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PAGE 12

New York Indian Consulate Hosts India's 77th Republic Day



PAGE 14

BAPS Sets Guinness World Record for the Largest Simultaneous Hindu Text Recital



PAGE 20





Trump, Modi Clinch 18% Tariff Pact Resetting U.S.–India Trade

Continued on page 04

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Eternal grace, the Padmini way

Evergreen, timeless actress Padmini Kolhapure

Early Journey

From a child artist to the leading lady of the 1980s, Padmini Kolhapure has mesmerized generations with her innocence, expressive eyes, and graceful dance moves. Born on 1 November 1965 into a renowned Marathi musical family in Mumbai, she debuted at age five in the chorus of Yaadon Ki Baaraat (1973) and shone brightly as the young Roopa in Raj Kapoor's masterpiece Satyam Shivam Sundaram (1978), earning early acclaim for her emotive portrayal. Her breakthrough came with supporting roles that showcased her natural talent, setting the stage for stardom.

At just 15, she clinched the Filmfare Best Supporting Actress Award for Insaf Ka Tarazu (1980), opposite Rajendra Kumar and Zeenat Aman, delivering a poignant performance as a rape survivor that resonated deeply with audiences. Then, at 17, she made history by winning the Filmfare Best Actress Award for Prem Rog (1982) alongside Rishi Kapoor, becoming the second-youngest recipient in both categories, a feat that solidified her as a prodigy.

Blockbuster Era

The 1980s crowned her the undisputed queen with a string of superhits that defined romantic and dramatic cinema. Films like Ahista Ahista (1981), where her chemistry with Rajendra Kumar captivated hearts; Woh Saat Din (1983), introducing Anil Kapoor with unforgettable romance; Pyar Jhukta Nahin (1985) pairing her dynamically with Mithun Chakraborty; and the ensemble Vidhaata (1982) alongside Dilip Kumar and Shammi Kapoor showcased her range from tender lover to fiery heroine. Songs like "Ole Ole" from Pyar Jhukta Nahin and "Dikh Gayi Deewana Ko Chalti Jawani Ki" from Vidhaata highlighted her playback singing and sizzling screen presence, making her a household name.

She balanced commercial successes with artistic depth, starring in Souten (1983) and Phir Teri Kahani Yaad Aayee (1993), while her Marathi ventures like Chimani Pakhar (2000) for which she won a Screen Best Actress Award, proved her roots. Television appearances in Ekk Nayi Pehchaan and cameos in Panipat (2019) kept her relevant, blending tradition with modernity.

Family Legacy

Daughter of classical veena player Pandharinath Kolhapure and singer Nirupama Kolhapure, Padmini's lineage boasts legends: she is niece to playback queens Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle. Her elder sister Shivangi Kolhapure married Shakti Kapoor, making Bollywood actress Shraddha Kapoor her niece, a family tree rich in talent and melody.

In 1986, at 20, she eloped with producer Pradeep "Tutu" Sharma, overcoming family opposition due to inter-community differences, with key support from her sister and actress Poonam Dhillon; the couple, now married over 35 years, has son, Priyaank Sharma, an actor-musician who continues the legacy. Padmini's own musical contributions include childhood chorus work and solo tracks like "Saat Saheliyan" from Vidhaata.

Enduring Grace

Now 60, Padmini radiates timeless elegance in sarees and traditional attire, often sharing glimpses on social media. She runs the boutique "PadmaSitaa," manages acting schools nurturing young talent, and was elected CINTAA Vice President in 2024, advocating for industry welfare. Known for her professionalism, like shooting through high fever on Do Dilon Ki Dastaan (1985).

Her diligence, warmth, and evergreen hits like Prem Rog continue to enchant fans across generations.

Beginning as a child artist, she rose rapidly to stardom and became one of Bollywood's most beloved leading ladies. Rooted in a rich musical legacy, her talent extended beyond acting to singing and mentorship. Even today, her timeless charm.



Source: Pinterest (@Ravindra)

Leaders move swiftly to ease trade friction, reassure markets, and signal a deeper strategic economic partnership.

Washington and New Delhi have moved swiftly to defuse a simmering trade confrontation, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump unveiling a breakthrough that cuts U.S. tariffs on Indian goods to 18 percent from 25 percent after months of hard bargaining. In coordinated messages on X and Truth Social, Modi hailed the decision as a boost for "Made in India" exports, while Trump cast the deal as a reciprocal reset that will strengthen a relationship he called "amazing" and predicted would grow even stronger.

The White House has also confirmed that Washington is scrapping a separate 25 percent punitive duty it imposed on Indian imports last year in response to India's purchases of Russian crude, after Modi agreed to halt oil buys from Moscow and significantly ramp up energy and commodities purchases from the United States. Trump said India has committed to more than 500 billion dollars in future American imports across energy, technology, agriculture, and other sectors, a pledge that, if implemented, could translate into long-term opportunities for U.S. producers and investors with deep ties to the Indian market.

Global markets responded quickly. U.S.-listed shares of major India-linked firms, including Infosys, Wipro, and HDFC Bank, rallied on the news, reflecting optimism that lower tariff friction and a clear political signal from both capitals will support trade flows and investment. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar arrives in Washington this week for high-level meetings that are expected to translate the leaders' personal rapport into detailed frameworks on critical minerals, supply chains, and sector-specific openings, with close observers here watching for how this deal will reshape the next phase of the economic partnership.



US President Donald Trump with Prime Minister Narendra Modi

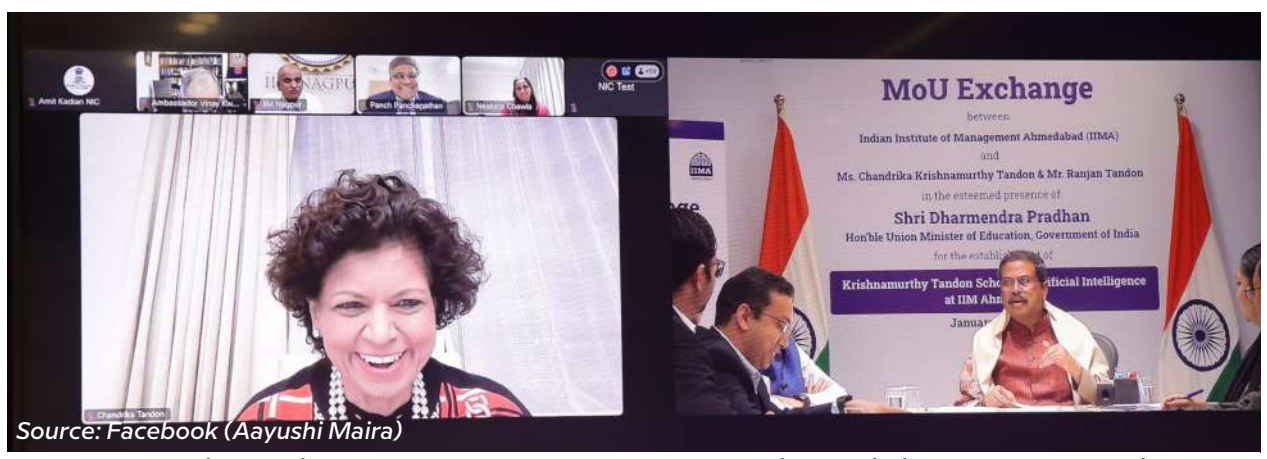
Indian-American Leaders Forge AI Partnership with IIM Ahmedabad

