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The country is committed to moving forward with a firm resolution by overcoming obstacles, hurdles, and challenges, PM Narendra Modi said in his Independence Day address. (Photo courtesy: PIB)

Viksit Bharat@2047 roar from Red Fort

NEW DELHI: The 98-minute Independence Day address by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the ramparts of Red Fort – his 11th in a row – left millions of people in India and abroad super hopeful for a ‘Swarnim Bharat’ (Golden India) sooner than expected.

For the Indian diaspora of nearly 20 million (over 1.3 per cent of the global population) – with more than five million in the United

States alone – the 78th Independence Day speech by PM Modi was full of vigor, showcasing his thorough vision of how we can achieve the ‘Viksit Bharat’ goal with a collective approach.

According to the prime minister, ‘Viksit Bharat 2047’ is not just a phrase for speeches; there is hard work behind it. “I am pleased that crores of citizens have given countless suggestions for a Viksit

Bharat 2047. Every citizen’s dream is reflected in this. Every citizen’s resolution is evident in this. Be it the youth, the elderly, villagers, farmers, dalits, tribals, people living in the mountains, forests, or cities, everyone has given valuable suggestions to build a Viksit Bharat by 2047 when the country celebrates 100 years of its Independence,” the PM said.

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All roads lead to India Day Parade in New York

NEW YORK: The Indian American community is palpably excited about the 42nd India Day Parade, which the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA-Tristate) is organizing in Manhattan on August 18. Hundreds of thousands of India lovers are expected to throng Madison Avenue for the iconic parade – the largest outside India.

The lineup of guests from India leading the parade is impressive with Bollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha, versatile actor Pankaj Tripathi, and MP and actor-singer Manoj Tiwari gracing the occasion as Grand Marshals. Swami Avdeshanand Giri Ji Maharaj, spiritual leader and Head of the Juna Akhada, is the Chief Guest, and dashing actor Zaheer Iqbal is the VIP Guest.

They will be joined by India’s Consul General in New York, Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, likely along with US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, NYS Governor Kathy Hochul, and NYC Mayor Eric Adams.

With the theme of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” (One India, One World, One Family), the roster of parade-related events include Indian flag hoisting at Times Square on August 15, lighting up the Empire State Building in Tricolors to mark India’s Independence Day, and Black Tie Gala at National Museum of the American Indian.

The parade this year will be adorned by over 35 floats, including a Vishwa Hindu Parishad USA-sponsored replica of the Ram Temple opened in Ayodhya earlier this year.



Indian Consul General Binaya Pradhan at the Independence Day celebrations in New York. Also seen NYC Mayor Eric Adams and other NYC officials and community leaders. (Photo courtesy: India in New York/Facebook)

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PM Modi to enthrall diaspora on LI next month

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to hold a mass meeting with the Indian diaspora when he visits the city next month for the annual United Nations summit. The meeting is likely to be held at a magnificent venue on Long Island, Nassau Coliseum, capable of accommodating 17,000

people, according to reports. However, there is no official word about the event yet.

The meeting will be a celebration of the achievements of the Indian diaspora in the US and the people-to-people links between the US and India that are bringing the two nations closer, according to reports.

PM Modi will be in New York for the week of high-level meetings at the United Nations from September 22 to 28, starting with the ‘Summit of the Future’. He is scheduled to address the General Assembly on September 26.

Coming to New York for the UN meeting after his first election in

September 2014, PM Modi held a rally at the Madison Square Garden, which was packed with about 20,000 people. The next year, he had a mass meeting with the diaspora in San Jose. Last year, PM Modi participated in the International Day of Yoga mass exercise at the UN.



HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

The South Asian Times wishes all its readers a very happy 78th Independence Day. This 64-page collectible edition is a tribute to the largest democracy from the greatest democracy of the world as we celebrate the beginning of **Viksit Bharat.**

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140 crore Indians to help build Viksit Bharat: PM Modi

If 40 crore Indians can break the shackles of slavery in 1947, 140 crore citizens can help build a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047, when we celebrate the 100th year of Independence, says Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 11th Independence Day speech. Here are excerpts from his 98-minute address to the nation...

Dear Countrymen,

Viksit Bharat 2047 is not just a phrase for speeches. There is hard work going behind it. Suggestions are being taken from many people across the country and we have sought suggestions from the citizens. I am pleased that crores of citizens have given countless suggestions for a Viksit Bharat 2047. Every citizen's dream is reflected in this. Every citizen's resolution is evident in this. Be it the youth, the elderly, villagers, farmers, dalits, tribals, people living in the mountains, forests or cities, everyone has given valuable suggestions to build a Viksit Bharat by 2047 when the country celebrates 100 years of its Independence.

...Through the Jal Jeevan Mission, 12 crore families are receiving hygienic tap water supply in a short duration. Today 15 crore families are the beneficiaries of this scheme. Who among our people were deprived of these facilities? It is the dalits, the marginalized people, the exploited segment, the tribal brothers and sisters, people who dwell in slums and shackles, it is they who are devoid of such basic necessities. We made efforts to fulfill many such basic needs and the benefits of the results have been received by all members of the society.

Our government is deeply committed to major reforms, and through these efforts, we aim to set the country on a path of progress. New systems are being established in the country. To advance the nation, numerous financial policies are being continuously developed, and the country's trust in these new systems is steadily growing.

Those who are 20-25 years old today, and who were only 12-15 years old a decade ago, have witnessed this transformation taking place before their eyes. In just 10 years, their dreams have taken shape, sharpened, and ignited

ed a new sense of self-confidence, which is now emerging as a formidable strength of the nation. Today, Bharat's reputation has enhanced globally, and the world's perception of Bharat has changed.

The doors of opportunities are now wide open for our youth around the world. Countless new employment opportunities, which had eluded us for so many years after independence, are now at their doorstep. Possibilities have expanded, and new opportunities are being created. The youth of my country no longer wish to move slowly. They do not believe in incremental progress. Instead, they are in the mood to take leaps, to achieve new milestones by making bold strides. I would like to say that this is a Golden Era for Bharat. Compared to global conditions also this is indeed our golden period.

We must not let this opportunity slip away. If we seize this moment and move forward with our dreams and resolutions, we will fulfill the nation's aspirations for a 'Swarnim Bharat' (Golden India) and achieve our goal of a developed Bharat by 2047. We have broken free from the shackles of centuries.

I am equally proud of several CEOs from India who are playing compelling roles at the global level today. It is indeed fulfilling to see that while on the one hand our CEOs are dominating the global business landscape, on the other hand one crore mothers and sisters joined women self-help groups and are becoming 'lakhpati didis'. This is a matter of immense pride for me as well.

Today our nation has opened up immense possibilities and new opportunities. We need to focus on two more advancements which have catapulted our economic growth and development. First is the development of modern infrastructure in which we have grown leaps and bounds. Second is Ease of Living. The common people



The doors of opportunities are now wide open for our youth around the world, said PM Modi in his Independence Day speech. (Photo courtesy: PIB)

should also have access to an affordable dignified lifestyle and basic amenities.

We are working on a nationwide mission to create Ease of Living. I emphasize this at every level of government. I urge all elected representatives, regardless of party or state, to take steps on a mission mode for Ease of Living. I request our youth, professionals, and everyone to keep writing to the government about the trivial issues they face with their solutions. They should inform the government. There is no harm in removing unnecessary difficulties. I firmly believe that today's governments are sensitive. Whether it is local self-governance, state governments, or the central government, they will give importance to this issue.

Reforms in governance are essential for the dream of a Viksit Bharat by 2047. We must push forward with these reforms so that opportunities are created in the lives of ordinary citizens, and obstacles are eliminated. Citizens should experience dignity in their lives, and no one should ever have to say, "This was my right, and I

did not get it." People should not have to look for what they deserve. Therefore, the delivery system in governance needs to be strengthened further.

Today, many of the world's leading companies want to invest in Bharat. I have observed this after the elections, and the majority of people requesting to meet with me in my third term are investors. These are global investors who want to come to Bharat and invest here. This is a huge golden opportunity. I urge state governments to establish clear policies to attract investors. Provide assurance of good governance and build their confidence in the law and order situation. Every state should engage in healthy competition to attract investors. This competition will bring investment to their states, providing local youth with opportunities and creating jobs.

We are moving towards a net-zero future in the coming years and I remember the targets set in the Paris Accord. From the ramparts of the Red Fort, I wish to highlight the achievements of my countrymen. What the G-20 nations could not accomplish, our citizens have

achieved. If any G-20 country has met its Paris Accord targets ahead of time, it is only my country, my Bharat. I take immense pride in this accomplishment. We have met our renewable energy targets and are ambitiously working towards reaching the target of 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030.

I understand the concerns regarding recent events in Bangladesh, especially given our proximity as a neighboring country. I hope that the situation there soon returns to normalcy. The primary concern of our 140 crore citizens is to ensure the safety of Hindus, the minorities in Bangladesh. Bharat has always desired that our neighboring countries pursue a path of contentment and peace.

Laws that divide our nation based on religion and foster discrimination have no place in modern society. Therefore, I assert that it is time for the country to demand a Secular Civil Code. After 75 years of a Communal Civil Code, it is crucial to move towards a Secular Civil Code. Once this shift takes place, it will eliminate religious discrimination and will bridge the gap felt by ordinary citizens.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER



Dear Friends, a very warm and heartiest congratulations on the 77th anniversary of India's independence that paves the way for 'Viksit Bharat'.

On this occasion, let us remember that India is also celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Constitution. Remaining firm on the constitutional ideals of justice, equality, liberty, and fraternity, we are moving ahead with the mission to ensure that India regains its proud place on the world stage.

However, the world is facing tumultuous times. From the Russia-Ukraine war to the Israel-Hamas conflict, from tensions growing in the Middle East to political unrest in Bangladesh — along with a slowdown in major economies like the US that has sparked recession fears — humanity is facing a heightened sense of uncertainty.

In times of such upheavals, India stands firm to become the third-largest economy in the world, showcasing political stability in the PM Modi 3.0 era. The RBI has forecast 7.2% GDP growth for 2024-2025 as India's forex reserves have reached a historic high of \$675 billion. India has now become one of the largest exporters of Arms & Ammunition and is soon to be the industrial-production HQ of the world.

Here in the United States, as Vice President Kamala Harris leads over Donald Trump, not only nationally but also in battleground states as per polls, we are proud to present our annual Special Edition commemorating and celebrating Independence Day with 'Viksit Bharat@2047' as the core theme.

India@78 is a vibrant and strong democracy in the world, maintaining the values of her ancient philosophy, "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" - the world is one family. In the same spirit, the Indian diaspora across the globe is creating synergies for collaborations among the world economies, while helping the country create a necessary skilled pool for emerging technologies that will make it a powerful global leader.

Over the 16-plus years' presence of The South Asian Times, we also do our utmost to preserve and promote the patriotic emotions in each Indian soul settled far away from their home. This special edition is a testimonial to our continued sincere effort. Our family-oriented, unwavering vision has set high standards in the South Asian media fraternity of the US, both in print and online. We take great pride in being the most consistent in ethnic newsprint media and publishing a most read and admired weekly newspaper in the USA, for the South Asian communities and the mainstream as well.

Our newly-designed website, www.thesouthasiantimes.info, is updated 24x7. Please visit it for the latest news, vital for the Indian-American Diaspora.

Here, we are presenting yet another India Day Special Edition. Hope you will enjoy the result of the efforts put in by our editorial team. We humbly thank you, our advertisers, supporters, contributors, and readers, for being gracious partners in our significant, sustained success and growth.

We are looking forward to presenting another very special edition celebrating Diwali, the Festival of Lights, which falls on November 1. Please share your views and feedback at — toeditorial@gmail.com

With warm greetings,

Kamlesh C Mehta
Jai Hind!

Viksit Bharat@2047 roar from Red Fort

<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The country is committed to moving forward with a firm resolution by overcoming obstacles, hurdles and challenges. PM Modi said he sees clearly and there is no hesitation in his thoughts or veil in front of his dreams. "I can see clearly that the blood of our ancestors is in the veins of the 140 crore people. If those 40 crore people could fulfill the dreams of independence, then 140 crore citizens can realize the dream of a prosperous Bharat. I will work three times harder, at three times the speed and with three times the scale so that the dreams we have for the nation are realized sooner," roared PM Modi, an untiring man in his third term.

"I will never shy away from hard work. I never back down in courage; I never fear facing challenges. Why? Because I live for you, I live for your future, I live for the bright future of Mother India," he added.

In the same vein, President Droupadi

Murmu, while addressing the nation on the eve of the 78th Independence Day, said the Amrit Kaal, the ongoing period of a quarter century leading to the centenary of our Independence, is going to be shaped by the youth of today.

"It is their energy and enthusiasm that will help the nation scale new heights. My greetings also to our diaspora: You are part of our family, making us proud with your achievements. You are great representatives of India's culture and heritage," she emphasized.

Congratulating India on its 78th Independence Day, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the comprehensive global and strategic partnership between the two countries is grounded in the deep bonds between our peoples, our economies, and built on the foundation of our shared commitment to democracy, freedom, and human dignity.

World leaders greet India

From Italian PM Giorgia Meloni to Canadian leader Justin Trudeau, world leaders greeted India and its leadership on the 78th Independence Day.

Posting a picture of her and Modi at the G7 summit in June, Italian leader Meloni said the strategic partnership between both countries was important for the future. Trudeau extended his congratulations, saying Indo-Canadian communities were an integral part of his country's national identity.

Maldives President Dr Mohamed Muizzu said our enduring friendship, rooted in history, has evolved to foster prosperity and development in

the Maldives and the region. Extending his wishes in both Hindi and English, French President Emmanuel Macron said he is looking forward to "working with my friend PM Modi on achieving the ambitious goals we have set for our strategic partnership".

Russian President Vladimir Putin said, "I am confident that the consistent implementation of the agreements reached following our recent talks in Moscow will contribute to the further development of multifaceted Russian-Indian cooperation". Mauritius PM Pravind Kumar Jugnauth wished "long live the vibrant and ever flourishing Mauritius Bharat relationship".

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Chairman and Co-Founder

Kamlesh C. Mehta
Kamlesh@thesouthasiantimes.info

Co-Founder

Saroosh Gull

President

Arjit Mehta
Arjit@thesouthasiantimes.info

Founding Editor: Parveen Chopra

Managing Editor

Meenakshi Iyer
toeditorial@gmail.com

Senior Editor

Hiral Dholakia-Dave
contacthiralholakia@gmail.com

Consultants

Shomik Chaudhuri P: 646.498.5122
shomik@shomikchaudhuri.com
Ginsmon P. Zacharia P: 516.776.7061
ginsmon@hotmail.com

Contributing Editors:

Surekha Vijn (DC),
Suchitra Srinivas (NJ),
Arvind Vora, Melvin Durai,
Dr Prem Kumar Sharma and
Dr Akshat Jain

Holistic Life Columnist

Dr Bal Ram Singh, Atul Vyas

Delhi Bureau:

Shinto Kallattu

Jaipur Bureau:

Prakash Bhandari

Cartoonist: Mahendra Shah

Art and Design: Dhiraj Kumar Showaan

Bharat Bhushan Chopra

Graphic Designer: Foxview Media

Consultants

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Bhagwati Creations

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Contacts

Editor@TheSouthAsianTimes.info
Subscribe@TheSouthAsianTimes.info

Advertisements

Advertise@TheSouthAsianTimes.info
P: 516.390.7847, F: 360.323.0036

Head Office

Forsythe Multimedia Group,
22 Hemingway Drive

Dix Hills, NY 11746

NYC office

62 W 47th street, Suite 905
New York, NY 10036

Website

www.TheSouthAsianTimes.info
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'OBSERVING CONSTITUTIONAL IDEALS TO ENSURE INDIA'S PLACE ON WORLD MAP'

Remaining firm on the Constitutional ideals of justice, equality, liberty and fraternity, we are on the mission to enable India to reclaim its rightful position on the global stage, says President Droupadi Murmu

On August 15, in all parts of the country and also abroad, Indians participate in the flag-hoisting ceremonies, sing patriotic songs, and distribute sweets. Young children participate in cultural events. When we hear them talking about our great nation and about the privilege of being a citizen of it, we find in their words echoes of what our great freedom fighters used to say.

We are also celebrating the 75th year of the Constitution. The journey of the newly independent nation was not without obstacles. Remaining firm on the Constitutional ideals of justice, equality, liberty and fraternity, we are on the mission to enable India to reclaim its rightful position on the global stage.

As general elections were held in our country this year, the number of eligible voters stood at nearly 97 crore. This was a historic record, making it the largest electoral exercise humankind has ever witnessed. The Election Commission of India should be congratulated for the smooth and flawless conduct of such a gigantic event.

From 2021 to 2024, India has been among the fastest growing major economies, with an average growth rate of 8 percent annually. This has not only put more money in the hands of people, it has also

The Amrit Kaal, the ongoing period of a quarter century leading to the centenary of our Independence, is going to be shaped by the youth of today. It is their energy and enthusiasm that will help the nation scale new heights

drastically reduced the number of people living below the poverty line. As for those who continue to suffer from poverty, all efforts are being made not only to provide a helping hand to them, but also to bring them out of it. For example, the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, launched in the initial phase of Covid-19, continues to provide free ration to about 80 crore people, which also ensures that those who have recently come out of poverty are not forced back into it.

It is a matter of pride for all that India has become the fifth largest economy in the world, and we are also poised to become one of the top three economies soon. This has been made possible only by tireless hard work of farmers and workers, by the farsightedness of planners and wealth-creators, and by the visionary leadership.

Farmers, our 'Annadata', have ensured that agricultural production continues to beat expectations. With this, they have contributed immensely to making India self-reliant in agriculture and feeding our people. Infrastructure has received a boost in recent years. Strategic planning and effective insti-



President Droupadi Murmu addressing the nation on the eve of the 78th Independence Day. (Photo courtesy: X@rashtrapatibhvn)

tutions have helped expand the network of roads and highways, railways as well as ports.

Considering the great potential of futuristic technology, the Government has vigorously promoted a range of sectors, such as semiconductors and Artificial Intelligence, while also creating an ideal ecosystem for startups which will propel their growth. It has made India an even more attractive investment destination. With greater transparency, the banking and financial sector has become much more efficient. All of these factors have set the stage for the next generation of economic reforms and economic growth that will catapult India among the developed nations.

This rapid but equitable progress has given India a higher stature in global affairs. After the successful completion of its G-20 Presidency, India has consolidated its role as the voice of the Global South. India intends to use its influential position to expand the scope of world peace and prosperity.

Social justice is a top priority of the Government, and it has taken a number of unprecedented initiatives for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other marginalised sections of society. The term 'justice', taken in the broadest possible sense, includes a variety of social factors. I would like to stress two of them in particular, namely, gender justice and climate justice.

Speaking of justice, let me also mention here that in adopting the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita from July this year, we have removed one more relic of the colonial era. The new code is oriented towards ensuring justice for the victims of crime instead of focusing on punishment alone. I see this change as a tribute to the freedom fighters.

The Amrit Kaal, the ongoing period of a quarter century leading to the centenary of our Independence, is going to be shaped by the youth of today. It is their energy and enthusiasm that will help the nation scale new heights. Cultivating the young minds

and creating a new mindset that takes the best of the traditions and the contemporary knowledge is our priority. To this end, the National Education Policy, launched in 2020, has already started showing results.

To harness their talent, the Government has come up with initiatives to facilitate skilling, employment and other opportunities for them. The Prime Minister's package of five schemes for employment and skilling will benefit 4.1 crore youth over five years. Under a new initiative of the Government, one crore youth will be doing internships in leading companies over five years. All this will be a foundational contribution towards building Viksit Bharat.

In recent years, India has made unprecedented advances in space exploration. Along

My greetings also to our diaspora: You are part of our family, making us proud with your achievements. You are great representatives of India's culture and heritage

with you all, I also eagerly look forward to the launch of the Gaganyaan Mission next year, which will take a team of Indian astronauts into space aboard India's first human spaceflight.

The world of sports is another arena in which the country has made great progress in the last decade. The Government has rightly prioritised the development of sports infrastructure, and it is showing results. The Indian contingent put up its best efforts in the recently concluded Paris Olympic Games. I appreciate the dedication and hard work of the players. They have inspired the youth.

In cricket, India won the T-20 World Cup, to the great joy of a large number of fans. In chess, our prodigies have made the country proud. This is said to be the beginning of an Indian era in chess. In badminton, tennis and other sports, our youngsters are making a mark on the world stage. Their achievements have inspired the next generation too.

My greetings also to our diaspora: You are part of our family, making us proud with your achievements. You are great representatives of India's culture and heritage.

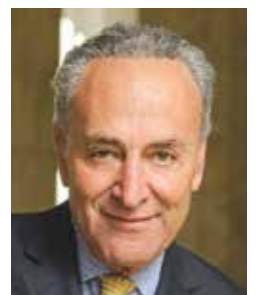
U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer
SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

Thursday, August 15, 2024

"Proud to represent vibrant Indian community in NY"

"Happy Independence Day, India! I am proud to represent a vibrant and wonderful Indian-American community in New York. The Indian community represents what's so great about New York - that it attracts talented and hard-working people from all over the world who come together and create a diverse society that is greater than the sum of its parts. The partnership between the United States and India—the oldest democracy in the world and the largest democracy in the world—has huge potential for growth in the 21st century. I look forward to continuing the partnership between our two countries and bolstering our shared democratic values."

- U.S. Senator Charles Schumer





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The Iconic World Trade Center building, tallest building in the United States of America in New York was lit up in tricolors in celebration of the 78th Independence Day of India. An initiative of the South Asian Engagement Foundation.



(Image courtesy: Rahul Walia/Facebook)

Independence Day celebrations at the Bowling Green with Mayor of New York Mr Eric Adams; CG Binaya S. Pradhan joined the grand celebration with Mayor & hoisted Tiranga at the event organized by the Indian Cultural Association of North America.



Tricolor at Times Square: Minister for State for External Affairs & Textiles Pabitra Margherita (inset) and Consul General Binaya S. Pradhan joined members of Indian community in a special flag hoisting ceremony at the Times Square organized by FIA. The Minister spoke about rich contributions made by Indian-American community in cementing India-USA partnership



India in New York celebrated 78th Independence Day with flag hoisting by Consul General Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, in the presence of members of the Indian community.



(All images courtesy: India in New York/Facebook)

भारत का प्रधान कौंसल
न्यू यार्क



CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA
NEW YORK

August 5, 2024

MESSAGE

As we unfurl the tricolor this 15th August, the Indian nation will mark a historic day in its civilizational journey. On this auspicious occasion, I convey my warmest wishes to fellow Indians, members of the Indian American community, and friends of India. It is also a day to pay homage to our founding fathers who won us freedom. Their sacrifice and struggle resonate in our hearts and minds each time we sing our national anthem.

On the eve of the 78th anniversary of India's Independence, as we take stock of our nation's progress, a feeling of pride and honor overwhelms us. It has been a journey of success and achievement, of resilience and determination, and above all, of togetherness and unity. We are proud to have built a society based on our age-old values and heritage, and embellished by our vibrant democracy. We remain committed to meeting the hopes and aspirations of our people and to making the world a better place for one and all. India embarks on the journey through the Amrit Kaal towards Viksit Bharat or Developed India by 2047. I urge one and all to wholeheartedly embrace these patriotic initiatives so that we can make the 78th Independence Day celebrations a grand success.

The marking of India's freedom is also a celebration of India's democracy and our shared democratic ethos with the United States of America. Both our nations have continued to inspire each other in thought and action. We are also celebrating an ever-deepening partnership between India and the United States which is cemented by the highly successful Indian-American community. May we together continue to walk on this nourishing path.

I once again convey my warmest greetings and felicitations to all readers of *The South Asian Times*.

B. Pradhan
(Binaya S. Pradhan)

3 East 64th Street, New York, NY 10065 (USA)
Tel: CG Office: (212) 774-0622/0621 • Fax: (212) 988-6423
E-mail: cg.newyork@mea.gov.in; cgoffice.newyork@mea.gov.in; Website: www.indiainnewyork.gov.in



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August 15, 2024

Dear Friends:

It gives me great pleasure to join the readers of *The South Asian Times* in celebrating the 78th Independence Day of India.

