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Issue: 166

Federation of Indian Associations NY-NJ-CT-NE. 501(C)3. The Largest Non-Profit Grassroot Umbrella Organization in the Eight-states of NY-NJ-CT-NE



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Featured by 40+ media platforms,
Dance Pe Chance 2026
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Sam Joshi Leads
Launch of Free Hot Meal
Program at Middlesex
College



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Oncologist Kashyap
Patel to receive
prestigious Hind
Rattan honor



Mahendra Patel Escalates Walmart Ordeal with Federal Lawsuit

Continued on page 04

SAVE THE DATE



THE FEDERATION OF INDIAN ASSOCIATIONS NY-NJ-CT-NE
&
THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA, NEW YORK

PRESENTS

8TH EDITION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



FRIDAY,
MARCH 6TH,
2026



6:00 pm
to 8:30 pm

Consulate General of India - New York
3 East 64th Street, New York, NY 10065

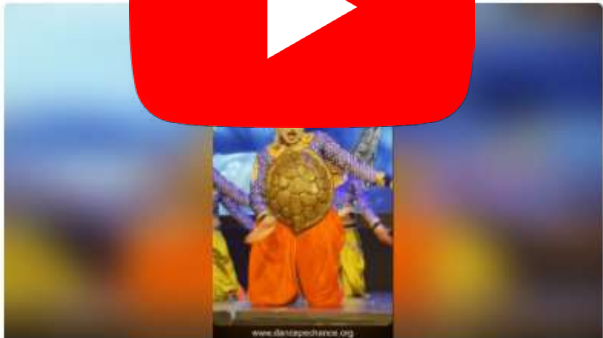
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Featured by 40+ media platforms, Dance Pe Chance 2026 crossed 1 million views

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The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) NY NJ CT NE is one of the oldest and largest non-profit grass-r...[More](#)
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2.7K 132.5K 1.2K 1.7K 0



9 days ago Video
From the electrifying opener and di...
20 2.5K 93 13 0



Georgia Engineer Seeks Justice After False Arrest Upends Life

Mahendra Patel, a 57-year-old engineer from Acworth, Georgia, has filed a federal civil rights lawsuit in Atlanta's U.S. District Court, targeting the mother who accused him of attempted kidnapping, local police, and Cobb County prosecutors. The action, lodged on February 9, follows the dismissal of all charges last August after Walmart surveillance footage exonerated him, revealing a brief, innocent interaction while he shopped for Tylenol.

Patel endured 47 harrowing days in Cobb County Jail without bond, facing threats and isolation that shattered his family and business. He alleges authorities ignored clear video evidence showing no

force or intent to harm, pressing felony counts of kidnapping attempt, as-

sault, and battery despite exculpatory proof. Named defendants include accuser Caroline Miller, District Attorney Sonya Allen, the city of Acworth, a lead detective, and a DA investigator.

His legal team at Milberg demands compensatory and punitive damages for lost wages, emotional trauma, and reputational harm, underscoring a critical need for accountability in rushed prosecutions. Patel, who rebuilt his life post prior incarceration, calls the episode a nightmare but stands resolute: "A simple trip to Walmart turned into the biggest headache of my life." As this case unfolds, it spotlights protections for everyday citizens caught in investigative misfires, affirming the justice system's capacity for correction.



Source: CNN

Mahendra "Mick" Patel stands outside a Walmart store in Kennesaw, Georgia

Edison's Chand Raat Mela Set to Spotlight Again as Regional South Asian Hub

Eid shopping, late-night culture and small-business energy converge in New Jersey's "Little India"

Edison, New Jersey is preparing for one of its marquee South Asian cultural nights as the Chand Raat Mela 2026 returns to the Moghul Ballroom on Oak Tree Road, reinforcing the corridor's status as a key Indian American hub for the New York metropolitan area. Organized by Ilyas Quraishi, the mela will be held on Thursday, March 19, 2026, from 6 p.m. to midnight, with live qawwali, henna, shopping booths, family programming, and raffle prizes that include an Apple Watch, all designed to draw families from New Jersey, New York City, and beyond.

The mela is paired with an Eid Bazaar series at the same venue on Saturdays, February 21, February 28, and March 7, offering noon to 7 p.m. shopping with free entry and parking, giving Indian and Pakistani American families a one-stop marketplace for Eid apparel, jewelry, and gifts while supporting South Asian

Ilyas Quraishi presents Find us on [Facebook](#)

CHAND RAAT MELA

چاند رات میلہ

NRS PAY

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026

6 PM to Midnight

MOGHUL BALLROOM
1655 OAK TREE ROAD, EDISON, NJ 08820

Shopping, Mehndi, Food, Entertainment

BOOK YOUR BOOTH AND SPONSORS
CALL: 201-450-2818

RAFFLE

Enter to Win APPLE WATCH

And Lot More..

ENTER A CHANCE TO WIN APPLE WATCH AND LOT MORE
NO PURCHASE NECESSARY

Qawwali Night

Source: Facebook (@ChandRaatMelaNJ)

small businesses clustered along Oak Tree Road. For elected officials and civic leaders tracking suburban cultural infrastructure, Edison's model illustrates how ethnic commercial strips can function as soft-power bridges, drawing diverse visitors to "Little India" for food, retail, and festival experiences that are increasingly part of the broader American story.

With the Consulate General of India in New York actively highlighting community outreach and cultural programming in its public messaging, events like Chand Raat Mela offer natural touch points for future consular engagement, public diplomacy, and economic promotion in the greater New York region.

Venue: Moghul Ballroom 1655 Oak Tree Rd, Edison, NJ 08820
Time: 12 Noon – 7 PM

FREE Parking | FREE Entry



Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India



APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED

**KNOW INDIA PROGRAMME
(KIP) - 88th EDITION**

IMPORTANT DATES



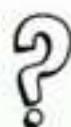
PROGRAMME DURATION

8th March 2026 to 27th March 2026



LAST DATE TO APPLY

20th February 2026



WHO CAN APPLY?

Persons of India Origin (PIOs)

Age 21-35 years

Passionate About India

Committed to contribute to Viksit Bharat



TO APPLY

**Contact your nearest Indian Embassy/
High Commission/ Consulate**



Diaspora India Connect



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Sam Joshi Leads Launch of Free Hot Meal Program at Middlesex College

Indian-American Partners Fuel Campus Nutrition Initiative in New Jersey

Middlesex College in Edison, New Jersey, has launched a free weekly hot meal program to combat food insecurity among its students, partnering with Indian-American organizations World Food Movement, Radha Gopinath Mandir, and India Heritage Foundation. Starting this month, the initiative delivers nutritious vegetarian meals every Thursday at noon in the Student Activities Center, aiming to serve around 100 students per week. Volunteers from the temple and foundation prepare the culturally inclusive dishes, addressing economic pressures

that affect one in three New Jersey college students.

The program kicked off with a high-profile event featuring Edison Mayor Sam Joshi, of Indian descent,

and Middlesex College President Mark McCormick, who joined organizers in serving meals to a line of grateful students. This builds on the college's longstanding Community Resource Hub and Food Pantry, bolstered by a state Hunger-Free Campus Act grant last year, and aligns with World Food Movement's ambitious goal of distributing one million meals nationwide by 2030.

The effort highlights community-driven solutions in the tri-state area. Edison's vibrant Indian population, home to Mayor Joshi, underscores how such programs foster student success and well-being amid rising campus hunger challenges documented in national surveys.