₹100 Crore Endowment Launches Premier School, Elevating U.S.-India Innovation Ties

In a landmark collaboration underscoring the enduring bonds between American innovators and India's academic powerhouses, prominent Indian-American philanthropists Chandrika Krishnamurthy Tandon, an IIM Ahmedabad alumna from the PGP Class of 1975, and her husband Ranjan Tandon, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA) to establish the Krishnamurthy Tandon School of Artificial Intelligence. This visionary initiative, backed by a generous ₹100 crore endowment, was formalized on Thursday in New Delhi under the watchful eye of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, with U.S.-based Indian Ambassador Vinay Kwatra participating virtually – a fitting nod to the transatlantic synergy driving this endeavor.

Hailed as a pioneering fusion of management acumen and cutting-edge AI, the new school will pioneer business-oriented AI research tailored to India's vast challenges, fostering deployable solutions for industry, governance, and society. Minister Pradhan praised the partnership as a cornerstone of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's strategy to position India as a global AI frontrunner, emphasizing its potential to spur job creation, broaden AI access, and harness technology for societal progress. IIMA Director Prof. Bharat Bhasker and senior officials joined the ceremony, celebrating the Tandons' commitment to alma mater excellence amid the buildup to the India-AI Impact Summit 2026.

This development highlights the profound influence of Indian-American leaders in bridging continents, propelling forward-thinking education that promises mutual prosperity and technological leadership. As AI reshapes global economies, such investments affirm a shared vision for responsible innovation and enduring U.S.-India collaboration.



Chandrika Krishnamoorthy Tandon and Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan during MoU exchange.

Mikie Sherrill Nominates Engineer Priya Jain to Lead NJDOT

Her Bold Vision Promises Faster Projects, Safer Roads for Garden State Residents

Governor Mikie Sherrill's nomination of Priya Jain as New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner marks a strategic step toward modernizing the state's infrastructure. With over two decades of steering complex projects at firms like Mace Consult and Atkins, Jain has honed skills in accelerating approvals and executing high-profile builds, from the ARC Tunnel to global rail initiatives. A Morris County engineer educated at top institutions, including the University at Buffalo, she embodies the precision needed to tackle New Jersey's backlog of bridge repairs and transit expansions.

Jain's priorities align seamlessly with Sherrill's agenda: trimming red tape to cut project timelines by 30 percent, bolstering South Jersey rail service, and fortifying roads for events like the 2026 FIFA World Cup. "Our goal is reliable, efficient mobility for every resident, from urban hubs to rural routes," Jain affirmed, drawing praise from NJ Transit leaders for her collaborative approach. Industry voices, including AASHTO, celebrate her as a bridge between innovation and execution.

As Senate confirmation looms, Jain's leadership promises tangible gains, shorter commutes, greener fleets, and resilient networks elevating New Jersey's stature in national transport. This appointment reflects a bright trajectory for public service excellence.


Source: britannica

Source: southasianherald

Mikie Sherrill on the left and Priya joshi on the right

Breakthrough Hindi Tool Advances Grief Care in America

CUNY, Weill Cornell Validate First Assessment for Hindi Speakers Facing Prolonged Loss

In a major step toward improving mental health accessibility, researchers from the City University of New York and Weill Cornell Medicine have launched the Prolonged Grief Disorder Scale – Hindi Version (PG-13-R-H), the first validated tool to assess prolonged grief among Hindi-speaking adults in the U.S.

Based on a study of 527 participants in Queens, the scale—recently published in the Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine—showed strong reliability (Cronbach's alpha 0.75). Findings revealed that 15.6% met criteria for prolonged grief disorder, with 41.7% linked to COVID-19 losses and 88.6% to unexpected deaths.

Lead author Dr. Apeksha Mewani of Lehman College highlighted the scale's goal of improving diagnosis and access to care for Hindi speakers. Collaborators Dr. Vincent Jones II and Dr. Holly G. Prigerson, who developed the original scale, called it a culturally responsive milestone for bereavement care.

As communities continue to cope with pandemic-related loss and isolation, the PG-13-R-H offers clinicians a valuable tool to provide timely, empathetic support. Researchers hope it will inspire similar translations for other South Asian languages, expanding the reach of grief care to more immigrant populations.


Source: york.cuny.edu

Left to right: Dr. Apeksha Mewani, Dr. Vincent Jones II, Dr. Kim Glickman, Mr. Sungwoo (Justin) Kim, Dr. Holly Prigerson.

New York Elevates Muslim American Heritage Month

Governor Hochul Champions Unity in the Empire State

Governor Kathy Hochul has officially proclaimed January as Muslim American Heritage Month, a historic first for New York State that honors the deep cultural, civic, and economic contributions of Muslim communities across the Empire State. As one of the states with the largest Muslim populations in the nation, New York's recognition stands as a milestone in advancing inclusion, mutual respect, and cultural understanding.

From the bustling neighborhoods of Brooklyn and Queens to the vibrant and diverse communities of Buffalo, Rochester, and Albany, Muslim New Yorkers have long played a vital role in shaping the state's identity. They are innovators, educators, healthcare professionals, artists, and entrepreneurs whose presence strengthens New York's social fabric and fuels its forward momentum.

As part of the observance, 16 state landmarks will be illuminated in green throughout January a color symbolizing peace, prosperity, and unity. Speaking at a ceremony in New York City, Governor Hochul expressed heartfelt appreciation for Muslim Americans' steadfast spirit and essential contributions, concluding her remarks with "Barak Allahu Feekum" ("May God bless you") to emphasize shared values of compassion and respect. The initiative, introduced during a time of growing concern over bias and division, sends a clear message of belonging and solidarity.

The proclamation received strong support from community leaders and elected officials, including Assemblymember Charles D. Fall, the first Muslim elected to the State Assembly, and State Senator Robert Jackson, who described the move as "a recognition of faith and service that enriches New York's civic life." Similarly, City Councilmembers Shahana Hanif and Yusef Salaam praised the announcement, highlighting that Muslim New Yorkers are deeply woven into the state's past, present, and future.

Adding to the statewide celebration, the New York Public Library unveiled special exhibitions such as "The People's Qur'an" and "Niyū Yūrk," which explore the enduring influence of Muslim scholars and artists in shaping the city's cultural heritage.

As landmarks glow green across the state, Muslim American Heritage Month stands as a luminous tribute to diversity a reminder that New York's greatest strength lies in the unity of all who call it home.







