassy remains in close touch with his family, doctors and local authorities, extending all possible assistance. We thank everyone for their prayers and wish him a speedy recovery," the Embassy stated on X.

Machchhar recounted the terrifying moments inside the cockpit when he realized that his co-pilot was attacking him.

He described the ordeal while speaking to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who invited the pilot and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to light a celebratory flame at Israel's next Independence Day ceremony.

Machchhar said the flight had begun as a normal journey and that he was looking ahead while his co-pilot prayed.

According to Machchhar, he initially had no reason to suspect that anything was wrong. He said that the co-pilot had told him he wanted to pray, something he described as a common practice among local passengers and crew members, and that he therefore looked towards the front of the cockpit out of respect.

"While he was praying, out of respect, I was looking at the front and not at the back, and suddenly, after about four to five minutes, there was a big blow to the back of my head."

Machchhar said his immediate thought after the first heavy blow was that something catastrophic had happened to the aircraft itself.

"My first thought was that there was catastrophic damage to the aircraft, that something is not right ... but after that the blows kept coming, one after the other and that's when I realized that it's not the aircraft, it's the other guy who is in the cockpit with me," he said. *IANS*



Dubai Crown Prince and UAE Deputy Prime Minister Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum inquires about the health of Captain Smit Machchhar, who saved hundreds of lives aboard a flydubai flight to Tel Aviv, in Abu Dhabi. The pilot is undergoing treatment for injuries sustained in a mid-air attack. *(@HamdanMohammed X/ANI Photo)*

Bow my head to people for choosing me as their servant for 25 years, says PM Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed gratitude to the people of the country for choosing him as their leader for 25 consecutive years and said his responsibility towards the country is the greatest, as the public has placed their trust in him.

As PM Modi arrived to attend the 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Sabha', people welcomed him by showering flowers, holding BJP flags and chanting 'Bharat Mata ki Jai', 'Swagat hai, bhai swagat hai; Modi ji ka swagat hai' slogans. People were also seen taking out their phones to capture the moment.

Addressing the massive gathering, PM Modi said, "When I took oath as the Chief Minister of Gujarat on October 7, 2001, I never thought that I would reach this milestone one day. Today marks my 25th consecutive year as Head of Government. This is evidence of continued blessings of the public. I express my gratitude to the Bharatiya Janata Party, the NDA, and all political colleagues who have immense faith in democracy."

Expressing gratitude to the people of the country, the Prime Minister said, "I bow my head and pay my respects to the people of the country. Be it the Assembly or the Lok Sabha elections, people have chosen me for their service for 25 years. Today, I also pay respects to India's democracy and the Constitution."

PM Modi also expressed gratitude to the participants of the Seva Jyoti Yatra.

The Prime Minister said that earlier in the day, he visited the Shri Vinayak Mandir in Delhi's Sarojini Nagar to offer prayers and seek the blessings of Lord Ganesha on completing 25 years in public office. He said that he prayed for the happiness, prosperity, and good health of "my family members across the country".

"For me, the people are also a form of God. The trust of lakhs and crores of countrymen and the hard work of lakhs of workers have always been my greatest strength. The country has given me so much. Therefore, my responsibility towards the country is also the greatest. And I sincerely believe that every citizen of the country has the greatest right over me," he said. *IANS*

India hands over three tons of anti-tuberculosis medicines to Sri Lanka

COLOMBO: India's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Santosh Jha, recently handed over a consignment of essential anti-tuberculosis medicines to Sri Lanka's Minister of Health and Mass Media, Nalinda Jayatissa.

"Standing together in the fight against TB! Pleased to hand over a 3-tonne consignment of essential anti-TB medicines to Hon. Minister of Health and Mass Media Dr. Nalinda Jayatissa today. These medicines will support Sri Lanka's TB treatment and control efforts and contribute to strengthening the country's response to tuberculosis," Santosh Jha posted on X.

On September 28, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar said that India sent anti-tuberculosis medicines to Colombo aboard an Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft and expressed India's commitment to supporting Sri Lanka's public health system.

"India remains committed to supporting Sri Lanka's public health system. About 3 tons of anti-tuberculosis medicines were dispatched to Colombo today aboard an IAF C130J," EAM Jaishankar had posted on X

"India remains committed to supporting Sri Lanka's public health system. About 3 tons of anti-tuberculosis medicines were dispatched to Colombo today aboard an IAF C130J," EAM Jaishankar had posted on X.

On September 16, the construction of a new two-story accident and emergency unit at the District General Hospital in Sri Lanka's Mannar started with financial assistance received from the Indian government.

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, Nalinda Jayatissa and Santosh Jha were present at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the unit. The project will be supported by an Indian grant of Sri Lankan Rupees (SLR) 600 million.

"Strengthening Healthcare, Saving Lives! Delighted to join H.E. President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and Hon'ble Minister of Health and Mass Media Nalinda Jayatissa at the foundation stone laying ceremony for a new two-story Accident and Emergency Unit at the District General Hospital, Mannar," High Commissioner Jha posted on X.

"Supported by an Indian grant of SLR 600 million, this project will also supply the unit with essential medical equipment, ensuring timely emergency care during the critical 'golden hour', he added. Jha described the project as a "true testament" to the enduring partnership between India and Sri Lanka and the shared commitment of both nations to people-centric development. *IANS*

India's 'sleeping' terror modules: Years of silence then a deadly strike

NEW DELHI: An emerging pattern has been observed in the functioning of self-radicalized terror modules in India. Such modules often remain dormant for prolonged periods without engaging in any major activity.

Indian security agencies suspect that several such modules may be operating across the country, staying inactive for years before attempting to carry out a major terror attack.

An official said that these terror modules are extremely dangerous in nature. "Most of these modules in India are either inspired by the Islamic State or Al-Qaeda in the Sub-Continent. It is their patience, which is what makes them extremely lethal," the official said.

It all begins with one or two youths with similar thoughts coming together.

"Their primary objective is to establish a self-sustaining module focused on spreading radical propaganda. Over time, they begin recruiting others, but only select a small number of people. They also thoroughly profile potential recruits before allowing them to join the module," the official said.

An Intelligence Bureau official said that recruits are usually highly educated youths who have jobs with high salaries. There are many reasons why such persons are chosen. *IANS*

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ISI moves to unite Bangladesh terror groups, eyes bigger India strikes

NEW DELHI: With the western border becoming increasingly difficult to operate along, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is seeking to intensify activities on the eastern front. Terror groups in Bangladesh have long been nurtured by the ISI, with the focus largely on targeting West Bengal and the northeastern states.

The ISI has been focusing on three groups in Bangladesh: Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), and Neo-JMB. While all three groups have their own strengths, they lack the capabilities for large-scale operations, particularly attacks in India.

The ISI wants these groups to build capabilities on the lines of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), which have carried out several deadly attacks in India.

The ISI has been focusing on three groups in Bangladesh: Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), and Neo-JMB. While all three groups have their own strengths, they lack the capabilities for large-scale operations, particularly attacks in India

An official said that the ISI understands that in order to operate a bigger scale, these groups need to be united. Although each one follows the same radical ideology, which is to bleed India, they lack unity.

This, the ISI wants to fix, and get these groups under one umbrella so that their operational might is scaled up.

An Intelligence Bureau official said that although these groups may not be fighting against each other directly, they have a tendency to operate on each other's turf.

"This has caused confusion when it comes to operations and very often also caused a rift. Such overlapping is hurting these groups, and hence they have not been able to scale up," the official said.

The ISI wants these groups to take a leaf out of the book of Jaish and Lashkar. Their operations have rarely overlapped, as the ISI has maintained strict control over them. Both groups remain focused on the Kashmir cause and, during operations, have generally avoided stepping on each other's turf.

"In fact, after Operation Sindoor last year, Pakistan brought both these groups to operate together. At the launchpads in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), operatives of the Lashkar, Jaish and Hizbul Mujahideen work in tandem. In case they do manage to infiltrate, operations in Jammu and Kashmir would be carried out jointly," the official said.

When it comes to Bangladesh operations, the ISI is now revisiting a 2019 proposal made by the so-called chief of the JMB, Salehuddin Saleh.

He had suggested that in order to function better and remain stronger, it would be best if the JMB, ABT and Neo-JMB merged into one faction. The ISI feels that going ahead with this proposal would benefit all three groups.

Another official said that while the ABT may be okay with the merger with the JMB, the problem lies with the Neo-JMB. The split in the JMB led to the formation of the Neo-JMB.*IANS*

Pakistan continues to create instability in neighborhood through proxy groups

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan continues to use policy of creating instability in the neighborhood through proxy groups as it is cheap, easy to deny, beneficial for its military and allows the Pakistan army to keep its budget and political power intact while the citizens of the country bear the ultimate costs, a report has detailed.

Pakistan using jihadist proxies against its neighbors is a key part of its policy, active on two fronts and backed by top military leadership. Pakistan originally used this approach against India in Jammu and Kashmir and is now targeting the Taliban in Afghanistan. Pakistan started using this strategy more than 70 years ago, according to a report in Afghan Diaspora Network.

Pakistan using jihadist proxies against its neighbors is a key part of its policy, active on two fronts and backed by top military leadership. Pakistan originally used this approach against India in Jammu and Kashmir

The events of 2025 indicated that Pakistan continues to use this policy even today and uses it to create instability in the region and places the spotlight on the Pakistan military as their protector. In April last year, Pakistan-backed terrorists gunned down 26 civilians in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, and the Resistance Front (TRF), a Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) proxy, claimed responsibility for it.

In response to the heinous Pahalgam attack, the Indian armed forces in May last year launched 'Operation Sindoor', carrying out what officials described as a focused, measured and non-escalatory military action targeting high-value terror bases in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). The close connection between the Pakistan military establishment and proxy outfits was showcased after India's Operation Sindoor, as pictures showed funerals of terrorists, with coffins covered in Pakistan's national flag, and senior uniformed army officials present there.

Pakistan has also been using this approach against Afghanistan. Pakistan helped create the Afghan Taliban and backed the Haqqani network. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief was in Kabul just days after the Taliban seized power in 2021. However, the ties between Pakistan and Pakistan have been strained in recent times. *IANS*

India calls for "immediate cessation of attacks" after strike on commercial vessel in Strait of Hormuz injures 11 of 17 nationals

NEW DELHI: India has expressed stern condemnation of the projectile strike on a Panama-flagged commercial vessel in the Strait of Hormuz, which injured 12 of the 19 crew members, of whom 17 were Indian nationals, calling for immediate cessation of attacks against civilian infrastructure and seafarers.

In an official statement, the Ministry of External Affairs noted that 11 of the 17 Indians aboard the vessel MT On Peace sustained injuries following the attack off the coast of Oman, while transiting the critical maritime chokehold.

"We condemn the attack earlier today on a Panama-flagged commercial vessel MT On Peace (IMO 9893204) off the coast of Oman, where it was struck by a projectile while transiting the Strait of Hormuz. Of the total crew of 19, 17 are Indian nationals. It is learnt that 12 crew members have been injured, including 11 Indian nationals," the MEA statement read.

The MEA informed that the injured seafarers were safely evacuated and are currently being medically treated in Khasab, Oman.

Expressing gratitude towards the Omani authorities, the MEA stated, "With the assistance of Omani authorities, the injured crew have since been evacuated and are receiving medical treatment in Khasab, Oman. We thank the Omani authorities for their valuable support."

The MEA, in the strongest terms, condemned these perpetual attacks on commercial shipping and reiterated the call for an immediate end to the hostilities to re-establish peace and stability in the region.

"The continuing incidents of attacks on shipping in the region remain a cause of deep concern for India. We reiterate our call for an immediate cessation of such attacks in the interests of peace and stability in the region," the statement read.

"The targeting of commercial shipping, seafarers and civilian infrastructure in the region must end, and navigation and commerce through international waterways must be restored at the earliest," it added.

This comes after the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported that a commercial tanker transiting inbound through the Strait of Hormuz was forced to turn around after being hailed and threatened by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

The incident occurred on October 6 at approximately 08:27 UTC, about 11 nautical miles north of Khasab, Oman.

According to UKMTO Advisory, the IRGC forces hailed the vessel and warned that it would be targeted if it failed to comply with instructions to turn back. The vessel's Master confirmed that the crew complied with the directive and altered course.

Authorities are currently investigating the incident. UKMTO has advised all ships transiting the region to exercise extreme caution and immediately report any suspicious activity. *ANI*

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In Brief

US bill seeks steep H-1B fraud penalties

WASHINGTON: A Republican lawmaker has introduced legislation that would raise penalties for serious H-1B visa violations to as much as $250,000, extend some employer sponsorship bans to at least 10 years and sharply increase fines for immigration document fraud.

Rep. Beth Van Duyne of Texas announced the H-1B Visa Fraud Crackdown Act, saying existing penalties were too small to deter employers from abusing the program.

The legislation, H.R. 10643, is co-sponsored by Republican Reps. Brian Babin, Pat Fallon, Brandon Gill, Keith Self and Pete Sessions, all of Texas.

"When a business can lie to the government and push American workers aside for cheaper labor, and the worst it faces is a $5,000 fine, many view that as the cost of doing business," Van Duyne said.

"The H-1B Visa Fraud Crackdown Act changes the penalties. American jobs should go to American workers, and fraudsters should face real accountability for their actions."

The bill would raise the maximum civil penalty for covered willful H-1B violations from $5,000 to $100,000. Van Duyne's office said those violations could include lying about the job being performed or underpaying an H-1B worker.

For violations involving the willful displacement of US workers, the maximum civil penalty would increase from $35,000 to $250,000.

The statutory changes are contained in the two-page legislation introduced in the House.

Employers found responsible for serious willful violations would also face longer periods during which they could not sponsor H-1B workers.

The minimum sponsorship ban would increase from two years to five years for serious willful violations. For violations that also involve displacement of US workers, the minimum ban would increase from three years to 10 years. *IANS*

Only 496 investigations were opened from that group, resulting in eight arrests, according to DHS's summary of the watchdog findings

US watchdog flags handling of visa overstays

WASHINGTON: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement took limited action on millions of potential nonimmigrant overstay leads between fiscal years 2021 and 2024, including cases deemed potential national security risks, according to a report by the Department of Homeland Security's independent watchdog that was highlighted by DHS recently.

The DHS Office of Inspector General, in a report issued September 29, examined ICE's handling of nonimmigrant overstay leads during fiscal years 2021 through 2024. DHS separately issued a statement drawing attention to the watchdog's findings and criticizing the previous Biden administration.

ICE received 3,145,375 leads involving possible overstays during the four years, according to figures cited by DHS from the inspector general's report.

Of those, 104,049, or about 3.3 percent, were categorized as potential national security and public safety concerns.

Only 496 investigations were opened from that group, resulting in eight arrests, according to DHS's summary of the watchdog findings.



ICE received 3,145,375 leads involving possible overstays during the four years, according to figures cited by DHS from the inspector general's report

The remaining 3,041,326 overstay leads, or 96.7 percent, were classified as non-priority.

Of the 2,837,188 non-priority leads sent to ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations, five were investigated after being identified as possible public safety threats, resulting in two arrests, DHS said.

The inspector general's review covered fiscal years 2021 through 2024, a period that largely coincided with the Biden administration.

The Trump administration seized on the recent report to criticize its predecessor's immigration enforcement record.

DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin said the findings showed that immigration authorities under the previous administration had failed to act on millions of potential overstay leads.

"The degree of the Biden Administration's dereliction of duty, which needlessly put American lives at risk, is staggering and enraging," Mullin said.

He said the Trump administration would "target and remove as many illegal aliens as possible to make America safe again."

Mullin's comments represent the administration's political interpretation of the report. The underlying review was conducted by the DHS Office of Inspector General, which provides independent oversight of the department's programs and operations. *IANS*

"Big week ahead": Trump administration signals major action on foreign labor visa front

WASHINGTON, DC: US Department of Labor Inspector General Anthony D'Esposito has indicated that the Trump administration is preparing for heightened enforcement concerning foreign labor visa frameworks, taking to social media to signal that a significant period lies ahead as examinations intensify regarding the recruitment of overseas personnel.

"Big week ahead on the foreign labor visa front," D'Esposito wrote on X. "We're taking LFG to a whole new level. American jobs. American workers."

The Labor Department official refrained from specifying any particular visa initiative, corporate entity or ongoing inquiry within his online statement.