Source: The India Observer

Edison Mayor joins college leaders and community partners in distributing hot meals to students during the launch of a new weekly food assistance program at Middlesex College

Maine Healthcare Leaders Rally Behind Dr. Nirav Shah's Gubernatorial Bid

Dozens of physicians, nurses and experts endorse Democrat with proven public health record ahead of June primaries

Dr. Nirav Shah, a physician and former top official at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, secured endorsements from dozens of Maine healthcare workers this week. The group, which includes doctors, nurses, paramedics and public health specialists from rural and underserved areas, praised Shah's deep understanding of the state's strained medical system.

The announcement came on February 12 as Shah campaigns for the Democratic nomination in the June 9 primaries, facing five other contenders. Supporters like Dr. Garrett Fontaine, who has worked in free clinics and migrant health programs, highlighted Shah's commitment to accessible care. "Dr. Shah has dedicated his career to making health care more accessible and more humane," Fontaine said. Shah's resume resonates strongly

with Indian-American professionals tracking Northeast politics. Raised in rural Wisconsin by Indian immigrant parents, he led Maine's CDC during COVID-19, securing protective gear early and orchestrating a top-ranked vaccine rollout that kept deaths low nationwide. President Biden later tapped him as CDC principal deputy director before his return to Colby College faculty.

Earlier backing from physician political action committees and the pro-science 314 Action Fund underscores momentum in health circles. Shah vows to cap insurance costs, bolster rural hospitals and expand maternal health services as governor. For New York leaders like governors and mayors with ties to Maine's Indian-American network, Shah's rise signals growing influence of public health experts in state leadership.



Source: The India Observer

Maine Governor Nirav Shah

Youth-Led Lions Club Launches on Long Island with \$100K Boost

MindSpark Chapter Empowers Next Generation for Community Service

A new youth-focused chapter of Lions Clubs International, the Long Island MindSpark Lions Club, officially launched this week at a Charter Night event in Glen Cove, drawing Lions district leaders, families, and young innovators. Club President Dr. Krishna Maddipatla announced a \$100,000 commitment from the Maddipatla Foundation to fuel initiatives in 2026 and 2027, with plans to match additional member contributions, underscoring a bold investment in youth leadership. The gathering featured ceremonial highlights, including officer installations by District Governor Jeanne Mulry and keynote addresses from Past In-

ternational President Al Brandel and Padma Bhushan awardee Dr. Nori, who praised the shift toward young people as active change-makers rather than mere participants.

This launch aligns with Lions Clubs' longstanding emphasis on youth programs, from scholarships to mentorship, now amplified by MindSpark's focus on hackathons, hunger relief,

and educational outreach in an inclusive model open to all backgrounds. For Indian-American families on Long Island and leaders in New York, the chapter offers fresh avenues for the next generation to tackle local challenges while building skills in innovation and service, backed by prominent supporters like Past District Governor Sue Piccolo. Founding officers, including Secretary Kiran Parvathala and Treasurer Karthik Maniam, signal strong community roots poised to strengthen civic engagement across the region. Early buzz on social media highlights the event's energy, positioning MindSpark as a catalyst for dynamic youth-driven impact.



Members and leaders gather, marking the official launch of the youth-focused service organization.

Seattle Approves Record \$29M Settlement in Jaahnavi Kandula Case

City Acknowledges Tragedy of Indian Student's Death, Offering Closure to Grieving Family

The city of Seattle has finalized a \$29 million settlement with the family of Jaahnavi Kandula, a 23-year-old graduate student from India killed in January 2023 by a speeding police vehicle. Officer Kevin Dave struck Kandula while driving 74 mph in a 25 mph zone, responding to a drug overdose call, an incident that ignited national outrage after bodycam footage revealed another officer mocking her death by saying it had "limited value." Filed in King County Superior Court, the agreement resolves a \$110 million wrongful death lawsuit, with about \$20 million covered by city insurance.

Seattle City Attorney Er-

ika Evans described Kandula's death as heartbreaking, stressing that her life mattered deeply to family, friends, and the community. The payout ranks among the largest in city history, signaling accountability amid scrutiny of

police practices. Kandula, pursuing a master's in information systems at Northeastern University, hailed from Andhra Pradesh, where her parents continue to mourn.

This underscores the value placed on lives in U.S. legal systems and bolsters calls for enhanced pedestrian safety and officer training nationwide. No recent statements emerged from the Consulate General of India in New York, though earlier consular efforts in San Francisco pressed for justice. Premium outlets like the Associated Press and New York Times frame it as a pivotal step toward reform.



Source: acrs.



Jaahnavi Kandula

HER STARTUP, OUR MISSION

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Our Diaspora Newsletter is giving **WOMEN OWNED STARTUP** a **FREE** spotlight to support and celebrate you.
Your story deserves more than staying hidden

THE FORTNIGHT THAT WAS

Republicans pick Indian American lawyer to run for high-profile New York attorney general

Saritha Komatireddy Emerges as Formidable Challenger to Incumbent Letitia James

New York Republicans have selected Saritha Komatireddy, a distinguished former federal prosecutor, as their nominee for attorney general, marking a pivotal moment in the 2026 state-wide elections. At the party's convention on February 10 in Garden City, Long Island, Komatireddy clinched 86.3 percent of the delegate vote, decisively defeating rival Khurram Dara.

With Harvard degrees and a clerkship under then-Judge Brett Kavanaugh, Komatireddy built a storied career tackling terrorism, cybercrime, and transnational syndicates, including Al Qaeda and Mexican cartels. Once nominated by President Trump for a federal judgeship, she now



Source: Times of India

Saritha Komatireddy

teaches at Columbia Law School and vows to restore public safety in a state plagued by rising concerns. "New Yorkers are tired of seeing criminals released over and over again while families feel unsafe," she declared, pledging to prioritize law enforcement over politicized pursuits.

Facing incumbent Letitia James, a prominent Democrat, Komatireddy positions her campaign on accountability and trust in the high-profile office. This race underscores New York's competitive political landscape, as Republicans aim to challenge Democratic dominance amid debates on crime and affordability. Her nomination highlights the rising influence of accomplished professionals in state leadership.

UN Event Spotlights Tech for Hindi Learning Amid Global Push

India Urges Digital Tools to Boost Hindi Education for Diaspora at World Hindi Diwas

India's Minister of State for Women and Child Development Savitri Thakur called for new educational technologies to simplify Hindi learning for the Indian diaspora during a World Hindi Diwas commemoration at United Nations headquarters in New York on February 2, 2026. Organized by India's Permanent Mission to the UN, the third annual event drew diplomats from Nepal, Mauritius, and Guyana, alongside UN officials and Hindi scholars. Deputy Permanent Representative Yojna Patel highlighted India's \$8 million contribution to pro-

mote Hindi, including a renewed five-year Hindi@UN project that reaches millions via social media, newsletters, and a dedicated news website with 346,000 views from 193,000 followers,

mostly young adults aged 18 to 34.

The gathering underscored Hindi's cultural anchor in Caribbean nations and Nepal, where it thrives in schools and preserves heritage. Speakers praised Bollywood's role in spreading the language to regions like Russia, Africa, and Latin America, while noting courses at top U.S. universities such as Harvard and Columbia. For leaders, this aligns with local celebrations by the Consulate General of India, fostering community ties through language amid growing U.S.-India cultural exchanges.