Source: Twitter (@GovKathyHochul)

The Women Who Inspire: Special Women's Day Series

inkpageimagination

InkPageImagination is a woman-founded literacy and learning platform rooted in multilingual, multicultural, and community-centered education. At the heart of the work is the Magic Reading Room—an experiential literacy offering that transforms traditional read-alouds into immersive, inquiry-driven experiences. Children engage with stories through conversation, movement, sensory play, and creative expression, allowing books to become spaces for reflection, identity, and connection.

Alongside children's programming, InkPageImagination offers 1:1 parent coaching designed to support caregivers navigating early childhood literacy with intention and confidence, particularly within multilingual and diasporic households. These sessions help parents better understand their child's learning, emotional world, and relationship to language and storytelling.

Founded by an educator with global teaching experience and DEIB leadership expertise, InkPageImagination moves beyond one-size-fits-all literacy models. Instead, it honors the everyday rituals, questions, and cultures that shape childhood. The mission is simple yet powerful: to foster belonging, curiosity, and joy through inclusive storytelling for both children and the adults who guide them.

Book a Free 15-minute 1:1 Parent Coaching Session Here





Bring the Magic Reading Room to your organization

Thank you again for this thoughtful opportunity. I truly appreciate the space you create for women-owned ventures and look forward to the feature. Please let me know if you'd like me to send you anything else.

Founder Bio

Kruti Suba-Coneti is an Indian-origin educator, licensed ESL specialist, and Founder & Educator of InkPageImagination. With an MA and Post-MA in TESOL from NYU Steinhardt and a background in English Literature, she brings deep expertise in multilingual and multicultural literacy. As a mother raising two multilingual, first-generation American children, Kruti blends personal insight with professional practice. Her career spans global education, DEIB leadership, and teacher mentorship—from directing language programs in Mumbai to mentoring future educators at NYU—always centering equity, belonging, and the power of stories.






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NYC Advances Youth Health with Elevate You Clinics Launch

Mayor Mamdani's $4 Million Commitment for Ages 16-25

In a forward-thinking move, Mayor Zohran Mamdani joined NYC Health + Hospitals and MetroPlusHealth to announce two new Elevate You clinics at Woodhull Hospital in Brooklyn and Queens hospitals. Supported by a $4 million grant from MetroPlusHealth, these facilities offer comprehensive care for young people aged 16 to 25, blending behavioral health, primary care, reproductive services, vocational training, and social support from consistent multidisciplinary teams.

MetroPlusHealth data underscores the urgency: nearly 90 percent of youth disengage from mental health providers after age 21, heightening long-term risks. The clinics combat this with dedicated teams of social workers, psychiatrists, nurses, youth peers, and family advocates, plus redesigned youth-friendly spaces featuring hangout areas and meeting rooms.



Mayor Zohran Mamdani joined NYC Health + Hospitals and MetroPlusHealth

"Access to consistent, high-quality health care is essential, and our city is proving it," Mayor Mamdani declared, framing the initiative as vital support for young New Yorkers chasing dreams amid personal challenges. Deputy Mayor Helen Arteaga praised the root-cause approach, while NYC Health + Hospitals CEO Mitchell Katz highlighted the "bright, comfortable spaces" fostering life skills.

MetroPlusHealth's Talya Schwartz emphasized stability for vulnerable groups facing housing and employment hurdles. This effort builds on school-based mental health programs and the 2024 State of Mental Health report, positioning New York as a leader in equitable youth care.

Indian Consulate Chart Course For Deeper Cultural Partnership In New York Harbor

Indian Festivals At The Waterfront Poised To Become A Year-Round New York Institution

Consul General Binaya Srikanta Pradhan met this week with Capt. Jonathan Boulware, President and CEO of the South Street Seaport Museum, along with Programming Director Zak Reisinger and The Culture Tree founder Anu Sehgal, will explore a long-term cultural partnership at one of Lower Manhattan's most historic waterfront sites. Building on increasingly popular Holi, Diwali and Navratri programs that have drawn New Yorkers from across boroughs to the Seaport, the discussions focused on making these collaborations a regular fixture in the city's cultural calendar.

The meeting examined ways to institutionalize Indian arts, music, dance and culinary showcases within the museum's programming, positioning the Seaport as a premier venue for celebrating India's contemporary creativity alongside its maritime ties to New York. Organizers highlighted how recent Holi at the Seaport, Garba aboard the historic tall ship Wavertree, and Diwali family activities have attracted diverse American families and school communities, reinforcing New York's commitment to inclusive cultural storytelling.



If finalized, the initiative is expected to create a predictable, annual festival series and educational engagements that can be woven into citywide tourism, neighborhood revitalization, and youth outreach efforts centered on the Seaport district. For civic leaders in New York and across the United States, this emerging model of heritage programming at a major waterfront museum offers a tested template for using culture, history, and cuisine to deepen connections between Indian and American communities in shared public spaces.

THE FORTNIGHT THAT WAS

India courts American travelers at high-profile New York travel showcase

India Pavilion at Javits Center puts tourism, heritage, and business ties in the spotlight

India's presence at the Travel & Adventure Show 2026 in New York has quietly but decisively shifted the conversation about travel to the subcontinent for American consumers and industry leaders alike. Over two days, the India Pavilion at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center drew more than 10,000 visitors, positioned prominently at the main entrance of one of the country's premier travel expos.

Inaugurating the pavilion, Consul General Binaya Srikanta Pradhan underscored that roughly 20 percent of all foreign tourists to India now come from the United States and that the clear objective is to grow that share further through easier access, stronger air connectivity, and curated experiences tailored for US travelers. Nearly 95 percent of US visitors are already using India's e-visa system, simplifying last-minute and repeat travel for families, young professionals, and heritage travelers alike.

The India Pavilion, mounted by the Consulate General of India in New York in partnership with Air India, Veena World, Sky Bird Vacations, and a slate of specialist tour operators, showcased everything from luxury rail journeys and wellness retreats to adventure tourism and food-focused itineraries. A dedicated display of the One District One Product initiative highlighted artisanal textiles, handicrafts, and regional delicacies, aligning tourism promotion with inclusive economic growth on the ground in India.



Source: New India Abroad

Consul General Binaya Srikanta Pradhan officially inaugurated the India Pavilion.