His remarks unfold as the White House intensifies its oversight of employment-centric immigration mechanisms amid allegations that commercial enterprises might be leveraging foreign worker permits in manners that disadvantage domestic personnel.

"Big week ahead on the foreign labor visa front," D'Esposito wrote on X. "We're taking LFG to a whole new level. American jobs. American workers"

Furthermore, this commentary arrives against the backdrop of wider governmental initiatives designed to tighten regulations surrounding the H-1B visa apparatus and enforce stricter scrutiny upon companies sponsoring foreign employees. *ANI*

Abu Dhabi invites families to celebrate Diwali with multi-generational getaways, just a short flight away

NEW DELHI/ ABU DHABI: The Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi) is inviting travellers to celebrate Diwali with curated multi-generational family getaways in the UAE capital, located a short three-to-four-hour flight from major Indian cities.

Designed to cater for every generation from grandparents to children, Abu Dhabi's seasonal offerings feature a blend of white-sand beaches, world-class museums, theme parks, festive shopping and family feasts, with holiday packages starting at INR 83,825 per person. Whether families are planning a quick getaway or a longer holiday, the emirate makes it easy to celebrate the festival of lights together. Holiday packages from INR 83,825 per person combine white-sand beaches, world-class museums, theme parks, festive shopping and Diwali feasts.



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Utazzo's six-night Discover Abu Dhabi Festive Celebrations package, from INR 83,325 per person, includes accommodation with breakfast and airport transfers. The package also includes access to Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Louvre Abu Dhabi, a Yas Island theme park and a desert safari, with time left for shopping too.

For families flying from Ahmedabad who want their travel arrangements taken care of, Flamingo Transworld's Diwali Package - Epic Tour Package with Sky View starts from INR 167,500 per person and includes return economy flights, a UAE visa and three nights in Abu Dhabi. High tea at Emirates Palace Mandarin Oriental, visits to two Yas Island theme parks, teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi and Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque are all part of the plan.

Thomas Cook's three-night Arabian Dhamaka - Winter package starts from INR 136,500 per person, including immersive art at teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi, the architecture of Qasr Al Watan, snow in the desert at Snow Abu Dhabi and access to two Yas Island theme parks. A guided city tour, a photo stop at Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque and a visit to BAPS Hindu Mandir round out the stay.

For a slower pace between sightseeing and family adventures, Rixos Premium Saadiyat Island is offering up to 25% off the Best Available Rate for minimum two-night stays between 1-15 November 2026, with complimentary all-inclusive accommodation for children in selected room categories. It means a Diwali family holiday can include time together beside the sea, just minutes from some of Abu Dhabi's leading cultural institutions.

Being away from home doesn't mean leaving familiar flavors behind. From 6-8 November, Namak's Diwali Table will feature live chaat, tandoor favorites, regional Indian dishes and traditional sweets for approximately INR 4,200 per adult, with up to two children aged 10 and below dining for free. *PRNewswire. ANI*

From university selection to arrival: Italy study consultants helps Indian students plan their future in Italy

NEW DELHI: With branches across 10 Indian cities, the consultancy brings profile evaluation, admission assistance, scholarship guidance and visa support together to help students make informed decisions.

Italy Study Consultants is highlighting its comprehensive support for Indian students planning to pursue higher education in Italy. From choosing a suitable course to preparing applications and settling in after arrival, the consultancy helps students and their families approach each stage with a clear plan.

For students considering an international education, an admission offer is only one part of the journey. Course suitability, documentation, funding, language preparation and visa requirements all need attention. Italy Study Consultants brings these services together, helping applicants understand their options and organize the steps ahead.

According to company figures, Italy Study Consultants has recorded 4,000+ student success stories in Italy and a 96% visa success rate. The company also reports strong connections with public universities across Italy, supporting its focus on helping students explore suitable academic opportunities.

Personalized Guidance Starts with a Free Profile Evaluation

The consultancy begins with a free profile evaluation to understand each student's academic background, interests and future goals. This assessment helps guide course and university selection, with attention to the student's preferences and financial circumstances.

Students receive assistance with admission applications, Statements of Purpose and supporting documents. *VMPL. ANI*

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Navi Mumbai International Airport steps up mobility and airline support

NAVI MUMBAI: Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) is strengthening the passenger experience with expanded mobility, transit hospitality and airline support as more flights prepare to shift from capacity-constrained Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) in Mumbai.

The focus of NMIA, one of India's largest greenfield airports and operated by Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL), on customer comfort also extends to a futuristic digital art program and experience zone designed to create a more soothing and engaging environment for passengers.

The measures come ahead of the winter flying schedule, which runs from October 25, 2026, to March 27, 2027.

Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation will start electric e-Shivai services from October 7 to Dadar, Borivali and Pune, with fares of Rs 170, Rs 210 and Rs 450, respectively. Children below 12 years of age and women travelling with a National Common Mobility Card will be eligible for half-fare.

'Chalo' operates 21 daily services to Marol, Bandra, Dadar and Colaba, while Navi Mumbai Municipal Transport runs seven dedicated airport routes. *IANS*

TechBiz POST

US goods trade deficit with India at $6.2 bn



Details on page 20

World Bank raises India's FY27 growth forecast to 7.1 pc on strong domestic demand

NEW DELHI: The World Bank has upgraded India's economic growth forecast for FY27, citing resilient domestic demand and continued strength in key sectors of the economy.

In its latest South Asia Economic Update, the multilateral institution raised India's GDP growth projection by 0.5 percentage points to 7.1 percent, from its earlier estimate of 6.6 percent.

The World Bank said India's growth momentum remains robust, supported by sustained expansion in the industrial and services sectors.

It noted that the country's long-term growth prospects continue to be underpinned by a series of structural reforms, including labor code consolidation, Goods and Services Tax (GST) reforms, tariff rationalization, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, and significant investments in both physical and digital infrastructure.

According to the report, strength in the broader economy is expected to offset weakness in the agricultural sector, helping India maintain a strong growth trajectory in the current financial year.



In its latest South Asia Economic Update, the multilateral institution raised India's GDP growth projection by 0.5 percentage points to 7.1 percent, from its earlier estimate of 6.6 percen

The institution said domestic demand continues to provide a solid foundation for economic activity despite external uncertainties.

However, the World Bank cautioned that risks to the growth outlook remain. Elevated energy prices and adverse weather conditions linked to the El Niño phenomenon could pose challenges to economic performance and inflation management in the coming months.

At the regional level, the World Bank revised upward its forecast for South Asia's economic growth in 2026 to 6.9 percent, compared with a previous estimate of 6.3 percent.

The stronger outlook has been largely driven by India's performance. Excluding India, the region's growth forecast was lowered to 3.6 percent from 4.1 percent, mainly due to a sharp downward revision in Bangladesh's growth expectations.

The report highlighted that South Asia faces a difficult global environment marked by rising energy costs and climate-related risks. As a major net importer of crude oil, the region remains vulnerable to high energy prices, which have pushed inflation higher than in many other parts of the world. In addition, an unusually strong El Nino episode is placing pressure on the region's large agricultural sector. *IANS*

Asia's 1st telecom manufacturing zone to take shape in Gwalior; attracts Rs 5,500 crore investment proposals

NEW DELHI: Gwalior is set to become home to Asia's first Telecom Manufacturing Zone (TMZ), with the groundbreaking ceremony scheduled for October 29, it was announced.

Backed by the Centre and driven by Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, the project has already attracted investment proposals exceeding Rs 5,500 crore and is expected to generate over 18,000 jobs.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to attend the event after accepting an invitation from Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, who has been spearheading the initiative for more than two years.

The Telecom Manufacturing Zone will be established at the Shrimant Madhavrao Scindia Counter Magnet City (SADA) in Gwalior and is envisioned as an integrated ecosystem for telecom equipment manufacturing, research and development, testing, innovation and advanced technology development.

According to officials, the project is designed on a plug-and-play model, similar to the concept of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ), enabling companies to commence operations quickly using ready infrastructure and shared facilities.



The zone will support the manufacturing of telecom equipment and components while also creating capabilities in areas such as optical fiber, semiconductors, 5G and emerging 6G technologies.

The initiative is expected to play a key role in reducing India's dependence on imported telecom equipment and strengthening the country's position in global technology and manufacturing value chains.

Scindia has been closely overseeing the project through regular reviews with officials from the Department of Telecommunications and the Madhya Pradesh government. *IANS*

Elon Musk rules out wider TSMC role in Texas Terafab, says his companies will build and run facility

NEW DELHI: Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk has said Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. (TSMC) could potentially sublease only a portion of the proposed Texas Terafab, making it clear that his companies would retain control over the facility's construction and operations.



Elon Musk

Responding to a post on X about ongoing discussions between TSMC and Musk over the chipmaking project, Musk said there should be no doubt that the Terafab would be built and operated by his companies.

"No, we will build and run the fab. Let there be ZERO doubt about that. Maybe TSMC subleases part of the Terafab if they want, but nothing more than that," Musk said.

The remarks indicate possible structure of the proposed semiconductor facility in Texas, where Musk's companies are exploring the development of advanced chip manufacturing capabilities to support their growing technology and artificial intelligence requirements.

Musk's comments came after TSMC Chairman and CEO CC Wei said the Taiwanese chipmaker was in discussions over a potential role in the Texas project. Wei had indicated that the talks were still at an early stage, according to a previous Taiwan Plus report.

The timing and scale of the project are likely to be important considerations. Wei said building a new wafer fabrication plant could take around two to three years, while expanding production capacity could require an additional one to two years.

Earlier reports had outlined different possible arrangements between TSMC and Musk's companies. One option under discussion involved TSMC owning and operating the Texas plant, with SpaceX investing in the project and purchasing chips produced there. Another option reportedly envisaged SpaceX taking a majority stake in the facility.

Musk had previously confirmed that discussions with TSMC were underway but stressed that they remained at an early stage.

His latest statement, however, suggests that any TSMC participation could be limited to leasing a portion of the proposed facility rather than giving the Taiwanese chipmaker a broader ownership or operational role.

The proposed Texas Terafab is part of Musk's broader push to secure semiconductor capacity for his companies as demand for computing power rises across artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, robotics and space technology.

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The ownership structure, investment commitments and operating arrangements for the proposed facility have not yet been finalized. *ANI*

How India is building its next-gen digital manufacturing

NEW DELHI: India is emerging as a competitive player in the digital revolution through Additive Manufacturing (AM) -- a 3D printing technology in which digital file controls the process of manufacturing, a government factsheet said on Wednesday.

The National Strategy for Additive Manufacturing (NSAM) is a strategy introduced in 2022 to build India's AM ecosystem. It has made steady progress so far, training over 1,54,000 individuals and supporting 56 AM startups.

The strategy is now moving into its NSAM 2.0 phase, planning an even bigger market than NSAM 1.0 -- positioning AM as a building block of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat, according to the factsheet.

AM is the emerging technology and innovation that is quietly turning digital designs into real, physical objects. It is becoming one of the newest engineering frontiers of India's manufacturing journey. The global AM machines market is projected to touch $149 billion by 2035, with the AM-electronics supply chain set to grow from $18 billion to $112 billion.

This gives India a real opening to become a competitive manufacturer of AM platforms across polymers, metals, composites, ceramics and semiconductor-grade materials.

The 'ESTIC-2026', the second edition of India's Emerging Science, Technology and Innovation Conclave, will be held from October 27-29. Organized by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), ESTIC-2026 will advance emerging science and technology frontiers. These include Additive Manufacturing (AM) and other emerging technologies with potential for transformative applications. The conclave will catalyze strategic collaborations and support India's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. Spanning 12 thematic areas, the event will feature plenary sessions, technical discussions and exhibitions.

India's space program is embracing additive manufacturing to build lighter, faster hardware. In May 2024, IIT Madras-incubated startup Agnikul Cosmos launched 'Agnibaan - SOrTeD,' featuring a single-piece, AM printed semi-cryogenic rocket engine. The mission demonstrated how additive manufacturing can enable complex engine designs and support faster, indigenous development of space hardware. NSAM is helping more such start-ups in their R&D for the development of critical engine parts using AM.

Similarly, the Armed Forces are turning to AM for faster, disaster-resilient construction. The Indian Army inaugurated its first AM-printed two-story dwelling unit at Ahmedabad, built in just 12 weeks, and has since extended the technology to precast defenses in operational terrains like Ladakh. NSAM is supporting all three branches of defense for establishing workshop level facilities for MRO applications. *IANS*

The National Strategy for Additive Manufacturing (NSAM) is a strategy introduced in 2022 to build India's AM ecosystem. It has made steady progress so far, training over 1,54,000 individuals and supporting 56 AM startups

Piyush Goyal invites US companies to expand investment and business in India

NEW DELHI: Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal met senior executives of leading US companies in New York to discuss opportunities to expand investment and strengthen trade ties between the two countries, according to a recent, official statement.

Goyal held meetings with senior executives from Blackstone, Neuberger Berman, Estée Lauder Companies, IBM, MetLife, General Atlantic and AIA Group, the Commerce Ministry said in a statement.

In his meetings with Blackstone President and Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Gray and Prakash Melwani, chairman of the company's international private equity business, the minister discussed expanding the firm's investments and partnerships in India across key sectors.

Goyal also met Neuberger Berman Chairman and CEO George Walker and members of the firm's leadership team to discuss opportunities to deepen investment ties and engagement in financial and wealth management services. *IANS*

India, Switzerland hold talks on fast-tracking Bilateral Investment Treaty

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman held discussions with Swiss President Guy Parmelin on taking forward negotiations over the Bilateral Investment Treaty between the two countries, with a view to enhancing investment flows and deepening economic engagement.

"Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. @nsitharaman called on H.E. Mr. @ParmelinG, Swiss President, in New Delhi. They held discussions on issues of common interest to both India and Switzerland, including taking forward negotiations on the Bilateral Investment Treaty which is mutually beneficial to both nations with a view to enhance investment flows and deepening economic engagement," the Finance Ministry said on X.

India and Switzerland are strengthening their economic partnership with a focus on expanding market access, facilitating investment and deepening cooperation in infrastructure, technology, innovation and supply chains, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agarwal had said.



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with Swiss President Guy Parmelin

In a post on X, Agarwal said India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries had implemented the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) last year, describing it as India's first free trade agreement with a European economic bloc.

The agreement provides a framework for investment, innovation, jobs and shared prosperity, he added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emphasised the importance of translating the growing India-Switzerland partnership into concrete outcomes in trade and investment.

Addressing a joint press conference with President Parmelin after their talks here, PM Modi said the two countries agreed that reforms in global institutions were essential to address growing global challenges.

"India and Switzerland both believe in democratic values, rule of law, dialogue and diplomacy," PM Modi said and added that India had consistently supported meaningful efforts towards peace in Ukraine and West Asia.

"We have taken several important decisions to enhance market access for India's exports in Switzerland and to further facilitate investment between the two countries. This will increase the export of India's agriculture, pharma, textile, and engineering goods to Switzerland. At the same time, we will attract new Swiss investment in India's important sectors such as biotech, life Sciences, banking, insurance, food processing, and Sustainability," he said. *IANS*

US goods trade deficit with India at $6.2 bn

WASHINGTON: The United States recorded a $6.2 billion goods trade deficit with India in August, according to official data released October 6, as America's overall trade deficit widened sharply during the month on a surge in imports.

The India deficit placed the country among the major economies with which the United States ran a merchandise trade gap in August, according to the US Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The figures come as trade remains a central issue in India-US economic relations and Washington seeks to reduce its deficits with major trading partners.

The $6.2 billion figure relates to trade in goods and is calculated on a Census basis. The monthly country figures released by the agencies do not represent the broader bilateral balance covering both goods and services.

India's deficit was the same as Germany's during August and smaller than the U.S. deficits with Mexico, Vietnam, Taiwan, China, the European Union, South Korea and Canada.

The largest US goods deficit among the countries and regions listed was with Mexico at $27.7 billion, followed by Vietnam at $24 billion, Taiwan at $18.3 billion and China at $16.4 billion.

The deficit with the European Union stood at $11 billion, while South Korea accounted for $9.4 billion and Canada $7.1 billion.

The India number was released as part of data showing a substantial deterioration in America's overall trade balance in August.



Malaysia followed India and Germany with a $6 billion deficit, while the U.S. deficit with Italy was $4.3 billion and with Japan $3.7 billion.