New Yorkers understand that our inimitable blend of diverse heritages and histories is the source of our singularity and strength. We are proud to be the home of a thriving population of Indian New Yorkers that has made an indelible impact on life throughout the five boroughs. My Administration is committed to ensuring that our city remains a welcoming and accessible home to people of all backgrounds. Established in 2008, *The South Asian Times* serves as a trusted news resource for Indian Americans in New York and beyond and is dedicated to its mission of journalistic excellence. As the Indian community at home and around the world celebrates the anniversary of India's independence from Great Britain, I commend this publication for its continued efforts to engage with and support our South Asian sisters and brothers. Together, we will work to further fortify New York as we forge a better, brighter future for our great global city.

On behalf of the City of New York, I extend my best wishes for a joyous and memorable Independence Day.

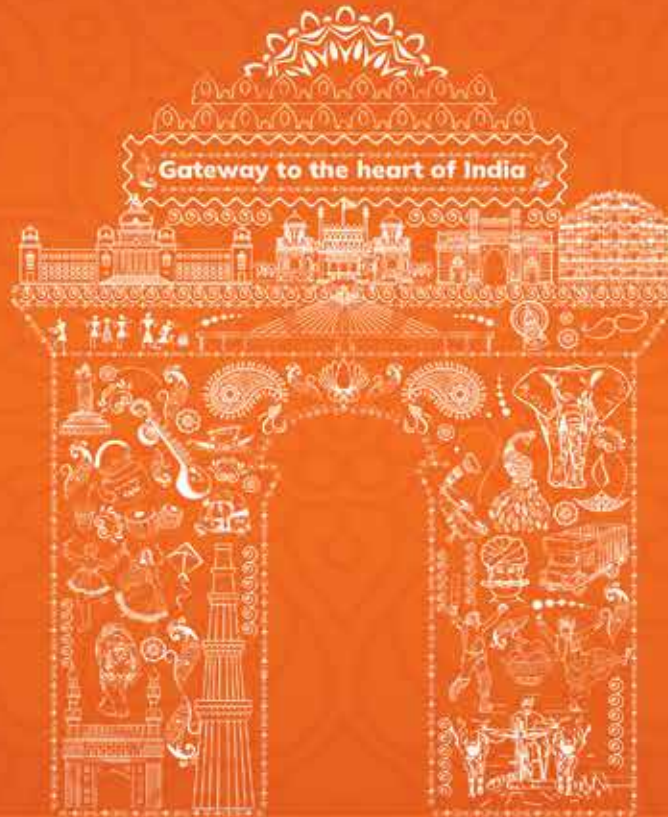
Sincerely,

Eric Adams
Eric Adams
Mayor



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Ambassador Shri Vinay Kwatra hoisted the tricolor at India House in Washington, DC. Members of the Indian diaspora and friends of India participated in the ceremony. The program included a special Bharatnatyam performance on Jayate Jayate Bharat Mata. An award ceremony was also held for the young winners of a painting competition organized by the Embassy of India. Members of the Cricket Association for the Blind in India also took part in the event.



(Photos courtesy: India in USA/Facebook)



(Photo courtesy: India in New York/Facebook)

The India Day Parade organized by FIA New England honored the essence of freedom, democracy, and unity at the iconic Boston Harbor. Indian community and friends from different walks of life came together to celebrate Indian Independence Day and India-USA friendship and flag hoisting at this site, rich in American history.



(Photo courtesy: India in New York/Facebook)

The Indian Association of Central Connecticut (IAOCC) hosted grand celebrations with the Indian Community and friends of India at Bushnell Park in Hartford, Connecticut. State Rep Tom Delnicki also graced the occasion.

SBA partners with Indian government to promote American small businesses globally

MOU builds on President Biden and PM Modi's priority of empowering entrepreneurs

New Delhi: Administrator Isabel Casillas Guzman, head of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the voice in President Biden's Cabinet for America's more than 34 million small businesses, announced a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the SBA and the Republic of India's Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to strengthen the two countries' joint work to promote MSME participation in the global marketplace. The agreement, signed by Administrator Guzman and the Indian Ministry for MSMEs in New Delhi on August 13, is the SBA's first such collaboration with India.

"The United States-India partnership is grounded in shared values of democracy, freedom, and opportunity, and through our new MOU with the Indian Ministry of MSMEs, the SBA is delivering on President Biden and Prime Minister Modi's outlined commitment to expanding our collaboration on empowering more small businesses and innovative startups in the global marketplace," said Administrator Guzman. "From advancing technology to supporting inclusive growth for women and other underserved entrepreneurs, we look forward to working

alongside our counterparts to ensure entrepreneurial ecosystems are at the center of both countries' efforts to strengthen investment, commercialization, supply chains, and trade in industries of the future."

The MOU builds on discussions during the state visit President Biden hosted for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2023, during which they shared views on the importance of MSMEs and entrepreneurship in building strong and inclusive economies for both nations. The agreement places a particular focus on integrating small businesses into the green energy transition and promoting women's entrepreneurship.

Under the initial five-year term of the MOU, the United States and India will move forward together to conduct joint programming to share expertise and best practices on entrepreneurial training, access to capital, trade and export financing, and leveraging technology and digital services, among other topics to improve small businesses' participation in the global marketplace. The two parties also agreed to explore developing a "Business Matching Digital Platform" to boost business opportunities and strategic partnerships between U.S. and Indian firms.



**Office of the
County Executive**
1550 Franklin Avenue
Mineola, New York 11501

August 2024

Dear Friends,

Please accept my warmest greetings and congratulations as we celebrate the 77th Anniversary of the Independence of India.

Americans of Indian Heritage have contributed to the economic, social, and cultural enrichment of this great nation, and are to be commended for their outstanding contributions, which have enhanced numerous aspects of heritage, history, literature, and social life.

Indian Americans are to be commended for working diligently to heighten an awareness of India and promote positive relations between the people of India and the United States. They deserve the esteem of Nassau County for their relentless commitment to make the lives of men, women, and children better.

Best wishes for continued success in all your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. Blakeman
County Executive



**Office of the Nassau
County Comptroller**
240 Old Country Road
Mineola, New York 11501

India Independence Day

August 15, 2024



Celebrating the 77th anniversary of the world's largest democracy!

Thank you to The South Asian Times, the most admired Indian American newspaper in North America, for more than a decade of recognized excellence in journalism.

Elaine R. Phillips
Nassau County Comptroller



Wishing everyone in the community a very
HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY 2024

**MAY INDIA BE A BEACON OF HOPE, OPTIMISM
AND SPIRITUALITY TO THE WORLD IN THE YEARS AHEAD...**

To honor the spirit of this occasion, here is a set of
easy to follow advice from my series 3 Tips

**3 TIPS
TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT
SITUATIONS IN LIFE**

- 1 Respond Positively**
Sometimes, life doesn't present us with the best situations, but we have the freedom to choose a positive response. This is what makes us a winner.
- 2 Be Selfless**
The path to peace and happiness should always be above having the upper hand.
- 3 Treasure Freedom and Joy**
The choice of personal freedom and happiness must be above any other choice we make in life.



Best Wishes from:

**MEERA GANDHI
& FAMILY**
& THE ENTIRE GIVING BACK
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Vijay Vishwa – Grand Marshall, Hillside India Day Parade



(Image provided by Vijay Vishwa)

The Hillside India Day Parade will have Vijay Vishwa (formerly known as Abi Saravanan) an Indian actor as Grand Marshall, who has appeared in Tamil and Malayalam language films. He has acted in films including Tour-

ing Talkies (2015) and Saahasam (2016). After completing a degree in engineering, Abi Saravanan wanted to become an actor and began looking for opportunities to enter the film industry. Abi initially played small supporting roles in Attakathi (2012) and Kutti Puli (2013). He successfully auditioned for the lead role in S. S. Kumaran's film, Kerala Nattilam Pengaludane (2014) and portrayed a young man looking for a bride in his film.

His second film was Touring-

Talkies (2015), where he portrayed the younger version of S. A. Chandrasekhar's character. He later appeared in a supporting role in Prashanth's Saahasam (2016). As a main lead he worked on several films titled Pattathari, Maayanathi, Saayam and Kumbaari. His upcoming films Brama moortham, Paraparapu, Tharai-padai, SAARA with Yogibabu and Sakshi.

As a social activist, he started a small relief work during Chennai

Floods 2015 later on he went to Nagapattinam District to help the people who were affected by Gaja Cyclone in 2019.

Abi Saravanan also helped flood affected people in Assam in 2020. He helped people who suffered in Covid 1&2. In 2023 he helped Chennai flood affected people again. He has worked for the welfare of farmers and supported their kids' education. He changed his name to Vijay Vishwa in 2021.

Grand 10-day Sri Ganesha Chaturthi fest at Hindu Temple Society of NA

Once again it is that time of the year to celebrate the biggest annual 10-day festival of the Hindu Temple Society of NA - Sri Ganesha Chaturthi. The colorful celebrations begin Friday, August 30th and conclude on Sunday, September 8th, 2024. The culmination of the program is a very colorful procession of Lord Ganesha placed in a lavishly decorated Silver Chariot around the streets of

Flushing on Sunday, September 8th starting in front of the Temple at 12:30 PM. This is the conclusion part of the biggest annual festival of our Temple. Thousands of joyful devotees accompany the procession and exhibit their exuberance by singing, chanting and dancing to the tunes of the drums and shehnai. Come in large numbers and enjoy the bliss and joy of the festival.



THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

Śri Mahā Vallabha Ganapati Devasthānam

45-57 Bowne Street, Flushing, NY 11355

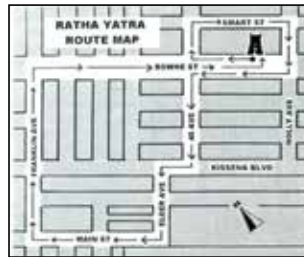
Tel: (718) 460-8484 ext. 112 • Fax (718) 461-8055

Email: hts@nyganeshtemple.org



GRAND RATHA YATRA Sunday, September 8th, 2024

YATRA ROUTE MAP



The Ratha will start from the Temple at 12:30PM after the pooja in the Temple, make a full Pradakshina around the temple block (covering 45th Ave, Smart St. and Holly Ave.) and will reach Main Street approximately at 1:45PM - 2:00PM. The Ratha will return to the Temple by approximately 2:30PM.



Don't Miss This Grand Event!

For further information please call the Temple at (718) 460-8484 ext. 112

(Flyer provided by Hindu Temple Society of NA)

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Grand Celebration of India's Independence Day 2024
August 17, 2024 Saturday

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For More Info : Subhash Kapadia (917) 757-1303, DINCIL GEORGE 516 637 4969, Kalathil Varugheese (516) 984-6591, Koshy O. Thomas (347) 867-1200
Hemant Shah (516) 263-9624, Jason Joseph (917) 839-7957, Cultural Program Contact: Ujwala Shah 516-615-0198, Mary Philip (347) 254-9834
Parade Committee Chairman: Koshy O. Thomas.

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Navneet Sondhi, Chair
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info@americanpunjabisociety.com

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SUPERVISOR

OFFICE OF THE TOWN SUPERVISOR
54 AUDREY AVENUE
OYSTER BAY, NEW YORK 11771
516-624-6350



August 15, 2024

Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I extend greetings to the distinguished readers of the South Asian Times for this special edition commemorating the 77th Anniversary of India's independence and also commend the dedicated staff of The South Asian Times, under the able direction of Kamlesh Mehta. Since this incredible publication was founded back in 2008, it built an unsurpassed reputation for excellence for its insightful journalism, content and an invaluable advertising resource. The South Asian Times is truly the preeminent print and online publication for the Global Indian and South Asian Communities and they perform an absolutely invaluable service to our Town by providing news, stories and features that touch and reflect lifestyle, choices, aspirations and trends. As a trusted communications source, The South Asian Times has helped developed a better understanding between all cultures. In today's world, the importance of this cannot be understated. It is also a tremendous source of pride for our Town that North America's most admired Indian-American newspaper is proudly published in Hicksville.

Many residents of the Town of Oyster Bay are linked by ties of birth, culture, family and principle to the country of India. I am exceedingly proud to recognize the seemingly endless contributions made to the community by people of Indian Ancestry as well as the 77th Anniversary of India's independence. I thank The South Asian Times for the service they provide and for assembling this special edition commemorating the 77th Anniversary of India's independence. These efforts have enabled the community to patriotically celebrate the oldest and the largest democracy in the world and my colleagues and I on the Oyster Bay Town Board join in celebrating India Independence Day, a special occasion honoring one of the world's greatest republics.

Yours truly,

Joseph Saladino
Town Supervisor**JENNIFER S. DESENA**
TOWN SUPERVISOR

TOWN OF NORTH HEMPSTEAD
OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISOR

TOWN HALL
220 PLANDOME ROAD
MANHASSET, NY 11030
TEL: (516) 869-6311 • FAX: (516) 627-4204

August 15, 2024

To the dedicated readers of The South Asian Times:

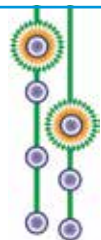
I am delighted to extend my warmest congratulations to you all as we celebrate the 77th anniversary of Indian independence on August 15. I know The South Asian Times and its esteemed chairman, Kamlesh Mehta, have done terrific work throughout this year, with plenty more excitement to come in 2024.

As North Hempstead Supervisor, I have the privilege of witnessing firsthand the positive impact this organization and its dedicated members and readers have on our town; I don't take it for granted that one of the most widely-read Indian American newspapers in the country resides in our shared country. Indian Independence Day is meant to acknowledge and celebrate our neighbors of Indian heritage and remind all residents of the value of cultural integration. On behalf of the Town of North Hempstead, I'd like to personally thank you for your remarkable contributions - your pledge to the betterment of your publication, community, and culture has not gone unnoticed, and it's efforts like yours that better our town and allow it to grow.

I again offer my gratitude to all members and readers of The South Asian Times for your dedication to not only your cultural values but to North Hempstead Town. Your work continues to exemplify how cultural exchange and celebration can unite us for a greater purpose.

May you all enjoy a wonderful Independence Day celebration, and once more, thank you for your tireless commitment to enriching the cultural and societal landscape of North Hempstead.

Sincerely,

Jennifer S. DeSena
Supervisor**K D Sharma**

Chief Executive
Bank of India, New York
277, Park Avenue

India is an incredibly diverse nation. Built on a vibrant tapestry of linguistic groups, religions, culture and heritage, India has emerged as one of the leading democracies of the 21st century. Bank of India joins in the celebration of "Viksit Bharat" to commemorate 78 glorious years of Independence of India.

The path to freedom was a long cherished dream for India. We as Indians stand together united, and echo in our voice for the national anthem to celebrate ancient values and heritage that stood firm against the gnaw of time.

We at Bank of India, New York are contributing by helping the Indian diaspora and corporates for their banking requirements in India and US. We are pleased to inform you that the New York branch is active in the banking industry for over the past four decades. We would like to thank our numerous happy clients for their trust in our service and lasting relationship.

As Ambassadors of India in the United States, let us come forward to step on the path of prosperity and glory. The largest democratic nation in the world, India shares democratic ethos with the United States of America. On the auspicious occasion of India's Independence Day celebration, Bank of India extends greetings and felicitations to the Indian diaspora, Indian American Community and friends of India.

May the Tricolour fly high and India reaches the zenith of success. Jai Hind!

**RAGINI SRIVASTAVA**
TOWN CLERK

TOWN OF NORTH HEMPSTEAD
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK

200 PLANDOME ROAD
MANHASSET, NY 11030
TEL: (516) 869-7646 • FAX: (516) 627-1714

August 15, 2024

The South Asian Times, USA

Dear South Asian Times Readers,

As we commemorate the 77th anniversary of India's Independence and proudly raise the Tricolor, it is with a profound sense of pride that we reflect on the remarkable journey of the Indian community. From the early days of Independence to the present, the community has flourished abundantly, making significant contributions across a spectrum of fields that have not only enriched our lives but also the fabric of societies worldwide.

The cultural richness of Indian heritage continues to be a beacon of diversity, celebrated through vibrant festivals, culinary delights, and profound philosophies that have found a special place in the hearts of people around the world. The sciences, arts and literature scene has been invigorated by Indian creativity, adding depth and color to the global cultural tapestry.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the first generation of Indians who ventured to America and to Americans who welcomed them warmly. Their courage and determination paved the way for future generations to thrive. Their legacy is evident in the growth and success of Indians in various fields where they serve with distinction and go on to amplify our voices and stories.

Let us continue to build on this foundation with the same spirit of determination and unity that has brought us this far. Let us honor the sacrifices of those who came before us by contributing to a world that values multiplicity, equity, & mutual respect.

With warm regards and best wishes for continued prosperity and success. Jai Hind.

Sincerely,

Ragini Srivastava



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MESSAGE

Amit Verma
Country Head, US Operations
State Bank of India
460 Park Avenue, New York

As we celebrate India's 78th Independence Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings to the readers of South Asian Times. On this auspicious occasion of India's Independence Day, we come together in spirit and pride, celebrating the resilience and unity that defined our journey to freedom. As we remember the sacrifices made by our forefathers, let us honor their legacy by fostering the values of courage, unity and integrity in our own lives.

From every corner of the globe, you carry the vibrant essence of our culture, traditions, and dreams. Your achievements and contributions enrich communities worldwide and strengthen the bonds between India and the global diaspora. Today, as we celebrate our nation's sovereignty, let us also reflect on the ways we can contribute to both our homeland as also to our adopted countries, bridging cultures and building bridges of understanding.

May this day inspire us all to continue working towards a world where freedom, justice, and unity prevail. Let us cherish our shared heritage, support one another, and remain steadfast in our commitment to the values that have shaped our great nation.

Happy Independence Day! Jai Hind!



MESSAGE

Prasanta Kumar Tripathy
Chief Executive Officer
State Bank of India
460 Park Avenue, New York

When we gather to celebrate India's 78th Independence Day, we stand united in honoring a journey marked by resilience, sacrifice, and unwavering spirit. On this day in 1947, our beloved nation stepped into a new era of self-determination, breaking free from colonial rule and embarking on a path of self-governance and unity.

The essence of Independence Day is not only a commemoration of our freedom but also a reminder of the values that underpin our democracy. It is a day to reflect on the dreams and aspirations of those who fought tirelessly for our nation's freedom. Their courage and determination laid the foundation for the vibrant, diverse, and dynamic country we are today.

As we proudly display our tricolor and join in the patriotic melodies of our national anthem, let us take a moment to reaffirm our commitment to the values of justice, equality, and inclusivity. India's uniqueness lies in its vast array of cultures, languages, and traditions, and it is this diversity that fortifies our unity and resilience.

This Independence Day, let us celebrate not just our historical achievements but also our ongoing journey towards progress and innovation. By honoring our past while looking forward with hope and ambition, we can shape a future where every Indian can realize their potential and contribute to our nation's growth.

To all Indians, both within the country and around the world, Happy Independence Day. May the spirit of freedom and unity continue to guide and inspire us all. God Bless America! Jai Hind!

**Wishing all Indians across the world
a Happy
77th Independence Day!!!**

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*A joyous and memorable
Independence Day
to all proud Indians around the world...*

**May this celebration fill your hearts with
pride, joy, and hope for the future...**



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FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL



India on way to become world's third-largest economy: PM Modi



PM Modi addressed the nation from the ramparts of Red Fort. (Photo courtesy: X@PIB)

New Delhi: As 140 crore Indians collectively work towards creating a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047, the country is on its way to become the third-largest economy with big reforms across sectors, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

Addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of the 78th Independence Day, PM Modi said that if 40 crore Indians can bring freedom in 1947, more than 140 crore citizens can also help make the country 'Viksit Bharat' by

2047, when we celebrate the 100th year of Independence.

"We received feedback from millions of Indians on how to make the country a developed nation by 2047, and becoming the third-largest economy is one of those suggestions. We are committed to continue to bring big reforms which are the blueprint of our future growth," the Prime Minister emphasised.

PM Modi mentioned reforms in the banking sector under the BJP-led NDA government in the past decade, which revived the sector once reeling with losses and high NPAs due to the phone-banking policy of UPA.

"Today, Indian banks are one of the strongest globally. For the growth of our

micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), banks have become a backbone," said PM Modi. The cumulative net profit of all banks for the first time crossed Rs 3 lakh crore in 2023-24.

PM Modi said that initiatives like 'Vocal for Local' and 'One District One Product' initiatives have become a success and we are now aiming to increase exports from small cities and towns.

The government has set a target to install 500 GW (gigawatt) of renewable energy capacity by 2030, becoming self-reliant in the energy sector by 2047. The country also needs more "greenfield cities" like Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City), PM Modi mentioned.

Work towards ease of living in 'mission mode'

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made a cross-party appeal on all levels of governance — from panchayats to the Central government — on working together to improve ease of living in a "mission mode."

Addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort, the Prime Minister said that the governance delivery systems have to be strengthened.

"The middle class gives a lot to the nation and expects a certain quality of life. It will be

our endeavour to ensure minimum government interference and improve ease of living," PM Modi emphasised. Under the overarching theme of 'ease of living', the five key themes are drinking water, electricity, health, schooling, and land and property.

Achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 will require a collaborative approach between the Centre and the state governments, to the level of gram panchayats. "Reforms in governance have to be pri-

oritised to realise the goal of a Viksit Bharat by 2047," the Prime Minister stressed, adding that we should create a society in which government interference is minimal.

The government is fully committed to ensuring 'ease of living' for its citizens and will continue to take further steps in this regard, said PM Modi. "I would like to assure my countrymen that our commitment to reforms is not limited to pink paper editorials. It is with the intention of strengthening the country," the Prime Min-

ister told the gathering. The government aims to foster governance and collaboration between the Centre and state governments, enhancing the quality of life for both rural and urban populations by strengthening the delivery mechanisms of government interventions.

According to PM Modi, the vision of Viksit Bharat can be realised through Viksit (developed) states, and that the aspiration of a developed India should reach the grassroots — to each district, block and village.

Modi's I-Day speech longest ever by an Indian PM



PM Modi pays tributes at Mahatma Gandhi's samadhi in Rajghat, New Delhi. (Photo courtesy: X@PIB)

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered his longest Independence Day speech at 98 minutes from the ramparts of the historic Red Fort.

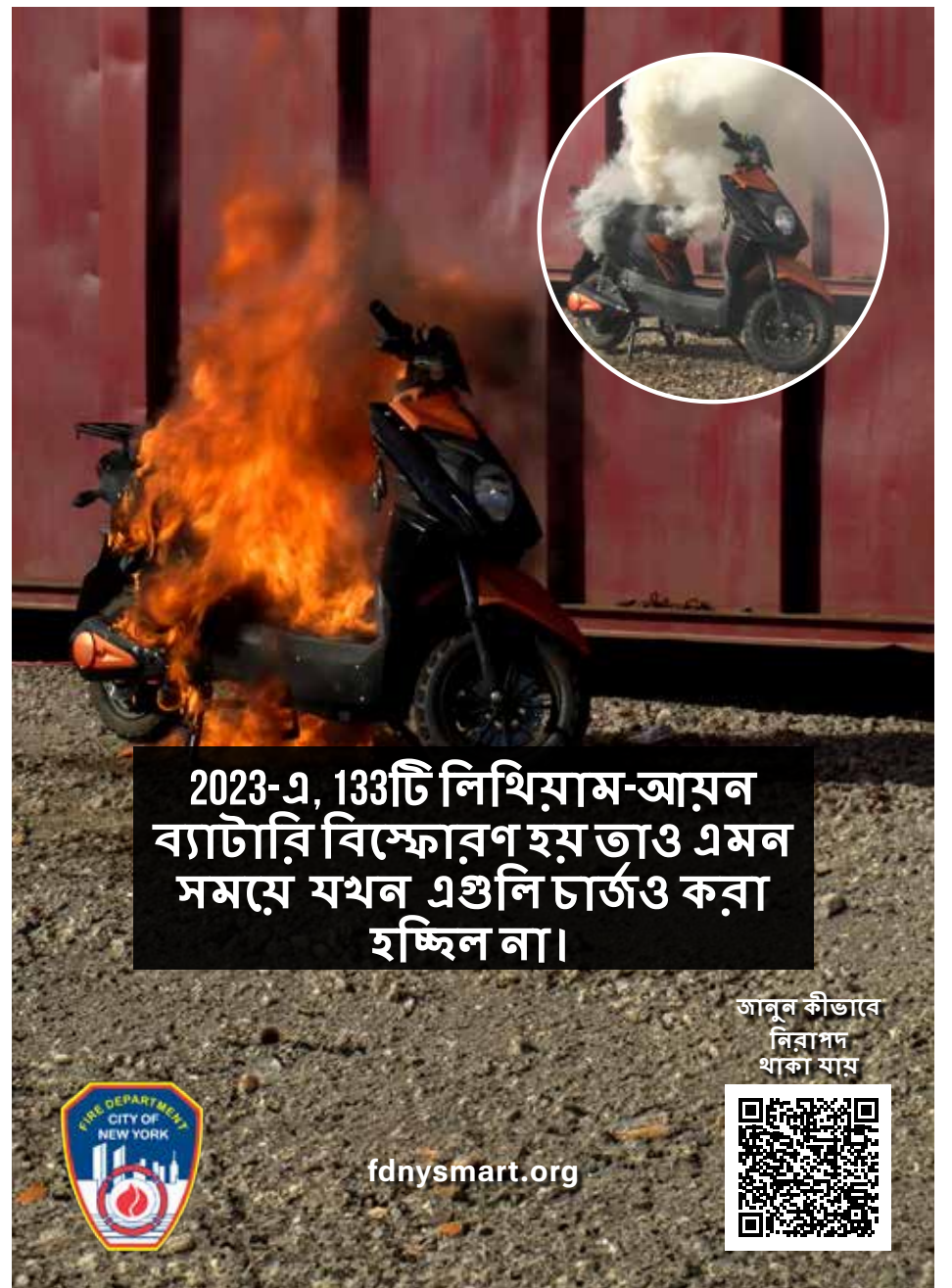
This was the second record that he set with his 11th consecutive address. The other one is surpassing his predecessor Manmohan Singh's 10 Independence Day addresses to become the third PM to achieve the feat. PM Modi's Independence Day speeches average 82 minutes, which is longer than any other prime minister in the country.