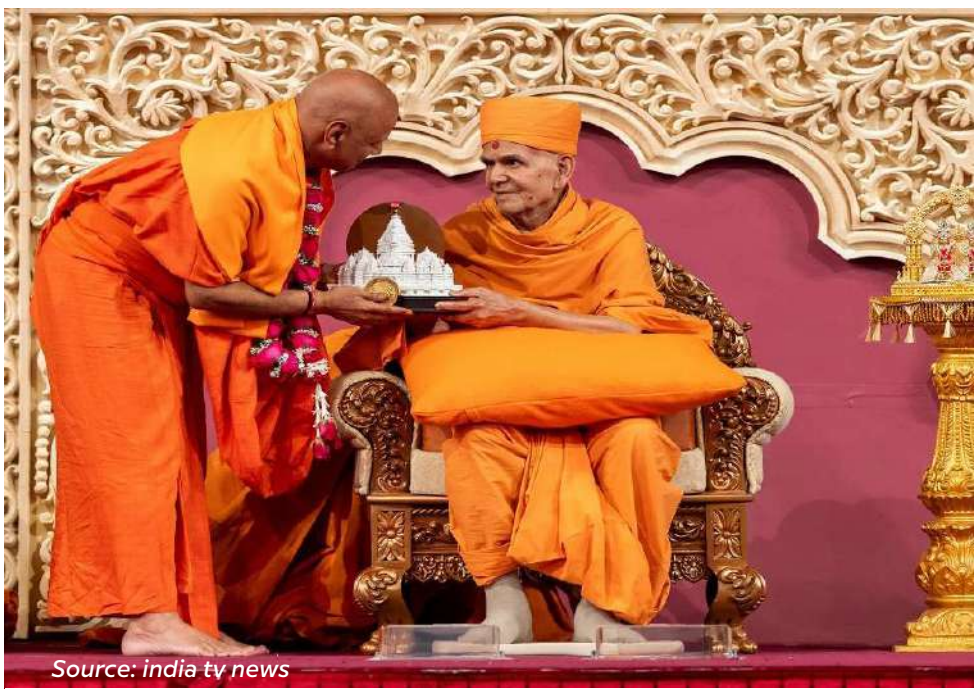
For policymakers and city leaders watching New York's own tourism economy, the show offered a useful template: sustained, year-on-year engagement, a flagship pavilion placed at a high-traffic gateway, and close coordination between a foreign mission, airlines, and private tour brands to convert curiosity into booked itineraries and deeper people-to-people ties.

DHS Eases Visa Path for Religious Leaders Nationwide

New Rule Ends Mandatory Year-Long Exile, Bolstering Faith Communities

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, under Secretary Kristi Noem's leadership, has enacted an interim final rule that slashes wait times for thousands of religious workers abroad, enabling priests, nuns, rabbis, and other clergy to swiftly resume vital roles in American congregations.

Previously, R-1 visa holders reaching their five-year stay limit faced a rigid one-year foreign residency mandate before reentry; now, that barrier is gone, offering immediate relief amid EB-4 immigrant visa backlogs exacerbated since 2023.


Source: india tv news

Mahant Swami Maharaj

A DHS spokesperson emphasized the administration's resolve: "Pastors, priests, nuns, and rabbis are essential to the social and moral fabric of this country." This aligns with President Trump's Executive Order 14205, fortifying the White House Faith Office's mission to safeguard religious liberty. Effective at once, the measure invites public comments for 60 days post-Federal Register publication, heralding stability for synagogues, mosques, churches, and beyond.

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In-person only

Feb 21 2026

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM ET

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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

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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

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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

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COMMUNITY NEWS

New York Indian Consulate Hosts India's 77th Republic Day

Senior U.S. Officials Join Indian Consulate Reception Celebrating Constitutional Ideals and a Strengthening Bilateral Partnership

The Consulate General of India in New York hosted a distinguished Republic Day reception at the Pierre Hotel on February 1 to mark India's 77th Republic Day, bringing together senior elected officials and influential leaders from across the region. Governor Matt Meyer of Delaware joined Congressman Nick LaLota, Congressman Mike Lawler, and Congresswoman Laura Gillen, alongside New York State Assemblywoman Jennifer Rajkumar and Edison, New Jersey Mayor Sam Joshi. Their participation signaled a clear, bipartisan commitment to strengthening engagement with India and with Indian-origin communities that are deeply woven into the civic and economic fabric of the United States.

FIA attended the Republic Day event, the reception convened government representatives, business executives, academics, cultural figures, and media leaders, highlighting both the breadth and maturity of the India-U.S. partnership. Speakers underscored the enduring values of India's Constitution and its vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047, echoing themes from the President of India's Republic Day address. They also acknowledged the outsized role of Indian-origin professionals in driving innovation, investment, and job creation in key states such as New York, New Jersey, and Delaware, particularly in technology, healthcare, higher education, and small business.

The evening conveyed a forward-looking message: that closer collaboration between New Delhi

















Source: Instagram (@ indiainnewyork)

Continued on next page

and Washington, grounded in shared democratic principles and expanding people-to-people ties, will remain central to economic opportunity, resilience, and strategic stability in the years ahead.

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The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) – representing New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and New England (FIA-NY-NJ-CT-NE) – attended the Republic Day celebration, reaffirming its steadfast partnership with the Consulate and its continued efforts in promoting India's cultural heritage and fostering unity among the Indian diaspora. Members of the FIA delegation interacted with dignitaries, community leaders, and Consulate officials, underscoring the organization's ongoing commitment to building bridges between India and the U.S. through cultural, social, and philanthropic initiatives. FIA's participation also highlighted the growing influence of the Indian-American community in the socio-economic and political landscape of the region.

The reception convened government representatives, business executives, academics, cultural figures, and media leaders, highlighting both the breadth and maturity of the India–U.S. partnership. Speakers underscored the enduring values of India's Constitution and its vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047, echoing themes from the President of India's Republic Day address. They also acknowledged the remarkable contributions of Indian-origin professionals in driving innovation, investment, and job creation in key states such as New York, New Jersey, and Delaware, particularly in technology, healthcare, higher education, and small business.

The evening carried a spirit of celebration and renewed purpose. Performances by local artists added a touch of cultural vibrancy, while lively exchanges among guests reflected the warmth and optimism defining India–U.S. relations today. The event concluded with an emphasis on collective progress, recognizing that closer collaboration between New Delhi and Washington, grounded in shared democratic principles and expanding people-to-people ties, will continue to drive economic opportunity, resilience, and strategic stability in the years ahead.







Source: Instagram (@indiainnewyork)

BAPS Sets Guinness World Record for the Largest Simultaneous Hindu Text Recital

Record set by 12,723 children during Mahant Swami Maharaj's birthday celebration

The grand celebration of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj's birthday, the spiritual leader of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, took place on February 2, 2026, drawing more than 200,000 devotees from around the world. The event became the setting for a remarkable global achievement as BAPS set a Guinness World Record for the largest simultaneous Hindu text recital by children.

The record was set when 12,723 children gathered to recite the Satsang Diksha, a sacred Sanskrit scripture composed by Mahant Swami Maharaj. The recitation was officially recognized by Guinness World Records as the highest number of children simultaneously reciting Sanskrit verses. A Certificate of Recognition was formally presented to Mahant Swami Maharaj during the celebration. See the video of the event at baps.sl/worldrecord

Inspired by Mahant Swami Maharaj's guidance and encouragement, a total of 15,666 children between the ages of 3 and 13 completed the full memorization and recitation of the Satsang Diksha within one year. Out of these, 12,723 children participated in the live recitation at Vadodara, fulfilling the criteria set by Guinness World Records.