The United States, meanwhile, recorded goods trade surpluses with several major partners and regions, including the Netherlands at $7.7 billion, South and Central America at $5.6 billion, the United Kingdom at $3.6 billion and Hong Kong at $2.3 billion.

The US goods and services deficit rose to $105.6 billion, an increase of $12.7 billion, or 13.7 percent, from a revised $92.8 billion in July. Exports rose by $4.5 billion to $315.2 billion, while imports climbed much faster, increasing by $17.2 billion to $420.8 billion. *IANS*

'Work underway to develop India's 1st AI city in Lucknow': CM Yogi Adityanath

LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the state government is working to develop the country's first artificial intelligence (AI) city in Lucknow and also foster an AI ecosystem in the district, urging young professionals to join the initiative.

The Chief Minister made the statement while addressing the 10th anniversary event of HCL Tech in Lucknow.

Maintaining that Uttar Pradesh's greatest strength has been its land, Chief Minister Adityanath said: "Today, I say that alongside our precious land, we possess the youngest workforce. The talent of this young workforce is also our greatest strength."

"HCL has now completed ten years here-marking the first milestone of a journey in which Lucknow has demonstrated to the world that, given the right opportunities, the youth of Uttar Pradesh will not lag behind anyone," he added. *IANS*

Realty Tidbits

Mumbai logs strongest 9 month housing sales since 2018: Report

MUMBAI: Mumbai's residential market posted its highest January-September sales volume since 2018 as housing sales rose 1 percent year-on-year (YoY) to 72,804 units in the first nine months of 2026, according to a report released recently.

A report by Knight Frank India said developers launched 72,673 units during the period, up 13 percent YoY, keeping new supply broadly aligned with demand.

Moreover, the city remained the country's largest residential market, accounting for 28 percent of the 258,238 homes sold across India's top eight cities and 26 percent of the 279,899 units launched during the period.

While homes priced below Rs 1 crore continued to dominate sales volumes, demand increasingly shifted toward higher-value properties, according to the report.

In addition, homes priced above Rs 1 crore emerged as the key growth driver supported by rising incomes and sustained demand from affluent buyers, it added.

Across the top eight Indian cities, residential sales remained largely steady at 258,238 units in the first nine months of 2026, while new launches grew 4 percent to 279,899 units. *IANS*

Two New Mountain House Communities: Opal & Emerald by Shea Homes



After delivering more than 1,300 homes in Mountain House over the past two decades, Shea Homes is raising the bar once again with Opal and Emerald, opening October 17th - two new neighborhoods, thoughtfully designed for growing families and intergenerational living.

Details on Page 23

'India's real estate market shows two-speed trend as commercial demand stays strong'

NEW DELHI: India's real estate market is increasingly showing a two-speed trend, with office, flexible workspace and logistics segments recording strong demand even as residential markets see a rise in unsold inventory, report the "Real Estate Tracker - Sept 2026" report by Equirus.

The report said net office absorption across the top seven cities stood at 27.4 million square feet in the first half of 2026, up 2 percent year-on-year, while office completions declined 10 percent to 22.2 million square feet. Vacancy fell to a multi-year low of 15 percent.

Demand from global capability centers (GCCs) remained a key driver, with GCC leasing rising 22 percent to a record 19.2 million square feet and accounting for 45 percent of gross office leasing during the period.

The flexible workspace segment also recorded a sharp expansion. Flexible workspace operators leased 191,306 seats in H1 2026, up 68.4 percent year-on-year and accounted for around 20 percent of total office leasing during the period, compared with 13 percent a year earlier.



"Flex transactions in 8 major cities rose 8.4x from 2.2 mn sq ft in 2017 to 18.6 mn sq ft in 2025," the report said.

The logistics and industrial segment also remained on a strong footing. Leasing across the top eight cities rose 18 percent year-on-year to a record 36.2 million square feet in H1 2026.

Warehousing accounted for 24.3 million square feet, or 67 percent of absorption, while third-party logistics (3PL) players leased 12.2 million square feet, with their share rising 64 percent year-on-year.

In contrast, the residential market showed signs of inventory build-up. Unsold residential inventory across eight major markets rose 4 percent year-on-year to 525,695 units at H1 2026, while quarters-to-sell increased to 6.0 from 5.8 at the end of 2025.

"Unsold residential inventory in 8 major markets rose 4% YoY to 525,695 units at H1 2026," the report said.

Ahmedabad recorded the highest inventory overhang at 8.1 quarters, followed by the National Capital Region at 7.6 quarters, according to the report.

Despite the softer absorption trend, developers continued to plan large luxury housing launches. The report said developers were preparing close to Rs 1 lakh crore worth of luxury residential launches in Gurugram in H2 FY27.

The divergent trends point to a real estate market where commercial assets are benefiting from corporate expansion, GCC activity, flexible workspace adoption and logistics demand, while residential markets are facing a gradual build-up in inventory. *ANI*

PE inflows into Indian real estate rise 23 pc to $2.7 billion in April-September: Report

NEW DELHI: Private equity inflows into Indian real estate saw a strong recovery with a surging 23 percent year on year to $2.7 billion in H1 FY27 (April-September 2026), marking the strongest first half since H1 FY23, a report of October 6 said.

The report from ANAROCK Capital said the half year inflows already account for about 63 percent of the $4.3 billion invested in the whole of FY26, with 30 transactions recorded in H1 FY27 versus 22 a year earlier and the average deal size up 18 percent to $91 million.

The total PE investment in FY27 would reach nearly $4.8 billion, the highest in at least five years if H2 FY27 inflows match investments in corresponding period in the previous fiscal. The listing of a sixth REIT during the half has also deepened the market, giving private investors a stronger exit route and freeing up capital for fresh deals.

"We expect the momentum to continue into the second half. Strong office leasing, rising demand for data centers and healthy hotel performance will keep institutional capital flowing," said Shobhit Agarwal, CEO, ANAROCK Capital.

"The first half of FY27 marks a clear turning point for private equity in Indian real estate. Investors are no longer just testing the waters; they are committing larger checks, taking equity positions, and backing scalable platforms," he said.

Agarwal noted that the recovery happened against an uncertain global backdrop which shows that India is now seen as a core, long-term allocation rather than an opportunistic bet.

Domestic investors deployed about $1.3 billion across 24 deals - nearly six times the $220 million invested in H1 FY26 - and accounted for 48 percent of total inflows. *IANS*

Godrej Properties marks 100th home handover at Godrej Nest with 'Shubh Aarambh'; actor Sanya Malhotra surprises the family

NOIDA: Godrej Properties Limited (GPL) (BSE scrip ID: GODREJPROP), one of India's leading real estate developers, celebrated its 100th home handover at Godrej Nest, Sector 150, Noida, through 'Shubh Aarambh', its signature home-handover initiative.

Godrej Properties has delivered over 3,000 homes in Delhi-NCR in the last 12 months, reinforcing the focus on execution and commitment to customers. Over the last few weeks, 120 families have received the keys to their new homes at Godrej Nest, a community built around convenience and well-being. In one of the most memorable moments of this Shubh Aarambh season, actor Sanya Malhotra surprised the 100th family as they entered their home at Godrej Nest.

Speaking on the occasion, actor Sanya Malhotra said, "There is something incredibly special about witnessing a family's first moments in a new home. It's a milestone filled with excitement, hope and the promise of new memories. What I particularly love about Godrej Nest is the idea that life doesn't have to follow a fixed schedule. Movement and wellness have always been central to my life, which is why the philosophy of 'Life, On Your Time' resonates so strongly with me. It was wonderful to surprise the family today and be part of their Shubh Aarambh as they begin this exciting new chapter."

For many families, homeownership represents years of aspiration, planning and dreams. Through Shubh Aarambh,



Godrej Properties seeks to honor this milestone by transforming a routine possession process into a meaningful celebration that recognizes the emotional significance of receiving the keys to one's home.

Today's lifestyles are increasingly dynamic. As work, wellness, leisure and family time extend beyond conventional schedules, the idea of home is evolving too. 'Life, On Your Time' is rooted in the belief that a home should adapt to the rhythm of its residents, rather than requiring residents to adapt to it. Godrej Nest has been envisioned around this shift, offering a curated mix of lifestyle and wellness amenities including a 24×7 gym, swimming pool, tennis and basketball courts, cricket facilities, indoor games and yoga and meditation spaces, alongside conveniences such as a 24×7 party lounge, e-library and medical support services. Together with Godrej Nest's five-tier security framework, this ecosystem is designed to give residents not only access around the clock, but the confidence and freedom to use their community on their own terms.

Commenting on the occasion, Geetika Trehan, CEO - North Zone, Godrej Properties, said, "Homebuyers today are seeking more than a well-designed residence. They want communities that adapt to their changing routines and support different dimensions of their lives. Through the philosophy of 'Life, On Your Time', Godrej Nest brings together thoughtful planning, flexible access to lifestyle amenities, security and well-being, giving residents the freedom to truly live life on their own terms."

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NBFC retail loan growth accelerates to 22% in August; gold loans rise 69%: RBI

MUMBAI: Retail lending by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) accelerated sharply in August, growing 22 percent year-on-year compared with 13.6 percent a year earlier, driven by stronger growth in housing and gold loans, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data of October 6 showed.

Loans against gold jewelry remained one of the fastest-growing retail credit segments, rising 69.1 percent year-on-year to about Rs 3.65 lakh crore in August, according to the accompanying RBI statement.

"Retail loans growth accelerated to 22.0 percent (y-o-y) in August 2026 compared to 13.6 percent a year ago," the RBI said in its release on Sectorial Deployment of Credit by NBFC - August 2026.

The acceleration in retail lending came as overall NBFC credit growth also strengthened. Total credit extended by NBFCs grew 15.8 percent year-on-year in August, up from 10 percent growth recorded a year ago, with outstanding credit reaching about Rs 60.64 lakh crore.



Within retail credit, housing loans grew 12.1 percent from a year earlier, compared with 3.8 percent growth in the corresponding period last year. Vehicle loan growth remained strong at 15.4 percent, while consumer durable loans expanded 56.4 percent, according to the RBI statement.

"Within retail loans, 'housing loans' and 'loans against gold jewelry' segments witnessed accelerated credit growth, while 'vehicle loans' maintained its robust growth with marginal uptick," the central bank said.

The data indicate that household-focused lending is growing faster than overall NBFC credit, with gold-backed borrowing continuing to expand at a particularly strong pace. *ANI*

Shea HOMES

TWO NEW MOUNTAIN HOUSE COMMUNITIES OPAL & EMERALD BY SHEA HOMES

After delivering more than 1,300 homes in Mountain House over the past two decades, Shea Homes is raising the bar once again with **OPAL AND EMERALD, OPENING OCTOBER 17TH** - two new neighborhoods, thoughtfully designed for growing families and intergenerational living.

Every square foot reflects Shea Homes' longstanding commitment to thoughtful design, quality craftsmanship, and everyday livability. From open-concept layouts that bring everyone together to flexible bonus spaces that adapt as life evolves, Opal and Emerald are built to meet the real needs of modern households.

Mountain House continues to stand out as one of the region's most sought-after communities, offering top-rated schools*, neighborhood parks, trails, and a true sense of connection. It's the kind of place where kids ride bikes after school, neighbors gather for weekend celebrations, and recreation abounds, with miles of scenic trails and open space just outside your front door.

Opal offers expansive floor plans with up to 3,219 square feet, 4-5 bedrooms and up to 4.5 baths. Enjoy spacious great rooms, optional flex spaces, and well-appointed kitchens designed to handle everything from weeknight dinners to holidays with friends and family. Elevated finishes and carefully curated details throughout make Opal feel both polished and welcoming, offering homes that work hard while making it look effortless.

Emerald delivers up to 3,793 square feet with 4-5 bedrooms and 4.5 baths, along with architectural elements that emphasize comfort and sophistication. Gourmet kitchens anchor the main living areas, while expansive indoor-outdoor spaces create natural flow for entertaining. Upstairs, sophisticated primary suites offer a private retreat, complete with spa-inspired baths and expansive closets. Every detail is designed to balance function with refinement.

These single-family home communities offer more than just new residences - they reflect Shea Homes' deep roots in Mountain House and their continued investment in the community's future. For buyers seeking space, quality, and a neighborhood that enhances your everyday life, these residences offer a rare opportunity.

DISCLAIMER: **Mountain House, CA is considered a top-rated school district based on current school ratings as of 02/26/2026. Source: greatschools.org/california/mountain-house/#TopSchools. publicschoolreview.com/california/san-joaquin-county. Sales: Shea Homes Marketing Company (CalDRE#01378646), Construction: SHNC GC, Inc. (CA CSLB #1060327). All square footages and measurements are approximate and subject to change without notice. Equal Housing Opportunity.*



If you've been waiting for the right home in Mountain House, this is your chance. **Opening October 17th**, these sophisticated, family-friendly homes won't last long. To learn more, visit **SheaHomes.com/Mountain-House or call 209-528-9910**



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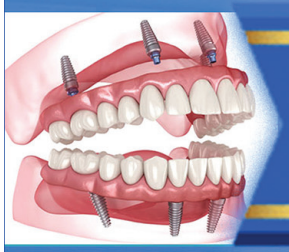



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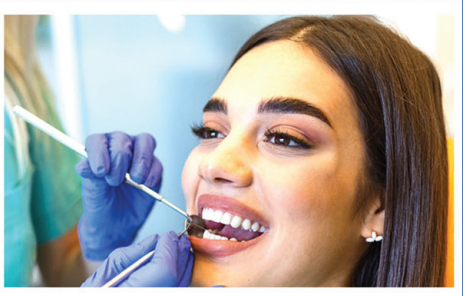
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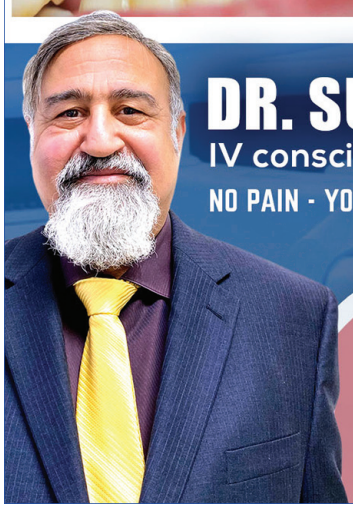



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Indian origin Trinidad student crowned Miss India Worldwide

PORT OF SPAIN: Hailey Pysadee, a 19-year-old law student representing Trinidad and Tobago, has been crowned Miss India Worldwide 2026 at the 33rd edition of the international pageant for women of Indian origin.

Pysadee received the crown from Neelam Saran, co-chairperson of Worldwide Pageants, at the event held at the National Academy for the Performing Arts (NAPA) in Trinidad and Tobago, a media release said.

Contestants of Indian origin from several countries participated in the pageant, which organizers describe as the longest-running Indian pageant held outside India.

Two other titles were awarded during the event. Dr. Sridevi Manginani, representing the United States, was crowned Mrs. India Worldwide 2026. Luna Jairam of the Netherlands won the Miss Teen India Worldwide 2026 title.



Pysadee, who represented the host country, is pursuing a law degree.

Photographs from the event showed Pysadee wearing the Miss India Worldwide crown and sash after her victory, alongside other title holders.

The pageant was organized by Indian-Americans, Neelam and Dharmatma Saran, through Worldwide Pageants, in association with Neha Karina Meena and Umesh Meena, the organization's national directors for Trinidad and Tobago.

The competition brings together women of Indian origin from different countries and has developed over more than three decades into an international platform for the Indian diaspora. *IANS*



Dr. Romesh K. Japra receives prestigious HMEC Lifetime Achievement Award

DR ABHILASH MAROJU



Dr. Romesh K. Japra



LOS ANGELES: A major three-day gathering celebrating Hindu Dharma, temple leadership, spiritual service, and community empowerment brought together a significant representation of Hindu leaders, priests, community representatives, and organizations from October 2 through October 4, 2026, for the 19th HMEC - Hindu Mandir Empowerment Council Conference and 13th HMPC - Hindu Mandir Priest Conference.

The landmark gathering provided an important platform for Hindu religious and community leaders to come together, exchange ideas, strengthen Hindu institutions, and discuss the continued preservation and advancement of Hindu Dharma and community service.

Americans4Hindus Joins Significant Hindu Leadership Gathering

Americans4Hindus proudly participated in this important three-day conference, contributing to the broader conversation on Hindu awareness, leadership, community engagement, institutional strength, and collective responsibility.