His longest I-day speech was 96 minutes in 2016 and his shortest one was in 2017 when he spoke for around 56 minutes. The speech on Thursday was his 11th address as the PM and his first after taking charge for a third term.

Before PM Modi, India's first PM Jawaharlal Nehru and later I.K. Gujral had delivered the longest speeches. Nehru in 1947 and Gujral in 1997 spoke for 72 and 71 minutes, respectively. The shortest speech record goes to Nehru and Indira Gandhi. Both spoke for 14 minutes in 1954 and 1966, respectively.

Manmohan Singh, who headed the UPA government for two tenures, delivered speeches in 2012 and 2013 which lasted only 32 and 35 minutes, respectively. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was the PM during the NDA rule, also gave short speeches -- 2002 and 2003 -- at 25 and 30 minutes, respectively.

Besides the speech duration record, with his 11th consecutive address on Independence Day from the ramparts of the Red Fort, PM Modi becomes the third Prime Minister to do so. The record lies with Nehru who hoisted the flag 17 times from 1947 to 1964. Nehru is followed by Indira Gandhi who hoisted the national flag 16 times. Indira Gandhi, however, did not achieve this record in consecutive tenures. She did this in two different stints from 1966-1977 and 1980-1984.



২০২৩-এ, ১৩৩টি লিথিয়াম-আয়ন ব্যাটারি বিস্ফোরণ হয় তাও এমন সময়ে যখন এগুলি চার্জও করা হচ্ছিল না।

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Guarantee schemes to continue to help beneficiaries: CM Siddaramaiah

Delivering his speech on the occasion of the 78th Independence Day in Bengaluru, he stated, "These programs will continue and we will give a befitting reply through economic growth of the state to those who made the prophecy that the state will go bankrupt due to these schemes. We are all set to make innovations and help the beneficiaries further."

"Our government, which came to power in 2023 with a clear majority, has taken decisive steps in this direction over the last 15 months. Our government has taken the initiative to provide

financial security to the people of Karnataka by implementing five guarantee schemes and keeping our promise. These schemes have brought relief to the lives of people who have suffered due to the rising financial inequality," CM Siddaramaiah stated.

Through the five guarantee schemes - Gruhalakshmi, Shakti, Gruha Jyothi, Anna Bhagya and Yuva Nidhi - each beneficiary family receives direct and indirect benefits amounting to an average of Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000 per month.

"This is the concept of Universal Basic Income, which pro-

vides direct financial assistance to poor families. Karnataka is the only state implementing such a programme in a big way, which is being implemented in developed countries to help the poor and we are proud of it," CM Siddaramaiah claimed.

He added that women in Karnataka have already availed 270 crore free trips under the Shakti Scheme and saved around Rs 6,541 crore, while under the Gruhalakshmi scheme Rs 25,259 crore has been transferred directly to the accounts of 1.20 crore women.



Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on the occasion of the 78th Independence Day in Bengaluru. (Photo courtesy: X@CMofKarnataka)

Bengaluru: Putting an end to speculation over the revision of guarantee schemes, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that the welfare programs would continue and the Congress government was all set to make innovations to help beneficiaries further.

Punjab Governor announces award for border defence committees



Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria hoisted the national flag at Parade Ground, Sector-17, Chandigarh. (Photo courtesy: X@Gulab_kataria)

Chandigarh: Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria announced to give Rs 36 lakh annual award money from his discretionary quota to the first three best border village-level defence committees in six border districts, sharing boundary with Pakistan, based on their performance to eradicate drugs in their villages

Aware of the social challenges of drug addiction, especially amongst the youth in Punjab, the Governor in a message to the people of India, especially Punjab and Chandigarh, said that the award would be given to three villages in each of the six districts, which include Rs 3 lakh to the first, Rs 2 lakh to the second and Rs 1 lakh to the third border defence committee.

On the day celebrated across the country with enthusiasm, he said that Punjab being a border

state has always been facing challenges from neighbouring country Pakistan, which has a 245-km long land border with the state.

"Now, as Pakistan does not have the courage to fight a direct battle with India, it's fighting a proxy war by way of sending drugs and weapons by various means to create disturbance in the country. We need to be aware of such acts and fight collectively against such plans of the enemy," said Kataria.

The government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Punjab government have started joint operations to counter anti-national activities from across the border.

The Central and state security forces have conducted joint operations in the six border districts of Punjab which have been very successful in countering the supply of drugs through drones.

I-Day functions conclude peacefully in J&K



Lt Governor Manoj Sinha hoisted the national flag at the Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar. (Photo courtesy: X@OfficeOfLGJandK)

Srinagar: The main 78th Independence Day function concluded at the Bakshi Stadium in J&K's Srinagar city smoothly and peacefully despite incessant rain.

Reports from the other 19 district headquarters of the union territory also said that the flag hoisting followed by a ceremonial parade ended peacefully there as well.

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha hoisted the national flag at the Bakshi Stadium and also took a salute at an impressive march past by contingents of police, paramilitary forces, fire services, disaster management, forest protection force, NCC cadets and various schools.

Addressing the gathering at the venue, the L-G said that J&K is now marching towards a new dawn whose contours are already visible to everybody. He highlighted the achievements made by UT during the last five years and added that these have surpassed

those J&K had made in the past decades. L-G Sinha said 46 new industrial estates are being established in addition to the existing ones.

"India startups, GR tagging and QR codes have helped improve the lives of thousands of our artisans. There are over 90,000 self-help groups and 46,000 women are part of these groups. 3,424 cooperative societies have been registered, including 2,400 for dairy, farming and allied agricultural activities," said the L-G in his address.

"In the last four years, employment of 80 lakh youth has been linked with the employment programmes and over 10,477 posts have been referred to the service selection board for recruitment. In the present fiscal, a new employment program is being planned. ITIs are being modernised to help youth. The Prime Minister's employment package has employed scores of our youth," he said.

Northeast's tallest Tricolor hoisted in Manipur's Moirang

Imphal: On the occasion of India's 78th Independence Day, the tallest flag in the northeast region was hoisted at the INA headquarters complex in Manipur's Moirang, where on April 14, 1944, the Indian National Army (INA) first hoisted the tricolor, marking a pivotal moment in the country's struggle for Independence.

Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh in his post on X said: "Today, we proudly witness the unfurling of the tricolor at the historic INA headquarters in Moirang, Bishnupur district."

"The flag flies high atop the 165 ft tall flagpole, the tallest in North-East India, symbolizing our nation's pride and glory. The INA headquarters, established by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, holds great historical importance. On April 14, 1944, the Indian National Army (INA) first hoisted the tricolour here, marking a pivotal moment in our struggle for independence," the Chief Minister said.

Moirang INA complex in Bishnupur district is 45 km away from state capital Imphal. INA Memorial Conventor Y. Modhu Singh praised the initiative taken by the Manipur government to restore the INA's old headquarters.



Chief Minister N Biren Singh at the 78th Independence Day celebration at 1st Bn MR Parade Ground, Manipur. (Photo courtesy: X@NBirenSingh)

Appreciating the Chief Minister's keen interest to further develop the complex and new buildings in the old headquarters of INA without altering the old structures, Modhu Singh said that with the facelift this historical complex would now attract more tourists, intellectuals and scholars from all over the country.



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India Inc hails Modi's call to state governments to attract investments

the states are in working towards good governance with a single-point focus and make efforts in this regard, the more likely it is that these investors will stay for the long term. This cannot be done by the central government alone; state governments play a crucial role because the projects will be implemented in the states," PM Modi remarked.

The Prime Minister urged the states that as the world is increasingly attracted to Bharat and is committed to investing in Bharat, "it is our responsibility to move forward with clear policies, leaving behind old habits".

"Every state should engage in healthy competition to attract investors. This competition will bring investment to



The Prime Minister said if policies need to be changed, states should adapt them according to global requirements. (Photo courtesy: PIB)

their states, providing local youth with opportunities and creating jobs," PM Modi stressed.

According to Deepak Sood, secretary general, Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India

(Assocham), the initiative to rope in states to establish clear policies to attract investments would be a "double-down approach for scaling up investment-led growth".

Anish Shah, president of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), said that India must be seen as a high-quality nation and that "our products must match the best in class seen anywhere in the world in terms of design, sustainability, and service quality".

Sanjiv Puri, president of CII, said that PM Modi's suggestion that even two reforms carried out per year at the sub-national level are sufficient to transform the country is spot on.

New Delhi: India Inc has hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to state governments to attract investments from global companies towards achieving the 'Viksit Bharat' goal.

In the Independence Day address, the Prime Minister said if policies need to be changed, states should adapt them according to global requirements.

"If land is required, states should create a land bank. The more proactive

Modi meets India's Paris Olympic contingent



PM Modi greeted Indian athletes and medal winners at his official residence in New Delhi. (Photo courtesy: X@narendramodi)

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi met and greeted the Indian athletes and medal winners of the recently concluded Paris Olympics at his residence 7, Lok Kalyan Marg in the national capital on Independence Day.

PM Modi shook hands with players and praised India's youngest Olympic medallist Aman Sehrawat, shooters Manu Bhaker, Sarabjot Singh and Swapnil Kusale and members of the Indian men's hockey team among others. The Prime Minister also clicked pictures with the athletes during the event. Hockey veteran PR Sreejesh, captain Harmanpreet Singh and Aman gifted India jerseys and hockey to PM Modi during their meeting.

A total of 117 Indian athletes participated across 16 sports at the Paris Games: archery, athletics, badminton, boxing, equestrian, golf, hockey, judo, rowing, sailing, shooting, swimming, wrestling, table tennis, and tennis. India clinched six medals at the Paris Olympics, one silver and five bronze.

Although hopes were high for a historic performance, the country fell just short of surpassing its previous best at the rescheduled Tokyo Olympics in 2021, when they secured seven medals (1 gold, 2 silver, and 4 bronze) and ranked 48th.

Athletics led the way for India with a robust 29-member squad, while the country also fielded its largest-ever contingent of 21 shooters in the shooting events.

Beyond the pursuit of medals, Indian athletes made history by setting new records at the Games along with some near misses on medals after finishing fourth in six events. Manu became the first Indian woman to win a shooting medal at the Olympics. Moreover, she became the first Indian athlete in the post-Independence era to win multiple medals in a single edition of the Games.

Later, Manu, partnering with Sarabjot Singh, became the first Indian shooting pair to win an Olympic medal in shooting. Overall, it was India's sixth Olympic medal in shooting.

Will overcome Wayanad tragedy, says Kerala CM

Thiruvananthapuram: In his Independence Day speech, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan mentioned the July 30 Wayanad landslide disaster, the worst-ever tragedy to hit the state, and said all have to overcome grief and march forward.

CM Vijayan said this soon after taking the salute at an impressive parade at the Central Stadium in the capital city.

"The stage is such that even in the 21st century, while developments have taken place in a big way, we are still not able to make precise predictions of calamities. At present, all that we get is a general warning, but not a precise one and that has to be addressed as the lives and properties of people continue to be vulnerable. This has to change," said CM Vijayan, who added that some are trying to mislead people by invoking superstitions and illogical narratives.

Meanwhile, on Thursday, the

forces presently engaged in rescue operations in the four affected villages of Wayanad took a day off to attend their Independence Day parades, while the locals were engaged in the rescue operations.

Incidentally, while CM Vijayan took the salute in the state capital city, his cabinet colleagues did it in the 13 district headquarters as part of the Independence Day celebrations. At Wayanad local Minister O.R. Kelu took the salute, while in the four landslide-hit areas of the district, there were no celebrations.

In a related development, rescue workers recovered currency notes to the tune of Rs 4 lakh from the Vellarmala school, which was destroyed in the landslide.

The money, which was packed in a plastic cover, was handed over to the police who decided to search for the owners. On July 30 massive landslides hit four villages in Wayanad,



Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan hoisted the national flag in Thiruvananthapuram. (Photo courtesy: X@CMOKerala)

which left 416 dead and 128 people still missing. There are more than 11,000 people now put up in over 115 relief camps.

CM Revanth hopes for positive outcome to talks with Naidu

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that his government is hoping for a positive outcome to the talks held recently with his Andhra Pradesh counterpart Chandrababu Naidu on pending bifurcation-related issues.

In his speech during Independence Day celebrations held at the historic Golconda Fort, he noted that the division of assets between the two states after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh remained pending for the last 10 years. The issue of sharing Krishna and Godavari river waters was also not addressed.

Asserting that his government was giving priority to the



Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy during Independence Day celebrations at Golconda Fort. (Photo courtesy: X@revanth_anumula)

state's interests, CM Revanth Reddy said it wants to maintain cordial relations with the neighbouring states as well as with the Centre.

The Chief Minister claimed that his government accorded the first priority to revive the freedom that Telangana was deprived of for the last 10 years. "We broke the shackles of physical and psychological slavery. Today, people have the freedom to question the government. A facility was also created to seek suggestions from people to run the people-friendly government," CM Revanth Reddy said.

Stating that the state government was functioning in the interest of the majority of people, CM Revanth Reddy said the government was ready to rectify mistakes, if any. "We have been maintaining restraint though some forces made false allegations against the government," he said.



Viksit Bharat

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Tricolor unfurls amid rose petal shower

From ways and means to achieve the 'Viksit Bharat 2047' goal to reforms brought about by the BJP-led NDA government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has laid out a roadmap for the country for the coming years



PM Modi unfurling the tricolor on the occasion of 78th Independence Day celebrations at Red Fort, in New Delhi.



President Droupadi Murmu laying a wreath at the National War Memorial in New Delhi.



Prime Minister inspecting the Guard of Honor at the Red Fort.



Helicopters showering rose petals at the Red Fort amid cheers.



Defense Minister Rajnath Singh hoisting the flag at his official residence in New Delhi.

(All photos courtesy: Press Information Bureau)

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India emerging superpower of 21st century

Major global players see India becoming a superpower soon and the country is poised to play a defining role in shaping the future of the global economy in 2024 and beyond.

Driven by the government's production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes, robust local manufacturing towards becoming a supply chain hub, and strong GDP growth, India is marching towards becoming a global economic superpower in the next decade.

The country embarked upon its journey under various schemes launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government in the last 10 years. It saw tremendous growth -- be it a thrust on local manufacturing, new semiconductor plants, AI, 5G, startups, innovation and PLI schemes for various sectors, while skilling the workforce and creating lakhs of new jobs.

Driven by the PLI scheme, the country's manufacturing sector is projected to expand threefold, reaching a market size of \$1.66 trillion from the current \$459 billion (FY24).

This growth surpasses the average increase of \$175 billion experienced over the last decade. According to the latest report by DSP Mutual Fund, the manufacturing sector's contribution to the GDP is anticipated to rise from 14 per cent in FY24 to 21 per cent by FY34, bolstered by lower logistics costs and improved infrastructure. Moreover, investments in infrastructure are set to climb from 33 percent of GDP in FY24 to 36 percent by fiscal year 2029.

More than 12 lakh new jobs have been created in electronics manufacturing alone, which has crossed \$100 billion. India's electronic manufacturing is projected to reach \$250 billion in the next five years.

The PLI schemes for 14 sectors are projected to see investments worth Rs 3 lakh crore - Rs 4 lakh crore in the next couple of years.

According to President Droupadi Murmu, the pace of reforms will be further accelerated in tune with the aspirations of the people of India for rapid development. In the last 10 years, India has risen to become the fifth largest economy from the 11th ranked one, she said.

From 2021 to 2024, India has grown at an average rate of 8 per cent annually. Today, India alone is contributing 15 percent of the global growth, the President said. The last five years focused on key reforms by the government and policy changes and the next five years are going to be about exe-



India is now the top destination for foreign investment in the manufacturing sector. (Photo courtesy: X@PIB)

cution in making India a global powerhouse.

12.5 crore jobs created in 10 years

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said recently that India's job market is on the rise and major global players are predicting that India will soon be a superpower. "With 12.5 crore jobs created in FY14-23, EPFO subscribers doubling, and India poised to be the 3rd largest economy by 2030, the future looks bright!" PM Modi remarked.

Highlighting the 'Great Indian Job Story' with numbers, PM Modi's post points out that 69 per cent of Indians believe the country's overall economy is moving in the right direction compared to the global average of 38 per cent. This sentiment is bolstered by India's rise to the world's fifth largest economy driven by domestic consumption and the growing influence in forums like BRICS and the G7 summit.

It also spotlights 12.5 crore jobs created from FY14-23, with an average of 2 crore jobs per year; 56 per cent rise in workers' income (FY22-23); AI market to touch \$77 billion by 2027; and India on track to become a \$10 trillion economy. Stressing that India is the emerging superpower of the 21st century, UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy said last month the countries have shared interests on topics like green transition, new technologies, economic security, and global security.

"I am travelling to India in my first month as Foreign Secretary because resetting our relationship with the Global South is a key part of how this government will reconnect Britain for our security and prosperity at home," said Lammy, who was accompanied by Lindy Cameron, the British High Commissioner to India, and Harjinder Kang, the British Trade Commissioner for South Asia and Deputy High Commissioner for Western India.

Lammy said that India is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. "Our Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations are the floor, not the ceiling, of our ambitions to unlock our shared potential and deliver growth -- from Bengaluru to Birmingham. We have shared interests on the green transition, new technologies, economic security and global security," he mentioned.

Viksit States are the key

As India begins its journey to become the third largest economy in the world in the next few years, the collective effort of all states and the Centre can help the country reach this milestone faster and achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

According to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country has achieved steady growth in the past 10 years. The economy, which was ranked the 10th largest economy in the world in 2014, has risen to become the fifth largest economy in 2024.

Now, the collective aim of the government and all citizens is to become the third largest economy in the world, said PM Modi while chairing the ninth Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog last month.

From being a predominantly import-driven country, India now exports many products to the world. The country has made its mark on the world stage in wide-ranging sectors like defence, space, startups and sports. The country's job market is on the rise and major global players are predicting that India will soon be a superpower.

The Economic Survey 2023-2024 projects India's GDP growth rate at 6.5 to 7 per cent for 2024-25 as it sees the economy on a strong wicket.

At the NITI Aayog meeting, PM Modi appreciated the confidence and enthusiasm of more than 140 crore citizens, which is the driving force behind the progress of the country.

The vision of Viksit Bharat can be realised through Viksit States, and that the aspiration of Viksit Bharat should reach the grassroots level -- to each district, block and village. "For this, each state and district should create a vision for 2047 so as to realise Viksit Bharat @ 2047," PM Modi emphasised.

The Prime Minister also appreciated the Aspirational Districts Programme anchored by NITI Aayog. He observed that the key to its success was continuous and

online monitoring of measurable parameters, which led to healthy competition among districts to better their performance in different government schemes.

PM Modi also emphasised skilling and training of youth to make them employment ready as the world looks favourably towards India for skilled human resources. The Union Budget 2024-2025 has allocated Rs 2 lakh crore for education and employment.

Top destination for FDI

The country is emerging as a top destination for foreign investment in the manufacturing sector and in the last decade, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows in the sector surged almost 69 per cent to reach \$165.1 billion, according to the government.

Jitin Prasada, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, informed that FDI equity inflow in the manufacturing sectors in the last 10 financial years (2014-24) has increased by 69 per cent to \$165.1 billion as compared to \$97.7 billion in the previous 10 financial years (2004-14).

The minister said that the total FDI inflow of \$383.5 billion came during the past five financial years (2019-20 to 2023-24) alone, mainly driven by production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes.

According to a latest HSBC survey, the manufacturing activity in India continued to expand at a robust pace in July on the back of strong domestic demand and new export orders.



Viksit Bharat

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From bike rallies to yatras - Tiranga unites us all

In the run-up to the 78th Independence Day, the "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign was relaunched this month, inviting every Indian to bring the Tricolor into their homes and proudly hoist it in celebration of their nation's independence. The initiative, undertaken as part of the "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav", started in 2021 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of India's independence. From vibrant rallies to Tiranga yatras and runs, the Har Ghar Tiranga movement ignited a wave of national pride across Delhi, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Puducherry, Kerala, Karnataka, and beyond. Here are some glimpses...



A high-octane Tiranga bike rally was organized in Delhi.

(Photo courtesy: X@MinOfCultureGol)

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar flagged off the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Bike Rally with Members of Parliament at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. "Har Ghar Tiranga' is an embodiment of our sovereignty, our collective identity, and our unwavering commitment towards Viksit Bharat. It is a reminder that this century belongs to our great nation!" he said in an address. (Photo courtesy: X@VPIndia)



As part of the campaign, the Indian Coast Guard (West) organized a bike rally covering the iconic locations in Mumbai. Seventy Coast Guard personnel participated in the rally that covered Marine Drive, Gateway of India, Mantralaya, and the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus. (Photo courtesy: X@IndiaCoastGuard)



Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the 'Tiranga Yatra' in Ahmedabad on August 13. (Photo courtesy: X@PIB_India)



A Har Ghar Tiranga program underway at Government High School in Wokha, Nagaland. (Photo courtesy: X@MIB_India)

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India at 78 in midst of regional chaos

By fostering stability and cooperation among its neighbors, India can create a more secure and prosperous regional order.

By Vipul Tamhane

It's been 79 years since Nehru's historic "Tryst with Destiny" speech, and India finds itself amidst a neighborhood marked by instability, conflict, and economic challenges. India's former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's adage, "You can choose your friends but you cannot choose your neighbors", rings profoundly true in the context of India's current geopolitical landscape.

India's geographical position is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it grants access to crucial maritime trade routes. On the other, it places the country in close proximity to regions prone to turmoil. To the west, Pakistan, a nuclear-armed neighbor, remains a persistent security threat with economic downturn. Afghanistan, under the Taliban's iron grip, serves as a breeding ground for extremism, indirectly impacting India's security.

To the east, the situation is equally complex. Nepal, traditionally a close ally, has been experiencing political instability due to Chinese strong-arming. The emergence of China as a dominant force in the region has further complicated matters. While maintaining cordial relations, Bhutan is also under increasing Chinese influence and is entering a border agreement with China. Myanmar, mired in civil conflict, poses a security challenge. Bangladesh, once a steadfast friend, is grappling with internal issues, with the recent ousting of long-serving leader PM Sheikh Hasina. The Indian Ocean island nations, Sri Lanka and Maldives, have faced economic crises and are slowly yet openly turning on India.

These challenges have far-reaching implications for India. The constant need to maintain a robust military posture to counter potential threats drains significant resources. Moreover, the instability in the neighborhood provides fertile ground for anti-India forces to operate. China, India's primary geopolitical rival, has been adept at exploiting these vulnerabilities, increasing its influence in the region. This has resulted in a strategic encirclement of India, limiting its diplomatic maneu-

verability.