The Satsang Diksha consists of 315 Sanskrit shlokas and offers practical guidance for spiritual growth, moral conduct, social harmony, and disciplined living. Children participating in the record included hundreds from the United States and Canada, reflecting the global reach of BAPS and the growing interest among Indian American families in traditional learning.

Guinness World Records officials traveled from England to personally verify and confirm the achievement. Following a thorough review process, the officials formally declared the recital as a world record, honoring the children's dedication and the collective effort behind the initiative.

Although the event took place in India, its impact resonated strongly with Indian American communities. Parents described the experience as a meaningful alternative to screen-heavy routines common in modern education. In contrast to classrooms where students often shift between devices and notifications, the Sanskrit recitation required focus, memorization, discipline, and sustained effort over several months.



Param Patel, a participant from Edison, New Jersey, shared that the preparation took months of consistent practice. "At first I thought it was too hard," he said. "But once I finished, I felt more confident. It showed me I can stick with something."

Six-year-old Anadi Tailor from Atlanta said memorizing the verses helped her apply values in everyday life. "I remember the words when I am at school," she said. "They help me make good choices."

Another participant, Vani Patel from Los Angeles, described the emotional impact of reciting with thousands of children. "It felt powerful to say the words together," she said.

Sanskrit, one of the world's oldest recorded languages, is known for its precise grammar and deep philosophical tradition. Scholars continue to study it for its linguistic structure, while families value its role in character-building and classical education. Organizers carefully selected participants based on their accuracy, commitment, and sincerity, ensuring the recital's quality and authenticity.

Educators and psychologists have long emphasized the benefits of structured, goal-oriented learning activities for children. According to organizers, the mass recitation was designed not only to set a record but also to promote focus, memory, perseverance, and collaboration—skills essential for childhood development.





Continued on next page

Beyond the record-setting event, the celebration featured spectacular cultural presentations with hundreds of performers, immersive video segments, and inspiring addresses, creating a powerful and memorable program for attendees. During the event, Mahant Swami Maharaj inaugurated a Mobile School initiative for tribal regions under the theme "Har Ghar Shiksha Ki Jyot Jale," highlighting BAPS' ongoing commitment to education and social upliftment.

At the conclusion of the celebration, Mahant Swami Maharaj addressed the gathering with heartfelt words. Reflecting on the legacy of the BAPS gurus, he said, "The honor received from Guinness World Records today is the result of the children's sincere and tireless efforts, and it is dedicated to all the gurus. The sadhus, volunteers, and parents have worked with great dedication—this recognition belongs to them."

The event was attended by Honorable Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Bhupendrabhai Patel, and Honorable Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Mohan Yadav, as special guests. A letter of greetings from the Honorable Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation, Shri Amitbhai Shah, was also read out on the occasion.

The record-setting recital highlighted unity, discipline, and values-based learning among children. It also reflected the strength of BAPS children's activities, guided by Mahant Swami Maharaj, in helping pass on Hindu values to the next generation.

About BAPS

BAPS is a spiritual, volunteer-driven fellowship dedicated to improving society through individual growth, by fostering values of faith, service, and global harmony. BAPS runs on the dedication and commitment of tens of thousands of full-time and part-time volunteers from diverse professional and social backgrounds who contribute millions of volunteer hours annually. In more than 100 communities in North America and 3,500 communities worldwide, BAPS plays a pivotal role in preserving and nurturing Indian traditions and values of Hindu culture while addressing the spiritual, moral, and social challenges in the world. Under the guidance of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, BAPS' current spiritual leader, the organization works to promote spiritual equality, advocate for social reform, and empower marginalized voices regardless of their class, race, gender, or religion.



About Mahant Swami Maharaj

His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj is the sixth and current spiritual successor of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He was ordained a swami by Yogiji Maharaj in 1961 and named Sadhu Keshavjivandas. As he was appointed the head (Mahant) of the Mandir in Mumbai, he became known as Mahant Swami. His devout, humble, and service-focused life earned him the innermost blessings of Yogiji Maharaj and Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Mahant Swami Maharaj travels throughout the world inspiring people through his insightful spiritual discourses and disciplined conduct. His virtuous lifestyle and profound devotion to Bhagwan Swaminarayan and gurus are ideals toward which devotees strive. Mahant Swami Maharaj became the guru and President of BAPS upon Pramukh Swami Maharaj's passing in 2016.







This is How India Honored its 77th Republic Day: A Grand Celebration of Unity



Source: economic times


Source: iimb.ac.in


Source: The Hindu



Source: iimb.ac.in


Source: Hindu Post


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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:

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Sanjay: 6462281002
Amit: 6098656456
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Grand and Historic Celebration of Uttar Pradesh Diwas by UPFNA in New Jersey

Today, the Uttar Pradesh Federation of North America (UPFNA) organized a grand and dignified celebration of Uttar Pradesh Diwas in New Jersey. This occasion was historic, as it marked the first-ever celebration of Uttar Pradesh Diwas outside India and the United States.

On this auspicious occasion, UPFNA received the blessings and goodwill of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Yogi Adityanath Ji. He addressed the Pravasi Uttar Pradesh community with an inspiring message that filled everyone with pride and enthusiasm.

On this occasion, UPFNA received congratulatory messages and letters from several distinguished dignitaries, including:

Hon'ble Shri Jitan Ram Manjhi Ji, Union Minister (MSME), Government of India

Hon'ble Shri Manoj Sinha Ji, Lieutenant Governor, Jammu & Kashmir

Hon'ble Shri Arif Mohammad Khan Ji, Governor of Bihar Shri Jayveer Singh Ji, Minister of Tourism, Uttar Pradesh.

- Shri J. P. S. Rathore Ji, Minister of Cooperation, Uttar Pradesh
- Shri Daya Shankar Singh Ji, Minister of Transport, Uttar Pradesh
- Dr. Daya Shankar Mishra Ji, Minister of AYUSH, Uttar Pradesh
- Dr. D. P. Ji, Educational Advisor to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh
- Shri Krishan Pal Panwar Ji, Cabinet Minister (Panchayati Raj, Development, Mines & Geology), Government of Haryana
- Dr. Arvind Sharma Ji, Minister of Tourism, Haryana
- Padma Bhushan awardee Prof. R. B. Singh Ji
- Padma Shri awardee Shri Kailash Kher Ji Shri Devkinandan Thakur Ji, renowned spiritual leader Shri Prabal Pratap Singh Ji, Co-founder, Aaj Tak.

The Chief Guests for the program were: Shri Piyush Singh Ji, Consulate General of India – Media & Culture Department Mr. Derek Armstead, Hon'ble Mayor of Linden, New Jersey

The event received active support from several prominent community organizations. Notable contributors included Mr. Surjal Parikh (Joint Secretary, FIA), Ms. Priti Patel (Secretary, FIA), Mr. Alok Kumar (Board Member, FIA); Mr. Sanjay Gupta (President, VHP America – New Jersey); Ms. Priti Kashyap (President, Bajana) with Mr. Sushant (Vice President); and Ms. Archana Sharma (UPAGP).