Representing Americans4Hindus, Geeta Sikand, Senior National Vice President of Communications, and Navneet Pathak, Chief Organization Officer, delivered powerful messages that connected strongly with the audience.

Their presentations brought together facts, awareness, and a clear call for the Hindu community to awaken, engage, organize, and take meaningful action in support of Hindu Dharma and the community.

Dr. Romesh K. Japra Honored With Lifetime Achievement Award

One of the most significant moments of the conference was the presentation of the prestigious HMEC Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Romesh K. Japra, Founder & Chairman of Americans4Hindus and Festival of Globe.





The recognition was met with tremendous appreciation and applause from the gathering, honoring Dr. Japra's achievements, longstanding leadership, and decades of service to the Hindu community and Hindu Dharma.

Throughout his years of community leadership, Dr. Japra has worked to build institutions, create platforms for Hindu engagement, promote Hindu values, encourage leadership, and inspire greater community participation and service.

His work through Americans4Hindus and Festival of Globe reflects a continuing commitment to Hindu awareness, community service, cultural preservation, leadership development, civic engagement, and strengthening the voice and participation of Hindus in American society.

The HMEC Lifetime Achievement Award represents a meaningful recognition of this longstanding commitment and the impact of his work across the Hindu community.

A Powerful Platform for Hindu Representation

The 19th HMEC Conference and 13th HMPC Conference highlighted the vital role of Hindu mandirs, priests, spiritual leaders, community organizations, and volunteers in preserving Dharma and serving future generations.

With substantial Hindu representation from across the community, the three-day gathering created opportunities for meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and exchange of ideas while emphasizing the importance of strengthening Hindu institutions and community leadership.

The participation of Americans4Hindus further underscored the importance of connecting Hindu Dharma, community service, leadership, awareness, civic engagement, and collective action.

Americans4Hindus extends its heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Romesh K. Japra on receiving the prestigious HMEC Lifetime Achievement Award and expresses its appreciation to HMEC, HMPC, their leadership teams, priests, volunteers, and all participants who contributed to the success of this significant gathering.

Cont'd on page 41

Saahas for Cause community celebrates 3rd annual Gala; book reading by Deepti Naval, poetry and comedy skits



ANAHEIM, CA: Saahas for Cause brought together 350 community members, supporters, leaders, and change makers for its 3rd Annual Gala, held on September 12 at the Anaheim Marriott Suites. The evening celebrated a powerful idea that is at the heart of Saahas's work: meaningful change begins when someone has the courage to take the first step, and that one step can create ripples that can transform families, communities, and generations.

The celebration began the evening before with an intimate Board and Honorees Dinner at



Spice Affair in Beverly Hills, hosted by Karanbir Singh and bringing together Saahas leadership and this year's distinguished honorees. The evening started with poetry and comedy skits and was concluded by a special book reading by Deepti Naval from her memoir, A Country Called Childhood. She highlighted not only the struggles but also what it means to be an immigrant, sharing powerful images from her story. One image that left a deep impact was that of her grandmother, who, after being displaced from Burma during World War 2, stood at the edge of a hill, her gramophone strapped to her back, forced to throw away the records her husband had bought for her. Each record symbolizes the treasured memories and feelings of home that one has to detach from as one is uprooted from their homeland.

The night came alive through their gala's theme, "The Ripple Effect," which highlighted how meaningful change can begin when people come together and start with the smallest act of care. Whether it is choosing to volunteer, reaching out to someone in need, giving resources, or just being there, a single act of care can create ripples that extend through families and into the wider community.

Board Chair Dr. Seema Arora opened the evening by warmly welcoming and honoring acclaimed Indian actress, filmmaker, and writer Deepti Naval as the Chief Guest, along with Dr. K.J. Srinivasa, Consul General of India. The program unfolded like a conversation between where we are and what we want to achieve. A special highlight of the



gala was an engaging fireside chat with Deepti Naval, hosted by Dr. Rohit Kohli. Their conversation brought an intimate and reflective dimension to the evening, reinforcing the gala's themes of courage, humanity, compassion, and the profound impact one individual can have on the lives of others. This year, across all our programs, Saahas has already served more than 20,579 members of our community.

The gala program was hosted by Dr. Rohit Kohli and Aakriti Kundra, who guided guests through an evening of reflection, recognition, and celebration. The evening also recognized five distinguished leaders whose contributions exemplify the spirit of service, leadership, and positive change. Mr. Navneet Chugh facilitated the awards presentation: CEO of the Year - Mr. Himanshu Palsule; Humanitarians of the Year - Mr. Shaku and Jay Nitturkar; Visionary Leader of the Year - Mr. Shashi Tripathi; Lifetime Achievement Award - Mr. Vinod Bhindi.

Saahas concluded the evening by expressing its heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Navneet Chugh, founder of Chugh LLP, for his extraordinary support and commitment. His support, ideas, and reflection have been the backbone of Saahas. From the earliest stages of planning through the execution of the gala, Mr. Chugh stood alongside Saahas not simply as a supporter, but as a dedicated member of the team. His efforts were instrumental in bringing these distinguished achievers to Saahas and helped advance our mission.

"You may never meet every person whose life you touch. You may never hear their name. You may never know the exact moment when your generosity created an opportunity for them, a resource, or simply a reassurance that they are not alone. Your generosity could be the answer to someone's prayer." - Payal Sawhney.



Siddhivinayak Temple in Brea celebrates weeklong Ganesh Chaturthi Mahotsav, welcoming more than 2,000 devotees



Daily worship and Aarati were central to the weeklong Mahotsav



Devotees filled the temple for cultural and devotional programs during the Mahotsav

Seven days of sacred rituals, devotional music, cultural performances and community fellowship brought families together across Southern California.

BREA, Calif.: Shri Siddhivinayak Temple successfully concluded its weeklong Ganesh Chaturthi Mahotsav, held September 14-20, 2026. The seven-day celebration welcomed more than 2,000 devotees from across the region for daily worship, traditional rituals, devotional music, cultural performances and shared Prasad.

A Temple Rooted in Legacy and Community

Located in a historic former church building in the heart of Brea, Shri Siddhivinayak Temple is a place of worship and cultural gathering centered on Lord Ganesh. The temple was established by local entrepreneur Shri Loksarang "Sarang" Hardas, in loving memory of his father Dr. Dinkar Hardas.

Driven by a vision of giving back to society, the temple is supported entirely out of pocket by Dolly and Sarang Hardas, without seeking outside donations or funding. Through festivals, Indian classical music concerts, worship services and community programming, the temple bridges spiritual tradition with cultural and civic life.

A Week of Sacred Rituals and Divine Melodies

The Mahotsav featured carefully organized daily rituals that formed the spiritual backbone of the celebration. Ganesh Puja and Aarati were led by Dolly Hardas and the entire Hardas family, creating an atmosphere of deep reverence and peace throughout the week.

Alongside the prayers, the temple came alive with devotional and cultural music. Attendees enjoyed Bhajan performances by Mr. and Mrs. Munshi as well as a vocal performance by Nameeta, adding to the festival's spirit of devotion and celebration.

The temple's mission is to provide a place where the community can worship, practice spirituality, celebrate festivals and cultural activities, and strengthen connections across generations.

Community Spirit and Sacred Prasad

Each evening, following Aarati, attendees gathered for Prasad. Traditionally prepared meal packets curated by Jaybharat were distributed to visitors, reflecting the temple's emphasis on hospitality and community.



Shri Siddhivinayak Temple in Downtown Brea, California

The scale and smooth execution of the Mahotsav reflected the dedication of organizers and volunteers who worked throughout the week. Sarang Hardas expressed appreciation to Chandreshbhai, Krishnaji, Manishbhai, Navitha, Jayeshriben, and the many volunteers whose hard work helped make the celebration possible. He also thanked the thousands of devotees whose enthusiastic participation transformed the week into a memorable cultural and spiritual gathering for the Brea community.

About Shri Siddhivinayak Temple

Shri Siddhivinayak Temple is located at 201 West Ash Street in Brea, California. The temple serves the community as a place for worship, spiritual practice, festivals, cultural activities, education and service. Its main deity is Lord Ganesh, revered in Hindu tradition as the Remover of Obstacles.

For more information, visit siddhivinayakla.org

Shri Siddhivinayak Temple: 201 West Ash Street, Brea, CA 92821
info@siddhivinayakla.org
siddhivinayakla.org

Youth lead dialogue at Lakshmi Puri book launch







ORANGE, Calif.: Youth leadership and literary achievement took center stage as more than 150 guests gathered for the Youth Civics Think Tank (YCTT) and SMAP-LA book launch at Tandoor Cuisine of India on September 23, 2026.

Former Indian Ambassador and former United Nations Assistant Secretary-General Lakshmi Murdeshwar Puri presented her novel, Swallowing the Sun. YCTT President Eshan Patil led a youth question-and-answer session with Omkar Siddeswaran and Aditya Komaragirei, encouraging intergenerational dialogue and student participation in civic life.

Dr. K. J. Srinivasa, Consul General of India in Los Angeles, introduced Puri. La Palma Mayor and YCTT Adviser Nitesh Patel and Artesia Councilmember Zeel Ahir honored her.

Cont'd on page 41

Consulate General of India, Los Angeles commemorates Gandhi Jayanti and Shastri Jayanti



LOS ANGELES: The Consulate General of India, Los Angeles commemorated the birth anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri through two programs held in Los Angeles.

The morning program, organized in collaboration with Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF) at the SRF Lake Shrine in Pacific Palisades, included floral tributes at the Mahatma Gandhi World Peace Memorial, where Paramahansa Yogananda had enshrined a portion of Mahatma Gandhi's ashes.

Consul General Dr. K. J. Srinivasa highlighted the enduring values of truth, peace and non-violence represented by Mahatma Gandhi and the spirit of "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan" given by Lal Bahadur Shastri. He also noted the shared commitment of India and the United States to democratic values, peace and respect for humanity.

Swami Vishwananda Giri, Vice President of Self-Realization Fellowship, and Brother Satyananda, Minister-in-Charge of SRF Lake Shrine, also addressed the gathering. The Consul General later led guests in a silent procession along the lakeside path to the Court of All Religions.







In the evening, the Consulate held another commemoration at Chugh, LLP - Attorneys & CPAs in Cerritos. The Consul General garlanded the statue of Mahatma Gandhi and offered floral tributes, followed by an interaction with members of the Indian diaspora.

Community members reflected on Gandhiji's life and legacy and their continuing relevance today. The program included an open interaction between the Consul General and members of the Indian diaspora on a range of issues of interest to the community. The Consul General listened to their views, interacted with guests and addressed questions and, concerns raised by participants.

The Consulate General of India, Los Angeles remains committed to engaging closely with the Indian diaspora and to promoting the values of peace, service, dialogue and community participation, represented by the two national leaders.

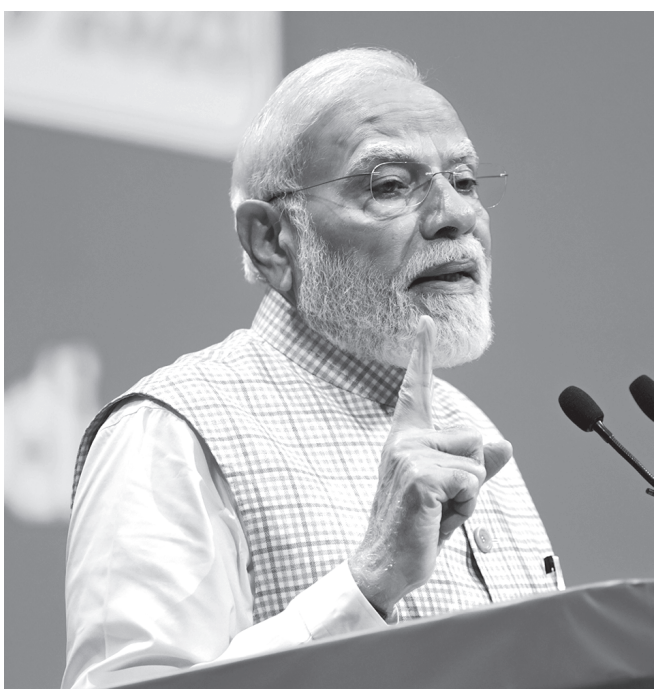




25 years of Sewa: Narendra Modi's journey of service

JAGDISH SEWHANI

October 7 marks an extraordinary milestone in the public life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Twenty-five years ago, on October 7, 2001, he took oath as Chief Minister of Gujarat. What began that day has become one of the most remarkable journeys in contemporary Indian public life - first leading Gujarat and, since 2014, serving as Prime Minister of India.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

To me, one word best describes these 25 years: SEWA-SERVICE

Prime Minister Modi has repeatedly described himself not as a ruler but as a Pradhan Sevak, a servant of the people. Whatever one's political persuasion, the extraordinary energy with which he has pursued public life is difficult to ignore. His work ethic, discipline and ability to connect public policy with the everyday aspirations of ordinary Indians have become hallmarks of his leadership.

His concept of sewa has also sought to give dignity to those who were too often at the margins of India's development.

A home for a poor family is not merely a roof. A toilet is not merely infrastructure. A bank account can mean financial inclusion and independence. Clean drinking water can transform the health of an entire family. Electricity, cooking gas and digital connectivity can change opportunities available to people, particularly women.

This is where Modi's philosophy of service has been most visible: in attempting to translate large national ambitions into tangible improvements in people's lives.

But the story of these 25 years extends well beyond India's borders.

As someone who has spent decades working with the Indian-American community, I have witnessed another transformation: the relationship between India and its diaspora.

Prime Minister Modi has made overseas Indians feel that while they may live thousands of miles from India, they remain an integral part of India's story.

From Madison Square Garden in New York to gatherings in Houston, Washington and other cities around the world, his interaction with the diaspora has carried a consistent message - India values your achievements, takes pride in your success and considers you a partner in its future.

That emotional connection matters.

For generations of Indians who built their lives abroad, India was always home in their hearts. Under Modi, the diaspora has increasingly been treated not simply as a community of expatriates, but as a bridge between India and the world.

At the same time, India's stature internationally has risen significantly. Today, India participates in global conversations with greater confidence - whether on economic growth, technology, climate change, security, development or the concerns of the Global South.

Modi's leadership has also given India a larger role in shaping the international agenda. From India's G20 presidency and the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the grouping to strengthening partnerships with the United States, Europe, the Indo-Pacific and the Global South, he has sought to position India as a country capable of building bridges in an increasingly divided world. His engagement with leaders across geopolitical divides reflects a belief that India need not choose between competing centers of power, but can speak with confidence in its own voice. For millions of Indians at home and abroad, seeing India command that respect on the world stage has itself been a source of enormous pride.



Jagdish Sewhani

Kutumbakam - the world is one family.

Twenty-five years is a long time in public life. Governments change. Political circumstances change. Nations themselves change. What is striking about Narendra Modi's journey from Gandhinagar to New Delhi is the continuity of his central message: Public office must ultimately be about service.

There will, naturally, be different assessments of any leader who has governed for so long and attempted change on such a scale. That is the nature of democracy. But milestones also provide an opportunity to look at the larger arc of a public life.

Prime Minister Modi has repeatedly described himself not as a ruler but as a Pradhan Sevak, a servant of the people. Whatever one's political persuasion, the extraordinary energy with which he has pursued public life is difficult to ignore. His work ethic, discipline and ability to connect public policy with the everyday aspirations of ordinary Indians have become hallmarks of his leadership

Yet perhaps the most compelling expression of sewa has come when India has extended a helping hand beyond its own people.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, India supplied vaccines and medicines to countries around the world. During conflicts and natural disasters, India has undertaken humanitarian and evacuation missions, sometimes helping citizens of other countries alongside its own. India's development partnerships across the Global South have similarly reflected the belief that progress acquires greater meaning when it is shared.

This philosophy draws from an ancient Indian idea: Vasudhaiva

For me, Modi's 25-year journey is ultimately a story of sewa - service to the poor, service to India's aspirations, service that reaches out to the Indian diaspora, and service that increasingly extends beyond India's shores.

On October 7, as Narendra Modi completes 25 years in elected executive office, India can look back at an extraordinary journey. But perhaps the more important question is what lies ahead.

For a man who has made sewa the vocabulary of his public life, the milestone should not be seen as a destination.

It is another day in the service of India.