National security is a multifaceted and delicate issue, requiring expertise and nuanced analysis to address effectively. India, with its rich history of internal security challenges, including insurgencies and terrorism, has developed sophisticated strategies to safeguard its national interests. The nation's approach to counter-insurgency and counterterrorism integrates military, political, and social elements, reflecting its comprehensive stance on security management.

India's national security framework emphasizes several key areas to mitigate potential threats. To start with, intelligence gathering is paramount, aiming to detect and thwart potential attacks through enhanced surveillance and analysis. Border security also plays a crucial role, with reinforced controls designed to prevent terrorist infiltration. To top this, counterinsurgency operations are conducted to address internal insurgencies, particularly in volatile regions like Kashmir and the Northeast. International cooperation further strengthens India's security posture, enabling intelligence sharing and joint operations with allied nations.

The geopolitical context of India introduces further complexities. Neighboring Pakistan's history of sponsoring cross-border terrorism, along with China's aggressive policies, pose significant external threats. The internal dynamics of nearby nations, such as Nepal, Myanmar, and Bangladesh, add layers to the security challenges India faces. Emerging threats like terrorism funding, cyber warfare, and hybrid tactics, which combine conventional and unconventional strategies, further complicate the security landscape. In response, India has implemented various measures to enhance its security apparatus. These include advancing border security through technological upgrades and increased force deployment, developing specialized counter-terrorism units, and bolstering intelligence capabilities.

Despite these advancements, India must continuously adapt its strategies to evolving threats. Addressing underlying issues such as poverty and inequality, building community resilience, and fostering international partnerships remain vital for ensuring long-term security and stabil-



India's neighborhood is a complex mosaic of challenges and opportunities. (File photo courtesy: Flickr)

ity. Though facing challenges, India is not without leverage. Its substantial economic and demographic weight makes it a crucial player in the region. However, translating this potential

surveillance and defense mechanisms along disputed boundaries. Maritime security protects India's coastline and maritime interests in the Indian Ocean, while economic stability fosters resilience to with-

By adopting a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach, India can effectively navigate the challenges posed by its neighborhood and ensure its own development and the stability of the region.

into effective influence requires a delicate balancing act. India must navigate complex relationships, provide economic assistance without compromising its sovereignty, and project a strong image as a regional security provider.

India's neighborhood is a complex mosaic of challenges and opportunities. The nation must adopt a multi-pronged approach, combining diplomacy, economic engagement, and military preparedness. By fostering stability and cooperation among its neighbors, India can create a more secure and prosperous regional order. The journey ahead is arduous, but the stakes are high. India's ability to navigate this complex terrain will significantly shape its trajectory as a global power.

India's national security strategy should focus on a multifaceted approach due to its complex geopolitical environment. Key parameters include military modernization, border security, maritime security, economic stability, cybersecurity, internal cohesion, diplomacy and alliances, and non-traditional threats. Military modernization aims to enhance the armed forces' capabilities to deal with potential interstate conflicts, while border security strengthens

stand regional economic challenges. Counter-terrorism and combating terrorism financing measures are key to cutting the lifeline of cross-border and internal insurgent operations.

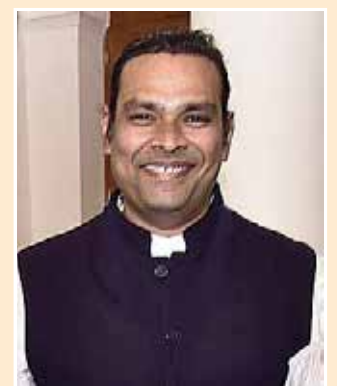
Cybersecurity safeguards critical infrastructure and information systems against cyber threats. Internal cohesion addresses internal challenges like social discrimination, unemployment, and regional disparities. Diplomacy and alliances build strategic partnerships to counterbalance adversarial influence. Non-traditional threats, such as terrorism, insurgency, and climate change, must be prepared and mitigated.

India's strategic location and geopolitical landscape necessitate a proactive diplomatic approach to safeguard its sovereignty, stability, and democratic values. To achieve this, India should focus on strengthening regional partnerships, such as SAARC revitalization, BIMSTEC, and India-ASEAN ties. Balancing strategic autonomy with major powers like the US, Russia, and China is essential, as is strengthening the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD). India should diversify its defense and energy partnerships while maintaining a strategic partnership

with Russia.

Economic diplomacy should focus on accelerating economic engagement with Southeast Asia, promoting connectivity initiatives, and positioning India as a global technology hub. Security and defense should be strengthened through border management, military modernization, and counter-terrorism capabilities. Soft power diplomacy can be enhanced through cultural exchange, diaspora engagement, and capacity building. Addressing internal challenges is crucial, including inclusive growth, good governance, and counter-radicalization. By adopting a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach, India can effectively navigate the challenges posed by its neighborhood and ensure its own development and the stability of the region.

Kavi (poet) Pradeep in his patriotic song 'Hum Laye Hai Tufan Se Kashti Nikal Ke' from the 1954 Hindi movie 'Jagruti', praises the triumph of his motherland and those who sacrificed to overcome all obstacles and fought the foes throughout her history, and the ode sings how the generations to come shall protect Mother India from any threats that our enemies may bring in the future; well Modi Government will have to focus on the neighbourhood in their third term; there is no other option. Diplomatic efforts with the neighboring countries and investments in economic development will be a crucial strategy in countering geopolitical threats and radicalization, to maintain regional stability. India will soon come to sing 'ude badal gulal ke', that is, see the days of felicity.



The writer is a counter-terrorism expert and a visiting faculty with Pune University (SPPU) at the Department of Defense and Strategic Studies (DDSS). He is also the founder & editor-in-chief at Diplomacy Direct, a public interest think-tank.

India's strategic location and geopolitical landscape necessitate a proactive diplomatic approach to safeguard its sovereignty, stability, and democratic values. To achieve this, India should focus on strengthening regional partnerships.

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Have we learned anything in the last 100 years?

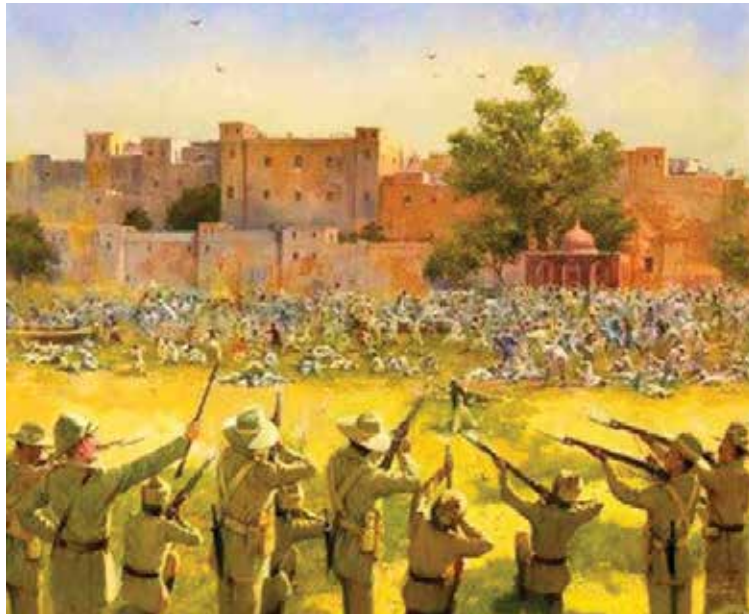
From the Jallianwala Bagh massacre to countless acts of political violence and terrorism, both here and abroad, we see a disturbing pattern. Have we truly made progress, or are we doomed to repeat the same mistakes, driven by hatred and fear?

By Reenita Malhotra Hora

The assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump is a jarring reminder that political violence is never far from our doorstep. As someone who grew up in India, where the assassinations of Mahatma Gandhi and Prime Ministers Indira and Rajiv Gandhi were not just historical events but integral parts of our generational trauma, the recent attack at the Republican campaign rally brought back haunting memories.

A stark reminder of the fragile nature of peace and the ever-present threat of violence. As an immigrant, I have to ask a fundamental question — why do people leave their homelands to come to America? Education and economic opportunities aside, we flee from violence, war, hunger, and extreme poverty. But also from domestic terrorism, or so we think. Because the American Dream promises a better life — not just economically but also in terms of safety, and socio-political stability.

So, when I emigrated to the



The Jallianwala Bagh massacre of April 1919 was a pivotal moment in the course of India's struggle for independence. (Photo courtesy: X@RahulGandhi)

relations. It was the catalyst for Mahatma Gandhi's unwavering commitment to Indian nationalism and independence. Yet, as I reflect on the attack at the Republican rally, I am struck by how little we seem to have learned in the past century. The violence and fear that drove so many to seek refuge in America are resurfacing on our own soil, repeatedly.



Former President Donald Trump was attacked at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania last month. (Photo courtesy: X@VivekGRamaswamy)

colonial government in India were far from victorious. The pro-freedom activists they sought to suppress with Dyer's heinous act were martyred, their sacrifices fueling India's independence movement. And who emerged victorious last month? Not Crook, who lost his own life in the process. Not the bystander who died or the two who were injured. Not Trump — this is hardly something he can proudly claim. And certainly not a divided America — what in this incident can help heal the rift in our polarized nation?

The recent attempt on Donald Trump's life is a stark reminder that the past is never truly behind us. It lives on in our collective memory, in the stories we tell, and in the lessons we either embrace or ignore. The echoes of Jallianwala Bagh reverberate in the gunshots of today. The question is, are we willing to listen, confront the uncomfortable truths they reveal, and commit to a path of non-violence and mutual respect? Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr championed these principles, yet ironically both themselves fell to assassins' bullets — one on Indian soil, the other right here in

America.

One would hope that, as a global society, we have evolved — becoming more civilized, more compassionate, more dedicated to resolving our differences through dialogue rather than violence. But the evidence suggests otherwise. Have we learned anything in the last 100 years, or are we doomed to repeat the same cycles of hatred and fear?

One of the most disheartening aspects of these acts of terror is how they expose the deep-seated tensions and divisions within the society.

United States some thirty-five years ago, I believed I had left that part of my past behind. But recent events have me questioning that belief. The attack on Trump takes me back 105 years to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on April 13, 1919. On that day, British Colonel Reginald Dyer ordered his troops to fire on a large crowd of unarmed Indians in Amritsar, Punjab, gathered for a political meeting—much like the crowds gathered in Butler County, Pennsylvania, for Trump's campaign rally.

Dyer's actions resulted in the deaths of hundreds and the wounding of many more. This massacre was a turning point in the Indian independence movement, galvanizing resistance against colonial rule and leaving a permanent scar on Indo-British

From the Jallianwala Bagh massacre to countless acts of political violence and terrorism since, both here and abroad, including the assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan in 1981, and culminating in the recent attempt on Trump, we see a disturbing pattern. Have we truly made progress, or are we doomed to repeat the same mistakes, driven by hatred and fear? Because hatred and fear are exactly what drive these acts. Hatred for the target of the assassination and fear that the target has the power to change the country's direction, threatening the assassin's way of life and ideals. Whether it's Thomas Matthew Crook's attempt on a single Donald Trump or General Dyer's mass killing at Jallianwala Bagh, both aimed to spread fear and assert control through violence.

In the attempt on Donald Trump's life, we see extreme polarization and toxic political climate defining modern American politics



Reenita Malhotra Hora is a California-based writer, native to Mumbai. Her historical fiction novel 'Vermilion Harvest - Playtime at the Bagh' published by Indignor House on July 15, 2024, is set against the backdrop of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of 1919. You can find out more about her and her work at: www.reenita.com

CONGRATULATIONS

78th Independence Day of India



Dr. Jay M. Sarkar

Attorney, Supreme Court of India

Chief Guest, IDP 2024

Grand Marshall, IDP 2021

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India's contribution to the world is civilizational

To celebrate India's 78th Independence Day, ALotusInTheMud.com invited comments from some eminent people appreciating India's contribution to the world and its role, which has taken center stage in recent years.

By **Parveen Chopra**

Kamala Harris, Usha Vance, Nikky Haley, Rishi Sunak... Satya Nadella, Sundar Pichai... Suddenly, the world is waking up to the Indian diaspora's stratospheric achievements and contributions. India surprised the world by space missions launched on shoe-string budgets and supplying Covid vaccines across the world almost free.

We are not surprised, however. India may be only 77 years old, but it stands on many millennia of civilizational wisdom that balanced the spiritual and the temporal.

India's spiritual message, of course, is perennially purposeful. Rooted in ancient texts such as the Vedas and Upanishads, our indigenous philosophical traditions — including Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism — offer deep insights into human existence and ethical living. Systems such as yoga and meditation have inspired global movements for inner peace and holistic well-being.

India's ethos is characterized by concepts such as ahimsa (non-violence) and vasudhaiva kutumbakam (the world is one family), which underscore the importance of compassion, tolerance, and unity in diversity. These concepts show the way to address global challenges, promote interfaith harmony and world peace, and foster a sustainable and inclusive future.

With India finding its rightful place in world affairs and enhancing global advancement and cultural enrichment, distinguished people in India and America comment on India's civilizational wisdom and its emerging role as Vishwaguru, not just Vishwabandhu.

Insight into the true nature of reality

- **RAJIV MEHROTRA**



India's rich civilizational heritage is a diverse blend of cultural, philosophical, religious, and scientific contributions. These have had a profound impact not only on the

Indian subcontinent but also on the rest of the world. Rooted in ancient traditions and knowledge systems, this heritage continues to evolve and adapt while inspiring and responding to present-day challenges.

At its core, it draws on spiritual traditions that encompass sophisticated, profound, and diverse mind-training techniques. These techniques combine method and wisdom to help us achieve a deep understanding and realization of the true nature of reality. This liberates us from the experience of 'dukkha', or the unsatisfactoriness we feel in our lives.

Different approaches to this are offered to individuals with different mental inclinations. These range from the path of action and devotion to knowledge and working with the body and mind to more esoteric and mys-



tical practices. This celebration of diversity respects all faiths and traditions.

One of the most secular, inclusive, and accessible approaches is the practice of different forms of meditation. Science has empirically validated many of these practices, which can be pursued independently of any specific faith or belief system.

Meditation practice first trains our minds to concentrate, a valuable skill applicable in various areas of life. It then guides us to nurture compassion for all sentient beings, recognizing our interdependence with others, including our precious Mother Earth, and that change, or impermanence is the only constant in the scheme of things. This fosters a softening of our exaggerated sense of the 'self' (the I, my, me, mine) that suffers and spontaneously leads to values such as non-violence and a sense of the human species as a community.

Despite the time we dedicate to training ourselves for our professions or to appear physically attractive to others, we neglect to invest in training our minds to live peacefully with ourselves and others. India's civilizational heritage, which has evolved and refined over thousands of years, offers us a way to achieve this. There is no greater contribution to our shared human heritage.

► (Rajiv Mehrotra is Honorary Trustee & Secretary, the Foundation for Universal Responsibility of H H The Dalai Lama, New Delhi)

Not a relic of the past, but a beacon for the future

- **SWATI ARUN**



Imagine a world without the concept of zero, where the unity of existence is a foreign idea. This is a world devoid of the profound contributions of Indian civilization, a civilization that has woven its wisdom into the very fabric of global knowledge and culture.

India's contributions are not just historical footnotes but living elements of today's modern life. The zero, an Indian invention, is the cornerstone of the digital age, enabling every-

thing from complex calculations to the technology driving our daily lives. Without it, the modern world as we know it would unravel.

In philosophy, India offers insights that transcend time and geography. The teachings of the Vedas, Upanishads, and Bhagavad Gita explore the nature of reality, the self, and the universe, inspiring seekers of truth globally. These ancient texts propose a worldview where everything is interconnected, facilitating unity and purpose relevant in our fragmented world.

Yoga and Ayurveda, India's holistic health systems, have revolutionized wellness. Yoga, embraced by millions worldwide, is more than poses or physical exercise; it is a path to mental clarity and spiritual growth. Ayurveda's focus on balance and natural healing resonates with contemporary shifts toward sustainable health practices.

India's rich cultural heritage, seen in its music, dance, art, and festivals, adds vibrant colors to the global mosaic. The rhythms of Bharatanatyam and the melodies of Indian classical music have transcended borders, uniting people in a celebration of creativity and joy. In today's world, where rapid technological advancements often cost spiritual and ecological balance, India's ancient wisdom provides guiding principles. The philosophy of ahimsa, respect for nature, and the pursuit of inner peace and knowledge are crucial for addressing global challenges like climate change, social inequality, and mental health crises.

India's civilizational wisdom is not just a relic of the past but a beacon for the future, illuminating pathways to a more balanced, compassionate, and inclusive world.

► (Swati Arun is the Director of Social Media, Hindu American Foundation, Washington, DC)

A model for pluralism in the world

- **SRINIVAS REDDY**



India is a microcosm of the world, a land of incredible diversity in every aspect: flora, fauna, people, geography, etc. It is a land of multiple languages, reli-

gions, cultures, and customs, and yet, a unifying force organically emerges from this multiplicity to bind people together.

Planet Earth today is a macrocosm of India. The world now faces unprecedented challenges related to war, famine, linguistic diversity, and cultural plurality. Much of the Western approach to diversity has been through assimilation. The Indian approach has always been -- live and let live. Thus, individuals and communities in India retain their idiosyncratic cultural practices while contributing to an emergent whole.

The two models are curiously different: the Western model is a soup, a uniform whole made of many elements, whereas the Indian model is a salad in which specific elements retain their individuality within the whole. The Indian approach has its problems, no doubt, but it provides a living example of how multiple cultures can coexist while maintaining their freedom and autonomy.

India has remarkably nurtured pluralism of every kind for millennia. As she celebrates her 78th birthday, we may hope that she lives up to her ancient mandates — in Sanskrit: vasudhaiva kutumbakam, and in Tamil: yātura ūre, yāvarum kelir: every city is our city, everyone is our kin.

► (Srinivas Reddy is a scholar, translator, and classical sitarist. His latest book is 'Illuminating Worlds: An Anthology of Classical Indian Literature' (Bloomsbury))

For sustainable well-being of all life forms

- **ADITI BANERJEE**



India's contribution to the world is a civilization, a worldview, an ethos of harmony and pluralism that prioritizes the sustainable well-being of all sentient and non-sentient

life forms. This is the basis of Dharma, which upholds and sustains, in accordance with the Rtam, the natural balance and order of the cosmos. Through the vast philosophical and metaphysical treasures of Hinduism and Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, great sages and savants have transmitted to the people of India, and through them, to the far corners of the world the uplifting message that we are inherently divine, we are inherently one, we are here on this Earth to discover our true calling and purpose of self-realization and self-knowledge.

Today, we, especially the younger among us, live in a global marketplace of ideas where we are so overloaded with information (much of it misleading or false) and ideologies, bombarded with propaganda of different kinds, that we need to counterbalance this by going within through silence and meditation, reflection and study of the self, through worship and reverence for nature, through yoga and chanting, through immersion in the words of the enlightened



ones, through the storytelling of the epics brought alive by our imagination. These are the marga, the paths that our rishis and ancestors laid out for us. This is the treasure of Indic heritage and civilization. It is a plurality of paths, each designed for the individual based on his or her nature, contextualized by time, place, and circumstance – a way marked not by dogma or revelation but rather self-exploration and discovery. It is our duty to undertake this journey for our attainment and the benefit of all living beings.

► (Aditi Banerjee is an attorney at a Fortune 500 financial services company. An author of four books, she frequently speaks about Hinduism and the Hindu-American experience)

The contributions of Dravidian India

- NARAYANI GANESH

Dravidian India's contributions to spirituality and wisdom have certain distinctive features evident in Sangam literature, the Bhakti movement, and the richness of the world's oldest language, Tamil, and its scrip-



tures, some of which date back to pre-Vedic times.

Among the more famous women bhakti saints is Avvaiyar, who propitiated Kartik, the tribal god, called Murugan in Tamil. Her compositions overflow with devotion and deep insights. Both Vaishnav and Shaivite schools have 12 Alvars and 63 Nayanars respectively. Woman Alvar saint Andal, whose love for and devotion to Vishnu so moved him that he appeared before her and took her hand. Her beautiful composition is called the Thiruppavai, sung one stanza a day during the Margazhi month, which falls between December and January. The Thiruvempavai is a collection of verses composed by Manikavachagar, praising Shiva.

Besides the Vaishnava and Shaivite schools, many others coexisted, including pantheism, atheism, the Agama traditions, tribal faiths, and others. There was also a strong Jain presence, which is evident even today.

The ecology of Tamil Nadu played a pivotal role in the way people here thought, acted, and lived out their beliefs and lives. Kurinji, the mountain region; Mullai, the pastoral region; Marutham, riverine valleys; Neydhal, coastal areas; and Palai, degraded land, all had their part to play in the way literature was created, culture evolved, and faiths played out.

Religion formed just one set of beliefs. People lived their daily lives intuitively

through another set of beliefs, or rather, a fundamental orientation to the world around them. This included a way of relating to their environment and people, a respect for ancestors, a view of the inseparability of humankind from all living beings, and a sense of the impact of the cosmos on their lives, says Deborah Thiagarajan, writing on the Tamil cultural and spiritual landscape. What we have now come to call sustainable living. This is a valuable contribution to world culture, spirituality, and civilization.

► (Narayani Ganesh was editor of The Speaking Tree and Sacred Space, two popular columns in The Times of India, as well as The Speaking Tree Sunday section)

A force for good in the world

- SAKET BHATIA



Indians excel globally due to their strong emphasis on education, family values, and adaptability. Strong family support provides stability and encourages individuals to take

risks and innovate. India's multicultural society promotes adaptability, allowing Indians to thrive in different environments and contribute positively.

Indians are making landmark contributions in the tech sector through innovation and development. Corporate leaders such as Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella continue to transform the technology industry with their visionary leadership and capability. Hundreds of thousands of other

Indian technologists and entrepreneurs are pioneering trends in artificial intelligence, IT, education, and healthcare. Indians have made significant contributions globally in medicine, academia, the arts, and the humanities.

In sports, India dominates cricket and competes in the top echelons of badminton, field hockey, wrestling, and chess. In the arts, Indians, at home or abroad, have made a major contribution to movies, music, and literature. Bollywood, with its vibrant movies, has captivated audiences worldwide, promoting Indian culture and entertainment.

The Indian lifestyle continues to positively impact through its emphasis on wellness and spirituality. Yoga and meditation have received worldwide recognition, and their benefits in promoting mental and physical well-being are well-documented. Indian festivals such as Diwali and Holi have become calendar events in many countries, fostering cross-cultural appreciation and understanding.

► (Saket Bhatia has a PhD in Electrical Engineering and founded two companies. Based in the Bay Area, he also has a PhD in Astrology and Numerology)

(Lead illustration and other photos courtesy: ALotusInTheMud.com)



Parveen Chopra is the Founding Editor of The South Asian Times and founder of ALotusInTheMud.com, where you can find more comments in this series.

Vishwabandhu to Vishwaguru

To read about Indian civilizational wisdom and how the nation and its diaspora are enhancing global advancement and cultural enrichment, go to:

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Journey of the Indian National Flag

The National Flag of India, commonly known as Tiranga, represents the hope and aspirations of the people of India and is a symbol of their national pride

By **Pragya Kothari, FRPSL**

The flag is a symbol of a country's values and pride which differentiates it from the rest of the world. It is an identity of the people in front of the world and is connected with patriotic emotions. The National Flag symbolizes the norms, values, beliefs, and rules of the nation and its people.

The importance of the flag and waving it outside the homes and offices is an important tool to express patriotic emotions and love for the country. The National Flag of India, commonly known as Tiranga, represents the hope and aspirations of the people of India and is a symbol of our national pride.

The National Flag has three equal, parallel, and rectangular stripes of Indian saffron (kesari/saffron) at the top, white in the middle, and Indian green at the bottom. A navy blue colored Dhar-

Leading a group of 70 women, Hansa Mehta presented the first National Flag of independent India to Dr Rajendra Prasad, the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, in the Parliament on midnight of August 14-15, 1947



The flags designed by Sister Nivedita (left), a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, came into being in 1905.



Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's Vande Mataram written in the Devanagari script.



The Jai Hind stamp was issued on December 15, 1947.

ma Chakra or "Wheel of the Law", also called Ashoka Chakra, with 24 equally-spaced spokes is placed in the center of the white band. This Wheel has been derived from the Lion Capital of the Great Mauryan emperor Ashoka which was discovered at Sarnath near Varanasi.