It was especially noteworthy that despite a state-level emergency and extreme cold temperatures of –14 degrees Celsius, members of the Uttar Pradesh community celebrated Uttar Pradesh Diwas with remarkable enthusiasm, devotion, and unity.

The program was successfully coordinated by Shri Prashant K. S. Dikshit, Founder and Trustee, UPFNA. The event was conducted with grace and excellence by Smt. Neeta Tyagi Ji.

The vote of thanks was delivered by Shri Amit Gupta Ji, in the esteemed presence of Trustees Dr. Shiv Shahi Ji and Shri Amit Kumar Ji. The program also received active support from the following office bearers: **Vice President: Ms. Alpana Singh Secretary: Ms. Alpana Pathak Treasurer: Mr. Saurabh Gupta**

A special highlight of the program was the collective rendition of "Vande Mataram", presented to mark the completion of its 150th anniversary, which was deeply emotional and filled with patriotic fervor. Additionally, sacred Prasad from the Shri Ram Lalla Temple in Ayodhya was distributed among all devotees present, creating a spiritually uplifting and devotional atmosphere.

The Uttar Pradesh Diwas celebration held in New Jersey emerged as a powerful symbol of cultural pride, unity, devotion, and the strong, vibrant connections of people from Uttar Pradesh living across the world.







NOW HIRING

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Email resumes & supporting documents to
admn.newyork@mea.gov.in
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Deadlines for submission:
December 22, 2025 - Messenger/MTS
December 26, 2025 - Local Clerk

Consulate General of India
New York

ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR

Local Clerk

- **Qualifications & Skills:** Graduate from a recognized institution with good communication skills in English (written and spoken); must have proficiency in MS Office and good typing speed. Knowledge of Hindi, India, and Indian culture is a plus.
- **Experience**: 1-2 years of experience in similar roles preferred; freshers are also welcome to apply.
- **Pay Scale:** USD 4,490 per month.

Messenger/Multi-Tasking Staff

- **Qualifications:** High School pass or equivalent; good communication skills in English; basic computer knowledge.
- **Work Profile:** Includes office maintenance, dispatch of correspondence, record keeping, photocopying, assisting during events, serving refreshments, and protocol duties for delegations; other tasks as assigned by the Consulate.
- **Pay Scale:** USD 3,970 per month.

Only candidates currently in the USA with valid work permits (US citizens or permanent residents) may apply

NEWSMAKERS

Indian-Americans Shine in 2026 Padma Honors

Physicians and Tennis Icon Earn India's Top Civilian Accolades

Three accomplished Indian-origin professionals based in the United States have been named among the 131 recipients of the prestigious Padma Awards for 2026, announced by the Ministry of Home Affairs on the eve of Republic Day. The awards include five Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan, and 113 Padma Shri honor exemplary contributions across diverse fields.

Dr. Nori Dattatreyudu, a renowned radiation oncologist from Andhra Pradesh, has been conferred the Padma Bhushan for his pioneering work in cancer treatment. Currently practicing in the U.S., Dr. Nori's research and policy contributions with the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency have shaped global standards in radiation therapy.

Tennis icon Vijay Amritraj, already a Padma Shri awardee, has also been elevated to the Padma Bhushan. His storied career, boasting 16 singles titles, Davis Cup leadership, and an International Tennis Hall of Fame induction, continues to inspire generations, both on and off the court.



L to R, Dr. Dattatreyudu Nori , Vijay Amritraj, Prateek Sharma

Completing the U.S.-based trio, Dr. Prateek Sharma has been honored with the Padma Shri for his pathbreaking advances in gastrointestinal endoscopy and cancer diagnostics. As president of the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, Dr. Sharma has led innovations that significantly enhance patient care.

The 2026 Padma Awards celebrate not only individual excellence but also the enduring global influence of the Indian diaspora in strengthening India's presence on the world stage.

Rep. Ami Bera Delivers $23 Million Windfall to Sacramento Families

Congressman's office slashes federal red tape, aiding over 35,000 constituents

U.S. Representative Ami Bera's office has reclaimed more than $23 million in federal benefits for Sacramento County residents, demonstrating accessible government service. The milestone, announced this week, underscores over a decade of dedicated casework that has assisted more than 35,000 individuals in navigating bureaucratic challenges with agencies like the IRS, Social Security Administration, and Department of Veterans Affairs.

From expediting tax refunds to securing Medicare payments for seniors and VA benefits for veterans, Bera's team has turned potential oversights into tangible relief for hardworking families. "I'm proud to announce that my office has helped recover more than $23 million in federal benefits owed to Sacramento County taxpayers," Bera stated, inviting constituents to reach out. This achievement builds on prior successes, including a $19 million recovery noted in 2024, reflecting sustained commitment to fiscal accountability and community support.



Indian American Congressman Ami Bera

For Sacramento's diverse residents, including those with roots in India, such initiatives affirm the value of responsive representation in Congress, fostering trust in federal systems amid everyday financial pressures. Bera's proactive approach to constituent service highlights his belief that governance extends beyond legislation, it includes real, measurable assistance that improves daily lives. His office continues to hold regular outreach events and resource fairs to ensure federal aid reaches those most in need.

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Format: Word document, 300–400 words
Themes: Breakthrough moments, cultural pride, faith journeys, community wins, or messages of unity.



Don't just post it on WhatsApp - publish it, inspire others, and let your voice travel across borders.