Author Jagdish Sewhani, President The American India Public Affairs Com-

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Shobhaa De: 'Attention to senses intrinsic to Indian life'

At the SALA Festival, the author of The Sensual Self speaks about rediscovering the pleasures of the senses, why Gen Z may be losing touch with intimacy, and living life by the 'why nots'

VINAYA PATIL

For Shobhaa De, sensuality has little to do with the narrow definition the word often evokes. It is, instead, about being fully alive to the world: to beauty, music, fragrance, touch and the pleasures of simply paying attention.

That idea lies at the heart of her latest book, The Sensual Self, which the novelist discussed during a one-on-one conversation with The India Post at the South Asian Literature & Arts (SALA) Festival in the Bay Area.

About questioning her own attitude through the book, whether it has changed over the years, De says that it has and that she also wanted to remind younger readers that they could be "losing out on something significant" by not paying attention to all the five senses. "It's not about sexuality alone, it's really much more than that," she says. "It's about being sensitive to beauty, to music, to fragrance, to touch."

For De, everyday life itself can become a sensory experience if one chooses to notice it. "Everything in our life is a feast if we want to look at it like that," she argues. "Or you can starve yourself and deprive yourself of all the pleasures life has to offer." Attention to the senses, she believes, was once more intrinsic to Indian life and culture.

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Today, she sees a generation overwhelmed by the "noise" and stress of everyday existence and increasingly disconnected from some of those older ways of experiencing the world.

She draws a parallel with India's renewed appreciation of traditional textiles. As regional weaves and embroideries have found new audiences, she believes there should be a similar revival of the sensual and an appreciation of music, touch, fragrance, beauty and pleasure.

There are signs of that shift though, she adds. Music festivals are attracting young audiences, while conversations around the body and pleasure are no longer quite as taboo as they once were. The problem, however, she feels, is that young people often have few comfortable places to turn for honest conversations about intimacy, bodies and desire. "Indian families, in particular, may not make it easy for children to approach parents with such questions, while information from peers may not always be reliable," she opines.

De's book is also, in some ways, a reckoning with her own journey. She readily acknowledges that her attitude toward sensuality has changed significantly over the years. "I think I went through a period where I was denying a lot of things to myself. I was so busy running my life," she says, adding that she now has consciously tried to reconnect with an older version of herself.

Interestingly, the book's original title was called Searching for Anuradha - Anuradha being De's given name as well as her nakshatra. But she eventually decided against a title that sounded too biographical. "How many times am I going to write different versions of my life in a memoir?" she quips.

Instead, she wanted her experiences to serve as one thread in a much larger exploration of sensuality. The book thus draws on observation, things people have shared with her and experiences from her own life. Sensuality, for De, is being in touch with beauty at all levels.

She offers a vivid example of what she means by a sensory life while recalling a recent experience involving her husband and the Rajinigandha flowers. She narrates an incident where her husband had filled the car with "lots of Rajinigandha" at a crucial moment in their life because he knew what the flowers meant to her. The car stereo was also playing one of her favorite qawalis, "Noor Ul Ala" [The Divine Light] from M F Husain's Meenaxi: A Tale of Three Cities, with music by A R Rahman.

For De, the moment became much more. "It was a combination of sentimentality, and my husband being aware of what those flowers and fragrance mean to me," she recalls. The experience brought together music, memory, visual imagery, fragrance and affection, precisely the kind of multi-sensory awareness she hopes her readers will rediscover.

On being her forever fearless self

Speaking of her readers who now include the next generation of adults, De says that the Gen Z has access to more information about sex, bodies and relationships than perhaps any generation before it. "I think they're responding to it very differently," she says. Their ideas of their bodies, intimacy and relationships are intensely individual, she believes. But she has noticed something else: perhaps they are not seeking intimacy in quite the same way.

"The most intimate relationship they have is with their phone," says De in her iconic way without much concern for whether everyone will agree. That same fearlessness, she says, remains intact despite living in an age of social media, instant reactions and the ever-present possibility of being misquoted. "I'm not preoccupied by that," she said. Her philosophy is simple: say what you believe, take responsibility for it and accept that some people may disagree.

"Whatever I say is an opinion that I'm happy to defend if I need to. And I say it with responsibility," says the novelist while acknowledging that some may find her opinions unpalatable that she's "okay with that too."

That includes her much-discussed observation about Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whom she has previously described as a charismatic personality. Does she still stand by it? "A hundred percent," De says, making it clear that she was separating personal magnetism from political agreement.



Shobhaa De

"It's not about his politics. I'm talking about a certain magnetism," she explains, adding that she sees a similar quality in Russian President Vladimir Putin. "Some people just enter a room and you notice them."

As for what comes next, De has no carefully mapped-out plan and she likes it that way. "I don't plan, actually. I've never planned," she says, adding that there's always room for new possibilities. "The why-nots in my life have defined a lot of my very important decisions." Whether they turned out to be the best ones is not the point, according to her. "No regrets," she signs off.

UIASC in association with the CGILA, successfully organized the Viksit Bharat Run 2026

CERRITOS, CALIFORNIA: The United Indian Associations of Southern California (UIASC), in association with the Consulate General of India, Los Angeles, successfully organized the Viksit Bharat Run 2026 - Los Angeles on Saturday, September 26, at the Cerritos Sports Complex, 19900 Bloomfield Ave., Cerritos, CA 90703.

More than 150 children, youth, adults and senior citizens participated, reflecting the vibrant spirit of Southern California's Indian American community-a community moving forward together. Centered on "Viksit Bharat 2047 - Bigger Dreams, Stronger India," the event promoted health, community service, youth engagement and stronger India-U.S. ties under the message: "Run Together o Build a Healthier Community o Support a Stronger India."



Consul General Inaugurated and Joined the Run

Dr. K. J. Srinivasa, Consul General of India in Los Angeles, served as Guest of Honor, inaugurated the Run and personally joined participants, interacting with and encouraging community members throughout the event.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Srinivasa highlighted the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 and Samarth Bharat, emphasizing the role that Indians and people of Indian origin worldwide can play through their ideas, knowledge, innovation, entrepreneurship and service.

His message to young Indian Americans was particularly significant: dream big, remain connected with India, and use education, talent and creativity to become the innovators, entrepreneurs and global leaders of tomorrow.

Dr. Srinivasa also spoke about expanding connections between India and Southern California, including the Mumbai-Los Angeles sister-city partnership, as an opportunity for greater cultural, educational, economic and people-to-people engagement. He also highlighted the India-U.S. Trade Portal, encouraging entrepreneurs, professionals and businesses to explore opportunities for stronger commercial connections between the two countries.

Health, Community and Inclusion

The free community event brought generations together around the message "Healthy People o Stronger Communities o Viksit Bharat." Complimentary food and brunch were provided, participants received FREE T-Shirts, FREE Commemorative medals, and awards were presented for the RUN by the Consul General in Under-19, Youth (19-30), Adult (31-65) and Senior (65+) categories.

Representing the diversity of Southern California's Indian community, participating and supporting organizations included IALA, GOPIO, Sanatan Bengali Society, Los Angeles Hindu Temple, SMAP, Maharashtra Mandal LA, Aikotaan, NFIA, Step2Step, IASA, OFBJP, Telugu Association of Southern California, Kannada Association of Southern California and VHP- LA.

The event reflected the spirit of "Run for Unity. Run for Progress." Different ages and backgrounds came together with one finish line and one shared spirit of progress.

Recognition of Public and Community Leadership

The California State Assembly recognized Consul General Dr. K. J. Srinivasa for his public service and engagement with Southern California communities. Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee and Ashok (Pat) Patnaik were also recognized for their public service and leadership, including their respective roles as city commissioners. Community leaders like Kewal Kanda, Sudip Gorakshakar, Hark Vasa, Aparna Hande, Anila Bhasin and others were additionally honored for their contributions to the Indian diaspora.

Media partners SoCal Channel, India West, India Post and TV Asia supported the event and helped amplify its messages of wellness, youth leadership, community engagement and India-America friendship.



Leadership, Family and the Work Behind the Event

The Run's success was the result of extensive work by UIASC leadership, members, families, volunteers, community organizations and supporters, encompassing permits, logistics, registration, outreach, food and hospitality, medals and awards, publicity and on-site coordination.

Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee, UIASC President and Commissioner for the City of Cypress, together with his family, played a significant hands-on role across virtually every aspect of the planning and execution, dedicating substantial time and personal effort to coordinating the many components necessary to deliver the event successfully.



Special recognition was given to Ashok (Pat) Patnaik, UIASC Advisor and Commissioner for the City of Cerritos, whose contribution was instrumental in coordinating venue arrangements and facilitating the process associated with securing the necessary permit. Kewal Kanda, UIASC Chairman and Sudip Gorakshakar, UIASC Advisor, also provided extensive leadership towards successful execution of the event, supported by UIASC advisers, committee leaders, members and volunteers.

Key outreach and event leadership included Jayesha Mukherjee, Anila Bhasin, Aparna Hande, Hasmukh Modi, Surekha Modi and Nila Parikh, along with many other dedicated UIASC members and community volunteers.

Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee stated: "Viksit Bharat Run 2026 was much more than a run. It brought children, youth, adults and seniors together around health, service, friendship and a shared vision for the future. We are especially grateful to Consul General Dr. K. J. Srinivasa for personally joining the Run and inspiring our younger generation to dream big, innovate and remain connected with India. UIASC sincerely thanks the Consulate General of India, our community organizations, media partners, volunteers and every participant who made this a truly collective celebration."

One Community, One Shared Future

The Viksit Bharat Run 2026 - Los Angeles connected health with community, youth with opportunity, heritage with the future, and entrepreneurship with international collaboration. It demonstrated how families, organizations and generations can come together around a shared commitment to service and progress.

When generations run together, communities grow stronger. When communities connect, ideas become opportunities. And when people move forward together, they help build a healthier community, a stronger India and a brighter shared future.

ABOUT UIASC

The United Indian Associations of Southern California (UIASC) is a nonprofit community organization promoting cultural, civic, educational, health, youth and community-service initiatives. Guided by "Together We Thrive for a Stronger Community," UIASC works to strengthen cooperation within the Indian-American community while promoting engagement with the broader Southern California community.

Renascent Media Launches #OakTreeStories with "Bollywood Jamming" to Celebrate Oak Tree Road

New community initiative aims to build greater awareness and recognition of Oak Tree Road as vibrant business district

ISELIN, NJ: Renascent Media is proud to officially launch #OakTreeStories, a new community initiative created to celebrate and promote the people, businesses, culture and vibrant character of Oak Tree Road while bringing greater awareness and recognition to the area as a thriving business district and South Asian destination.

Renascent Media extends its sincere appreciation to Woodbridge Township Mayor John E. McCormac and the Woodbridge Township team for their support and encouragement in helping bring the #OakTreeStories initiative to life. Their cooperation and commitment to the community have been invaluable as we work to promote Oak Tree Road, support its businesses, and create a cleaner, greener and more welcoming business district.

The initiative will officially launch with #OakTreeStories - Bollywood Jamming on Saturday, **October 10, 2026, at 1376 Oak Tree Road, Iselin, New Jersey**.

Presented by Raj Jewels Bansal Group, Bollywood Jamming will bring the community together for an afternoon and evening of live Bollywood music, instrumental performances, dance, rap, community engagement, brand activations and giveaways - while encouraging residents and visitors to experience Oak Tree Road, shop local and support the many businesses that make up the district.

The entertainment lineup will feature Madhukar Kshirsagar, Om Guha, rapper KSD, Raja and Team - "Keeping Bollywood Alive," and Karan's Kissa: The Collective, bringing together Bollywood favorites, Indian classical sounds, live music, rap and contemporary performances across generations on one vibrant community stage.

The event will also welcome Woodbridge Township Mayor John E. McCormac, Caroline Ehrlich, Chief of Staff for Woodbridge Township, and Councilman Virbhadra "Viru" Patel, along with local business and community representatives.

"An initiative like this would not be possible without the support and cooperation of the Township," said Tanvi Prenita Chandra, Founder & President of Renascent Media. "We are grateful for their encouragement as we work to bring greater recognition to Oak Tree Road, support its businesses, engage the community, and create a cleaner, greener and more welcoming business district."

"#OakTreeStories is about giving Oak Tree Road the recognition it deserves as a business district and destination, while celebrating the people and businesses behind it," added Chandra. "We want to bring greater awareness to Oak Tree Road, encourage people to visit, shop and support our local businesses, and create experiences that build pride in this very special community."

A Cleaner, Greener Oak Tree Road

The October 10 launch will go beyond entertainment. As part of #OakTreeStories, Renascent Media is also launching a community effort focused on helping create a cleaner, greener and more welcoming Oak Tree Road.

On October 10, players from the Old Bridge High School Boys Volleyball Team will volunteer their time to help clean Oak Tree Road, covering the stretch from Middlesex Avenue to Correja Avenue.

Renascent Media extends a special thank you to the Old Bridge High School Boys Volleyball Team for stepping forward to support the community. Their participation reflects the spirit behind #OakTreeStories - bringing together young people, businesses, residents and community organizations to take pride in and care for the Oak Tree Road business district.

The initiative will also encourage local businesses and community members to go green by adding plants and greenery along Oak Tree Road, helping beautify the district and create a more welcoming environment for shoppers, businesses and visitors.

With the support and approval of Woodbridge Township, #OakTreeStories will also transform one of the benches along Oak Tree Road with an Indian-inspired artistic design by Medha Art Studio, bringing color, creativity and cultural character to the streetscape. Renascent Media extends a special thank you to the Township for supporting this beautification effort and to Medha Art Studio for contributing their artistic talent to help make Oak Tree Road even more welcoming and reflective of the vibrant community it represents.

"Oak Tree Road belongs to all of us, and #OakTreeStories is about much more than entertainment," said Chandra. "It is about taking pride in our business district. We are especially thankful to the Township, the Old Bridge High School Boys Volleyball Team and Medha Art Studio for joining us in these efforts. We hope to inspire more businesses, young people and community members to come together to help keep Oak Tree Road clean, green, beautiful and welcoming."

Raj Jewels Bansal Group Leads the Way as Title Sponsor

Renascent Media extends its special appreciation to Raj Jewels Bansal Group, Title Sponsor of #OakTreeStories - Bollywood Jamming and a long-standing client and partner of Renascent Media, for its continued support of community-focused initiatives.

Raj Jewels Bansal Group has generously provided its parking lot at 1376 Oak Tree Road as the venue for the inaugural #OakTreeStories event, creating a gathering place in the heart of the business district where the community can come together.

"We are truly grateful to Raj Jewels Bansal Group for their continued trust and support over the years," said Chandra.

Event Details
Event: #OakTreeStories - Bollywood Jamming
Presented by: Raj Jewels Bansal Group
Date: Saturday, October 10, 2026
TIME: 3:00 PM onwards I VENUE: Raj Jewels Bansal Group Parking Lot
Location: 1376 Oak Tree Road, Iselin, NJ
Admission: Free and open to the community



For detailed story visit
www.indiapost.com

Indian Christian Day / Yeshu Bhakti Divas









ARTESIA, CALI: The Indian Christian Day / Yeshu Bhakti Divas celebration was a great success! Everyone was excited about the program, and we were blessed by the wonderful participation and fellowship.

Eight churches joined the celebration, with approximately 120 people in attendance from diverse backgrounds. Telugu, Malayalee, Tamil, Hindi, Punjabi, and Hawaiian communities were represented, reflecting the unity and diversity of the Indian Christian community.

We were honored to have two international speakers with us. Keynote speaker Dr. Solomon Darwin shared about his Indian Christian heritage and his pioneering work in developing the Smart Villages movement in India. Dr. Rabhi Maharaj shared a powerful message about how Jesus Christ brings equality and unity among people.

The special singing and dance choreography by the IPC youth were greatly appreciated. The Veena performance was also beautifully presented and warmly received.

The U.S. and Indian national anthems were sung simultaneously, celebrating our heritage and our home.

We also had the privilege of felicitating influential individuals who have made significant contributions to the Indian diaspora.

The program concluded with a benediction by Pastor Nunna of TCF SoCal.

Following the program, a delicious Indian dinner was served, and everyone enjoyed a wonderful time of fellowship and friendship.

The evening concluded with a group photograph, capturing a memorable moment of unity among the participating churches and communities.

We thank God for His blessings and for bringing together so many churches, leaders, families, and friends to celebrate Indian Christian heritage, faith, service, and unity.