The evolution of the Indian Flag represents the freedom struggle of India. The first Indian flag came into being in 1905. It was made by Sister Nivedita, an Irish disciple of Swami Vivekananda. The words Vande Mataram in Bengali script were written on it. The flag also contained a figure of Vajra in the middle, the weapon of the Hindu deity, Indra.

In 1906, another flag, a tricolor, was designed with three equal stripes, green at the top, yellow in the middle, and red at the bottom. This flag had symbols of the Sun and a crescent along with eight



This flag was hoisted on August 22, 1907, by Madam Bhikaji Cama (left) in Stuttgart, Germany.



half-opened lotuses. This flag had the words Vande Mataram written in the Devanagari script, and it was hoisted by Sir Surendranath Bannerjee at Kolkata to mark the unity of India against the Partition of Bengal.

Another version of the tricolor was developed in the year 1907 by Madam Bhikaji Cama, Veer Savarkar, and Shyamji Krishna Varma. This flag had three bands

– green at the top, saffron in the middle, and red at the bottom with Vande Mataram in Devanagari script on the center band. This flag was hoisted on August 22, 1907, by Madam Bhikaji Cama in Stuttgart, Germany who became the first person to hoist the Indian Flag on foreign soil.

In 1921, Pingali Venkaiah a young man from a small village in Andhra Pradesh, designed the Indian Flag at the insistence of Mahatma Gandhi. The flag had three bands with a large charkha superimposed on all three bands.



The Har Ghar Tiranga campaign is a government initiative to inspire citizens to hoist the Tricolor at home. (Photo courtesy: Govt of India)

In 1931, a modified tricolor came into existence with three bands – saffron at the top, white in the middle, and green at the bottom, with a Charkha in dark blue color imprinted on the middle band.

In 1943, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, the Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army (INA), adopted the Purna Swaraj Flag but substituted the spinning wheel with an image of a springing tiger. The tiger image symbolized the strength of the Indian people and their indomitable will to fight. The design was replicated on stamps, which were printed in 1943 at Reichsdruckerei in Berlin. However, these were never sent to India for postal service.

In 1947, the India National Flag in its present form was adopted in a meeting of the Constituent Assembly on July 22, 1947. Lead-

ing a group of 70 women, Hansa Mehta presented the first National Flag of independent India to Dr Rajendra Prasad, the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, in the Parliament on midnight of August 14-15, 1947.

It first served as the National Flag of the Dominion of India from August 15, 1947, to January 26, 1950, and, thereafter, as the National Flag of the Republic of India. In modern times, the Government envisages to transform the relationship between the National Flag and citizens to be personal rather than formal and institutional, so as to evoke a sense of patriotism in the hearts of the people.

The Har Ghar Tiranga campaign has been initiated by the Government to propagate this idea and to inspire the citizens to hoist the national flag at home. We salute the spirit of the Indian National Flag and recognize the sacrifices of all freedom fighters and unsung heroes who contributed to the rise of free and independent India and the evolution of the Indian Flag, and also, the Department of Posts to issue stamp on the evolution of the Indian Flag, a symbol of national pride of the entire nation.

(All photos courtesy: Pragya Kothari)



Pingali Venkaiah, the designer of India's Swaraj (Freedom) Flag. His original design is shown in the top right-hand corner of the stamp.



A rare stamp of Azad Hind (free India).

Pragya Kothari is a Fellow, Royal Philatelic Society, London.

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Indian stock markets break all records

The meteoric rise in the Indian stock market is due to the strong performance of the GDP, which in the financial year 2023-24, grew at the rate of 8.2%.

Riding on political stability, overall economic growth, robust fiscal discipline and strong fundamentals, the Indian stock markets have come a long way in the last decade or so — from 25,000 in 2014 to 80,000 in 2024.

The Indian benchmark indices remain more resilient amid the US economic slowdown, according to global brokerages, as the risk of a US economic downturn has now risen materially. India has unambiguously healthy demand for equity in light of private equity's monumental pipeline of investments.

Today, India is the best-performing stock market among the top five globally, and delivered over 25 per cent return (in terms of market cap) from the beginning of 2024. Due to a stellar rally, the total market cap of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) reached Rs

Exchange (NSE) has crossed the 10-crore mark for the first time. The total number of client codes (accounts) registered with the leading exchange stands at 19 crore.

According to the exchange, the benchmark Nifty 50 index has generated a return of 11.8 per cent in this fiscal year (as of July 31). The Nifty 500 index has delivered a strong 16.2 percent gain during the same period. As many as 2,535 companies from various sectors are listed on the NSE with a market capitalisation of Rs 455.79 lakh crore (as on July 30).

Mutual funds, SIPs at record levels

As the financial landscape in India witnesses a significant shift, the mutual fund ecosystem has played a crucial role in this transformation, stepping up remarkably to earn the trust of Indian investors.



India is currently the best-performing stock market among the top five globally. (Photo courtesy: Wikipedia/BSEIndia)



(Photo courtesy: X@NSEIndia)

462 lakh crore (over 5.5 trillion dollars).

The market capitalisation of the Indian stock market crossed one trillion dollars for the first time on May 28, 2007. After the next 10 years, it reached 2 trillion dollars on July 10, 2017, and after the next four years it reached 3 trillion dollars on May 24, 2021, and then after more than two years, it reached 4 trillion dollars on November 30, 2023, and in the next six months, the 5 trillion dollars mark was crossed on May 24, 2024.

The meteoric rise in the Indian stock market is due to the strong performance of the GDP. In the financial year 2023-24, GDP grew at the rate of 8.2 percent and the Economic Survey reported that GDP may grow at the rate of 7 per cent in the financial year 2024-25.

The unique registered investor base on the National Stock

India's mutual fund industry witnessed the highest ever Rs 23,332 crore SIP inflow in July this year, which in June was Rs 21,262 crore. Due to the recent increase in Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) inflow, Assets Under Management (AUM) of the total mutual fund industry reached 64.69 lakh crore in July as against 60.89 lakh crore in June.

According to the AMFI (Association of Mutual Funds in India) data, total inflows into equity funds declined by 8.6 per cent to Rs 37,113.4 crore in the last month which was Rs 40,608.19 crore in June, the highest ever recorded equity inflow in mutual funds in India. This is the 41st consecutive month that inflows into open-ended equity funds have been positive. In July, Sensex surged 3.43 per cent and Nifty railed 3.92 per cent.

Venkat Chalasani, Chief Executive of AMFI, said that

the growth rate of the industry is positive due to continuous investment in mutual funds by retail investors. At present, mutual funds have become an important part of the financial strategy of retail investors.

Maximum investment is being seen in sectoral and thematic funds. A net investment of Rs 18,386.35 crore came in this category in July.

FPIs pumped in Rs 54,727 crore in equity and debt in the full month of July. According to the NSDL data, FPIs invested Rs 32,364 crore in equity and Rs 22,363 crore in debt in July. FPI activities are influenced by factors like the performance of the global equity markets, the movement of the dollar index, incremental geopolitical events, and opportunities in the Indian markets considering slightly elevated valuation levels.

Domestic investors stabilize volatility

As foreign institutional investors (FIIs) resorted to big selling in the cash market this week amid weak global cues, domestic institutional investors (DIIs) are playing a stabilising role in mitigating volatility and supporting market confidence.

Additionally, the increasing participation of domestic retail investors through mutual funds strengthened the market's internal support system, fostering a more stable investment environment, said Alok Agarwal, Head, Quant and Fund Manager, Alchemy Capital Management.

Since the end of 2020, FIIs have net bought equity worth Rs 1 trillion compared to mutual funds, which have bought Rs 6.2 trillion. With six times more net buying, domestic institutions are becoming far more relevant in the last few years. According to experts, the domestic funds are bullish on the Indian markets due to several factors.

According to Sunil Damania, Chief Investment Officer, MojoPMS, despite global negative news, the Indian stock market has demonstrated remarkable resilience. Unlike previous trends, retail investors are now using market dips as opportunities to increase their equity allocations.

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) typically pursue valuations. Currently, India's valuations are at a premium compared to the his-

torical premiums of other emerging markets. "Last year, the Indian market saw record inflows from FPIs, leading to expectations of muted inflows this year. The average monthly inflows from FPIs in 2024 were Rs 15,000 crore, which has come down to Rs 4,000 crore year-to-date in 2024," Damania added.

Domestic funds have greater confidence in the long-term growth story of India, driven by sectors like manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and renewable energy. The growing financial literacy and an increasing investment culture among Indians have boosted fund inflows, further fueling market optimism.

"India is a unique large country with stability in government along with double-digit economic growth, double-digit corporate earnings growth and double-digit corporate return on equity (ROE). FIIs can't remain out for a long period of time," the experts maintained.

As more and more Indians prefer to have simple and transparent exposures in mutual funds, the total retail folios in index funds increased by nearly 12 times from 4.95 lakh in March 2020 to 59.37 lakh in December 2023, a study by Zerodha Fund House showed.

The total number of index funds has increased from 44 in March 2021 to 207 in March 2024, accounting for an absolute growth of 370 per cent. As of March 31, there were 120 and 87 equity and debt index funds, respectively.



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By TSAT Team

A part from India taking the big leap from being among the 'Fragile Five' economies to the world's top five economies based on GDP in the last 10 years of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi government, an analysis by experts show that the country's relative performance compared with its peers has also turned better, which was not the case earlier.

A higher per capita GDP growth also means that the standard of living of the people is rising as each person has more money to spend on the country's 78th Independence Day.

Latest IMF data shows that in 2004, India's per capita GDP was \$635 which is 35 percent of the average per capita GDP of \$1,790 for 150 countries listed as "emerging market and developing economies" by the multilateral financial institution. These peer countries include China, Russia, Brazil, and countries in South America, Africa, the Middle East as well as parts of Eastern Europe.

Around 135 million Indians escaped poverty in the five years between 2015-16 and 2019-21, made possible through integration of social safety nets, infrastructure development and multiple financial inclusion programs



(Photo courtesy: X@PIB)

Experts point out that this figure of 35 per cent declined to 30 per cent by 2014 which shows that India became relatively poorer than these 150 countries which performed better. However, this ratio increased from 30 per cent in 2014, to 37 per cent in 2019, according to IMF figures.

India's per capita GDP in 2024 has shot up further to \$2,850 which works out to 42 per cent of the \$6,770 for its peer countries. This means that the gap has been narrowed with India's economic performance being better than the other emerging economies in the last 10 years.

IMF data also shows that in 2004, India's economy was 37 per cent the size of the Chinese economy but by 2014, it had fallen to a mere 19 per cent as China was clocking a much higher rate of growth. However, with the Indian economy growing at a much faster growth rate than China, the tables are being turned and the relative size of the economy has gone up to 22 per cent.

Based on the strong macro-economic fundamentals, India is now headed to be the third largest economy surpassing Germany and Japan and what is equally important is that the per capita GDP is rising reflecting a better standard of living for the people.

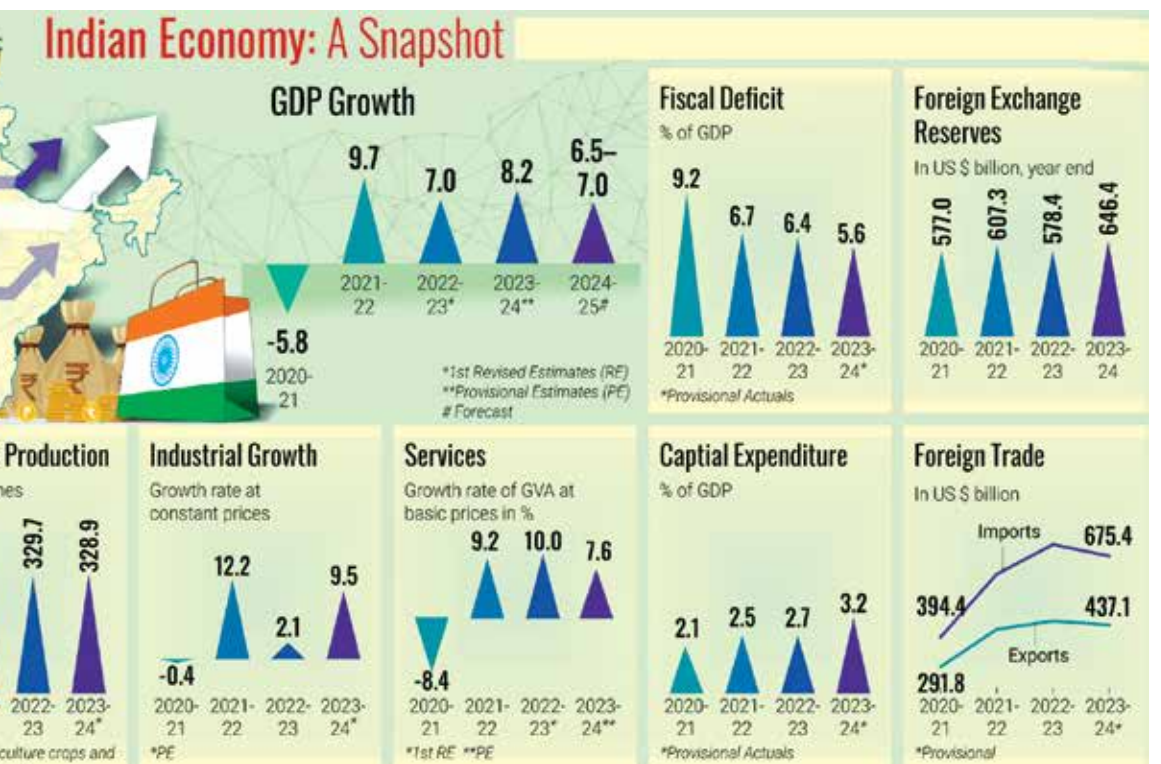
Lessons for other countries

According to Suman Bery, vice chair of NITI Aayog, India's ascent

from the "Fragile Five" to the fastest-growing major economy has lessons for other developing countries. Speaking to the media recently, Bert said that India has its own challenges, and one reason for India's success is that it has mechanisms to come up with its own solutions. "With Prime Minister Modi, having been at the helm for ten years and now having been selected to be Prime Minister, another five years, I think there are certain lessons to be drawn", he was quoted as saying.

A lot of that has to do with sheer economic management, making sure that the inflation rate is down, good administration, the GST (Goods and Services Tax). Above all economic and financial stability was important and the government had its mandate.

The "Fragile Five" term was coined by the international investment company Morgan Stanley that lumped India with four other developing nations signalling their economic vulnerability. That was a year before Narendra Modi's election to his first term as Prime Minister. The International Monetary Fund has also reiterated India's position as the fastest-growing economy with a growth rate of 7.5 per cent for this year, continuing the world record for the seventh year in a row.



India is now headed to be the third-largest economy, surpassing Germany and Japan.

(Photo courtesy: X@PIB)

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Around 135 million Indians escaped multidimensional poverty in the five years between 2015-16 and 2019-21, made possible through integration of social safety nets, infrastructure development and multiple financial inclusion programs.

India has achieved progress towards this and other goals encompassing ending hunger, extending healthcare, fighting climate change, and institution-building "in a participative, democratic framework with orderly transfers of power at the level of Indian states and at the centre", he said.

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said recently that the country has moved from "Fragile Five" under the UPA government to "Top Five" in the BJP-led NDA government.

India is on track to become the world's third-largest economy with GDP crossing \$5 trillion, and the goal is now to reach a \$30 trillion economy by 2047 with a per capita income of \$18,000 per annum, according to a key NITI Aayog document.

Forex reserves at historic high

India's foreign exchange reserves reached a historical high of \$675 billion (as of August 2) as overall, India's external sector remains resilient with key indicators continuing to improve.

"We remain confident of meeting our external financing requirements comfortably," says RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das. He also said that India's current account deficit (CAD) moderated to 0.7 per cent of GDP in 2023-24 from 2.0 percent of GDP in 2022-23 due to a lower trade deficit and robust services and remittances receipts.

In Q1 2024-25, the merchandise trade deficit widened as imports grew faster than exports. The RBI chief further stated that buoyancy in services exports and

strong remittance receipts are expected to keep CAD within a sustainable level in Q1 2024-25. "We expect CAD to remain eminently manageable during the current financial year," he remarked.

On the external financing side, foreign portfolio investors turned net buyers in the domestic market from June 2024 with net inflows of \$ 9.7 billion during June-August (till August 6) after witnessing outflows of \$ 4.2 billion in April and May, the central bank chief said.

Fastest growth in intangible investments

Intangible investments have shown remarkable resilience compared to tangible investment in the recent past and India is the country among major global economies that experienced the fastest growth in intangible investment from 2011 to 2020.

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) said in its report that India recorded the fastest growth in intangible investments, exceeding countries like Sweden and the US -- the two most intensive economies in terms of intangible investment as a share of GDP.

"India's performance is also comparable with that of certain advanced economies, its intangible investment level in 2020 being close to that of Sweden," the WIPO report mentioned.

Intangible assets include research and development (R&D), software and data, design, brands and reputation, supply-chain expertise and top-tier skills and all assets that either result from or interact with intellectual property (IP) in some form.

*Warmest wishes to all Indians
on the joyous occasion of*



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Ricky Kej's rendition of national anthem sets Guinness world record

"Honored to share my epic rendition of our National Anthem of India (Bharat)... We even won a Guinness World record."

This rendition brings together top classical musicians from both North and South India, including renowned figures like Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Amaan and Ayaan Ali Bangash, and Rahul Sharma. It also features the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra from the UK and a choir of 14,000 tribal children from the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences.

Kej's project is more than just a musical achievement; it symboliz-



Three-time Grammy winner Ricky Kej's rendition featured top Indian musicians. (Photo courtesy: Instagram@rickykej)

es unity and diversity. The video, which includes a performance by a 100-piece British orchestra, features 14,000 children forming the map of India and the word "Bharat" in both Hindi and English.

In a statement to ANI, Kej reflected on the project's significance: "The national anthem was the first piece of music I ever learnt as a child. We brought together the best classical musicians from India to create a beautiful interpretation, and organized 14,000 students to sing the anthem in four-part harmonies."

On the eve of India's 78th Independence Day, three-time Grammy-winning composer Ricky Kej unveiled a spectacular new rendition of the Indian National Anthem, featuring an impressive collaboration of artists and a Guinness World Record. Kej shared the release of the anthem on social media platform X with the caption,

'May our flag always fly high': B-Town extends I-Day wishes



Actress Sara Ali Khan shared a picture with father Saif Ali Khan holding Tricolor and actor Kartik Aryan posted a picture with the Indian flag in the background. (Photo courtesy: Instagram@saraalikh95, X@TheAaryanKartik)



nani unfurling the Indian flag. Sharing the clip on Instagram, she wrote, "Proudly raising the flag and celebrating our nation's spirit this Independence Day. Jai Hind!"

Actor Sara Ali Khan shared a picture with her father Saif Ali Khan holding the tricolor, and wrote: "Happy Independence Day". Actor Suniel Shetty shared a video of himself folding hands in front of the Indian flag. He wrote: "Proud to be born in Incredible India. Happy Independence Day. Jai Hind".

Actor Kartik Aaryan took to X to wish his fans on the occasion. He posted a picture of himself in a suit from Australia, with the Indian flag in the background. Sharing the image, he wrote, "Wishing a Happy 78th #IndependenceDay to my Motherland! I might be seven seas away, but India's spirit, grit, and pride can be felt no matter where you are. Bharat is not just a name; it's a feeling that always makes our hearts swell with pride. Jai Hind".

'Pushpa' actor Allu Arjun too extended his wishes on X platform. He shared a picture of the National flag, writing, "Happy Independence Day to each and every Indian in the world. Jai Hind"

With messages filled with hope and pride, several Bollywood actors, including Akshay Kumar, Allu Arjun, Priyanka Chopra, and Suniel Shetty, took to their social media handles to extend Independence Day wishes to their fans and followers.

Actor Akshay Kumar, whose film 'Khel Khel Mein' released in cinemas on August 15, posted on his Instagram stories, "Celebrat-

ing freedom, pride & progress. May our flag always fly high and our hearts soar with pride. salute to our freedom. Best wishes to all of you on Independence Day. Jai Hind".

Actor Priyanka Chopra also took to her Instagram stories to share an image of the Indian flag with the "Happy Independence Day" message. Actor Rakul Preet Singh posted a video of herself with her husband Jackky Bhag-

'Let's keep building a stronger, brighter nation together': Ayushmann Khurrana

Celebrating India's 78 years of Independence, Bollywood actor Ayushmann Khurrana urged people across the country to work towards building a stronger and brighter nation together. In a post shared on Instagram on August 15, the 'Andhadhun' actor said: "Lot of work left to be done; we have come a long way, and we have to go a long way forward. Jai Hind!". He wrote the message in Hindi along with a picture of himself standing in front of the India Gate in Delhi.

Earlier, speaking to IANS news agency, Aushmann said he considers himself deeply patriotic and added that Viksit Bharat (developed India) resonates with him as he has witnessed how the country has soared globally. "I consider myself deeply patriotic. I grew up in an environment where my parents told me about the pride we should feel about being Indian because there is no other country like ours," he told the agency.

"At this impressionable age, I was deeply moved by the lives of our national heroes who fought for our freedom. I was in awe of their resilience, grit, and unconditional

love for the motherland! My school used to remember such heroes on Independence Day.

We celebrated our freedom with a gentle reminder that independence was earned with a lot of sacrifice."

Ayushmann added that the country's "economy, culture, heritage—everything is being viewed by the world as a model example of a country that is rich in unity and diversity".

"We are a young and ambitious nation, and on this Independence Day, let's pledge to make our country stronger, let's pledge to contribute more, and let's pledge to leave a positive impact on society through our work and the way we live our lives."

The actor said that through cinema, he aims to leave a message to society. "My goal is to excel in storytelling, sharing extraordinary stories about India and its resilient citizens who make a difference every day. I also try to do this through the work that I do off-screen with UNICEF, an organization that has my heart because of the countless lives of children that it touches."

Shilpa Shetty celebrates Independence Day with BSF jawans

Actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra, who recently essayed the role of Special Cell Chief Tara Shetty in the streaming series 'Indian Police Force', is celebrating the 78th Independence Day with the men who are on the frontlines of our nation. She took to her Instagram handle and shared a video of herself celebrating with Border Security Force (BSF) jawans.

The actress visited the BSF sector headquarters in Ferozepur and participated in the I-Day celebrations where soldiers recited poems and gave speech-



Actress Shilpa Shetty thanked the soldiers for guarding India's borders. (Photo courtesy: Instagram@theshilpashetty)

es on the special day. In her speech, she expressed her gratitude to the jawans for guarding India's borders and said how the people of India feel secure and can enjoy freedom because of them.

She wrote in the caption, "Not many have the chance to witness the courage and dedication of those who stand guard at the Indo-Pakistan border, protecting our nation with unwavering resolve. Seeing them in action is a humbling reminder of the sacrifices made every day, often unnoticed but never unappreciated".



I-Day movie mania! 15 releases lined up for August 15

Independence Day is turning out to be a cinematic celebration for film buffs with a record 15 diverse array of films hitting the theaters. Whether you're a fan of action-packed thrillers, family comedies, or intense dramas, this year's line-up offers something for everyone. Here's a look at some of the most anticipated releases you won't want to miss...

Khel Khel Mein | Hindi | Starring Akshay Kumar alongside a stellar cast including Taapsee Pannu and Vaani Kapoor, the film is a high-octane action film that combines thrills with engaging drama.

Thangalaan | Tamil | Directed by Pa Ranjith, the film is a Tamil historical drama featuring versatile actor Chiyaan Vikram. This film promises a gripping narrative and exceptional performances, making it a must-watch for fans of epic storytelling.

Stree 2 | Hindi | A sequel to the successful 'Stree', this horror-comedy stars Shraddha Kapoor and Rajkummar Rao. Directed by Amar



(Photos courtesy: X@Thangalaan, Shraddha Kapoor/Facebook, x@DemonteColony2, John Abraham/Facebook)

Kaushik, the film continues the franchise's legacy with a fresh storyline and humor.

Mr Bachchan | Telugu | This romantic action film directed by Harish Shankar combines romance and action and stars Ravi Teja and Bhagyashri Borse in pivotal roles.