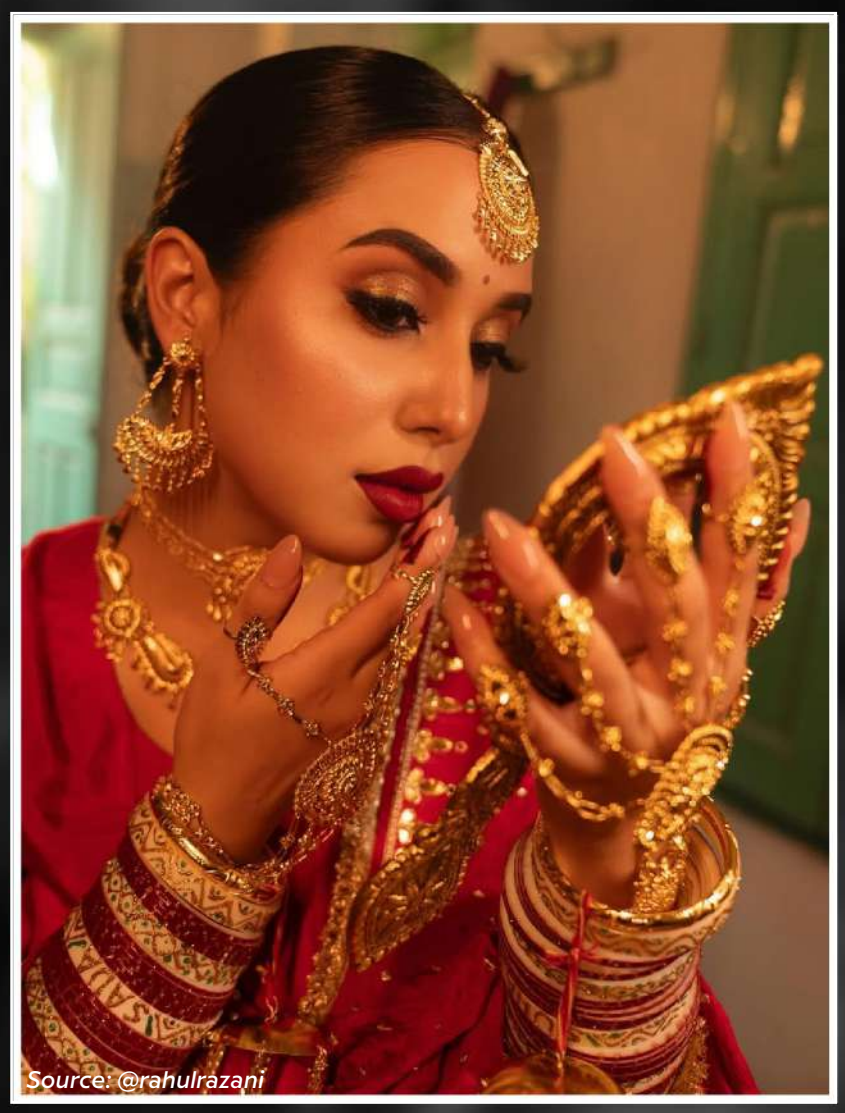
Source: @Freepik

WHEN HER MAKEUP SPEAKS : BRIDAL FACES ACROSS INDIA

The Punjabi Bride: Bold Eyes, Unapologetic Joy

A Punjabi bride doesn't enter a room, she claims it. Her eyes speak first: thick black kajal extends beyond the lash line, almost like an exclamation mark drawn in kohl, announcing her arrival even before the dhol starts beating. The lids shimmer with warm golds and bronzes, deepened with browns that create a cinematic kind of drama, perfect for nights filled with dancing, teasing, and family banter. The brows are full and arched, a strong frame for a face that's used to laughter and a thousand cousins calling her name at once.

Her cheeks are sculpted like a heroine's contour and highlighter working together to carve out sharp cheekbones that catch the light under crystal chandeliers and fairy lights. The lips are where tradition sits proudly: bridal reds, orange-reds, or rich berries that refuse to be subtle, much like the Punjabi spirit itself. Around this carefully crafted face, there is no shortage of competition chooda stacked high on her arms, kaleere brushing against her wrists, heavy kadas, layered haars, and jhumkas that sway with every nod of her head. Yet the makeup never disappears under the jewellery; it stands tall beside it.


Source: @rahulrazani

Every stroke on a Punjabi bride's face feels intentional, like a line in a poem written about joy. Her look doesn't whisper; it declares: "I am here, I am radiant, and I am not afraid to take up space." In that bold wing of liner, in that unapologetic red lip, you see the story of a community that celebrates loudly, loves wholeheartedly, and believes that a wedding is not a delicate ritual it's a full-blown festival of life.


Source: @rahulrazani


Source: @rajindermakeoverz


Source: @rahulrazani

EMERGENCY KIT ESSENTIALS

- Pack a small bridal survival kit with these must-haves, often entrusted to a bridesmaid or maid of honor
- Safety pins (small and medium sizes) to secure loose gown fabric, hold back hair, pin bustles, or clip boutonnieres.
- Bobby pins in matching shades for last-minute hair fixes.
- Tissues and blotting papers to manage happy tears or shine without smudging makeup.
- Mini sewing kit with white thread for hems or buttons.
- Blister plasters, painkillers, and mints for comfort during long hours.



The Maharashtrian Bride: Morning Light & Maroon Grace

The Maharashtrian bride often gets ready before the city fully wakes up. The sun is still gentle, the air is cool, and her makeup is crafted for the soft honesty of daylight. Her face doesn't rely on glitter or heavy drama; instead, it glows with a muted, earthy elegance. Warm bronze, copper, and terracotta tones echo the colours of the soil and the old wadas of Pune and Kolhapur, blending seamlessly with the deep reds and saffron hues of her Nauvari saree.

Her eyes are defined but never harsh. Kohl is applied with restraint, tracing her lash line just enough to bring warmth and expression without taking over her face. A wash of warm eyeshadow gives dimension, while the brows stay close to their natural shape neat, groomed, but not overdone. The skin looks luminous yet matte, as if painted for an old oil portrait, created to age beautifully in framed wedding photos that will hang in family homes for decades.

Then come the lips: deep maroon, wine, or burgundy shades that feel rooted, dignified, and quietly powerful. This is not a look that clamors for attention; it gently commands respect. Paired with the distinctive crescent-shaped chandrakor bindi and a nose pin or nath that curves gracefully, the Maharashtrian bride looks like she could step out of a Peshwa-era painting and still fit right into a modern wedding mandap.

Her makeup tells a story of discipline, tradition, and refinement beauty that doesn't chase trends, but sits firmly in its own timeless place.



Source: @maharashtrian_wedding

MAKEUP KIT ESSENTIALS

- Stock a compact pouch with these bridal must-haves for shine control and freshness.
- Blotting sheets or pressed powder to tame T-zone oil without smudging foundation.
- Creamy concealer for under-eye circles or minor blemishes, blended with fingers.
- Lipstick and liner in your shade for reapplying after kisses or toasts.
- Setting spray (travel-size) to lock in look post-touch-up.