Source: PMI

India's Permanent Mission to UN in New York commemorates World Hindi Day



Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America celebrates **Maha Shivratri**



Date: 02-21-2026

Bharat Sevashram Sangha, 3490 Rt. 27, Kendall Park, NJ 08824

3pm - 5pm followed by Mahaprasad/Light dinner

Shiv rudrabhishek will be performed by kids and families under the guidance of trained pujari. Puja samagri and shivlingam will be provided by VHPA team or if you want you can bring your own shivlingam. 🙏

Register / Scan:

<https://forms.gle/cyf5PUHbT4ZBmJSx5>



Sanjay: 6462281002

Amit: 6098656456

Archana: 7323721911



COMMUNITY NEWS

Maryland Lt. Gov. Aruna Miller Hosts Historic Welcome for Buddhist Monks' Peace Walk Finale

12,000 Crowd Cheers 2,300-Mile Journey in Annapolis, Symbolizing Unity and Mindfulness

Maryland Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, the state's highest-ranking Indian-American official, welcomed nearly two dozen Buddhist monks to the State House on February 12, marking the culmination of their grueling 2,300-mile "Walk for Peace" from Fort Worth, Texas. More than 12,000 residents lined the streets from Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium, creating a sea of supporters for the pilgrims, who traveled through 10 states with volunteers and their dog Aloka.

The event, the first visit by the

monks to a First Family's official residence, underscored Annapolis's legacy as America's original peacetime capital. Miller escorted the group into legislative chambers for resolutions honoring their Theravada Buddhist-inspired mission of nonviolence and loving-kindness, launched October 26, 2025, amid national calls for mindfulness. They joined discussions with the Council for Interfaith Outreach, which Miller chairs, highlighting interfaith bonds vital to community strength.

Governor Wes Moore and First Lady Dawn Moore hosted a private

lunch at Government House, presenting Maryland flag pins and praising the walk as "a profound act of faith in motion." Lead monk Venerable Bhikhu Paññākāra noted the journey's transformation, distributing hundreds of thousands of peace bracelets after starting with just 1,000.

Miller's role spotlights South Asian contributions to U.S. public service and interfaith harmony, fostering bridges between American values and global peace efforts. The warm reception, covered widely in outlets akin to NRI Pulse, reinforces Maryland's inclusive ethos.



Source: Maryland.gov

Virginia's Durga Temple Draws Thousands for Vibrant Maha Shivratri Festivities

Devotees Pack Fairfax Station Site for All-Day Spiritual Observance

The Durga Temple of Virginia in Fairfax Station hosted a grand Maha Shivratri celebration on February 15, drawing huge crowds of devotees for rituals honoring Lord Shiva. The temple opened from 7 a.m. to midnight, featuring Shiv bhajans by the Anu Pajjur Group, evening aartis, and prahara pujas culminating in a sampurna aarti past 10:30 p.m.

This annual event underscores the temple's role as a key spiritual hub for the Hindu community in the Washington, D.C., metro area, blending traditional chants like Rudrabhishekam with live streaming on YouTube for broader reach. Sponsorship



options, including Shiva Puja Thali at \$31 and Prahara Puja Thali at \$151, supported the proceedings via Zelle or checks.

Maha Shivratri, marking the triumph of light over darkness, aligns with a natural energy surge in the northern hemisphere, fostering enlightenment through vigils and meditation. The Fairfax Station gathering reflects growing Hindu cultural vibrancy across U.S. suburbs, with parking updates and detailed programs ensuring smooth participation. No recent updates from the Consulate General of India in New York highlighted the event, though similar observances resonate in regional diaspora networks.

New Jersey Leader Sujit Singh Honored for Disability Advocacy

Congressional hopeful receives temple recognition amid rising political profile

Sujit Singh, a prominent Indian-American community leader and Democratic candidate for New Jersey's 12th Congressional District, was honored at the Hindu American Temple and Cultural Center in Morganville, New Jersey, known widely as the Shri Krishna Temple. The nonprofit institution, founded in 1988, serves as a key spiritual hub for local communities, where Singh was celebrated for over a decade of service aiding more than 600 residents with disabilities and their families. His efforts emphasize enhanced quality of life, greater inclusion, and bolstered caregiver support in the diverse Central Jersey region.

The ceremony featured blessings from Dharmatma Dr. S. Yegnasubramanian, a respected scientist formerly with Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and Bell Labs, renowned for Vedic scholarship. Renowned bha-



Source: New Jersey Globe

New Jersey leader Sujit Singh

jan singer Anup Jalota performed, adding a devotional highlight to the gathering. Singh, drawing inspiration from Yegnasubramanian's blend of science and service, reaffirmed his dedication to compassion-driven community building.

A technology consultant with Tata Consultancy Services working on projects for the Inter-American Development Bank, Singh brings 30 years of enterprise expertise to his advocacy. He previously held roles as West Windsor Democratic Committee secretary and vice chair, and nearly challenged the township mayor in recent nonpartisan elections. Now vying in a competitive June primary to replace retiring Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman, Singh positions himself as a fresh voice on human services, education, and economic opportunity in one of America's most diverse districts.

Brahma Kumaris Piscataway

Upcoming Events February 2026

Special Event

God's Power To Renew and Restore

Join us in celebrating Shiv Ratri, a sacred time of spiritual renewal.

Light refreshment will be served.

RSVP : <https://tinyurl.com/bknjevent>

In-person only

Feb
21
2026

5:00 PM -
6:30 PM ET

Weekly Experiential Meditation

Join us for a few words of inspiration followed by a guided meditation.

Feb 3 Beyond Influences

Feb 10 Healing Hearts with God's Love

Feb 17 Making Relationships Beautiful

Feb 24 The Power of Togetherness

In-person or on Zoom

Zoom ID: 998 1552 2589 Passcode: peace

EVERY
TUESDAY

7:30 PM -
8:15 PM ET

Introduction To RajaYoga Meditation

The Introductory Session is the first step of the Raja Yoga Foundation Course and is designed to introduce the fundamentals of the foundation course in a short and concise one-hour session.

RSVP : <https://tinyurl.com/RYIntroEng>

In-person or on Zoom.

Zoom details will be provided after registration

Feb
7
2026

11:00 AM -
12:30 PM ET

Meditation For World Peace

Embrace the world by spreading thoughts of peace through the power of our mind.

Join us at this powerful gathering to fill the universe with the energy of lightness and peace.

In-person or on zoom.

Zoom ID: 811 7612 1465 Passcode: peace

Feb
15
2026

6:30 PM -
7:30 PM ET

Learn RajaYoga Meditation

At the Brahma Kumaris, meditation is a journey inward - an experience of reconnecting with the self as a spiritual being. In this meditation course, you will learn how to cultivate a true relationship with your inner virtues and powers.

RSVP : <http://tinyurl.com/RyBasicEng>

In-person or on Zoom.

Zoom details will be provided after registration

Feb
22
2026

11:00 AM -
12:30 PM ET
4 sessions

Midday Meditation: Time to Heal and Recharge

Create space for calm in the middle of your day with a short, guided meditation.

On Zoom ONLY Zoom ID: 870 0604 9106,
Passcode: peace

MONDAY
- FRIDAY

12:00 PM -
12:15 PM ET

An Immersive Meditation Experience

Step away from the noise and reconnect with inner stillness at the Meditation Center.