Nunakuzhi | Malayalam | Directed by Jeethu Joseph, the film is a Malayalam family-comedy film starring Basil Joseph and Grace Antony. It's about a wealthy businessman whose seemingly perfect life unravels when his company becomes the target of a high-profile IT raid.

Vedaa | Hindi | Directed by Nikhil Advani, the film is an action thriller that explores intriguing plotlines and intense action sequences. It stars John Abraham, Sharvari Wagh (in the titular role), Abhishek Banerjee, and Tamannaah Bhatia, and is inspired by true events.

Chinna Katha Kaadu | Telugu | This family entertainer, directed by Nanda Kishore Emani, stars Nivetha Thomas and Priyadarshi. It is about a young mother facing challenges when her son fails to secure passing marks in the examination.

Double iSmart | Telugu | The film delivers an action-packed experience with Ram Pothineni and Sanjay Dutt in lead roles. Directed by Puri Jagannadh, this film promises edge-of-the-seat entertainment with its gripping plot and powerful performances.

Bhairathi Ranagal | Kannada | Starring Shiva Rajkumar and Rahul Bose in lead roles, the Nartan directorial features intense action sequences and strong performances.

Andhagan | Tamil | A remake of the critically-acclaimed Bollywood film 'Andhadhun', this film, directed by Thiagarajan and pro-

duced by Staar Movies, hopes to offer a thrilling experience with its intriguing plot twists.

Hunt | Malayalam | Directed by Shaji Kailas, the horror-thriller promises to deliver a spine-chilling experience with its engaging storyline and suspenseful elements.

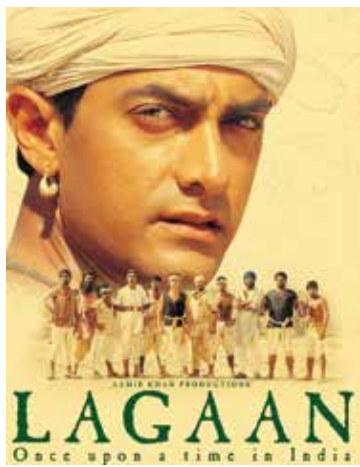
Raghu Thatha | Tamil | Directed by Chandra Mohan, this film offers a unique blend of comedy and drama and centers around a rebellious young woman, Kayalvizhi (played by Keerthy Suresh), who is forced to choose between principle and patriarchy.

Aay | Telugu | This romantic comedy directed by Anji Kanchipalli, features Narne Nithiin and Nayan Sarika.

Demonte Colony 2 | Tamil | A sequel to 'Demonte Colony', this horror film dives into the eerie history of a cursed mansion and its dark secrets. Directed by Ajay Gnanamuthu, it promises a spine-chilling experience that expands on the terrifying narrative of the original film.

Krishnam Pranaya Sakhi | Kannada | A romantic film directed by Srinivas Raju, the film features Ganesh and Malvika Nair.

B-Town actors who redefined patriotism



(Photo courtesy: Wikipedia)

AAMIR KHAN

He played the role of Daljit 'DJ' Singh in the film who, along with his friends, challenged corrupt political leaders in the country. He also starred as Mangal Pandey, a leading revolutionary in the Indian Mutiny of 1857, in 'Mangal Pandey: The Rising'. In 'Lagaan', he plays a farmer, who, along with the people of his small village in colonial India, stake their future on a game of cricket against British rulers.



(Photo courtesy: Disney + Hotstar)

AJAY DEVGN

In 'The Legend of Bhagat Singh', Devgn played the titular character. The biographical period drama film chronicled the freedom fighter's life as a young witness of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919 to his execution in 1931. Set against the 1971 Indo-Pak War, 'Bhuj: The Pride Of India' featured the actor as IAF Squadron Leader Vijay Karnik who led a group of local women to reconstruct a landing strip, which was destroyed by Pakistan. The film, 'Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior' earned Devgn his third National Award for Best Actor.

VICKY KAUSHAL

In 'Sardar Udham', Kaushal played the role of freedom fighter Udham Singh, who assassinated Michael O'Dwyer in London to avenge the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar. In 2023, he featured as Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, the seventh Chief of the Army Staff, Indian Army, in 'Sam Bahadur'.



(Photo courtesy: X@taran_adarsh)

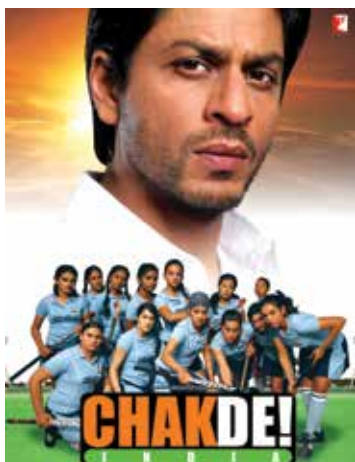
KANGANA RANAUT

Kangana Ranaut's patriotic action-thriller 'Tejas' showed how India's fighter pilots risked their lives in accomplishing dangerous missions. In 'Manikarnika - Queen of Jhansi', she played the role of Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, the first woman in history to fight against the British in the cry for Independence.

SHAH RUKH KHAN

In 'Swades - We the People' Khan played Mohan Bhargava, a successful scientist with NASA in the US, whose realization of India's socio-economic problems inspired him to return to his roots forever.

In 'Chak De', he portrayed the role of a hockey coach who gains redemption for the wrong done to him, via guiding and training the national women's hockey team.



(Photo courtesy: Amazon)



(Photo courtesy: Netflix India)

JANHVI KAPOOR

She essayed the role of Flight Lieutenant Gunjan Saxena, who made history by becoming India's first female combat pilot in the Kargil War.



(Photo courtesy: Prime Video)



By Pradip Jain RDP, FRPSL

Philosophy and morality are closely intertwined in Indian life. "Dharma" is the Indian word meaning morals and ethics. The word "dharma" derives from the root "dhr," which means to hold. Dharma, therefore, serves to maintain the stability and development of human civilization by acting as a unifying force within it.

'Ramo Vighravan Dharma' means Shri Ram is Dharma incarnate. Maharishi Valmiki called Shri Ram 'Dharmavigraha' in Ramayana, God incarnated for the welfare of the people. Maharishi Ved Vyas said that the incarnation of Shri Ram was not just for killing demons but for teaching dharma to humans. Patience, forgiveness, control of mind, selflessness, purity, restraint of senses, wisdom, knowledge, truth and mercy, these ten characteristics of dharma have been properly reflected in the entire conduct of Shri Ram.

A fundamental principle of Shri Ram's life conduct is to be aware of one's true self. If a man thinks about his real identity and controls his behavior accordingly, then there can be an appropriate solution to the problems prevalent in the society. Shri Ram's life and his human attributes are highly relevant in the modern world to discipline the mind and for continuously developing and changing the country.

Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Temple at Ayodhya is unique for its geographical, historical, cultural importance and architectural style. The city of Ayodhya, situated on the bank of pious river Saryu is considered a form of Rama. Ayodhya is filled with many childhood life acts of Rama which ultimately played an important role in his transformation as Maryada Purshottam. Shri Ram Janmbhoomi temple at Ayodhya symbolizes the united faith of every Indian in the



Special Postmark issued to mark the occasion

India Post's befitting tribute to Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Mandir



Model of Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Temple, Ayodhya, stamp issued in 2020

life of Shri Ram. The sculptures in the temple complex, spiritual symbols on walls and the overall architectural style describes the divinity of Rama. This temple is the center of renaissance of the spiritual energy of great Bharat.

The construction of the Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Temple, situated on the sacred birthplace of Shri Ram within a 70-acre complex, is a significant endeavor undertaken by the Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, formed by the Supreme Court on November 9, 2019.

The main temple is designed in ancient Nagara style of Archi-



Shri Ram Mandir Pran Pratishtha, special Postmark on Pran Pratishtha day 22.01.2024



ecture. The temple is constructed with Pink Bansi Paharpur stones from the mines in Bharatpur district, Rajasthan and spans a vast area of 2.77 acres.

The construction involves intricate processes, including cutting and carving of stones at Pindwara in Rajasthan, utilizing advanced CNC technology for precision. The final finishing, a testament to craftsmanship, is meticulously done by a team of approximately 1,500 artisans. The stones, after carving, are carefully packed and transported back to the temple for the assembly and erection.



Stamp First Day Cover on Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Temple

The temple's structural integrity is reinforced to withstand seismic activities of Zone 4. The ground floor boasts 166 pillars, the first floor 142, and the second floor 82, including 6 Makrana Marble pillars on each floor, adorned with intricate carvings of over 10,000 Moortis and themes.

Teak wood sourced from the Maharashtra Forest Department, seasoned in Nagpur, is used for the temple's 46 wooden doors, with 14 doors on the ground floor embellished with gold plating. The opulent flooring, covering an area of 80,000 square feet, is done with 35mm thick white Makrana Marble, featuring an inlay of 15mm thick colored marble stones.

A special highlight of the temple is the mechanism devised by the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI), Roorkee, where during the auspicious day of Ram Navami, Surya Kiran falls on the forehead (Surya Tilak) of Shri Ram.

Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Temple Souvenir sheet - The stamp series contains a total of six designs. While the Ram Temple frontal view in the backdrop of the sun is the primary stamp, images of the idols of Ganesha, Hanuman and Jatayu put at the temple are the three other designs.

Two other stamps in the set showcase wall murals describing the Kevat and Shabari episodes from the epic. The stamps have the fragrance of sandalwood signifying the fragrance of divinity. To make these stamps radiant of the divine light, parts of the Miniature sheet is gold foiled, also used the soil and water of sacred Saryu river of Ayodhya.

Pranpratishtha at Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Temple is a historic day for the nation. To make this moment truly unique, India Posts has conceptualized a set of six stamps on Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Temple. These stamps have been printed with the water and sand from Ram Janmbhoomi, carrying the consciousness and blessings of Shri Ram. The stamps have the fragrance of sandalwood signifying the fragrance of divinity. To make these stamps radiant of the divine light, parts of the Miniature sheet is gold foiled.

Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Temple invites every being to seek blessings of Shri Ram for virtuous, blessed and meaningful life.

(Photos courtesy: Pradip Jain)

Pradip Jain RDP, FRPSL is a Philatelist Expert. He can be reached at Philapradip@gmail.com



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Indians world over mark I-Day with patriotic fervor

Indians across the world enthusiastically celebrated India's 78th Independence Day, exchanging greetings, singing the national anthem and patriotic songs, and planting trees. Here are some glimpses...



Indians in the UK celebrate Independence Day with a Bharatnatyam performance. (Photo courtesy: X@HCL_London)



Indian community gathers at the Embassy in Moscow to celebrate Independence Day. (Photo courtesy: X@IndEmbMoscow)



Ambassador Sibi George and his wife Joice Sibi joined hands with school children in Japan to plant tree saplings on August 15; patriotic songs rendered by children from the Indian community. (Photos courtesy: @IndianEmbTokyo)



Consul General Satish Sivan pays a floral tribute to Mahatma Gandhi in Dubai. (Photo courtesy: @cgidubai)



The rich tapestry of Indian culture could be seen on the streets of Germany with several Indians putting up spectacular Mallakhamb and dhol performances on August 15. (Photo courtesy: X@eoiberlin)



The vibrant Indian community in Australia gathered at the High Commission to celebrate August 15. (Photos courtesy: @HCICanberra)



As part of the 'Ek Ped Maa ke Naam' (Plant4Mother) campaign, the Indian High Commissioner to Australia, Gopal Baglay, planted a tree on the 78th Independence Day. He encouraged the Indian diaspora representatives present at the event to nurture the environment for a better tomorrow.



(Left) Glimpses of cultural performances put up by community members in South Korea. (Photo courtesy: X@IndiainROK)



Cultural performances by children and people of the Indian community in New Zealand. (Photo courtesy: X@IndiainNZ)





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By Dr Kirti Shekhawat

Morning walks are associated with multiple benefits, one of them being interacting with fellow walkers. One morning, for reasons best known to them I found myself deserted by my fellow walkers. I joined another group, a silent spectator, listening to their conversation, sipping the fresh neem giloy juice. Moments later their discussion converted into virtual memoirs, each reminiscing their experiences and emotions related to India's independence in 1947 when some were in school, while others narrated tales orally handed down to them by their parents who were witnesses to 'the golden day' 15th August 1947.

Interest aroused, I looked at their eyes filled with pride and love for their country, their voices full of passion, their emotions resurfacing as they re-lived those days. To them, breathing in an independent country was freedom! The words,

To the millennials, freedom meant expressing their thoughts in an uninhibited way along with financial freedom so that they could become independent individuals.

the looks, the emotions, the treble in their voices were what I carried back with me and it lingered in my mind for days. Born in an independent country, I realized that I had taken freedom for granted. I had no experience of colonial subjugation, the sacrifices, the struggles, the thirst for independence, when life and family, and finances were secondary to the country's independence.

As India celebrates its 78 years of freedom, I pondered upon the changing dimensions and magnitude of 'freedom' to a common person today. Tracing the years of independence it struck me that in these 78 years, the meaning has changed for each generation proving the fact that the only constant in the world is change.

Independence brought along with it the pain of partition, border wars and defining boundaries. To the baby boomers (1946-1964) independence was freedom from debt, a reserve bank balance for emergencies that assisted in making them self-reliant, they literally began from the scratch: there was freedom but there was concern and unreliability with the motto, "Better be



(Photo courtesy: publicdomainpictures.net)

safe than sorry." Generation X (1965-1980) also labeled as the latchkey and forgotten generation believed in working anytime, anywhere and anyplace that made them more productive and entrepreneurial. They respected the sacrifices made for them, were active, happy and had a good work-life balance. To them freedom was being the masters of their own destiny, to follow dreams with the motto, "If you want something done right, do it yourself."

Millennials (1980-1990) also termed, Generation Y or the Silent Generation were digital natives, technology a part of their life. To them, freedom meant expressing their thoughts in an uninhibited way along with financial freedom so that they could become inde-

pendent individuals. Freedom of the press and religion is what they strongly believed in so as to "live and let live".

The next generation also called the 'Crystal Generation' is commonly addressed as Generation Z (1990-2010) or the Zoomers. They prioritized economic freedom over anything else so that they could travel at will, party and eat out, indulge in hobbies and make lifestyle choices. Their motto, "Let Me Play and Let Me Loose" describes them.

Beyond the connotations of freedom down the generations, in an average income group Indian household, to a girl, freedom means wearing clothes of her own choice, going wherever she wants to, and loving whoever she wants while to the boy choosing his own career is

freedom. To the lower-income group individual, freedom is a synonym for not sleeping hungry.

In a nutshell, freedom is all about having choices: to feel free from within, free to select a path, and have equal opportunities that assist in constructing a purposeful and meaningful life, an essential component of a flourishing individual. This freedom to explore, create and innovate is the driving force for human progress that finally leads to creating prosperous communities and healthy societies that evolve and thrive within the confines of societal rules and directs the motion to spiritual unity.

The diversity in the entire length and breadth of the country, India, where different languages constantly evolve, where various religions coexist, where there is a multitudinous culture, provides a route for the evolution of individuals and societies. These factors make the country spectacular, identical to a beautiful garden with an inner current that connects people. India is not one nation, it is an entire continent where everyone just has to be themselves...that's freedom!

(The writer has been a lifelong academician, educationist, trainer, administrator, and research guide before she became a short-story writer post-superannuation as principal of a college.)



By Shambhavi Arora

To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others." This quote by Nelson Mandela effectively sums up what it means to be free in today's world. Raised in an India that has been free for 78 years now, it's easy to presume that Gen Z, to which I belong, doesn't bother much about the hard-won freedom in 1947. But nearly 80 years after the country got its independence, the question I keep asking is, is India truly free?

Of course, the landscape has changed dramatically in the last couple of decades with progress being seen in areas like science and technology, education, manufacturing, trade, and commerce. But there are also challenges - corruption,

Notes from a young Indian: What freedom in 2024 means



(Photo courtesy: Ministry of Culture/GOI)

terrorism, gender discrimination, unemployment, child labor, and il-

literacy, to name a few. Every year, Independence Day is celebrated

with much fanfare in our school, with our principal unfurling the

tricolor and students singing patriotic songs. What steals the joy, however, is to witness a group of young children cleaning car windows at a red light, reading in the newspaper about terror threats, or classmates discussing rising suicide cases due to exam stress.

We do fondly remember and respect the sacrifices made by our freedom fighters. Each one of those who laid their life for the country is our icon, which puts the onus on the present governance and young Indians to protect and carve a nation that our leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and Lokmanya Tilak dreamed of. To achieve that, freedom from the ills that our nation faces today, is the first step.

Shambhavi Arora is a student of class XI in Delhi - NCR, India.



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Tricolor recipes for a vibrant Independence Day celebration

Celebrate Independence Day 2024 with a burst of flavors! Check out these delicious Tricolor recipes that beautifully capture the essence of India's flag.

Tricolor Pasta

Pasta is a traditional Italian cuisine and Tricolour Pasta is a colorful version of the conventional pasta tossed with red tomatoes and black olives. This creamy delight is a perfect birthday recipe and a date recipe as well that your loved one will love to binge on.

Ingredients

- 1 cup wholewheat pasta
- 1 medium tomato
- 1 tablespoon virgin olive oil
- 2 pinches salt
- 6 black olives
- 1/2 red peppers
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 pinch black pepper

Method

Cook the pasta in salted boiling water till done. Remove, refresh in cold water and set aside.

Whisk together the olive oil and lemon



(Image courtesy: itsakeeper.com)

juice. Dice the pepper and cut the olives into halves. Deseed and dice the tomatoes as well.

Mix together the vegetables with the pasta and pour the dressing over it. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Toss well and serve.

Dhokla

Ingredients:

- 1 cup suji / semolina
- 1/2 cup curd
- 1/4 cup carrot puree
- 1/4 cup spinach puree
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon oil to grease the dhokla pan

Method:

To make the spinach puree, take washed and chopped spinach leaves, add 2-3 tablespoon water and make a smooth puree using a grinder jar. Similarly wash, peel and chop the carrot and adding little water grind it to get a smooth puree.

In a mixing bowl take suji and add curd, salt and sugar and mix well. Keep the mixture covered for 15- 20 minutes. The suji will absorb all the moisture and swell.

Now divide the suji mix into 3 equal parts in bowls.

Add carrot puree to one bowl, spinach puree to the other and water to the third part and whisk well to get lump free batters in tricolors.

Grease an 8-inch cake pan or any other vessel which fits into your steamer. If you do not have a steamer you can use a large pressure cooker or a large sauce pan with a lid in which you can place a stand and the pan with batter. Add water to the steamer and heat it.

Now once our steamer is ready, add a thick pinch of baking soda to the green batter and mix well.

Place the greased pan in the steamer



(Image courtesy: nari.punjabkesari.in)

and add the green batter to it, spreading evenly. Cover the steamer and steam our first layer for 5 minutes.

Now add a pinch of baking soda to white batter, mix and pour it over the steamed green layer. Cover and cook for another 5 minutes.

Lastly add remaining baking soda in the orange batter, mix well and pour over the steamed white layer. Cover and allow the dhokla to steam for another 10 minutes.

Do a check test by inserting a toothpick in the center of the dhokla, if it comes out clean, our dhokla is ready. If not steam for another 2-3 minutes.

Remove the dhokla pan and allow it to cool for 30 minutes on a wire rack.

Run a knife through the edges of the dhokla pan and invert it over a board or plate. Tap the pan to release the dhokla.

Cut the tricolor dhokla in desired shape and serve as it is or with some ketchup or dip of your choice. You may temper the dhokla if you wish to.

You can also make this tricolor dhokla using idli batter if you like. The green layer can be made using coriander or mint leaves as well if you do not have spinach.

Tricolor Idli

Ingredients

- 3 cups raw short-grained rice or idli rice
- 1 cup urad dal
- 1 cup blanched and pureed spinach
- 1 cup boiled and pureed carrots
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Turmeric powder a pinch

Method:

Soak rice and dal separately for 6-8 hours and then grind until smooth. Add salt and let the batter ferment overnight

Boil water in a steamer and grease Idli molds

Divide the batter into three parts. Mix carrot & spinach puree in two parts separately to make orange & green color batter. Add a pinch of turmeric to the carrot batter



Place orange color batter in a round mold first from one side followed by white then green at the last making stripes of batter. Alternatively, you can make different colored idlis separately

Steam for 10-15 minutes or until done. Allow it to cool down a little and scoop out idlis from the mold.

Served warm with sambar and chutney

Tricolor Salad

Tricolor Salad can be served with meals or quick solutions for mid-time small meals. The recipe adds Green peas protein with vitamins and a dose of antioxidants from carrots and radishes.

Ingredients

- 0.5 cup grated orange Carrot
- 0.25 cup grated White Radish
- 0.5 cup Green Peas, steamed
- 0.5 teaspoon salt
- 0.25 teaspoon Black pepper
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

Method

In a small bowl, add salt, pepper, and lemon juice. Mix well and set aside



Add this dressing to carrot, radish, and steamed peas in separate bowls and mix well

Take a mason jar. Layer green peas at the bottom, followed by radish and carrot at the top

Healthy and tasty salad is ready to serve or you can carry it along with you for mid-time small hunger

Tricolor Pulao

Tricolor Pulao is a good complex carbs option with added benefits of fiber and other micronutrients.

Ingredients

- 1 cup rice (soak for 30-40 minutes)
- 1 tablespoon ghee
- 0.25 cup chopped Green beans
- 0.5 cup Green peas
- 2 cup spinach
- 2 green chilies
- 1 onion
- 0.25 teaspoon cumin
- 0.25 teaspoon saffron
- 0.25 cup grated pumpkin
- 1.5 teaspoon salt

Method

Boil rice in water and cook until it is firm and not mushy. Drain and let cool

Blanch spinach, green beans, and green peas. Then add to a mixing jar with green chilies and make a coarse paste. Soak saffron in warm water and set aside

In another pan, add ghee. Once hot, add cumin seeds and allow the seeds to splutter. Add chopped onion and sauté for 5-7 minutes or until translucent. Add the cooked rice and salt, then mix well. Make 3 equal parts and set



them aside For the green layer take a pan. Once warm, add the green paste and 1-2 tablespoon water and cook for a minute

Add cooked rice and mix until rice coat well so that the rice gets mixed into the green color

For the orange layer, heat a pan, and once hot add grated pumpkin. Sauté for 5-7 minutes or until cooked well. Add saffron along with water and cooked rice. Mix well to coat the color all over the rice. Cover and simmer for a few minutes. Switch off the flame and set it aside

Take a large bowl. Layer orange rice followed by white and green rice at the top. Press lightly and unmold it on a plate. Beautiful and yummy Tricolor rice is ready to serve with chilled raita or curry

(Images courtesy: healthifyme.com)

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India's achievements under PM Modi have surprised world: Amit Shah

Ahmedabad: Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that the government's achievements under Prime Minister Narendra Modi have "surprised the entire world", as he flagged off the 'Tiranga Yatra' here and called upon the youth to come forward and strike and make India a developed nation by 2047.

"The Har Ghar Tiranga campaign started by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji has become an expression of patriotism and resolve to create Viksit Bharat by 2047. He said that this campaign is infusing a new energy not only in Gujarat but also in the entire country," Shah was quoted as saying in a government statement.

Ahead of Independence Day, the minister underlined Prime



Home Minister Amit Shah hailed the PM's decisive moves against terrorism. (Photo courtesy: Amit Shah/Facebook)

Minister Narendra Modi's initiative to celebrate 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', saying three goals were behind it. "The first goal was to remind every child, youth, and citizen of the country about the entire history of the freedom struggle. The second goal was to inform all citizens, especially the younger generation, about the achievements made by the country in 75 years of independence."

"The third objective was to make 140 crore citizens of the country pledge to make India winner in every field in the world by working towards the development of the country for the next 25 years of 'Amrit Kaal' till the centenary of India's independence," Shah said.

Hailing the prime minister's

leadership, he recalled Modi's decisive moves against terrorism and Naxalism in the country. "India was afflicted with terrorism and Naxalism for decades, but Modi ji has given a befitting reply to the enemies of the country by conducting surgical strikes and air strikes. Along with this, Modi ji has protected 130 crore countrymen from COVID-19 by administering both doses of the vaccine free of cost using technology," he added.

"As per the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the youth of the country need to come forward especially to achieve the resolution of making the country fully developed by 2047," he added.

Kolkata doc's case: CM Mamata says CBI must complete probe by Aug 18



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee said she will lead a protest march on August 16.