International Friendship Center (IFC)

US tech entrepreneur with deep India ties seeks Raja Krishnamoorthi's Illinois seat

CHICAGO: Jennifer Davis was still in college when she and her husband started a technology company, and decades later, the business had hundreds of employees, substantial operations in India and had given the Wisconsin farm girl an intimate view of immigration, entrepreneurship, and the Indian American experience. Now, the Republican and first-time political candidate wants to take that experience to Congress.

Davis is running for Illinois' 8th Congressional District seat being vacated by Indian American Democrat Raja Krishnamoorthi, who has represented it in the Congress for a decade.

In an exclusive interview with IANS, Davis laid out an unusual political biography: the sixth of nine children, a mother of 10, a technology entrepreneur, a longtime employer in India and a political newcomer who says the Congress needs lawmakers who understand artificial intelligence, data centers, blockchain, and the rapidly changing technology economy.

Davis is running for Illinois' 8th Congressional District seat being vacated by Indian American Democrat Raja Krishnamoorthi, who has represented it in the Congress for a decade

She also spoke about H-1B visas and immigration, President Donald Trump, government debt, online threats to families, and the Indian American community that has become an important part of the district.

Davis grew up on a farm in Wisconsin. Her parents also owned an auto repair business, where she got her first paid job. She later went to university to study education, Russian history, and English.

Politics existed at home, but across party lines.

"My dad was a Democrat, my mom was a Republican," she said, recalling a period when such political differences within a family seemed less consequential.

Her original plan was to teach. Instead, she and her husband started a technology company while she was still in college.

By graduation, the business was established enough that teaching no longer made financial sense. Davis remained in the company for her career.

The business expanded to India in 2002, initially opening an office in Kolkata and later moving its operations to Hyderabad.

Her husband had initially gone to India looking for consultants. Davis recalled that he soon reached a different conclusion.

"I know what the problem is, that we were trying to buy labor, but instead we need to invest in people," she quoted him as telling her. *IANS*

National Retail Solutions and partners to host Networking Lunch for independent retailers in Iselin, NJ

Storeowners will join NRS, Mandel Wholesale, Krauszer's, Renascent Media, TV Asia, and El Especialito on Oct. 20 at Rasoi 2 for an afternoon of networking and business insights

NEWARK, NJ - October 1, 2026 - National Retail Solutions (NRS) will host a Networking Lunch for independent retailers and business owners on Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2026, at Rasoi 2 in Iselin, NJ. The sponsored event brings retailers together for an afternoon of practical business ideas and connections with fellow store owners.

Attendees can meet fellow retailers, connect with sponsors and industry partners, and pick up ideas to strengthen their stores.

"Independent retailers spend their days behind the counter, and they rarely get a room full of people who understand their business," said Elie Y. Katz, president and CEO of NRS. "That's what this event gives them - a few hours to meet fellow store owners, talk with our partners, and pick up ideas they can put to work the same week."



Event Details:

Date: **Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2026**

Time: **Noon to 3 p.m.**

Venue: **Rasoi 2, 1567 Oak Tree Rd., Iselin, NJ 08830**

RSVP: Required - seats are limited

Retailers can RSVP at nrsplus.com/lunch2026 or by calling 973-438-6NRS (677).

About National Retail Solutions (NRS)

National Retail Solutions (NRS), a subsidiary of IDT Corporation (NYSE: IDT), operates the leading point-of-sale (POS) system and NRS Pay payment processing services for thousands of independent retailers in the United States and Canada. NRS provides small and mid-sized business owners with robust, revenue-generating store management and checkout systems, including EBT/eWIC acceptance, e-commerce solutions, payroll services, business cash advances, and other merchant services. NRS serves diverse retail segments through specialized solutions, such as NRS Petro for gas stations and convenience stores, and offers reseller partnership opportunities. For more information on NRS, visit www.nrsplus.com.

Youth lead dialogue at Lakshmi Puri book launch

Cont'd from page **34**

SMAP-LA President Aparna Hande welcomed guests, while SMAP Founder and Global President Vijay Patil outlined the organization's mission, and Dr. Pradip Shukla served as emcee.

The program also recognized seven authors: Kamlesh Chauhan Gauri, Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee, Dr. Pradip Shukla, Anand Satsangi, Geeta Bhatt, Harshi Syal Gill, and Dr. Parvin D. Syal.

Organizers acknowledged Ashok Madan, Chair of SMAP-LA; Vilas Jadhav, Past President of SMAP-LA; Smita and Kumar Shah; Anila, Sunila and Bharat Shah; Nila Parekh; and Aishwary Pawar for their contributions to the event's success. They also thanked youth participants, volunteers, Tandoor staff, partner organizations, media supporters and all attendees who braved heavy weekday traffic to attend.

The gathering brought local authors, public officials, community leaders and members, and young leaders together, reflecting SMAP's mission of community unity while giving youth a prominent role in the evening's dialogue.



Dr. Romesh K. Japra receives prestigious HMEC Lifetime Achievement Award

Cont'd from page **32**

Dr. Japra's recognition stands as an inspiring tribute to a lifetime of service and leadership and a reminder that when leadership is guided by Dharma and dedicated to community, its impact can extend across generations.

A4H CALL TO ACTION

Americans4Hindus encourages Hindu and pro-Hindu Americans across the country to become more actively engaged in civic life by becoming informed voters, participating in community affairs, interacting with elected representatives, supporting public service and developing the next generation of community leadership.

Strong civic participation. Stronger community voice. Stronger democracy.

About Americans4Hindus (A4H):

Americans4Hindus is dedicated to empowering Hindu Americans through political education, leadership development, strategic endorsements, and community mobilization. Americans4Hindus continues to expand its national presence by building alliances, empowering communities, and advancing democratic engagement across the United States

For further information or media inquiries, please contact: Email: contact@americans4hindus.org. Website: www.americans4hindus.org

"We are not just participating - we are shaping the future. From school boards to the U.S. Congress, American Hindus are ready to lead."- Americans4Hindus.

E-Sanjeevani crosses 50 crore teleconsultations

NEW DELHI: India's National Telemedicine Service, eSanjeevani, has crossed the landmark of 50 crore teleconsultations, recording 50,00,92,730 consultations across all 36 States and Union Territories, as the Government's digital health platform expands access to healthcare for citizens across the country.

As per the official release, the platform crossed the landmark on September 15, recording a cumulative 50,00,92,730 teleconsultations across all 36 States and Union Territories. The achievement reflects the growing role of telemedicine in complementing the country's existing healthcare delivery system and in overcoming barriers of distance, geography and access, particularly for citizens living in rural, remote and underserved areas.

As the world's largest telemedicine implementation in primary healthcare, eSanjeevani has emerged as an important component of India's digital health ecosystem. By enabling citizens to consult healthcare professionals remotely, the platform has extended the reach of public healthcare services beyond the physical boundaries of conventional health facilities and brought medical consultations closer to people in the communities where they live. *ANI*

wellness POST

One can be said to be perfectly healthy in body and mind only if no part of the body or mind makes itself felt. A part makes itself felt only when there is something wrong with it. You know that you have a head only when it aches.
Sri Atmananda (1883 - 1959)

2026 Nobel in Medicine goes to trio for optogenetics that shows how brain shape memories, feelings

NEW DELHI: The 2026 Nobel for Physiology or Medicine has been awarded to Karl Deisseroth, Peter Hegemann, and Georg Nagel for their discoveries concerning light-gated ion channels and optogenetics -- a technique that has transformed the study of the brain, the Nobel Assembly at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm said recently.

To understand how the brain forms memories, feelings, and behaviors has long been a dream for researchers. Optogenetics makes it possible to switch on or off the activity of individual nerve cells in a living brain.

"Optogenetics provides opportunities for mapping the brain in a way that we could once only dream of," said Per Svenningsson, Chair of the Nobel Committee for Physiology or Medicine.

According to an official statement, Hegemann and Nagel discovered "channelrhodopsin", a protein with unique properties.

They found that regardless of which cell they put the protein in, those cells became light-sensitive.

"Deisseroth introduced the gene for 'channelrhodopsin' into nerve cells from rats. By illuminating the cells with blue light, he was able to trigger a nerve signal. Later, he made this light-controlled switch for nerve cells work in the brains of living mice," the statement noted.

This method for controlling nerve signals with light is now called optogenetics, and it has rapidly gained global impact.

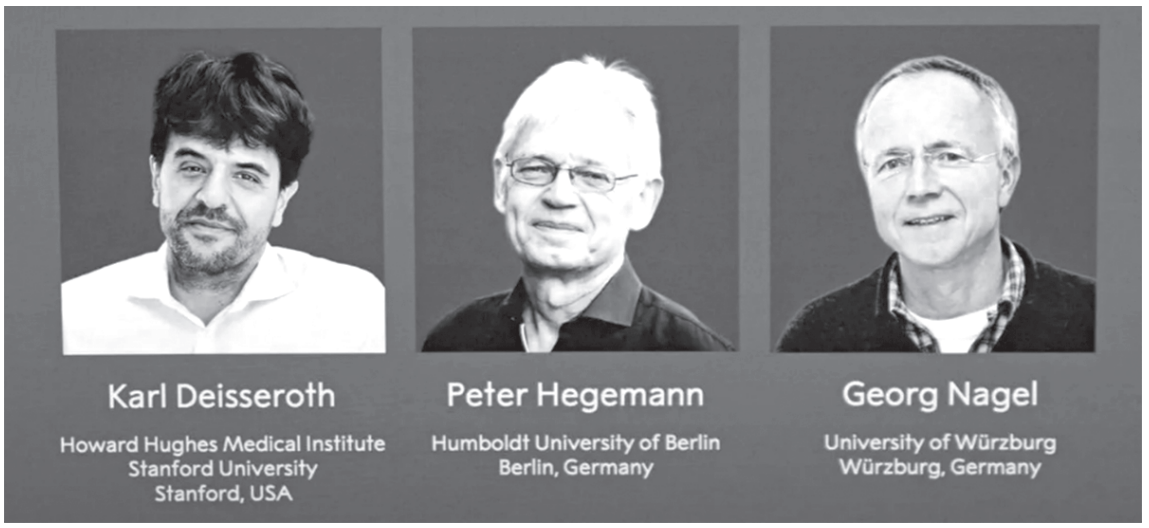
Hegemann's research helped reveal how certain microorganisms sense light through specialized proteins.

Nagel subsequently helped demonstrate that these proteins could function as light-controlled ion channels.

Using optogenetics, researchers have been able to reveal neural circuits governing specific memories, feelings, and behaviors relevant for neurological and psychiatric disorders.

In clinical medicine, researchers are using the method in attempts to restore sight in people with visual impairment.

Deisseroth is a professor of bioengineering, psychiatry, and behavioral sciences at Stanford University in the US. Hegemann, a German biophysicist, studied light-sensitive proteins in microorganisms. Nagel, a German neuroscientist, contributed to the discovery and characterization of microbial opsins and demonstrated their potential as light-controlled ion channels. *IANS*



Why vegetarians are struggling to hit their protein targets - and how one atta swap fixes it

NEW DELHI: Ask a vegetarian in any Indian city whether they get enough protein and you will usually hear one of two answers. The first is a confident yes, followed by a list of dal, paneer and curd. The second is a hesitant no, followed by a story about protein shakes, soya chunks and a nutritionist's chart that never survived the first busy week. Both answers share a blind spot. Almost nobody counts the food they eat most often, at every meal, in the largest quantity: the roti.

If the flour behind those rotis is ordinary commercial atta, it delivers plenty of carbohydrate and very little else. If it is something better, the improvement compounds quietly, meal after meal. That is the idea behind the High Protein Khapli Atta from Two Brothers India Farms : not another supplement to buy and forget, but a change to the one ingredient already present in every meal.



The Protein Gap Nobody Sees on the Plate

India's protein conversation is usually framed as a question of quantity. The more revealing question is one of source. A 2025 analysis by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), using the 2023-24 NSSO Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, found that the average Indian at home gets around 55.6 grams of protein a day, and that nearly half of it comes from cereals such as rice, wheat, suji and maida. The researchers describe cereal protein as having a low-quality amino acid profile and poor digestibility.routs and paneer can do the rest. *PNN. ANI*

Don't believe in idle gossip and hearsay: Kremlin on reports of plague in Irkutsk region

MOSCOW: Reacting to reports about suspected outbreak of 'plague' in the Irkutsk region, Russian Presidential spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that professional assessments and official statements should be heeded, not idle gossip and hearsay.

"The leading agency with authority in this area is Rospotrebnadzor," the Kremlin spokesman emphasized. "And it is Rospotrebnadzor's official statements that should be relied upon, without listening to various rumors and speculation," Russia's state-owned Tass news Agency quoted Peskov as saying during a regular media briefing in Moscow.

"Rospotrebnadzor is home to highly qualified professionals in this field. Let's listen to their official statements," the Kremlin spokesperson urged.



Earlier, Rospotrebnadzor reported that a series of anti-epidemic measures have been organized and implemented in the Irkutsk Region in response to a case involving an employee of the Irkutsk Anti-Plague Institute of Siberia and the Far East.

"Due to the patient's professional activities, upon receipt of information, a comprehensive set of anti-epidemic measures was immediately and fully organized and implemented in accordance with sanitary legislation, including identifying the widest possible circle of people who had been in contact with the patient, and providing in-patient medical observation with daily laboratory testing," the statement mentioned.

According to Tass, the test revealed two cases of Covid-19 and two cases of rhinovirus infection, but no other infectious agents were detected.

Rospotrebnadzor also reported that no emergencies were reported while working with pathogenic microorganisms at the Irkutsk Anti-Plague Institute of Siberia and the Far East.

"Based on the work of the committee monitoring compliance with biological safety requirements at the Irkutsk Anti-Plague Institute of Siberia and the Far East, no emergency situations involving pathogenic microorganisms were identified. These findings were confirmed by an expert committee sent to the institute at the request of the head of Rospotrebnadzor," the statement read.

A special set of measures was taken in response to the illness of an institute employee who was diagnosed with pneumonia of unknown etiology. *IANS*

EAM Jaishankar to visit Ghana to advance relations in pharmaceutical development

ACCRA: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar is set to visit Ghana from tomorrow at the invitation of his Ghanaian counterpart Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, the African nation's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

"The Minister of External Affairs of India, His Excellency Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, will pay an Official visit to Ghana from 6th to 7th October 2026 at the invitation of Ghana's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa. Ghana looks forward to hosting His Excellency Dr. S. Jaishankar on this historic visit, which will afford the two countries the opportunity to renew their inseparable bond of solidarity and shared values," the Ministry stated in a post on Facebook.

"During the visit, Ghana and India will hold discussions that will advance their relations in pharmaceutical development within the framework of President (John Dramani) Mahama's Accra Reset philosophy; deepening agricultural cooperation in mechanization and value addition; support for President Mahama's industrialization and job creation agenda; and expanding scholarships and IT partnerships," it added. *IANS*



Philosophy

Parents' love for children is selfish attachment

Worldly love is like being caressed with poisonous hands

AMRITANANDAMAYI MA

It is possible to reach your spiritual goal while leading a family life, provided you remain detached, like a fish in muddy water. Perform your duties towards your family as your duty towards God. In addition to your husband or wife, you should have a friend and that should be God.



Amritanandamayi Ma

Why do parents love their children? Because they came from their flesh and blood, and because they grew up with them. It is not love; it is a selfish attachment. Otherwise, wouldn't they love all children equally?

Do not abandon your wife or husband and children but let your higher bond be with God.

Worldly love is like being caressed by someone with poisonous hands. It brings happiness for a short time, then a lot of suffering follows. It is like the honey on the tip of a needle. If you try to enjoy the honey, the needle will pierce your tongue.

A belief obtained through telling, hearing and reading will not last long. Whereas, the faith gained from experience will last forever.

Attending a lecture on the theory of cooking will not remove hunger. Knowledge alone is not enough; to practice what we grasp intellectually is more important. Spirituality is an experience. To really know it all interpretations and explanations should end. There should not be any inner talking or any judgements. All interpretations are borrowed ideas. Spirituality can be experienced only in stillness and silence.

What difference is there between someone who gives speeches and a tape recorder? Will reading cookbooks satisfy our hunger?

You can train a parrot to say: 'Brahman, Brahman.' But when a cat comes by, it will cry in fear. Instead of repeating words, we have to absorb the principle.