EVERY
SUNDAY

6:30 PM -
7:30 PM ET

Explore upcoming events near you
<https://brahmakumaris.us/events/>



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www.bknj.org | 732 381 1533

Indian-American Physicians Mark 15 Years of Affordable Care with Landmark Gala

Indian-American doctors in North Carolina drew over 500 attendees to the Sheraton in Research Triangle

Park for a gala celebrating 15 years of the nonprofit North Carolina Indo-American Physicians-People's Medical Care (NCIAP). The event doubled as a major fundraiser, highlighting the group's direct-pay clinics that deliver primary and specialty care starting at \$55 per visit to uninsured and underinsured adults. State Senator Jay Chaudhuri served as chief guest, praising the audience's generosity and the Indian-American community's rise to prominence in U.S. leadership, from CEOs to elected officials. Sponsors from platinum to silver levels, including corporations and financial firms, committed up to \$50,000 each, with every \$500 donation enabling care for 10 more patients. Over 15 years, NCIAP's Raleigh clinic has logged more than 60,000 visits, cutting emergency room strain and offering services like chronic disease management and preventive screenings.

Co-founded in 2011 by doctors Vinod Jindal and Vandana Devalapalli, along with Samudra Vijay and Gurjit Sawhney, NCIAP embodies "has-

sle-free healthcare for all," free from insurance hassles. Volunteers like Dr. Bal Krishan Agarwal and Sangeeta Saxena received honors for their dedication.

This model underscores scalable solutions to America's healthcare access gaps, blending professional success with public service. The February 7 gathering reinforced corporate-community ties vital to states like New York.



Source: Courtesy NCIAP



HINDU STUDENTS COUNCIL

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National Youth Camp

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JULY 3 – 6

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STATE PARK**
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info@hindustudentscouncil.org

www.hindustudentscouncil.org

NEWSMAKERS

Oncologist Kashyap Patel to receive prestigious Hind Rattan honor

South Carolina cancer care leader's recognition resonates across US-India corridors

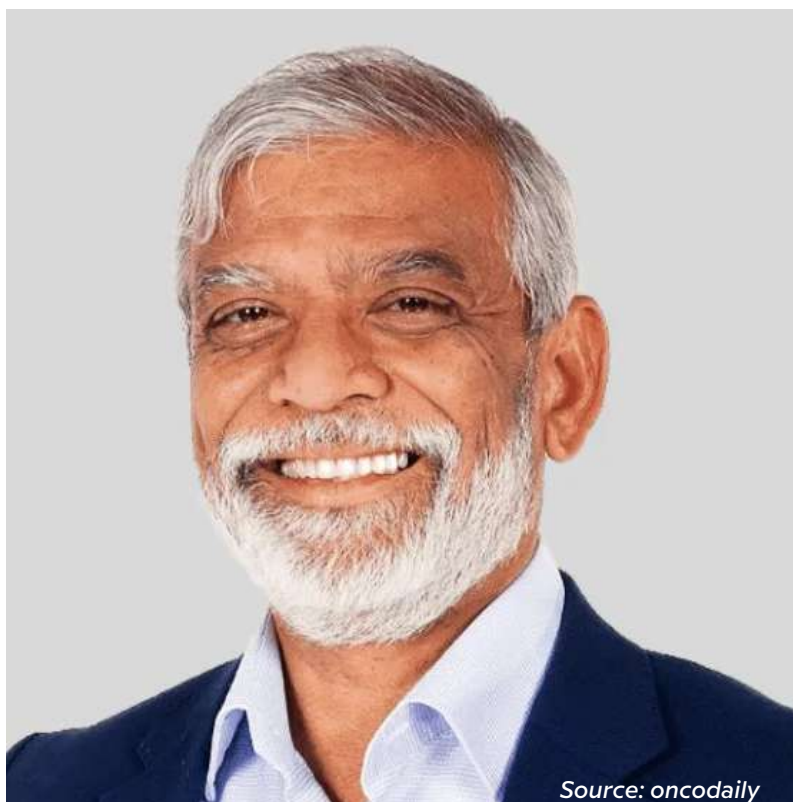
Indian American oncologist Kashyap Patel, Medical Director and Consultant at Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina and a past president of the Community Oncology Alliance, has been selected to receive the Hind Rattan Award from the NRI Welfare Society of India, one of the highest honors for non-resident Indians. The award ceremony is scheduled for August 14 at the Supreme Court of England in London, underscoring the increasingly global profile of Indian origin professionals shaping care and policy far beyond India's borders.

Dr. Patel, who also leads Carolina Blood and Cancer Care Associates in South Carolina, has spent more than two decades focused on ensuring that every patient,

Dr. regardless of zip code or economic

status, can access world-class cancer care, particularly in rural communities. He has highlighted initiatives such as "No One Left Alone" and his work with the Community Oncology Alliance as central to tackling US health disparities while advancing a patient-centered model of oncology.

In remarks shared publicly, Dr. Patel framed the award less as a personal milestone and more as a tribute to his team, patients, and policymakers who are working alongside him to preserve equitable cancer care, echoing his motto of "service above self." His recognition spotlights how Indian American medical leaders are increasingly influencing national debates on value-based care, community oncology, and the future of shared US-India health collaboration.



Kashyap Patel

Indian-American Physician Padma Gulur Named Head of Anesthesiology

Duke Pain Management Leader to Advance Opioid-Safe Care Models in St. Louis

Padma Gulur, MD, a distinguished Indian-American physician-scientist, will assume leadership of the Department of Anesthesiology at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis starting August 1. Currently interim chair at Duke University, Gulur brings patented innovations in opioid safety and nationally adopted pain management protocols that optimize postoperative care and community interventions. Washington University Dean David H. Perlmutter praised Gulur's transformative work in curbing opioid misuse while ensuring quality pain treatment.

Her research includes green light therapy as a non-opioid alternative and early risk identification for



Padma Gulur, MD

chronic pain, positioning the department for breakthroughs in anesthesia, critical care and beyond.

A Bangalore Medical College graduate, Gulur trained at Boston University and Massachusetts General Hospital before advancing through UC Irvine and Duke, where her department secured top NIH research funding.

This appointment underscores the rising influence of Indian-American leaders in U.S. academic medicine, bolstering healthcare innovation amid national priorities on pain management and addiction. For governors and mayors in New York, Gulur's expertise offers models to address regional opioid challenges, potentially informing state health strategies through interstate academic partnerships.



VISHWA HINDU PARISHAD AMERICA SHREE RAM LALLA RATH



RAFFLE CONTEST

DRAW DATE:



**MARCH 27, 2026
1 PM EASTERN**

BUY TICKETS

<https://raffle.vhpamerica.org>



**TICKET:
\$100 EACH
ONLY 2000
TICKETS!**

**FIRST 250
TICKETS
SPECIAL GIFT**



PLATINUM PRIZE

**2 Business Class
Round Trip Air Travel,
Accommodation and
Darshan at Kashi
Mathura & Ayodhya**

GRAND PRIZE

**Historic Shree Ram Lalla
Rath (2024 Honda Odyssey
Touring) World Record
Holder 872 Mandirs
Visited In
65 Days**

GOLD PRIZE

**2 Economy Class
Round Trip Air Travel,
Accommodation and
Darshan at Kashi
Mathura & Ayodhya**



USA



DELHI



MATHURA

KASHI

AYODHYA



Religious Events

Ved Mandir



1 Ved Mandir Dr, Milltown, NJ 08850 Ph: (732) 821-0404

Open Every day - 7:00 AM to 7:30 PM

AARTI TIMES

Morning Aarti - 7:00 AM, Evening Aarti - 7:00 PM

Everyday Online Session by Mandir Priests

5:00 PM To 7:00 PM

Sri Venkateswara Temple (Balaji Mandir)



1 Balaji Temple Drive, Bridgewater, NJ-08807, Ph: (908) 725-4477

Mon - Fri: 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM & 4:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Saturday, Sunday & National Holidays: 8:30 AM - 8:30 PM

Every Sunday : Vishnu Sahasranama : 8:30 AM - 9:15 PM

www.venkateswaratemple.org

The Hindu Temple Society of North America Sri Maha Vallabha Ganapati Devasthanam

45-57 Bowne Street, Flushing, NY 11355, Ph: (718) 460-8484

Weekdays: 8:00 AM to 8:30 PM; Weekends: 7:30 AM to 8:30 PM



SUBSCRIBERS' SECTION

The US deal doesn't compromise national interest, but brings us big benefits of trade liberalisation

New York: With its focus on questions such as "Did India lose its strategic autonomy by agreeing not to buy Russian oil?", "Did it compromise the nation's interest by exchanging zero duty on imports for 18% duty on exports?", and "Did it sacrifice interests of farmers by agreeing to liberalise agriculture?", Indian media has failed to perform its duty to satisfactorily inform the nation on what has been a historic breakthrough in trade negotiations with the US.