(Photo courtesy: Mamata Banerjee/Facebook)

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee demanded the CBI to complete the investigation into the rape and murder of a junior doctor at the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata last week by

Sunday (August 18) and ensure that those found guilty are hanged by then.

"We are going to press for the hanging of the accused by Sunday. Our Kolkata Police have completed 90 per cent of the investigation. I am going to lead a protest march on August 16... I request all the mothers and sisters to join me," the Chief Minister said while addressing a public program at Hazra crossing in South Kolkata.

A couple of days after the body of the victim doctor was found in a seminar hall inside the hospital premises on August 9, the Chief Minister had set a deadline for the Kolkata Police to complete the investigation, failing which she said the case would be handed over to the CBI. However, before the said deadline, the Calcutta High Court handed over the probe to the central agency with immediate effect.

Political observers feel the deadline set by the Chief Minister for CBI is a clandestine attempt to build up the pressure on the central probe agency.

Earlier at a program in Behala, the Chief Minister threw her weight behind the city police, claiming that the Kolkata Police and the West Bengal Police are the best forces in the country.

Ram Lalla sculptor, family members denied US visa

New Delhi: The US Consulate in Chennai has denied visa to well-known sculptor Arun Yogiraj and his family members from Karnataka's Mysuru, IANS news agency reported. Yogiraj gained widespread attention and applause for sculpting Ram Lalla's idol for the newly-constructed Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

Planning a 20-day trip to the US, Yogiraj had applied for a visa to travel to the US to participate in a felicitation program organized by the Akka Foundation and also to attend various other programs at different locations.

The US Embassy officials, however, did not provide any specific reason for the visa refusal and submitted that Yogiraj had not fulfilled the necessary formalities, IANS said in its report.

"I had submitted the invitation card and other documents as required. Our family traveled to Chennai to obtain the visa as per the appointment fixed there. The authorities at the US Consulate asked some questions and later informed us that the visa was denied to me and my family," he said.

"They asked general questions and indicated that I had not met their requirements. I never imagined that obtaining a visa to visit the US would be so difficult. My children were excited because I had promised to take them along on this trip. They were disappointed, and I had to console them by promising another trip.

"I will not apply for the visa again this year... I will consider it next year. Had I received the visa, I would have had the opportunity to experience the



Arun Yogiraj, one of the most sought-after sculptors in India, was planning a 20-day trip to the US.

(Photo courtesy: Arun Yogiraj/Facebook)

art and architecture of the US and meet many artists. Personally, I am not too disappointed by this development," he concluded.

After the idol sculpted by him was placed in the sanctum sanctorum of the newly-built Ram temple, the Karnataka-based sculptor had said that he considers himself the "luckiest person" on Earth. "I feel I am the luckiest person on the Earth now. The blessing of my ancestors, my family members and Lord Ram has always been with me. Sometimes I feel like I am in a dream world," he had said.

Yogiraj, one of the most sought-after sculptors in the country, comes from a family with a rich legacy of the craft as his father and grandfather were also renowned sculptors. After completing his MBA, Yogiraj worked in a private company for a while but wanted to follow his ancestors' legacy.

Mob vandalizes RG Kar hospital, protest turns violent

Unidentified miscreants entered the premises of state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata shortly after midnight on August 15 and vandalized portions of the medical facility, where the body of a woman trainee doctor was found last week, police said.

The miscreants stormed into RG Kar Medical College and Hospital around 12.40 am and destroyed hospital property at rampant in the middle of the junior doctors' ongoing agita-

tion against the August 9 rape and murder of a post-graduate trainee doctor that the Central Bureau of Investigation started probing on August 14.

Spurred by the 'Reclaim the Night' campaign, which gained momentum through social media, the protests began at 11.55 pm, aligning with Independence Day celebrations, and spread across key areas in small towns and big cities, including several landmarks in Kolkata.



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Iran rejects European leaders' call to refrain from any retaliatory attacks

New York: Iran has rejected a call by three European countries asking it to refrain from any retaliatory attacks that would further escalate regional tensions.

Nasser Kanaani, spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, described these demands as "void of political logic, in complete contradiction to the principles and rules of international law, and excessive."

French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer issued a joint statement beginning this week endorsing the latest push by mediators Qatar, Egypt, and the United States to broker an agreement to end the Israel-Hamas war.

The leaders also called for the return of scores of hostages held by Hamas and the "unfettered" delivery of humanitarian aid and



Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani said the demands were 'void of political logic'. (Photo courtesy: X@IRIMFA_EN)

asked that Iran and its allies refrain from retaliation that would further escalate regional tensions after the late-July killing of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

State news agency IRNA reported that Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian had told Starmer that

Western countries' support for Israel had encouraged it to "continue atrocities" and threatened peace and security.

The Israeli military, according to BBC, stated that it was taking Iran's statements seriously. "We are prepared at peak readiness in offense and defense, and we will

Shia militias warn of 'unlimited' retaliation if US attacks Iran

Baghdad: An umbrella group of Iraqi Shia militias warned the US of "unlimited" retaliation if it attacks Iraq or Iran. The Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee (IRCC), representing the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, said this week that it would not be constrained by any restrictions if US forces target Iraqi personnel or use Iraqi airspace to strike Iran.

This threat comes amid heightened regional tensions,

with Iran and its allies pledging retaliation for the recent killings of Hamas Politburo Chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran and Hezbollah commander Fouad Shokor in Beirut, both occurring in late July, Xinhua news agency reported. In response to the rising threat, Washington said it is committed to defending Israel in the event of a major conflict and is sending "more troops and military hardware to the Middle East".

act according to the directives of the government," spokesman Rear

Admiral Daniel Hagari said at a briefing.

Japan PM Kishida to step down, won't seek re-election: Report

The PM's decision to step down comes at a time when the country faces significant challenges both domestically and internationally.

Tokyo: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has said he will not run in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) presidential election next month, according to media reports. While addressing a press conference here, Kishida said his decision not to join the race, a decision that will lead to him stepping down as premier, is "the first step to show

that the LDP will change" as quoted by Kyodo news agency report.

Kishida has been under scrutiny within the party for his handling of a political fundraising scandal involving some of its factions. The approval ratings for Kishida's Cabinet, launched in October 2021, have plunged to the 20 per cent range in the wake of the scandal.

Despite his unpopularity, Kishida had been keen to secure re-election in the leadership race. But calls have been growing within the LDP for him to resign amid fears over how the LDP would fare in the next general election under his leadership, political analysts said.

So far, former Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba, who is popular

among the public, has expressed his intention to run in the LDP presidential election. LDP Secretary General Toshimitu Motegi, Economic Security Minister Sanae Takaichi, former Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, and former Economic Security Minister Takayuki Kobayashi are also among those who may join the race.



PM Fumio Kishida has been under scrutiny for a political fundraising scandal. (Photo courtesy: Wikimedia Commons)

Thailand PM Thavisin dismissed over breach of ethics



The court said that PM Srettha Thavisin had violated the constitution.

(Photo courtesy: X@Thavisin)

Bangkok: Thailand's Constitutional Court has dismissed Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin from office over breach of ethics for appointing a former lawyer to his cabinet who had been jailed 16 years ago. The development comes exactly a week after the main opposition Move Forward Party was dissolved.

The judges voted 5-4 to oust Srettha after ruling that the Prime Minister had violated the constitution by appointing Pichit Chuenban as a minister in his

office. As many as 40 former Senators had petitioned the court, questioning Srettha's decision despite the country's constitution stipulating that ministers must be "of evident integrity" and their behavior must comply with ethical standards.

Srettha, a real estate mogul, entered the often shaky Thai political landscape only last year. In August 2023, he was elected as the Southeast Asian kingdom's new PM after winning a simple majority in a parliamentary vote, setting the stage for Pheu Thai Party's candidate to form the country's next government.

Local media reported that Deputy PM Phumtham Wechayachai is likely to be appointed as a caretaker PM till the country's Parliament is convened to vote for the next Prime Minister. On August 7, the same court dissolved the main opposition Move Forward Party, ruling its efforts to amend a law against defaming the kingdom's royal family violated the constitution.

Over 1,000 arrested in UK over violent rioting

London: More than 1,000 people have been arrested by the UK Police in connection with the riots involving violence, arson and looting as well as racist attacks that took place over the last two weeks in Britain, officials said this week. The riots, which took place after the killings of three young girls in the northern English town of Southport, began after the July 29 attack was wrongly blamed on a Muslim migrant based on online misinformation, Reuters reported.

Violence broke out in cities across England and also in Northern Ireland, but there have been fewer instances of unrest since last week after efforts to identify those involved were ramped up. Many have been swiftly jailed, with some receiving long sentences.

The National Police Chiefs' Council said in its latest update that 1,024 had been arrested and 575 charged across the UK.



Police have also charged over 500 people across the UK. (Photo courtesy: Wikimedia Commons)

Those arrested include a 69-year-old accused of vandalism in Liverpool and an 11-year-old boy in Belfast. A 13-year-old girl pleaded guilty to violent disorder at Basingstoke Magistrates' Court, prosecutors said, having been seen on July 31 punching and kicking the entrance to a hotel for asylum seekers, Reuters reported.

"This alarming incident will

have caused genuine fear amongst people who were being targeted by these thugs -- and it is particularly distressing to learn that such a young girl participated in this violent disorder," prosecutor Thomas Power said. The last time Britain witnessed widespread rioting was in 2011 when the fatal shooting of a Black man by police triggered several days of street violence.

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Pakistan arrests ex-ISI chief who went to Kabul after Taliban takeover

Faiz Hameed is accused of engaging in questionable activities after retirement. This makes him the third senior officer to face arrest under the current leadership in Pakistan.

Rawalpindi: In an unprecedented move by Pakistan's powerful military establishment, court martial proceedings have been initiated against the former Director General (DG) of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Lt General (ret'd) Faiz Hameed, for his alleged involvement in the Top City Housing Society case, coupled with violations of the Pakistan Army Act post his retirement.

According to a press release issued by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), an inquiry has been initiated by the Pakistan Army, which has taken Faiz Hameed into custody.

The ISPR maintains that the move complies with the orders of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in this case.

"Complying with the orders of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, a detailed court of inquiry has been



Faiz Hameed (inset) is known as being close to former PM Imran Khan. (Photos courtesy: Wikimedia Commons/X@ia_rajpoot)

undertaken by the Pakistan Army to ascertain the correctness of the complaint in the Top City Case against Lt. General (ret'd) Faiz Hameed," the ISPR release stated, adding, "consequently, appropriate disciplinary action has been initiated against Faiz Hameed under the provisions of the

Pakistan Army Act".

The ISPR also confirmed that while Faiz Hameed is going to be probed for 'misusing' his powers as DG ISI to assert influence in the Top City Housing Society case, multiple instances of violation of the Pakistan Army Act have also been found against the

Hameed's arrest 'internal issue' of Pak Army: Imran

Pakistan's jailed former premier Imran Khan termed the arrest of former ISI chief Faiz Hameed as an "internal issue" of the military and said that the army's action against the former general has nothing to do with

his party. Hameed served as the director general of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) from 2019 to 2021, when Imran was prime minister and was accused of meddling in political affairs at his behest.

former ISI chief. "In addition, multiple instances of violation of the Pakistan Army Act post-retirement have also been established. The process of Field General Court Martial has been initiated and Faiz Hameed has been taken into custody," read the ISPR release.

Faiz Hameed, who is known for being close to former Prime

Minister Imran Khan, has been under the spotlight since April 2024 when the Pakistan Army constituted a high-level inquiry committee to look into the allegations against him, which claimed that Hameed misused his authority as ISI DG in the Top City case. This is the first formal inquiry ordered and announced against Hameed by the Pakistan Army.

Afghan Taliban call for peace 3 years after US withdrawal



Security measures have been beefed up in Kabul for the celebration of the victory day. (Photo courtesy: X@TalibanUpdates)

Kabul: Afghan caretaker government's Acting Prime Minister Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund called for efforts to maintain peace and security in Afghanistan and to rebuild the war-torn central Asian country, a statement released by his office this week said.

The current opportunity provided by returning peace and security in Afghanistan should be used for strengthening the administration, good governance, stabilizing security, and rebuilding the country, Akhund stressed in the statement released on the eve of the celebration of the third anniversary of the US-led forces pulling out of Afghanistan.

Taliban forces seized Kabul on August 15, 2021, after the US-led forces withdrew from Afghanistan. That day, known as Asad 24 in the Persian calendar, has been declared by the Afghan administration as the victory day over US-led forces for the Afghan nation, and as a public holiday.

Security measures have been beefed

up in Kabul for the celebration of the victory day, with security personnel deployed in streets and sensitive areas. Streets and buildings in the capital have been decorated with white flags and slogans inscribed on the walls meaning "congratulation to freedom", or "Afghan nation defeated America".

Meanwhile, a total of 317 development projects worth over 3.9 million US dollars have been put into operation after completing construction in south Afghanistan's Helmand province, according to the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

The Taliban government, however, remains unrecognized by any other state, with several restrictions on girls and women in the country. The country is also experiencing one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with aid severely underfunded, thousands of Afghans forced back into Afghanistan from Pakistan, and thousands of others expecting to emigrate to Western countries still waiting.

Bangladesh's ex-PM Hasina issues 'first statement' after ouster

New Delhi/Dhaka: Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who is currently in India after the fall of her government following a mass uprising, has demanded an investigation into the killings, vandalism, and arson carried out in the name of agitation in her country. She also demanded that the culprits be identified and brought to justice, The Daily Star reported.

Sajeeb Wazed Joy, Hasina's son, posted her statement on his verified Facebook page on August 13. Hasina was compelled to step down on August 5 following the student protests, which saw more than 500 people killed.

In the statement, she said, "Since July, lots of lives have been lost in violence, arson in the name of protests. I express my condolences and prayers for the victims, including students, teachers, police, journalists, cultural activists and a pregnant policewoman, members of Awami League and its associate bodies, pedestrians and various professionals."

She conveyed sympathy to the bereaved families, The Daily Star reported. In her statement, Hasina recalled the massacre of August 15, 1975, when Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members were assassinated. Hasina, the eldest daughter of Bangabandhu urged all to observe the National Mourning Day on August 15 in a befitting manner by placing floral wreaths at Bangabandhu Bhaban and offering prayers.



Former PM Sheikh Hasina urged everyone in Bangladesh to observe August 15 as 'National Mourning Day'. (Photo : Wikimedia Commons)

Attacks on Hindus continue

Targeted attacks on Hindus continued in Bangladesh, which plunged into chaos on August 5 when Sheikh Hasina was forced to resign as Prime Minister and flee Dhaka. In the latest incident, the house of a Hindu family was torched in the Farabari Mandirpara village in Akcha union under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila on August 13, the Daily Star reported. Subrata Kumar Barman, chairman of Akcha Union Parishad, told the newspaper that unidentified individuals set fire to Kaleshwar Barman's house around 7:30 pm. Locals quickly responded and managed to control the fire, and the house's occupants were able to escape unharmed.

The Bangladesh Jatiya Hindu Mohajot (BJHM), a grand national alliance of 23 religious organizations in the country, said this week that as many as 278 Hindu families have faced massive violence and vandalism in 48 districts of the nation since August 5.

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- Mark Twain

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Kamala Harris ahead in 6 of 7 battleground states, tightens race against Trump: Report

Washington, DC: A series of polls have shown that Vice President Kamala Harris is surging ahead of former President Donald Trump in key battleground states.

According to a Cook Political Report survey, Harris holds an average 48% - 47% lead over Trump across seven battleground states, outperforming him in all but Georgia, where they are tied, and Nevada, where Trump has a slight edge. When third-party candidates are included, Harris's lead increases to 46% - 44%.

The Cook Political Report's swing state poll reveals that Harris has gained six points against Trump since May. In a one-on-one contest, Harris leads Trump 48% - 46% in Arizona, ties with him at 48% - 48% in Georgia, leads 49% - 46% in Michigan, holds a 48% - 47% edge in North Carolina, marginally leads 49% - 48% in Pennsylvania, and has a 49% - 46% advantage in Wisconsin. She only trails in Nevada with 45% - 48%.

When factoring in third-party candidates, Harris's standing shifts slightly. She leads Trump 46%-42% in Arizona, remains tied in Georgia at 46%-46%, maintains a 46%-44% lead in Michigan and North Carolina, increases her lead to 48% -43% in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, and falls further behind in Nevada with 42% -47%.

In a two-way matchup, Harris holds a 1.1-



Kamala Harris
(Image courtesy: whitehouse.gov)

point lead over Trump in the most recent national RealClearPolitics aggregate polls. Yet, this lead narrows to 0.8 points when third-party candidates are added.

The Cook Political Report's findings also spotlight Harris's success in North Carolina, a state often considered one of the most reliably Republican among battleground states. According to the most recent RealClearPolitics aggregate, Trump maintains his second-largest advantage in North Carolina with a 2.4-point lead, only trailing his 3.5-point lead in Nevada. Notably, Nevada has

not voted Republican in a presidential election since 2004.

Harris's overall performance has narrowed Trump's lead in the swing states by about six points since May. Back in May, the Cook Political Report's survey indicated that Trump led Biden by an average of three points across the same battleground states, either leading or tied with him in all seven.

The latest poll from Cook Political Report, conducted from July 26 to August 2, sampled 2,867 likely voters. It was conducted by GS Strategy Group, a Republican polling firm, and BSG, a Democratic polling firm.

Trump's campaign has anticipated a tightening of poll numbers after Harris was promoted to the top of the Democratic ticket last month.

Blinken wishes India on Independence Day, highlights strong US-India bond

Washington, DC: Predicting a bright future for the US-India strategic relations, Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said that the two countries share a deep bond, which is founded on their shared commitment to democracy, freedom, and human dignity.

Congratulating the people of India ahead of the country's Independence Day, Blinken said: "On this momentous day, we celebrate the rich and diverse history of the Indian people and the bright future of US-Indian relations."

"Our comprehensive global and strategic partnership is grounded in the deep bonds between our peoples, our economies, and built on the foundation of our shared commitment to democracy, freedom, and human dignity," Blinken said in a statement.

The US-India cooperation is expanding at a rapid pace as the two countries continue to work together to advance our shared vision of a free, open, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific, he said on Wednesday.

The US, India and several other world powers have been talking about the need to ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China's rising military assertiveness in the resource-rich region.



Antony Blinken
(Image courtesy: Wikimedia Commons)

The Indo-Pacific is a biogeographic region, comprising the Indian Ocean and the western and central Pacific Ocean, including the South China Sea. China claims nearly all of the South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam claim parts of it.

Blinken pointed out that from climate and clean energy to defense and space technologies, US-Indian bilateral cooperation is more wide-ranging and stronger than ever before.

"I wish all those celebrating today, in India, in the United States, and globally through the Indian diaspora, a joyous Independence Day," he said.

Trump speaks with Netanyahu over Gaza truce: Report



Donald Trump
(Image courtesy: Donald Trump/Facebook)

Washington, DC: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump spoke on the phone with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday and discussed the Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal, Axios reported, citing two US sources.

One source told Axios that Trump's call was intended to encourage Netanyahu to take the deal, but stressed he did not know if this was indeed what the former president told Netanyahu. The Trump campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Late last month, Netanyahu visited the US and met President Joe Biden, Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris and Republican former President Trump.

Egypt, the United States and Qatar have scheduled a new round of Gaza ceasefire negotiations for Thursday.

Biden laid out a three-phase ceasefire proposal in an address on May 31. Washington and regional mediators have since tried arranging the Gaza ceasefire-for-hostages deal but have run into repeated obstacles.

Columbia University President quits 4 months after Gaza war campus protests

New York: Columbia University President Minouche Shafik resigned on Wednesday, nearly four months after the Ivy League university's handling of campus protests over Israel's war in Gaza was criticized by pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian sides alike.

"It has also been a period of turmoil where it has been difficult to overcome divergent views across our community," Shafik said in an email to staff and students. "This period has taken a considerable toll on my family, as it has for others in our community."

Shafik said her departure "at this point would best enable Columbia to traverse the challenges ahead." She said she made the announcement so new leadership could be in place before the new term begins.

Katrina Armstrong, Columbia's executive vice president for health and biomedical services, will serve as the interim president, according to the university website.

In touch with India over Bangladesh political crisis: US State Department



US State Department Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel

(Image is screen grab from video tweeted by @StateDeputy Spox)

Washington: The United States is in touch with India and other countries in the region regarding the situation in Bangladesh and is seeking an end to the violence there, a State Department official has said.

"I'm not going to get into private diplomatic discussions but we continue to push for an end to violence in Bangladesh, accountability and for the respect for rule of law," US State Department Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel said at his daily news conference on Wednesday.

He was responding to a question regarding the communica-

tion between India and the US on the situation in Bangladesh following the collapse of the Sheikh Hasina government.

"We have been in touch with our Indian partners as well as other countries in the region to discuss recent events in Bangladesh," Patel said.

He also welcomed Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus' statement, calling for calm and an end to the recent violence. "We welcome the new government's focus on restoring security and protection of members of minority communities as well," Patel said.



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Tom Cruise sets the stage for Los Angeles Olympics

Los Angeles: Hollywood star Tom Cruise lent the Paris Olympics closing ceremony a Hollywood texture as he dove off the top of the Stade de France to mark the handover from the Paris Olympics to the Los Angeles Games in 2028.

After H.E.R. played the US national anthem, the actor jumped off the roof of the Stade de France, the country's biggest stadium, and landed on stage, reports Variety.

He was welcomed with deafening cheers and greeted by Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, who was handed the Olympic flag by Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo during the bash.

As per Variety, Tom then hopped onto a motorcycle with the flag in tow and rode out of the stadium to make the symbolic delivery to Los Angeles. As the Red Hot Chili Peppers' 'By the Way' played in the background, the actor rode down the Paris streets and drove



Tom Cruise lent the Paris Olympics closing ceremony a Hollywood texture. (Photos courtesy: X@Paris2024 and X@TomCruise)

into a plane.

In a pre-recorded segment, he then parachuted out of the aircraft, landing by the Hollywood sign. Once he touched down at the famous landmark, Cruise attached the five Olympic rings to it.

Tom has been a regular at these summer Olympics. He was on the ground for the opening ceremony on July 27 and attended a few competitions along with other stars like Steven Spielberg, Ariana Grande, Sarah Jessica Parker and



Matthew Broderick.

A day prior, on July 26, he was named a Knight of the Legion of Honor by France's Culture Minister Rachida Dati.

The Paris Olympics hosted almost all competitions at iconic

landmarks, from Place de la Concorde, Eiffel Tower, Chateau de Versailles to the Grand Palais. The opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics also took place outdoors for the first time in modern history. It ran along the Seine River and featured Lady Gaga and Celine Dion.

More than 70,000 spectators were present inside the stadium to watch 270 artists and performers in the closing ceremony.

To celebrate the Games, Thomas Jolly, artistic director of the Paris 2024 Games ceremonies, put together "Records", an exceptional show staged at the Stade de France to ensure that everyone can enjoy the party right up to the last second. It was a wonderful way to collectively celebrate the athletes who excelled through their sporting performances.

The IOC chief then declared the 2024 Games closed. "See you LA..."

USA pips China to claim top spot; India finishes 71st



Manu Bhaker, PR Sreejesh and Neeraj Chopra. India won six medals, including five bronze and a silver. (Photos courtesy: X@WeAreTeamIndia)



Japan, defying pre-Olympic predictions, finished third in the medal standings with 45 medals, including 20 gold. This result exceeded expectations, particularly given that Japan had finished with 27 gold medals at their home Olympics in Tokyo three years earlier.

India's performance, though not among the top ranks, was noteworthy, with the country finishing 71st with six medals, including five bronze and a silver. However, their tally could still increase, as wrestler Vinesh Phogat has appealed her disqualification in the women's 50 kg wrestling final. Phogat was disqualified for being 100 grams overweight during the weigh-in on the day of the final.

Pakistan made a significant mark as well, finishing 62nd, with their first Olympic gold medal in 44 years. Arshad Nadeem's victory in the men's javelin final was a historic moment for the nation.

A total of 117 Indian athletes participated across 16 sports at the Paris Games: archery, athletics, badminton, boxing, equestrian, golf, hockey, judo, rowing, sailing, shooting, swimming, wrestling, table tennis, and tennis.