Following the Path of Knowledge without devotion is like eating stones. We should think that God is our own Self and worship Him seeing all forms as His different aspects.

You have heard that honey is sweet. You may put some in your hand. But unless you taste it with your tongue, you cannot experience the sweetness.

Can you explain the beauty of a flower, or describe the sweetness of sugar? So how can the beauty of the Infinite be described? It has to be experienced.

Repeating, 'I am Brahman' without doing any sadhana is like calling a blind child by the name 'Prakasham' (light).

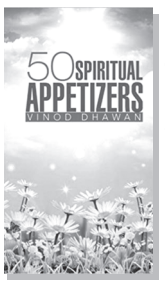
Is it enough to sit in a parked car staring at a map? Satsang only teaches spiritual principles; we have to put these principles into daily practice and live according to them in order to move forward on the spiritual path. This is why sadhana (spiritual practices) is performed.

If we put the different parts of radio together in the proper manner and connect it to a battery, then we can hear the programs broadcast by a distant station while sitting in our own home. By living according to the spiritual teachings, we can enjoy infinite bliss even while living in the body. When we are hungry we eat just enough food to appease our hunger, and not all the food in the kitchen. Many scholars waste their lives eating the whole thing.

Many scholars are like those who stay at the railway station memorising the train schedule. Will they reach anywhere?

Excerpted from amritapuri.org/teachings/sootra. The 73rd birth anniversary of Amritanandamayi Ma was celebrated on September 27

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Jac O'Keeffe
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EU and India should cooperate strategically on Middle East stability

NAWAB KHAN

The European Union (EU) and India have maintained a Strategic Partnership since 2004 and are currently seeking even closer cooperation, but yet are not acting together more visibly to stabilize the situation in West Asia (Middle East).

The EU and India view West Asia through different lenses. The 27-member European bloc is mainly concerned with migration, terrorism, energy security, and the impact of instability in West Asia on European societies.

The Palestine question remains one of the principal sources of instability in the region. The EU policy unapologetic is very pro-Israel, but it also supports a two-state solution, humanitarian access and a permanent end to hostilities, while India has also maintained its longstanding support for Palestinian statehood alongside Israel and has called for dialogue and diplomacy.

This gives Brussels and New Delhi a potential common diplomatic platform. Rather than presenting themselves as outside powers attempting to dictate a settlement, they could support regional dialogue.

The EU and India view West Asia through different lenses. The 27-member European bloc is mainly concerned with migration, terrorism, energy security, and the impact of instability in West Asia on European societies

However, their contribution should probably focus on implementation rather than attempting to replace the principal mediators.

Diverging Strategic Interests

Critics argue that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's closer relationship with Benjamin Netanyahu and the strengthening of India-Israel strategic ties have reduced India's traditional image as a balanced actor in West Asia. India historically supported the Palestinian cause and maintained strong relations with both Arab states and to a lesser extent with Israel.

The visible warmth between New Delhi and Tel Aviv has weakened India's credibility among some constituencies in the Global South and the Arab world.

Some analysts argue that India has simultaneously expanded ties with the UAE, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states while deepening cooperation with Israel in defense, technology, agriculture and cybersecurity. India and Israel have formally described each other as strategic partners, and bilateral cooperation has grown substantially.

India's priorities in the region are protecting its large expatriate community in the Gulf, ensuring uninterrupted energy supplies, and maintaining balanced relations with all regional players.

As a result, although both the EU and India want stability, their immediate interests are not always identical.

When crises emerge in West Asia, New Delhi often prefers bilateral diplomacy, issue-based cooperation, mediation through multilateral forums, rather than joining collective diplomatic initiatives led by external powers.

This can make India appear less closely aligned with EU diplomatic efforts than traditional Western allies are.

Another often overlooked factor is that the EU is not a state. Foreign policy decisions require substantial agreement among 27 member states, which may have different historical relationships and interests in the region. France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Spain, and eastern European states do not always view regional crises in exactly the same way.

Consequently, the EU's ability to act decisively can be slower and more constrained than that of a single nation-state.

India maintains working relations with almost all major players in the region Saudi Arabia, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman. The EU also has relations with these countries , but its positions on issues such as sanctions, human rights, and security sometimes create tensions with some regional governments.

(The author is Brussels-based Non Resident Fellow of the New Delhi-based Society for Policy Studies who has been tracking and reporting on EU and European affairs and NATO for the past four decades) South Asia Monitor

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Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author

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Udupi Palace is a South Indian vegetarian BYOB restaurant. My friend and I had dinner there shortly after I returned from south India. We were greeted warmly and the ambiance is pleasant. The menu is so enticing that we ordered too much food but it was almost as good the next day.

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Mounting instability in Pakistan: Consequences for regional security

ANAND KUMAR

Pakistan is confronting a convergence of political instability, economic difficulties and worsening internal security. The resurgence of militant violence, deteriorating relations with Afghanistan and the continuing confrontation between the government and supporters of former Prime Minister Imran Khan have placed additional pressure on the country's political and security institutions. Although these developments do not necessarily threaten the survival of the Pakistani State, their cumulative effect could deepen instability and intensify the hardships faced by ordinary Pakistanis.

For India, the situation warrants close attention, not because conflict is inevitable, but because developments within Pakistan can have consequences for regional security.

The most striking aspect of Pakistan's present predicament is the deterioration of its security environment at a time when terrorism has declined globally. According to the Global Terrorism Index figures reported in September 2026, Pakistan recorded 1,139 terrorism-related deaths and 1,045 incidents in 2025, placing it first among the countries most affected by terrorism in the index

Sharp Increase in Terrorism

The most striking aspect of Pakistan's present predicament is the deterioration of its security environment at a time when terrorism has declined globally. According to the Global Terrorism Index figures reported in September 2026, Pakistan recorded 1,139 terrorism-related deaths and 1,045 incidents in 2025, placing it first among the countries most affected by terrorism in the index. The reported number of fatalities was the highest since 2013, marking the sixth consecutive year of rising deaths.

Globally, by contrast, terrorism-related fatalities declined by nearly 28 per cent in 2025. This divergence illustrates the seriousness of Pakistan's internal security challenge.

Two distinct militant movements are contributing to this violence. The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has intensified its campaign against the Pakistani State, particularly its military and police forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the adjoining former tribal areas. The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), meanwhile, continues its insurgency in Balochistan, targeting state institutions and, increasingly, Chinese-linked investments and infrastructure. Although their ideological objectives and political demands differ, both organizations challenge Islamabad's authority and impose substantial costs on its security apparatus.

The scale of the TTP threat is particularly significant. The figures cited in the latest reporting attribute 595 attacks and 637 deaths to the organization in 2025, with military and police personnel accounting for 416 of those fatalities. Repeated attacks on security checkpoints, police vehicles and government installations demonstrate the difficulties Pakistani authorities face in containing militancy. The recent suicide bombing in Dera Ismail Khan, followed by a separate shooting that killed three traffic police officers in Tank district, further illustrates the vulnerability of law-enforcement personnel in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The TTP claimed responsibility for the bombing, although responsibility for the subsequent shooting remained unconfirmed in the reports available.

These attacks also raise questions about the effectiveness of Pakistan's counterterrorism strategy. Military operations can disrupt militant networks, eliminate individual commanders and recover territory, but lasting improvements in security require more than periodic offensives. The persistence of violence despite counterterrorism initiatives suggests that Pakistan must examine not only its operational response but also the conditions that allow militant organizations to retain influence and replenish their ranks.

Deteriorating Pak-Afghan Ties

The crisis is further complicated by Pakistan's deteriorating relationship with Afghanistan. Islamabad has repeatedly accused the Afghan Taliban government of providing sanctuary to TTP militants operating against Pakistan. Kabul has denied the allegations. The return of the Afghan Taliban to power in 2021 has not resolved this longstanding dispute; instead, disagreements over militant activity, border security and responsibility for attacks have become major sources of bilateral friction.

Pakistani airstrikes inside Afghanistan and subsequent border clashes have raised the risk of further escalation. Such actions may be intended to disrupt militant infrastructure, but they can also generate retaliation, deepen mutual distrust and complicate diplomatic efforts.

(The author is an Associate Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), New Delhi) South Asia Monitor

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HOW SAFE ARE WE?

The Flydubai Flight FZ1073 incident of September 30, 2026, has raised serious questions about pilot screening and aviation security. Authorities are investigating an alleged attack by the co-pilot on the captain, which forced the aircraft to divert to Saudi Arabia. The aircraft landed safely, with all passengers accounted for.

The ongoing investigation must establish how the incident occurred and whether warning signs were missed.

Airlines and aviation authorities should establish secure international systems for sharing relevant information about pilots who have been suspended or deemed security risks. Employment history, professional disciplinary records, and credible security concerns must be checked before recruitment.

No pilot should be allowed to conceal a serious, safety-related suspension, simply by moving to another airline or country.

Being a former pilot and flown several airlines around the world, I notice that entire security procedures and checks have changed and improved tremendously. However, it seems there are still many loopholes to be crosschecked and sealed, before another incident like Flydubai takes place. Cockpit security procedures must protect pilots from external threats while also addressing the possibility of violence involving a crew member. Airlines should review cockpit access controls, emergency communication systems, and procedures for responding when a pilot becomes incapacitated or, poses an immediate threat.

Aviation experts and regulators must carefully evaluate how cockpit doors, emergency access arrangements, and the presence of additional qualified crew members, can improve safety without creating new security vulnerabilities. Pilots work under enormous responsibility, irregular schedules, fatigue, and pressure. Airlines should provide confidential psychological support, fatigue management programs, and independent fitness-for-duty assessments.

Employees must feel safe reporting disturbing behavior or serious concerns about a colleague without fear of retaliation. At the same time, mental health conditions must not automatically be treated as evidence of dangerousness. Assessments should be professional, confidential, fair and, based on relevant evidence.

Cabin crew should receive regular training to respond to cockpit emergencies, violent incidents, and sudden incapacitation of pilots. Airlines should also maintain clear procedures for declaring emergencies, diverting aircraft, and coordinating with air traffic control and emergency services.

Governments, airlines, intelligence agencies, and international aviation organizations must cooperate to share legitimate safety information while protecting privacy and preventing discrimination.

The Flydubai incident is a powerful reminder that aviation safety involves much more than maintaining aircraft and monitoring weather. It also depends on the reliability, preparedness and security, of the people entrusted with operating them.

Airlines must learn from this incident with a thorough, independent investigation that corrective measures in the future are actually followed rather than merely announced.

Ultimately, no preventive system can eliminate every risk, but rigorous screening, continuous training, strong cockpit safeguards, and international cooperation, can significantly reduce the likelihood of another such incident.

Every lesson learned may save hundreds of lives in the future.

Especially nowadays, many pilots move from one country to another for better pay and package, as in the case with both pilots on the Flydubai flight. It is imperative that background checks must be thorough and the fundamental principle must be simple: passenger safety comes before profit, schedules and, reputation.



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Udaipur Palace weddings become unaffordable even for HNIs during peak season: Weddingsutra luxury survey 2026

MUMBAI: WeddingSutra recently released findings from its Annual Luxury and Destination Weddings Survey 2026 , conducted in September 2026 among 1,045 luxury and destination wedding planners and influencers across 32 cities in India and 8 overseas destination wedding hotspots popular with Indians.

The headline finding: Udaipur's top palace properties have become unaffordable for many HNIs during peak season, and are now largely accessible only to UHNIs.

Rajasthan continues to lead as India's most preferred destination wedding market, with Goa and Kerala also remaining among the top choices. Within Rajasthan, Udaipur commands a steep premium at peak, while Jaipur is seen as more cost-effective in the non-peak season with many options across the city.

Key Findings:

• Hometown and near-metro weddings on the rise: Destination-style hometown celebrations and intimate weddings near metros are gaining traction - Mahabalipuram near Chennai, resorts near Bengaluru airport, Alibag, Karjat, Lonavala and Khandala near Mumbai, and Jaipur for the Delhi market.

Tier-2 and Tier-3 surge: Kochi, Bekal, Coorg, Amritsar, Rishikesh, Mussoorie, Dehradun, Ramnagar (Jim Corbett), Agra, Jaisalmer and Sawai Madhopur (Ranthambore) are seeing sustained growth, driven by improved air and road connectivity and new 4- and 5-star hotels.

New luxury supply: Fairmont Agra (200+ keys, vegetarian positioning) and an upcoming 300+ keys vegetarian resort in Karjat are set to address demand for large-inventory luxury venues closer to metros. Among boutique openings, Leela Jaisalmer is generating strong interest.

UHNI vs HNI adoption: 50% of UHNIs are opting for destination celebrations in India or overseas for at least pre/post events, if not the main wedding - compared to only 12% of HNIs, highlighting significant headroom for growth.

Hotel demand: In the luxury segment, the strongest demand for 250-key hotels is from business families.

Wedding spends: HNI wedding budgets (excluding clothing, jewelry, travel and gifting to immediate family) range between Rs 1 crore and Rs 5 crore. Business families with a combined net worth of Rs 300-400 crore have moved from Rs 2-4 crore pre-COVID to Rs 5-10 crore now. *BusinessWire India/ ANI*

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IDOL-MAKING PREPARATIONS GATHER PACE AHEAD OF DURGA PUJA IN RAIPUR'S MANA AREA

RAIPUR: With only a few days remaining before the nine-day Durga Puja celebrations begin, women artists in the Mana area of Raipur are busy giving the final touches to idols of Goddess Shakti, as preparations gather pace across Chhattisgarh's capital.



A woman artist was seen meticulously working on a Durga idol, while an elderly sculptor displayed his artistic skill through detailed brushwork.

Durga Puja, also known as Durgotsava or Sharadotsava, commemorates Goddess Durga's victory over the shape-shifting buffalo demon Mahishasura and is among the most prominent Hindu festivals.

In 2026, the primary festival days will be observed from October 17 to October 21.

The celebrations center on Goddess Durga, traditionally depicted with ten arms riding a lion and accompanied by Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesha and Kartikeya.

The festival's key rituals include Chakkhu Daan, the symbolic painting of the Goddess's eyes, followed by Bodhan, the ritual awakening of the deity. *ANI*



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'BANDISH BANDITS' ACTOR SHREYAA CHAUDHRY TO STAR WITH AYUSHMANN KHURRANA

Actress Shreyaa Chaudhry, who worked in the series "Bandish Bandits" Seasons 1 and 2 and The Mehta Boys, is set to share the screen with Ayushmann Khurrana in the upcoming film "Mupapa", which is scheduled for a theatrical release on February 19, 2027.

With Mupapa, Shreyaa takes another significant step forward in her career, joining Ayushmann in a theatrical release that marks her debut in the silver screen.

In another significant career development, Shreyaa Chaudhry has also been signed for exclusive management by YRF Talent, marking a new chapter in her professional journey.

Directed by Sameer Saxena, Mupapa is produced by Akshaye Widhani (CEO, Yash Raj Films) and Posham Pa Pictures, the banner Sameer co-founded with Biswapati Sarkar, Saurabh Khanna and Amit Golani. The film marks the first theatrical collaboration between the studio and the production house.

Other details related to the film are currently under wraps.

Shreyaa made her film debut in Dear Maya in 2017, where she played the role of Ira. *IANS*

Yami Gautam on her enhanced photos using AI:

DON'T ALTER WITHOUT CONSENT



Amid rising concern regarding fake content being generated with the help of AI, actress Yami Gautam urged netizens not to use technology to tamper with her pictures.

In her latest post on social media, the 'HAQ' actress made it clear that pictures and videos from her public appearances must not be altered, even if it is simply to enhance them.

Yami's post came after a morphed video clip from the 'Chuttamalle' song from 'Devara' reached social media. Without mentioning any particular incident, Yami wrote on X (Earlier known as Twitter), "Please refrain from using AI to alter or enhance my photographs from public appearances. Kindly use images in original form. Altering or manipulating an individual's image or likeness using AI should not be done without their knowledge and consent. Thank you in advance for respecting my request! (sic)."

'Devera' actor Jr NTR condemned the recent fake-video of the 'Chuttamalle' song, warning of legal action against the accused. Additionally, Vijay Deverakonda and Chiranjeevi also used social media to speak against the misuse of technology.

Shifting our focus to Yami, she will be seen leading the forthcoming family entertainer, 'Nayyi Navelli' next.