To understand what is at stake in these negotiations, let's begin with the geopolitics. India is surrounded by unfriendly, hostile and extremely hostile neighbours along its entire land border. One of these hostile neighbours is also the world's only two superpowers. Under such circumstances, what best serves India's interests: making every effort to strengthen its relationship with the world's only other superpower or turning its back on that power? Or, grand-standing by refusing to even negotiate except exclusively on its own terms?

India can take pride in recent decisions that show maturity and leadership despite the complex domestic history beneath their feet. In many ways, recent decisions are also major victories over China amongst regional powers. China may not say so, and neither will the US, but as the stances of Donald Trump, even as they generated major controversies, as they hardened over time, PM Modi has patiently moved his pieces on the diplomatic chessboard that has consistently served India's broader strategic interests. He has done something that protected Xi Jinping.

Opens up all those bottlenecks

Over the past 25-odd years, India's relationship with the US has deepened and broadened to an extent that was unthinkable in the 1990s and earlier. US-India trade is only

is that, with some exceptions, the US has agreed to reduce its tariffs from 50% to 18%, and India has agreed to either eliminate or substantially reduce tariffs on imports of industrial products from the US, whose current average level is less than 20%.

The critics have characterised the 18% tariffs on goods entering the US from a zero tariff on US goods entering its market as bilateral. On the surface, this may seem unfair to India. Unfortunately, as usual, many of India's officials have missed a crucial element: when set against the current package of concessions, India can now look forward to significantly greater market access to the American agricultural sector than before; and the country's policymakers may be getting a fairer shake this time.

As with any major reform, the impact will be gradual rather than immediate. Farmers will benefit from expanding their markets in the US, manufacturers will gain from cheaper imported inputs, and Indian consumers will enjoy lower prices and greater choice. Agriculture, manufacturing, and services will each experience gains, and even though some sectors will

face tougher competition, India as a whole stands to gain.

India will gradually bring down its tariffs on US imports from the current 40% average to 10%, 8% and eventually lower. When assessing this announcement, one must do so in the global context in which India has negotiated the deal and made its choices. The alternative on the table was a collapse of the agreement, with the danger that our country under new future US administrations.



Source: Twitter (@ Arvind Panagariya)

one aspect — although an important one — of that relationship. However, the on-again, off-again negotiations over the past year have cast a cloud over the entire relationship. To rescue and advance the relationship, it was essential to restore concessions regarding Russian oil purchases, or liberalisation of certain agricultural imports, which consideration of India has gained from the deal as a whole, are problematic, even if true.

While full agreement is yet to be finalised, one data point we do have

Our rejection would have meant maintaining status quo of a 50% tariff on our goods entering the US, and jeopardising the entire US-India relationship. Would this have been a superior outcome?

Some critics prefer the framework agreement on the grounds that the US cannot be trusted to honour its commitments. For all we know, it will raise its tariff from the agreed 18% level back up to extract additional concessions from India. However, this argument cuts both ways. Were India to choose the status quo over the framework agreement, what guarantee is there that the US will not raise its 50% tariff to 75-100%, eliminating nearly all Indian exports to the US? Between the two risks, which does the better future prospect?

Finally, the point of contention cannot overstate the benefits of one's own lobbying. In this case of disarmament negotiations, each side presents its own liberalisation as a cost in trade negotiations, not as an advance in global markets that Indian producers may learn to conquer. However, subjective or narrow reduction is rightly considered as a constant in which one's national security is not compromised as liberalisation has benefited.

A notion in history suggests otherwise. Unilateral but similar trade liberalisation, not akin to bilateral trade liberalisation, has time and again delivered historic gains, long



Source: Twitter (@ Arvind Panagariya)

attested to in Britain's repeal of the Corn Laws in the 1840s. These historical observations suggest that trade agreements do better than double the advantage gained by the counterparty's market.

Unilateral trade liberalisation has long and illustrious history

The intuition is that the advantage of liberalisation through trade agreements is they double benefits by concurrently opening the

partner country's markets for our goods. Both sides had a stake in it. But it mattered much more to India, given its vulnerabilities on the border, than to a superpower that sits across many oceans away from its land frontiers.

Both sides had a stake in removing the cloud over India-US relations

But it mattered much more to India, given its vulnerabilities on the



Source: Pinterest (@Diana Oliinyk)

border, than to a superpower that sits many oceans away from its land frontiers.

The way forward will be as follows: India will lower tariffs gradually while monitoring sector-specific impacts. Safety nets and adjustment assistance may be needed for affected producers, but over time, the economy-wide gains from trade, investment, and technology transfer will outweigh the costs.

Even as negotiations get traction, India has leveraged this deal to ensure that its strategic autonomy is preserved; at no point has it surrendered its right to pursue independent foreign policy decisions, including energy purchases and defence partnerships.

The current agreement is not about capitulation, but about pragmatism — recognising that, in a world of interdependence, engagement with the US can strengthen both our economic prospects and our strategic position.

The writer is professor, Columbia University



Source: khanacademy



Source: NDTV

Credit: Arvind Panagariya

FESTIVAL

Raulane Festival: Himachal's Enigmatic Winter Ritual Captivates the World

A mystical celebration of ancient folklore, spirituality, and cultural heritage unlike any other

In the serene valleys of Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, a centuries-old winter ritual called the Raulane Festival is quietly enchanting people globally with its mystery and spiritual depth. Until recently hidden from the wider world, the festival's surreal masked dancers and vibrant traditional costumes have become a viral sensation on social media - drawing curiosity and admiration alike.

The Raulane Festival honors celestial guardians known as 'Sauni,' believed to protect villagers through the harsh winters. As spring approaches, two men don elaborate woollen costumes and stunning masks to embody a symbolic spiritual couple:



Raula (the groom) and Raulane (the bride). They lead villagers in a slow, meditative procession culminating in a sacred dance at the Nagin Narayan Temple. This profound ritual serves as a bridge between the human world and the ethereal realm of the Sauni, marking a solemn farewell.

What makes Raulane truly captivating is the complete concealment of identity, faces hidden beneath vivid masks, transforming participants into spiritual intermediaries who shed individuality for a shared divine purpose. Far from a tourist spectacle, it is an intimate, handcrafted ceremony treasured by the villagers as a vital inheritance of their cultural and spiritual lineage.