Paris: The United States of America (USA) emerged victorious atop the medal table at the Paris Olympics, narrowly edging out arch-rivals China in a dramatic final day of competition. The race for supremacy came down to the last event of the Games, the women's basketball final, where the USA secured a nail-biting 67-66 victory over host nation France.

This triumph not only clinched the gold medal for the basketball team but also ensured that the USA maintained its streak of topping the Olympic medal table for the fourth consecutive Games.

The final tally saw the United States finish with 126 medals, including 40 gold, 44 silver, and 42 bronze. China, despite dominating in several key disciplines, finished

with 91 medals, also including 40 gold. The USA's superior overall medal count ultimately tipped the balance in their favor.

The competition between the two sporting powerhouses was intense throughout the Games. China had

taken the lead in the medal table, largely due to their dominance in pool events like diving and artistic swimming, as well as their traditional strengths in table tennis and weightlifting.

However, the Americans respond-

ed with a series of standout performances in track and field, securing 14 gold, 11 silver, and 9 bronze in athletics alone. The USA also continued to show its strength in the swimming pool, where they collected 28 medals, including eight golds.

Vinesh Phogat fights medal disqualification case in CAS

Paris: The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS)'s verdict in the case of wrestler Vinesh Phogat was delayed and the new deadline set by CAS for the verdict was August 16. The wrestler was disqualified from the 50kg freestyle wrestling gold medal match at the Paris Olympics 2024 for being 100 grams overweight. If the decision comes in

her favour, Vinesh can win a joint silver medal.

Vinesh has challenged the decision to be disqualified from the 50kg gold medal bout and has knocked on the CAS doors to be awarded a shared silver medal along with Yusneylis Guzman Lopez at the Paris Olympics.

The Sole Arbitrator Dr Annabelle Bennett AC SC

(Australia) heard all parties -- applicant Vinesh Phogat, the respondents United World Wrestling and the International Olympic Committee as well as the Indian Olympic Association as an interested party.

The panel has already heard parties, who were accorded an opportunity to file their detailed legal submissions before the

hearing and then present oral arguments.

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president, PT Usha, has said that IOA-appointed Chief Medical Officer Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala should not be held responsible for the disqualification of Phogat and it's the coach and support staff of the grappler that should take responsibility.

Exercise or extra fries? Study debunks brain's dilemma



The study focused on orexin, a relatively recently discovered messenger substance in the brain. (Photo courtesy: William Choquette, www.pexels.com)

London: Is your brain in a dilemma wondering if you should go for exercise or instead have those tasty extra fries? A study released by Swiss researchers may finally provide your answer.

Until now, science has had no idea what happens in our brain when we make this decision.

Researchers at ETH Zurich have uncovered a key factor in the brain's decision-making process when it comes to this particular decision. Scientists discovered that the chemical messenger orexin and its neurons may be transferable to humans, explaining why some resist temptations and maintain regular physical activity.

Researchers found that mice with a blocked orexin system preferred a milkshake over exercise, while those with an intact orexin system spent more time on the running wheel and less time at the milkshake bar.

Denis Burdakov, Professor of Neuroscience at ETH Zurich, explains the significance of these findings. He notes that while many people struggle to get enough exer-

cise, some manage to resist daily temptations and stay active.

Understanding what happens in the brain to facilitate this decision-making process is essential for developing new strategies to promote physical activity.

According to the World Health Organization, 80 per cent of adolescents and 27 per cent of adults do not get enough exercise, and obesity rates are rising alarmingly among both adults and children.

The study focused on orexin, a relatively recently discovered messenger substance in the brain. While other chemicals like serotonin and dopamine have long been known and studied, orexin's functions are only now being clarified. The researchers found that when mice were given a choice between running on a wheel and enjoying a strawberry-flavoured milkshake, the presence of an intact orexin system significantly influenced their preference for physical activity.

The next step for the researchers is to verify these results in humans, given that the brain functions involved are known to be practically the same in both species.

Suffering from high BP? Eating fruits and vegetables may help

New York: Fruits and vegetables, which are an under-prescribed treatment, have become a crucial part of hypertension treatment, new research said. Diets high in these foods have been shown to lower blood pressure, reduce cardiovascular risk, and improve kidney health due to their base-producing effects.

A new study in The American Journal of Medicine, presents findings from a five-year interventional randomized control trial.

Despite efforts to improve hypertension treatment with pharmacological strategies, hypertension-related chronic kidney disease and cardiovascular mortality are rising. Heart disease remains the leading cause of death for patients with chronic kidney disease.

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet, rich in fruits and vegetables, is recommended as the first-line treatment for primary hypertension. However, it is often under-prescribed and under-implemented, despite supporting data. Diets high in fruits and vegetables are associated with

lower blood pressure, reduced chronic kidney disease progression, and decreased cardiovascular disease risk and mortality.

"Our patient studies showed that an acid-producing diet (high in animal products) is harmful to kidneys, while a base-producing diet (high in fruits and vegetables) is beneficial. We hypothesized that fruits and vegetables are both kidney- and heart-healthy because they reduce dietary acid," said Donald E Wesson from Dell Medical School, The University of Texas.

The study involved hypertensive patients with macroalbuminuria -- a marker of chronic kidney disease and cardiovascular risk. Participants were divided into three groups: one adding 2-4 cups of fruits and vegetables to their daily diet, another taking sodium bicarbonate (NaHCO₃) tablets, and a control group receiving standard medical care.

Results showed that both fruits and vegetables and NaHCO₃ improved kidney health, but only fruits and vegetables reduced blood pressure and cardiovascular disease risk.



Fruits and vegetables reduced blood pressure and cardiovascular disease risk. (Photo courtesy: Vanessa Loring, www.pexels.com)

Rising cases of diabetes, BP fueling vascular diseases in India



The experts focused on early diagnosis, lifestyle modifications, and specialised care. (Photo courtesy: www.freepik.com)

New Delhi: Rising cases of diabetes and hypertension are driving vascular diseases that encompass a range of conditions affecting the circulatory system, including arteries, veins and lymph vessels in India, said health experts on World Vascular Day.

World Vascular Day is observed every year on August 6 and serves as a crucial reminder of the importance of vascular health.

The circulatory system includes arteries, veins, and capillaries, which transport blood throughout the body. When these blood vessels are compromised, it can lead to various

vascular health issues, from peripheral artery disease to venous conditions and blood clot disorders. The experts focused on early diagnosis, lifestyle modifications, and specialised care to address the growing burden of vascular diseases in India.

"Vascular diseases are on rising trends. This rise is noted because of the increasing prevalence of diabetes among the Indian population which directly affects your vascular system," Dr Shrikant Ghanwat, Consultant - Vascular Surgery - Jupiter Hospital, was quoted as saying in reports.

In India, around 40-50 per cent of all amputations are due to complications from vascular diseases, particularly diabetes.

This underscores the critical need for increased awareness and preventive measures to manage risk factors like high blood sugar, hypertension and high cholesterol.

Vascular diseases can also lead to stroke, seizures, mental retardation, heart failure, and kidney failure requiring dialysis. The doctors advised patients to maintain a healthy diet, engage in regular exercise and manage conditions like diabetes and hypertension.

Plant-based proteins offer major health advantages

Washington: New findings show that all plants contain essential amino acids, countering the common but mistaken belief that plants lack one or more amino acids, giving them major health advantages over animal-based proteins, a belief that has long been held but has been finally demolished.

"Plant-based proteins are associated with reduced mortality compared with animal proteins," says Dr Neal Barnard,

adjunct professor of medicine at the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Washington, D.C.

A major Harvard University study showed that when plant-based proteins are consumed instead of protein from beef, poultry, fish, dairy products, or eggs, mortality is reduced, as far as statistics are concerned.

Long-term, high protein-high meat diets may cause bone and calcium balance issues,

increased cancer risk, liver problems, and worsening of coronary artery disease, which can spiral into further serious conditions.

People drawing their nutrition from plant-based diets enjoy a reduced risk of diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and cancer. However, individuals on any diet should be mindful of their need for vitamin B12 and other essential nutrients, for the lack of vitamin B12 has its own severe consequences which affect the bone, hair, skin and nails etc.



However, individuals on any diet should be mindful of their need for vitamin B12. (Photo courtesy: www.freepik.com)



By Dr Prem Kumar Sharma

(Astrologer, Palmist, Numerologist & Vastu Consultant)

Panchkula India: +91-172- 256 2832, 257 2874

Delhi, India: +91-11- 47033152, 40532026

Email: psharma@premaastrologer.com, Url: <http://www.premastrologer.com>

Stars Foretell: August 17-23, 2024

ARIES: (March 21-April 20)



A favour done to someone is likely to be reciprocated. You will get all the support you need on the professional front. A good showing in something important on the academic front is likely to boost your morale and egg you on to do better. You will take all the steps to increase your friends' circle. Networking promises to help you on the social front. Those seeking love will find the week most promising. A family issue needs sorting.
Lucky No.: 1
Lucky Colour: White

TAURUS: (April 21-May 20)



Give some time to someone to improve his or her performance. Healthy options chosen by you are likely to bring you a step closer to total fitness on the health front. Distractions will be responsible for your not giving your best on the professional or academic front. Overspending threatens to get you into a tight situation on the monetary front, so be judicious with your money. Love life will cruise along fine. Travel only if you have to this week.
Lucky No.: 3
Lucky Colour: Rose

GEMINI: (May 21-June 21)



Your creative ideas will help in making your surroundings pleasing and aesthetic. Dark clouds hovering over your fate for some time now are likely to drift away, letting in the bright and positive sunshine in your life. You are likely to pick up the threads on the professional or academic front and resolve to give it your best. Plans to enhance wealth will succeed and increase your financial strength. Some favourable developments on the social front are foreseen.
Lucky No.: 6
Lucky Colour: Brown

CANCER: (June 22-July 22)



This is the right time to negotiate for a property you have been eyeing for long. You will be in the process of consolidating what you have gained on the academic front. Those nearing the deadline for a project at work may get an extension. You will need to remain at your helpful best on the social front just to retain a positive image. Efforts will be required to make a relationship click, but you will succeed.
Lucky No.: 22
Lucky Colour: Dark Grey

LEO: (July 23-August 23)



This is a good time to invest, so search for the best options. Your disinterest may be apparent in your performance on the academic front. You are likely to get ticked off for shoddy work on the professional front, so be careful in what you do. Keeping a promise on the romantic front is important, if you want your love life to sail smoothly. An ancestral property may come into dispute and may require legal advice.
Lucky No.: 11
Lucky Colour: Peach

VIRGO: (August 24-September 23)



You may have to set the pace at work for others to follow. Much workload is foreseen on the professional sphere, but you will manage everything admirably. You need to remain focused on the academic front. There is someone who is a source of irritation on the social front, so avoid him or her. You may feel frustrated by not having your complete say in a relationship, but things are set to improve. A trip may get cancelled.
Lucky No.: 17
Lucky Colour: Green

LIBRA: (September 24-October 23)



You may have to instill confidence in a family youngster for taking up something challenging. Someone you have an instant liking for may also begin to take interest in you, so keep your fingers crossed! You will be able to surmount all opposition at work and pave way for success. Victory will come with efforts, especially on the academic front. An extra source of income may start to fill up your coffers soon. Health remains satisfactory.
Lucky No.: 7
Lucky Colour: White

SCORPIO: (October 24-November 22)



You will need to be at your best on the professional front this week. Those preparing for something important are likely to gain from experienced people. Academic front looks satisfactory on the whole, but don't expect everything to go as per plans. An additional income that you are banking on may take some more time to come. Those in love will need to work on their relationship to make it even stronger. Remain positive to remain healthy.
Lucky No.: 6
Lucky Colour: Orange

SAGITTARIUS: (November 23-December 21)



A set routine may begin to appear monotonous and may drive you to do something exciting. Some struggle is foreseen for young administrators and managers in establishing themselves, but it will only be a temporary phase. Attracting someone from the opposite camp is possible on the romantic front. Travelling light will help you get more out of a vacation. Your cocktail circuit will afford you an opportunity of meeting important people. Health should not be neglected.
Lucky No.: 6
Lucky Colour: Red

CAPRICORN: (December 22-January 21)



This is a good time for meeting someone, who can be of immense help to you. You risk losing focus on the academic front. Focusing only on the essentials will be the key to complete the tasks. You can be at loggerheads with an associate or a colleague over a workplace issue. A bad investment is likely to haunt some, but little can be done about it now. Chance for an official trip is likely to materialise soon.
Lucky No.: 7
Lucky Colour: Maroon

AQUARIUS: (January 22-February 19)



Maintaining a relationship will be in your favour. You may get the chance to put your best foot forward week on the professional front. A delightful time can be expected by those calling on their near and dear ones. Your hard work and unwavering focus will help achieve academic goals. Good health and positivity is yours for the asking on the fitness front. Keeping a low profile on the romantic front that is likely to work in your favour.
Lucky No.: 4
Lucky Colour: White

PISCES: (February 20-March 20)



There is a distinct possibility of change of job or residence for some. Your sincerity and dedication on the work front is likely to get rewarded. Those eligible are likely to find a perfect match. A thrilling time is foreseen on the romantic front for those in love. Your initiative on the social front is likely to bring you into the limelight. Participating in an event will be fun this week. Efforts on the fitness front will bear fruit.
Lucky No.: 3
Lucky Colour: Dark Yellow

August 17, 2024

Ruled by number 8 and the planet Saturn, you are dynamic, practical, responsible, hardworking, authoritative and highly disciplined. You are highly innovative and have an in built talent to impress others, but at times you need to control your tendency to behave impatient and erratic at times.

A very promising and favourable period starts this year. Investors who speculate in the stock market will benefit financially. This is also a good time to invest in property. Children will be supportive and bring in some happy news later in the year. Pilgrimage or a long journey would be high on your cards. Those involved in art and other creative profession should expect recognition and monetary gains. Sudden help from some near one or a friend will bring a major boost to your professional career. September, November, March and June will prove to be significant.

August 18, 2024

Ruled by number 9 and the planet Mars. You are dignified, sensitive, courageous, confident and diplomatic person. For you your duties and responsibilities take precedence over everything else, but you need to check your tendency to behave stubborn and jealous at times. This period is good for you to take important decision. You shall gather knowledge, information and make new and long-lasting contacts. You shall leave no stone unturned to achieve your

ANNUAL PREDICTIONS: FOR THOSE BORN IN THIS WEEK

desired goals. Some exhilarating news from your children would boost up your spirits later in the year. Businessmen will expand their ventures into new and more profitable avenues. Investment in stocks would bring spectacular results. Health would definitely need more attention. Meditation and Yoga should be practiced for spiritual as well as physical gains. August, October and April will be eventful.

August 19, 2024

Ruled by number 1 and the Sun. You are active, energetic, authoritative, brilliant, systematic and a talented person. You are simple and very helpful, but you need to control your tendency to behave impatient and short-tempered at times.

This year you will see an improvement in your financial position, but there will be an increase in your expenses as well. Put your efforts on projects that promise long term gains without wasting much time on small problems. Only selective investment will be rewarding and you should avoid speculation on all fronts. Employment opportunities for some of you. Romance will be pleasant and will add a spice to your life. Arrival of guests and relatives during this period will be plenty, who will bring you gifts in cash and kind. The months of September, February and April will

be highly significant.

August 20, 2024

Ruled by number 2 and the Moon. You are imaginative, smart, trustworthy, generous and authoritative. You always welcome new ideas and thoughts, but you need to check your tendency to behave spendthrift and dominating at times.

This year you can look forward to major changes in your professional career. A long due transfer or a promotion can be expected towards the middle of the year. Those undertaking a foreign trip in the second half of the year will have a highly pleasurable and a very exciting journey. Do not spend lavishly on luxuries. Despite few initial problems earlier in the year, your financial position will become much better as new moneymaking projects will be undertaken. Spiritual gains for some later in the year. Financial difficulties and health problems will mar peaceful atmosphere at home. The month of August, December, March and June will be highly significant.

August 21, 2024

Ruled by number 3 and the planet Jupiter, you are intelligent, dignified, jovial, generous and an optimistic person. You have good command over your work and people look up to you for advice and support, but you need to check your

tendency to behave selfish and moody at times. This year you will complete many of your pending jobs in hand. New money making opportunities will be highly promising, but will require you to give in your best. Relation with your spouse during this period will be cordial and on an even footing. Children will bring you good news and you will be proud of their achievements. Romantic alliances will prosper and strengthen. Speculations however will not be beneficial, therefore strictly not recommended. Investment in a house or land will bring you long term benefits. The months of July, November, February and May will be important.

August 22, 2024

Ruled by number 4 and the planet Uranus, you are energetic, methodical, systematic and possess an attractive personality. You are good at everything you do, which in return brings lots of appreciation and rewards for you. But you need to control over your tendency to behave spendthrift, dominating and vindictive at times.

This year you will feel more secure with your prevailing job and your monetary position will also improve. Money transaction however should be made carefully. Some losses due to speculation or hasty decision during this period cannot be ruled out. Businessmen will sign new and important con-

tracts. Overseas ventures will be highly lucrative. This might not be the perfect year for matters relating to your heart and forming a matrimonial alliance. The latter half of the year will see you undertake a pilgrimage, which will bring you mental comfort and peace. The months of October, December, January and April will be highly result oriented.

August 23, 2024

Ruled by number 5 and the planet Mercury. You are highly intelligent, diplomatic, highly business oriented, accommodating, god fearing and kind hearted person. You are highly social and helpful, but you need to check your tendency to behave jealous, self-centered and destructive at times.

The coming year will promise many new opportunities for growth. Your acumen in business will really do wonders, but you need to plan your budget well in advance and it will be wise not to go beyond it. Investment made in the past will bear fruits, making your financial position much comfortable. Property/legal disputes will settle to your satisfaction. Some exhilarating news from your children will boost up your spirits. Travel and journey, most likely overseas for some will ensure pleasure and excitement. Health definitely needs more attention. Meditation and Yoga should be practiced for spiritual gains as well as physical gains. The months of July, October, January and March will be eventful.



THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

Śri Mahā Vallabha Ganapati Devasthānam, NY



गणाधीशं गणेशानं गणेश्वरं उमासुतम् ।
महा वल्लभगणपतिं वन्दे महाभय निवारणम् ॥

ganādhiṣam ganeśānam ganeśvaram umāsutam ।
mahā vallabhaganapatim vande mahābhaya nivāraṇam ॥

The great fear within us would get easily released, if one respectfully worships Śri Mahā Vallabha Ganapati, the leader of all groups of devās, head of all forces, God of luck and wisdom, naturally supreme, formed by goddess Pārvati.

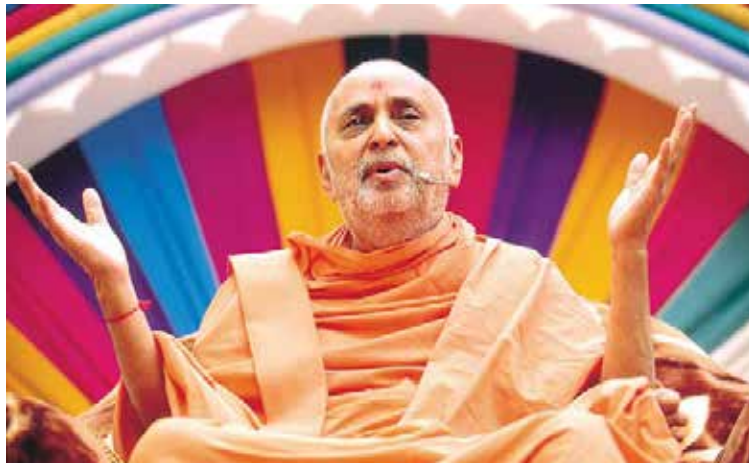
**Our warmest greetings and prayers for peace and prosperity
to "BHARAT" on this great occasion of the 77th Anniversary
of Independence.**

Jai Hind!



Remembering Pramukh Swami Maharaj

Pramukh Swami Maharaj passed away eight years ago on August 13, 2016. He was a peaceful, humble, and spiritual personality—a rare soul who lived selflessly for others while maintaining a constant connection with God. Revered as one of the most influential spiritual leaders of our time, he was a staunch advocate for world peace. Pramukh Swami Maharaj lived by his maxim, 'In the joy of others lies our own,' and dedicated his life to selfless service for the spiritual and social upliftment of society. Pramukh Swami Maharaj inspired countless aspirants, and for the betterment of humankind, he has visited over 17,000 villages, towns, and cities. He uplifted and inspired spirituality in the lives of numerous people, including myself. Many aspirants experienced the bliss of God in his presence. Many aspirants reached the highest spiritual state; today, many others continue to tread this path. As I write this, his love, affection, simplicity, humility, and



Pramukh Swami Maharaj

(Image provided by BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha)

guidance come to my mind.

Pramukh Swami Maharaj spoke little, but whenever he did so, his simple words conveyed the wisdom of eternal truth and had the divinity that you just felt like following whatever he said, I guess a reflection of the Supreme Divinity within him. I felt as if God spoke through him. His thoughtful and meaningful words brought peace to even the most disturbed. His

words removed impurities, brought joy, inspired greatness, lifted the gloom, gave direction, removed ego and imbued the bliss of God. Pramukh Swami Maharaj's words of wisdom provided inspirational guidance on dharma, gnan, bhakti, family values, nurturing children, duty of citizens, appropriate speech and many other essential aspects of daily life. Let us learn some of his

teachings:

- ▶ True life is about living for the good of others and for God.
- ▶ Doing Gharsabha (short family assembly, done weekly or daily) will bring love, harmony, pass on our culture and sanskars to the next generation and keep the family together.
- ▶ In times of difficulty, take the refuge of God and be in the company of the Guru.
- ▶ The means to solve misery and pain in life is to do God's bhajan and offer Him prayers.
- ▶ By giving up bad company (kusang) and doing daily satsang (nitya satsang) transforms one's inner self.
- ▶ Reading good books enables one to keep the mind clean.
- ▶ Kusang is that which distances you from God and moral behavior.
- ▶ The darshan of a true Sadhu dissolves one's sins of countless births.
- ▶ Earn what one requires; however, greed invites misery and pain.

▶ Happiness and peace lie in seeing God in all.

- ▶ By going to the mandir, one's mundane burdens are lightened, and the mind gets rest.
- ▶ Dharma is that which spreads love for one another.
- ▶ If one does not have values in life then it won't take long to lose one's wealth.
- ▶ Eating a dry millet bread earned honestly brings peace, instead of earning abundantly through dishonest means.
- ▶ Character is the foundation, if it is kept firm and intact the monument of life built upon it will be unshakeable. If character is lost, the monument will soon tumble. Keep all thoughts and actions pure.
- ▶ Satsang is the soap that cleanses the mind.
- ▶ If we devote ourselves to God the trash within us will leave.
- ▶ Centre God in all your activities. Serve society but keep God before you. Never forget God.

Lenin Joshi

BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha

Meditation and human unity



By Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj

The benefits of meditation are manifold. Research shows that meditation enhances our physical and mental well-being; it reduces stress-related illnesses, strengthens our mental capabilities, and improves our relationships. The most important aspect of meditation, however, is its impact on our spiritual health.

Through connecting our soul with the inner Light and Sound of God, meditation nurtures our soul, and brings calm, love and peace into our lives. As a result, we become a source of tranquility and inspiration for those around us.

As we journey within through meditation, we realize that God is all Light. We realize that as soul we are also a ray of the same divine Light. We begin to see that the same Light of God which is within us is also in all

other beings in creation.

We see the Light of God in all people. Divisions which separate us break down when we reach this state. We see for ourselves that we are all children of the one Creator, and, we develop love for each other. We no longer hurt others either in thought, word, or deed. Rather, we seek to help each

other.

Our love expands from our family to our neighbors, to our community, to our country, and then to all humanity. Meditation has the power to bring us closer together at the level of the soul, and help us comprehend the universal oneness of all creation.

Thus, meditation also helps to bring about

human unity on this planet. If we devote time to meditation for even a small part of each day, we will be helping ourselves reduce our stress, experience inner bliss, and bring about inner peace. Then it will not be long before we bring about unity and love between all souls. This will bring about the heaven on earth for which we all pray.

IF EACH OF US CAN REALIZE THAT THERE IS UNITY IN ALL LIFE,
THEN PEACE WILL DEFINITELY COME TO OUR PLANET.



Every soul will feel a closeness and love for every other soul.

-SANT RAJINDER SINGH JI MAHARAJ



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