Talking about playing Mohini, Yami said, "What drew me to Mohini is that she is never quite what you expect. There's a warmth and familiarity to her, but also a mystery that slowly reveals itself."

"Nayyi Navelli gave me the opportunity to explore a character that moves seamlessly between family, humor, emotion, fantasy and action, while still staying rooted at heart. *IANS*

TOP TEN

HINDI FILM SONGS

1 Tera Mera Rishta: **Awarapan 2**

2 Parvati: **Hanuman Ansh**

3 Vaaroon Forever: **Mirzapur The Movie**

4 Gehra Hua: **Dhurandhar**

5 Maine Tere Hi Bharose: **Hanuman Ansh**

6 Saiyaara: **Saiyaara**

7 Barbaad: **Saiyaara**

8 Tum Hi Ho: **Aashiqui 2**

9 Sanson Ki Mala: **Mirzapur The Movie**

10 Arz Kiya Hai: **Coke Studio Bharat**



Honey Singh fails to appear before Maharashtra Cyber Cell

Rapper and music producer Yo Yo Honey Singh was summoned by Maharashtra Cyber Cell for questioning on October 5 but the rapper failed to appear before the Cell.

As per Maharashtra Cyber Cell, the rapper was asked to appear in person before the investigating officer through a notice, and record his statement. However, the rapper has sought more time from Maharashtra Cyber to appear before the investigating officer.

The issue stems from a controversial remark by the rapper at one of his concerts in Delhi. Honey Singh had allegedly made indecent remarks during a concert. *IANS*

SANDEEPA DHAR RECALLS COLORFUL NARRATION BY THE DIRECTOR OF 'CHUMBAK'



Actress Sandeepa Dhar, who is receiving a lot of good response to her work in the recently released OTT show 'Chumbak', has recollected her 1st narration from the director of the show Aatish Kapadia.

The actress spoke with IANS along with Sumeet Vyas, Sumeet Raghavan, Neena Gupta and Manasi Parekh during the promotions of the show in the BKC area of Mumbai.

Talking about the narration, she said, "For me, I was amazed because when he narrated it, he played all the parts, he played all the characters, so he was changing voice from one character to another, tonality, everything changed. So he did the mannerisms, he fully became that character and within like five minutes, he had done everything".

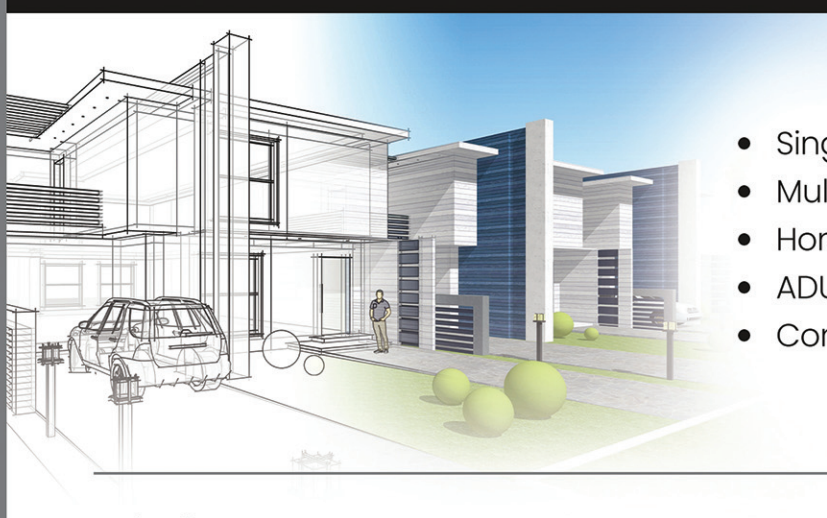
She told IANS, "He had done the background music, he had done each character and I was just looking at him like, 'Oh my god, what is this person?'. I had not met Atesh before that and I was like, just by the virtue of this, I would want to work with this person to learn because he's just so awesome. Once I read the script, I was like, 'Oh my god'. I was just laughing, it was so funny and I think it's got the heart of Aatish Kapadia in terms of his wit and humor and everything".

"I felt like any part that you would give me in it, I would just do it even if they didn't give me Kiran, my part in the show, and they would give me something else, I would do it because, you know, I think it's every actor's dream to kind of work in this kind of a setup. So, it was amazing", she added. *IANS*

"FOR ME, I WAS AMAZED BECAUSE WHEN HE NARRATED IT, HE PLAYED ALL THE PARTS, HE PLAYED ALL THE CHARACTERS, SO HE WAS CHANGING VOICE FROM ONE CHARACTER TO ANOTHER, TONALITY, EVERYTHING CHANGED. SO HE DID THE MANNERISMS, HE FULLY BECAME THAT CHARACTER AND WITHIN LIKE FIVE MINUTES, HE HAD DONE EVERYTHING"

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Shriya Saran says Ajay Devgn is 'VERY INTENSE ACTOR'

Actress Shriya Saran has praised her "Drishyam 3" co-star Ajay Devgn, calling him a "very intense actor."

She also highlighted his powerful screen presence and distinctive approach to acting. Speaking about her experience of working with Devgn, Shriya told IANS that the actor often conveys emotions through his eyes, which she described as particularly powerful.

"Ajay works with his eyes. His eyes are very powerful. And he has a different kind of dialogue delivery. He is a very intense actor," she said.

She also praised Devgn for his dedication and disciplined approach to his craft, saying that he works extremely hard and often does not need multiple takes. "He is very hardworking. He doesn't need any other take. He works very hard," she added.

The actress also spoke highly of director Abhishek Pathak and his commitment to the Drishyam franchise. She said Pathak spends considerable time working on the script, carefully exploring the twists and turns before bringing the story to the screen. *IANS*



Karishma Tanna longs to hear 'action!' again

Actress Karishma Tanna has opened up about her desire to return to acting. She expressed that motherhood has not taken her away from her ambitions but has instead deepened her as a woman and an actor.

Taking to Instagram, the 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi' actress shared a glimpse of the script from her last project, placing it alongside bottles, nappies and muslin cloths to reflect her life as a mother. The actress said becoming a mother has not changed her aspirations, but has given her a deeper perspective and added new dimensions to her journey as an actor.

Karishma also expressed her readiness to return to work while navigating motherhood. Sharing a couple of her photos, the actress stated she is prepared to make space for acting between her responsibilities as a mother.

The 'Naagin' actress wrote, "The script you see in these pictures is from my last project. At the moment, there isn't a new one waiting on my table. So I placed the old script beside the bottles, nappies and muslin cloth..because this is my life now:) motherhood and my restless love for acting, sharing the same space. Motherhood hasn't taken me away from my ambition; it has deepened the woman-and the actor-I am. *IANS*

Rakul Preet Singh breaks silence on IT raid reports

Bollywood actress Rakul Preet Singh has addressed reports that linked her name to recent income tax searches.

Taking to social media, the 'Yaariyan' actress clarified that she was not connected to the matter and sought to set the record straight. Rakul shared a note that read, "It's heartbreaking to see that there's a growing trend amongst the self styled online reporters & some main stream media journalists to sensationalize the news without verifying facts. Let's therefore set the record straight once for all. The search was not pertaining to me."

"Let it be known that I am from the Armed Forces background & had no Godfather in the Industry. I have come up through sheer hardwork & as a responsible law abiding citizen have been paying my due taxes since the age of 20 years."

The actress added, "I am not involved in any kind of illegal Foreign remittance in personal capacity or on behalf of any Production house. I would also add here that I do not hold any Benami property on behalf of anyone anywhere in the country or abroad. Neither anyone has ever gifted me any property at anytime nor do I accept such expensive gifts as a principle." *IANS*



Madhavan says Tamil film 'Modha Rathri' is a must watch!

Terming director Raja Karuppasamy's superhit film 'Modha Rathri', featuring actors Rishikanth and Anishma Anilkumar in the lead, as "brilliant", popular actor Madhavan has now said that the film was a "must watch".

Taking to his Instagram page to shower praise on the film and its makers, Madhavan wrote, "What a brilliant, brilliant film! Enjoyed a Tamil film after a really long time. Brilliant screenplay, wonderful visual storytelling, extraordinary performances. I laughed hard after a long, long time and cheered and clapped as well. A big standing ovation to the entire team, cast and crew. God bless you with more power."

Madhavan is not the first person to shower praise on the film, which went on to emerge a superhit.

National Award winning director and actor Dhanush too had lauded the unit of the recently released film, saying, the film was a "heartwarming" one.

Taking to his X timeline to laud the bunch of newcomers who had worked on the film, Dhanush had said, "#ModhaRathri is such a heartwarming film. Have to applaud this wonderful effort by a bunch of first-timers. Please don't miss it in theatres with your families! #RajaKaruppasamy @iam_rishikanth #AnishmaAnilkumar."

For the unaware, the rural comedy entertainer, directed by Raja Karuppasamy and featuring actors Rishikanth and Anishma Anilkumar in the lead, had hit the screens on August 21 this year. The film, which was cleared for release with a U/A certificate by the Censor Board, went on to emerge a superhit. *IANS*

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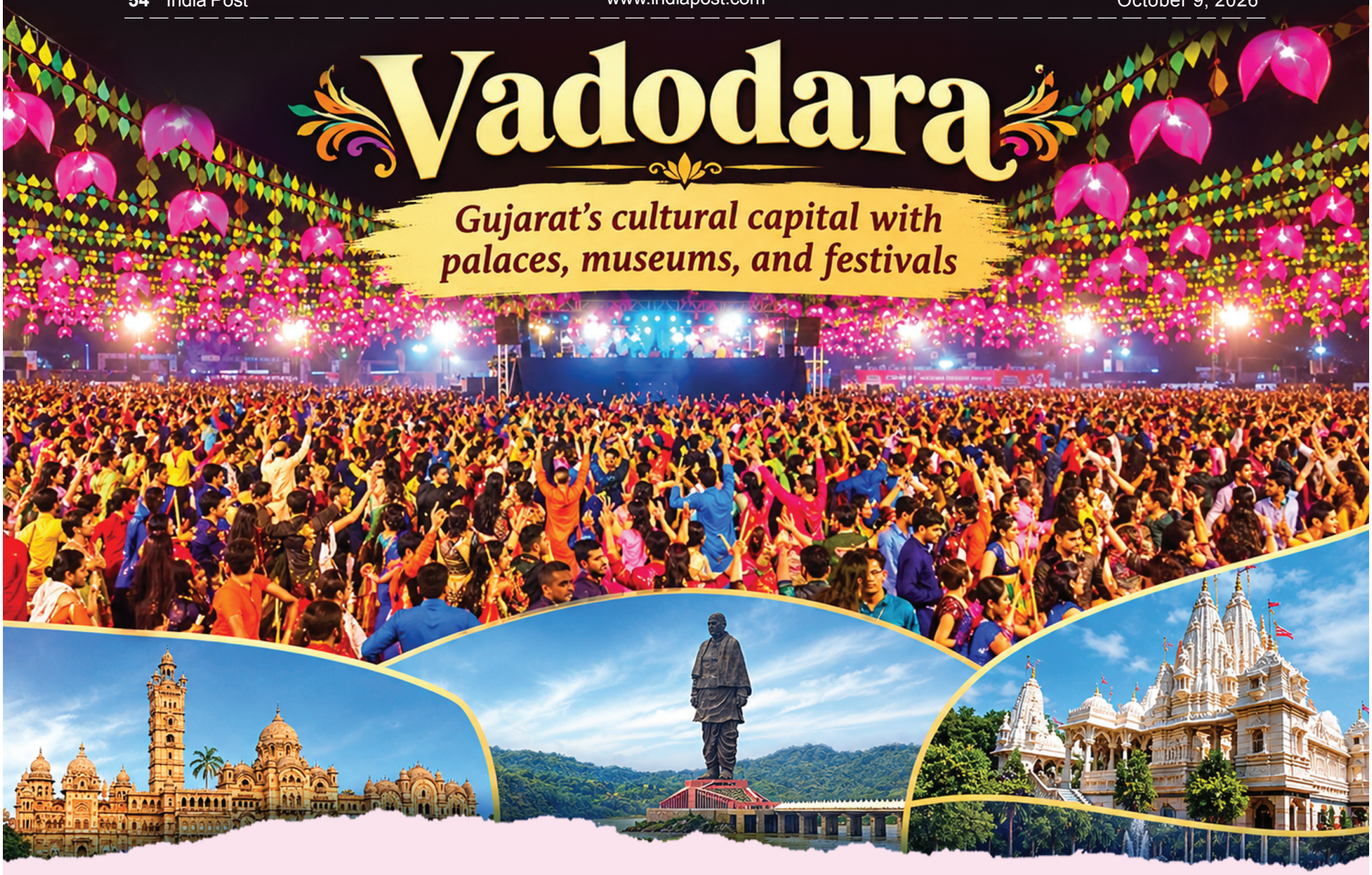
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Vadodara

Gujarat's cultural capital with palaces, museums, and festivals



Vadodara or Baroda is a cosmopolitan city located in Gujarat. Home to some of the most exem plary displays of architecture, Vadodara is a fitting memorial to Maratha leader Sayaji Rao Gaekwad III who had envisioned a dream to make this Big City an educational, industrial and commercial center.

Known for one of the most lavish palaces in India- the Lakshmi Vilas Palace and plenty more legendary monuments, Vadodara is the cultural capital of Gujarat. With a prominent part of it being occupied by the Gujaratis.

You just cannot come to Baroda and miss out on its most extravagant festival - Navratri. Vadodara is considered the cultural capital of Gujarat, and the most sought after location for celebrating Navratri.

The festival is celebrated with a lot of exuberance in this city and one should not leave the city without shaking a leg in its traditional dance form - Garba. It usually takes place in the month of October.

PLACES TO VISIT

Laxmi Vilas Palace: Laxmi Vilas Palace is one of the most majestic structures in India and was the private residence of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III. Known to be the largest private dwelling of the size equivalent to four times of the Buckingham Palace, this magnificent palace is a must-visit when in Vadodara.

Champaner: The Capital of the Sultanate of Gujarat, Champaner is a historical city located in the Panchmahal district in Gujarat. Being included in the elite list of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites across the globe, this marvelous archaeological park set in the heart of the city of Champaner and amidst the Pavagadh hills is one of the most sought after places in Gujarat.

Sayaji Gardens: Sayaji Baug or Sayaji Gardens, as the name suggests, is dedicated to Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III by Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III himself. It is the most extensive garden in the western region of India with a sprawling 45 hectares of land. This was built in the year 1879 on the river Vishwamitri, and it comprises of a broad spectrum of flora, with more than 99 species of trees to its name.

YOU JUST CANNOT COME TO BARODA AND MISS OUT ON ITS MOST EXTRAVAGANT FESTIVAL - NAVRATRI. VADODARA IS CONSIDERED THE CULTURAL CAPITAL OF GUJARAT, AND THE MOST SOUGHT AFTER LOCATION FOR CELEBRATING NAVRATRI

Ajwa Nimeta Garden: Decked with green manicured lawns and adorned by towering palm trees, the Ajwa Nimeta Garden is the perfect destination to plan your leisurely weekend at. The crowd-puller here is the 100-meter row of perfectly aligned musical fountains that mesmerize us with coordinated water shoots in the background of lively colors.

Sursagar Lake: Sursagar Lake, also known as Chand Talao, is a historic water body located in the heart of Vadodara, Gujarat. Originally constructed in the 18th century and later renovated with stone masonry, the lake remains full throughout the year and features a concrete wall where visitors often sit and relax.

Surya Mandir: Sun Temple, Borsad is situated in the town of Borsad in Anand, Gujarat, dedicated primarily to the Sun God. The Sun Temple of Borsad is known to bestow divine grace upon those who visit and relives them from ailments which might cause them unhappiness. Hence, people from all over the world visit the Sun Temple enthusiastically.

Baps Sri Swaminarayan Mandir: Adorned with immaculate architecture, flawless design and awe-striking grandeur, the BAPS Sri Swaminarayan Mandir is like the palace of the lord. The tranquil vibe of the temple instills a revitalizing and deeply energizing calm within you.

Zarwani Waterfalls: At a distance of about 90 km from Vadodara in Gujarat, Zarwani Waterfalls are amongst the most sought natural destinations in India. Huddled deep inside the heart of Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary near the district of Narmada, the perennial and gorgeous Zarwani Waterfalls provide you with an opportunity to trek, picnic, and indulge in wildlife photography. *www.holidify.com*

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