Source: himalayandreamtreks.in

TRAVEL

Kinnaur: The Untouched Himalayan Paradise Where Gods Reside

Kinnaur, tucked away in the remote north-eastern reaches of Himachal Pradesh, India, is a mesmerizing Himalayan district that borders Tibet and captivates with its dramatic contrasts, from lush apple orchards and gushing rivers like the Sutlej and Baspa to towering snow-capped peaks of the Zaskar, Greater Himalaya, and Dhauladhar ranges spanning altitudes of 2,320 to 6,816 meters.

Roughly 235 km from Shimla, this "Land of Gods" is dominated by the

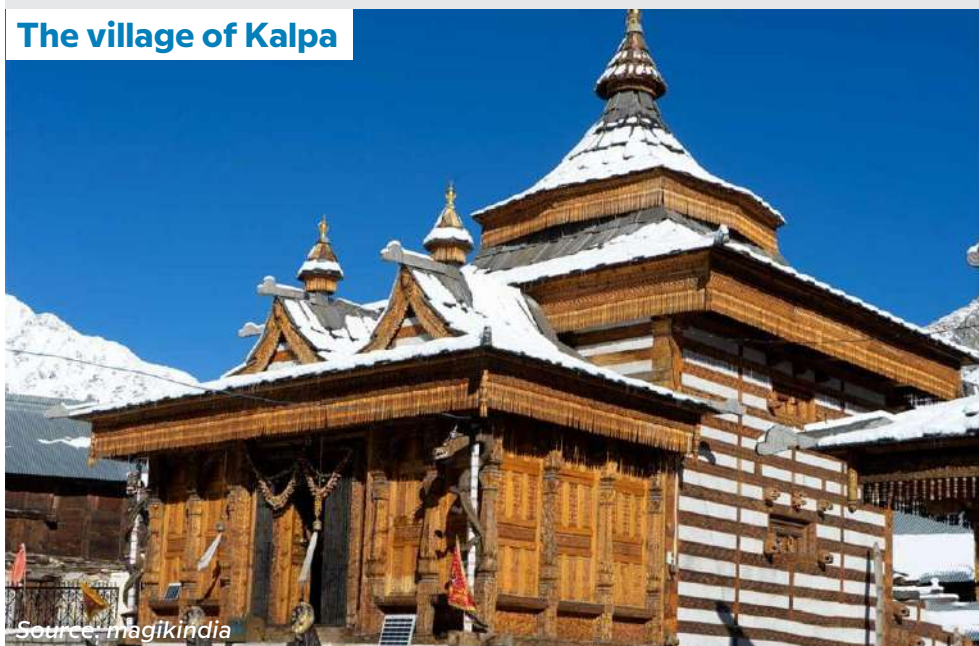
sacred Kinner Kailash peak at 6,050 meters, revered as Lord Shiva's abode and a pilgrimage magnet for Hindus and Buddhists, blending vibrant Sangla and Kalpa valleys famed for chilgoza pines and apricots, serene Nako Lake, and ancient temples like Chitkul Mathi.

Treks such as the 3-4 day Kinner Kailash Parikrama and Rupin Pass lure adventurers through remote villages showcasing the Kinnauris' unique Hindu-Buddhist fusion culture, where descendants of mythical Kinners celebrate festivals like Phagol in February-March to hon-

or mountain spirits and Phulaich for blooming flowers, thriving on wheat, barley, peas, and home-made fruit alcohol while savoring non-veg dishes, folk dances, and colorful attire in sturdy wooden homes with kathar granaries.

Accessible via the Hindustan-Tibet Road (NH-22), Kinnaur is best explored from May to October to dodge six-month snow blockades, offering offbeat tranquility, organic delights like sidu bread and thukpa soup, and profound cultural immersion for nature enthusiasts seeking an untouched Himalayan paradise.

The village of Kalpa



Source: magikindia

Traditional wooden houses



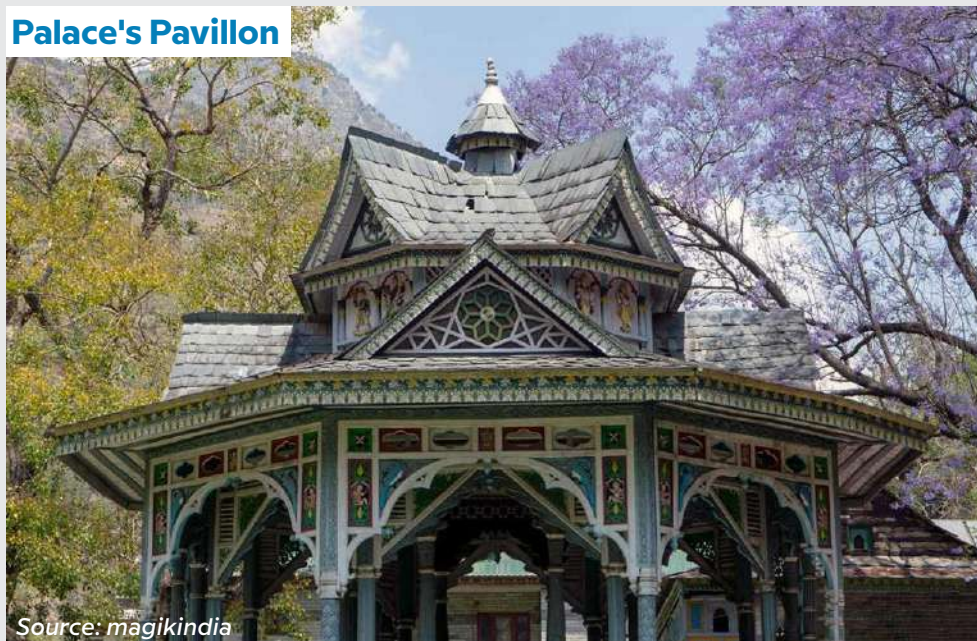
Source: magikindia

Traditional weaving



Source: magikindia

Palace's Pavillon



Source: magikindia

Kinnaur Valley



Source: Times of India

Kalpa



Source: Times of India

Lipa Asrang Sanctuary



Source: Times of India

Essential Tips for Diaspora

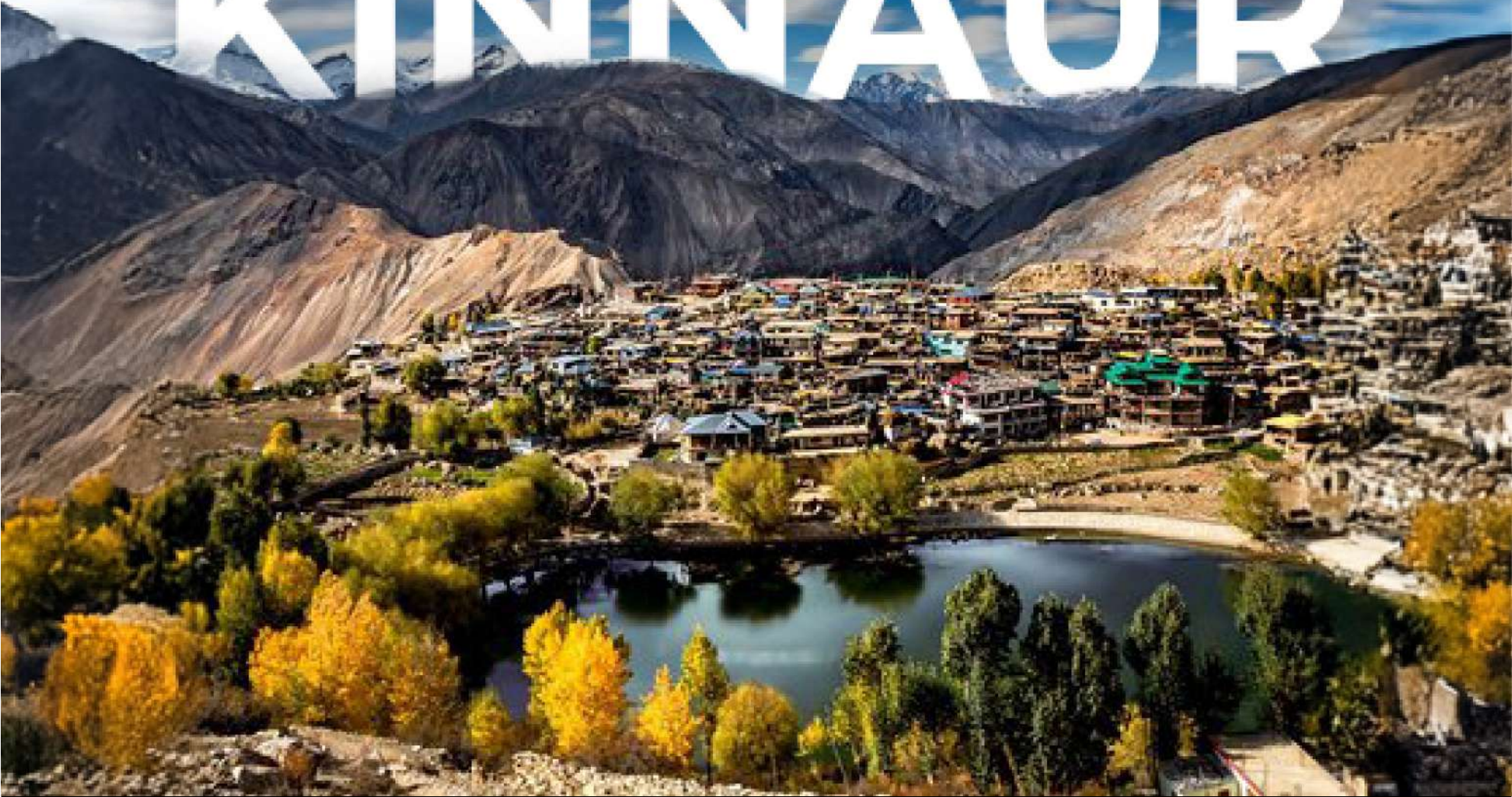
PERMITS AND ENTRY

- Foreign nationals, including NRIs holding foreign passports, must obtain an Inner Line Permit (ILP) for inner Kinnaur areas like Chitkul, Nako, and parts of Spiti border. Apply online via the Himachal Pradesh tourism portal or at Shimla's Deputy Commissioner's office upon arrival; processing takes 1-2 days and costs around ₹400 per person. Indian passport NRIs skip this but carry ID proof everywhere.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

- Plan for May-October when Hindustan-Tibet Road (NH-5) is open; winters bring 6-month snow blockades. As an NRI, align with festivals like Phulaich (post-monsoon blooms) or Phagul (Feb-Mar spirits) for cultural immersion matching your interest in Indian traditions.

KINNAUR



GETTING THERE

- Fly into Chandigarh or Delhi, then bus/train to Shimla (8-10 hrs), followed by HRTC bus or shared taxi to Reckong Peo (10-12 hrs, ₹800-1500). Self-drive SUVs handle hairpin bends better; book in advance via redBus for peak season. Allow 2 days from Delhi (570 km total).

PACKING ESSENTIALS

- Layer thermals, fleece jackets, waterproof gear, sturdy trekking shoes, and sunglasses for UV glare at 2,300-6,000m altitudes. Pack motion sickness meds, altitude sickness tablets (Diamox), power banks, and Indian SIM (Airtel/Jio for spotty coverage); homestays lack Western amenities.

FOOD AND HEALTH

- Savor local organic apricots, chilgoza nuts, and non-veg thalis, but stick to boiled water or electral. Acclimatize in Shimla first to avoid AMS; vegetarian options abound due to Hindu-Buddhist fusion. Carry prescriptions if diabetic or hypertensive.

MUST-DO ITINERARY

- Days 1-2: Shimla to Kalpa via Sarahan (Bhimakali Temple).
- Days 3-4: Sangla-Chitkul for Baspa Valley treks.
- Day 5: Nako Lake, return via Reckong Peo. Add Kinner Kailash Parikrama if fit (3-4 days with guide).

CONNECTIVITY AND SAFETY

- ATMs sparse beyond Reckong Peo-carry ₹20,000 cash. Download offline maps (Maps.me); roads prone to landslides, so check BRO updates. Emergency: Dial 100 or Kinnaur DC office.

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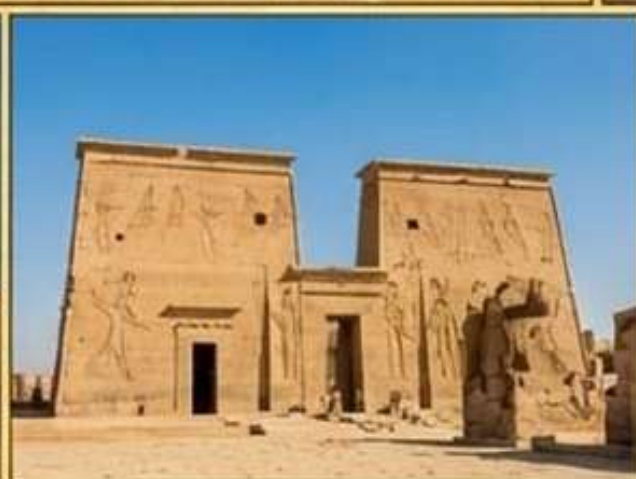
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NextGen Sports Desk

India's Track Stars Make History at Asian Indoor Championships

Tejaswin Shankar Leads Medal Haul in Tianjin

Tejaswin Shankar claimed India's lone gold medal at the Asian Indoor Athletics Championships in Tianjin, China, shattering his national record in the men's heptathlon with 5,993 points. The victory ended a 16-year drought for India in the event and highlighted the nation's rising prowess in multi-disciplinary competition. Shankar's performance, which topped China's Zihui Hua, signals strong momentum ahead of major international meets.

India wrapped up with five medals overall, securing sixth place in the standings behind dominant host China. Tajinderpal Singh Toor grabbed silver

in men's shot put with a 20.05-meter

throw, edging close to gold in a tense final round. Teenager Pooja matched an Asian indoor record to earn silver in women's high jump at 1.87 meters, while J Aadarsh Ram opened the tally with bronze in men's high jump.

Ancy Sojan rounded out the medals with bronze in women's long jump, capping a field-event focused campaign that broke two national indoor records. Tejaswin Shankar broke the heptathlon national record en route to winning India's only gold medal at the Asian Indoor Athletics Championships 2026, which concluded in Tianjin, the People's Republic of China, on Sunday.



Source: The Hindu

India's Tejaswin Shankar clinches gold medal at Asian Indoor Athletics Championships in China

USA Cricketers Seek Blessings at Tirumala Ahead of World Cup

Visit to Lord Venkateswara temple underscores cultural ties as Team USA chases Super 8 spot in India

Indian origin members of the United States cricket team paid a spiritual visit to the hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala, Andhra Pradesh, during a crucial phase of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 in India. Captain Monank Patel, accompanied by teammates Milind Kumar and Sourabh Netravalkar, took part in the VIP break darshan early in the morning, offering prayers and receiving temple prasadam alongside hundreds of other devotees.

Videos shared by Indian media outlets and wire services show the players in tradi-

tional Indian attire, joining temple rituals and interacting briefly with pilgrims who recognized them from their World Cup appearances. The cricketers described it as their first visit to Tirumala and called the experience deeply spiritual and memorable amid

a demanding tournament schedule.

The stop in Tirumala comes as Team USA, which features several players with roots in India, competes in a high-profile group that includes India and Pakistan. Their temple visit has attracted attention.



Source: Youtube (@Telugu Nestam)

USA cricket team squad 2026



Source: ndtv

F1 Sequel Accelerates into Production

Bruckheimer Confirms Next Lap for Pitt's Oscar-Nominated Hit

From Los Angeles, the engines are revving again for Hollywood's latest racing sensation. Producer Jerry Bruckheimer has officially greenlit a sequel to F1, the Brad Pitt starrer that stormed to over \$630 million at the global box office following its June 2025 release. Speaking at the Academy Awards luncheon, Bruckheimer shared with BBC, "We're working on a sequel," fueling excitement among audiences who propelled the film to four Oscar nominations, including Best Picture, Best Film Editing, Best Sound, and Best Visual Effects.

Directed by Joseph Kosinski of Top Gun: Maverick fame, the original captured the high-stakes

world of Formula 1 with Pitt as veteran driver Sonny Hayes mentoring rookie Joshua Pearce, played by Damson Idris, for the fictional APXGP

team. Co-produced by seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton, whose input shaped its authenticity, the project endured Hollywood strikes yet delivered pulse-pounding races filmed at real Grand Prix events.

Details on casting and timeline remain under wraps, though Bruckheimer hinted at ongoing story development pitched to Hamilton, promising another thrilling ride. While Pitt's return as Hayes sparks speculation, the confirmation underscores F1's enduring appeal, blending cinematic spectacle with motorsport precision to captivate global viewers ahead of the March Oscars. This sequel bids fair to sustain the momentum, offering fresh laps of adrenaline-fueled drama.



A Still from "F1 The Movie"

Source: bbc

Tom Brady's Iconic Victory Shave Supports Boston Charities

NFL Legend Partners with Gillette in Time-Honored Tradition

Tom Brady marked the New England Patriots' sixth Super Bowl triumph with a ceremonial shave at Gillette's South Boston headquarters, channeling a beloved local tradition into substantial charitable giving. Fresh from the 13-3 victory over the Los Angeles Rams, the six-time champion shed his playoff beard to spotlight community support, as Gillette pledged over \$100,000 across three key Boston nonprofits: Boys & Girls Clubs of South Boston, Best Buddies International, and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

Each organization received \$35,000, reflecting Brady's longstanding commitment to youth mentorship, friendship programs for those with intellectual disabilities, and cancer research efforts that resonate

deeply in the region.

Brady amplified the initiative by signing Patriots-branded Gillette

razor sets for auction, with all proceeds directed to the causes. Gillette North America Director Pankaj Bhalla

praised the quarterback as the epitome of excellence, underscoring the brand's dedication to hometown heroes. This event not only celebrated athletic prowess but also reinforced corporate philanthropy in New England, where such traditions blend sports glory with social good.

Brady highlights the power of high-profile partnerships in driving local impact. His involvement with Best Buddies, which fosters inclusive friendships nationwide, mirrors values of community uplift that parallel diaspora efforts in education and health. A clear philanthropic outcomes to amplify social impact without diluting commercial goals



Source: goodcelebrity

Tom Brady Joined Gillette for a Victory Shave to Benefit Local Boston Charities

Farhan Akhtar Lands Coveted Role in Sam Mendes' Beatles Epic

Hollywood Calls: Indian Star to Portray Ravi Shankar in Blockbuster Biopic Series

Sony Pictures has unveiled a marquee casting coup for Sam Mendes' ambitious four-film saga on The Beatles, tapping acclaimed Indian actor-director Farhan Akhtar to embody the legendary sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar. Announced Thursday, the move marks Akhtar's full-fledged Hollywood feature debut, spotlighting Shankar's profound influence on the Fab Four during their transformative India visit in the late 1960s.

Production hums along in the UK for this groundbreaking project, the first to secure complete life story and music rights from Apple Corps Ltd. and the band. Each standalone film unfolds from one Beatle's viewpoint—Paul Mescal as Paul McCartney, Harris Dickinson as John Lennon, Joseph Quinn as George Harrison, and

Barry Keoghan as Ringo Starr—chronicling their meteoric ascent and 1970 disbandment. Akhtar joins a power-

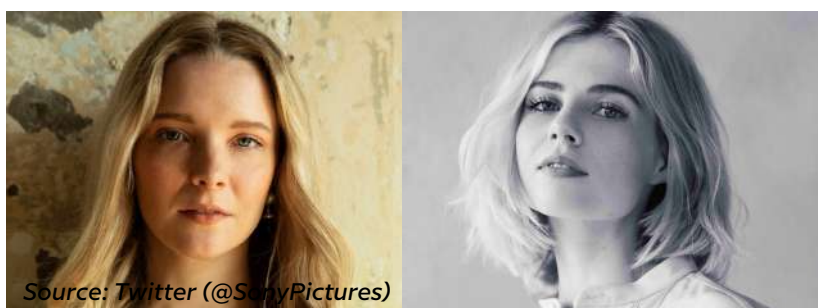
house ensemble including Saoirse Ronan as Linda McCartney, Anna Sawai as Yoko Ono, and fresh additions like Lucy Boynton as Jane Asher and Morfydd Clark as Cynthia Lennon. Writers Jez Butterworth, Peter Straughan, and Jack Thorne craft the narrative under Mendes' Neal Street Productions and Apple Corps banner.

Slated for a global theatrical rollout in April 2028, the series promises a fresh cinematic innovation Mendes dubs the "first binge-able theatrical experience." For Akhtar, fresh off his cameo in Disney+'s Ms. Marvel, this role elevates Indian artistry onto the world stage, bridging Bollywood flair with rock history's pantheon. Filming wraps by year-end, fueling anticipation for a cultural milestone that honors cross-continental bonds.



Source: Twitter (@SonyPictures)

Farhan Akhtar will star as Ravi Shankar
Clark will star as Cynthia (Powell) Lennon



Source: Twitter (@SonyPictures)

Lucy Boynton will star as Jane Asher
Morfydd Clark will star as Stuart Sutcliffe

O'Romeo Captures Buzz on Release Day, Shahid Kapoor's best movie yet.

Shahid Kapoor Shines in Bhardwaj's Gritty Saga

Vishal Bhardwaj's O'Romeo hit theaters Friday, reuniting the director with Shahid Kapoor in a riveting Mumbai underworld drama inspired by true events. Set against post-Independence Bombay, the film pairs Kapoor's intense lead with Triptii Dimri, Nana Patekar, and Avinash Tiwary, delivering raw action and tangled romance.

Praise poured in swiftly from Bollywood circles. Mira Rajput, Shahid's wife, declared it his "best yet," spotlighting Bhardwaj's brilliance and Dimri's fierce charm. Homi Adajania,

gearing up for Cocktail 2, echoed the sentiment, lauding the cast's electric synergy.

Social media erupts with fan acclaim for the film's 1990s vibe, score, and Kapoor's commanding presence. Poised for strong Valentine's week traction, O'Romeo underscores Bollywood's magnetic draw for audiences nationwide.



Source: Twitter (@SonyPictures)

A still from the movie "O'Romeo."

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