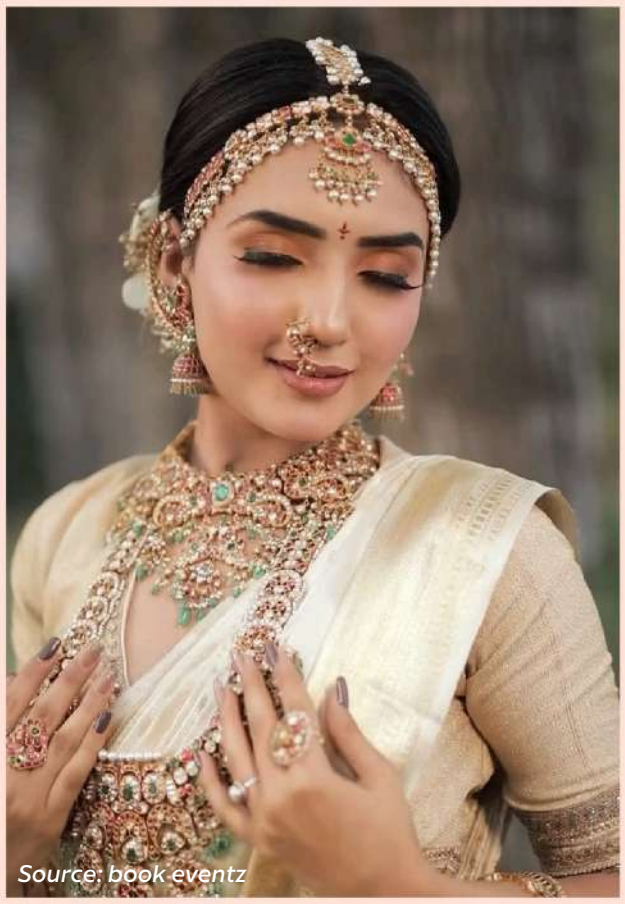
QUICK APPLICATION TIPS

- Pat blotting papers gently on oily areas, then dust powder lightly with a brush for a matte finish.
- Dab concealer sparingly on trouble spots and set with spray to avoid creasing during humid Indian outdoor events.
- Refresh lips by lining first, filling with lipstick, and blotting for longevity, ideal for multi-day celebrations like Haldi to reception.

The South Indian Bride : Temple Goddess in Silk



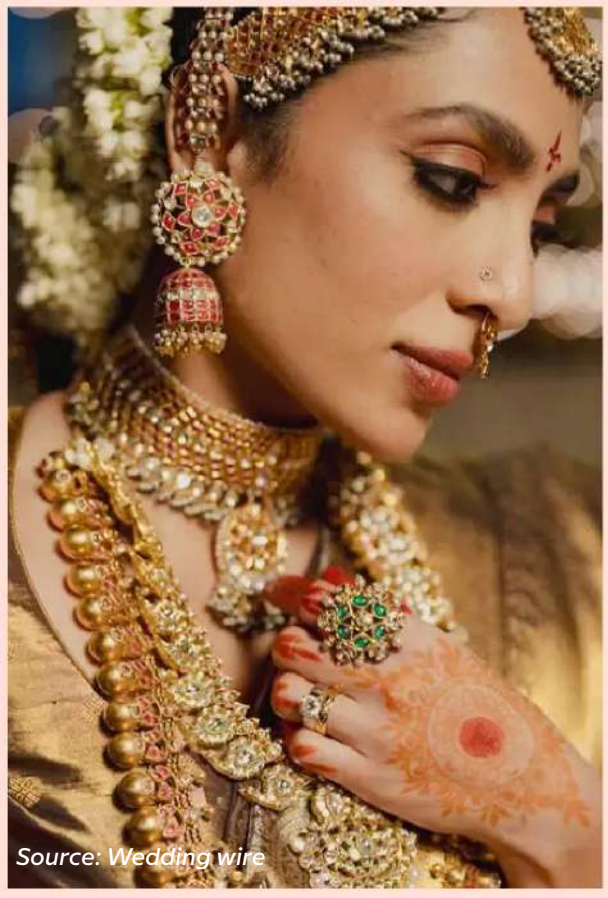
Source: South India Fashion



Source: book eventz



Source: South India Fashion



Source: Wedding wire



Source: book eventz

When a South Indian bride steps out in her Kanjeevaram or heavy silk saree, she doesn't just look dressed she looks consecrated. Her makeup is deeply inspired by temple sculptures and classical dance: every line, every highlight, every bindi placed with almost devotional precision. Her eyes are the centrepiece. Thick kajal lines her waterline and extends into a fine wing that recalls the eyes of goddesses carved in stone, or the dramatic looks of Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dancers. A touch of gold or copper eyeshadow sits on her lids, mirroring the intricate gold jewellery that adorns her forehead, neck, and hairline.

The brows are full, symmetrical, and strong no room for casual asymmetry here. Balance is beauty in South Indian aesthetics, and her face reflects that philosophy. The bindi is often larger, more ornate, sometimes accompanied by smaller dots or designs that follow the arch of her brows. Her lips, in deep red, warm nude, or mauve, never look washed out; they anchor the face and complete the frame created by the saree's bold borders and the long braid woven with flowers and jewellery.

Her skin carries a matte, almost porcelain-like finish, the result not just of makeup, but of weeks of traditional skincare turmeric, sandalwood paste, oil massages, and ubtan rituals that prepare her like one gets a deity ready for a festival. She often chooses a makeup artist who understands not just technique, but temple aesthetics and ritual context. The result is a look that doesn't simply match the outfit; it matches the sound of the nadaswaram, the fragrance of jasmine, and the weight of centuries of tradition resting softly on her shoulders.

The Bengali Bride : Poetry in Red and Gold

A Bengali bride looks like she has walked out of a Rabindranath Tagore verse soft, luminous, and quietly intense. Her makeup begins with the skin: a smooth, radiant base that leans towards a brighter, fairer finish, echoing long-standing local beauty standards. There's a softness to her face, as if everything has been blended a little extra, so no hard edges remain. Her eyes are lined, but the kajal doesn't scream; it defines her gaze while letting the emotions in her eyes remain visible and tender. On the lids, gentle shades like pinks, mauves, or delicate gold add romance, not drama.

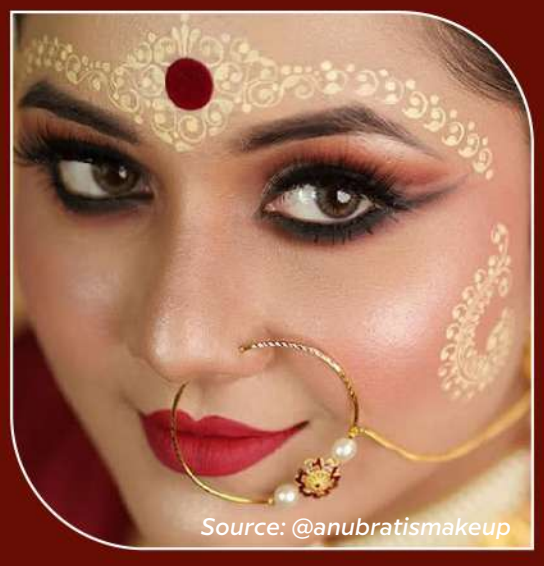
What sets her apart is the artistry around her forehead. The big red bindi, often framed with white designs painted in shringar style, turns her face into a canvas. These intricate white patterns can curve along her brows or crown her bindi, making her look almost like a living painting. Her lips are traditionally a deep, rich red, reminiscent of sindoor and alta, though modern brides sometimes soften this with berry tones or romantic nudes that still keep the overall look gentle.

She wears her red and white Benarasi saree like a story of identity, gold zari catching the light as she moves through rituals filled with conch shells, dhunuchi smoke, and ululation. Her makeup never feels like a mask; it feels like an enhancement of her natural softness and grace. A Bengali bride's face tells a story of romance, nostalgia, and quiet strength, where every glance feels like a line of poetry and every smile holds the promise of a new chapter.

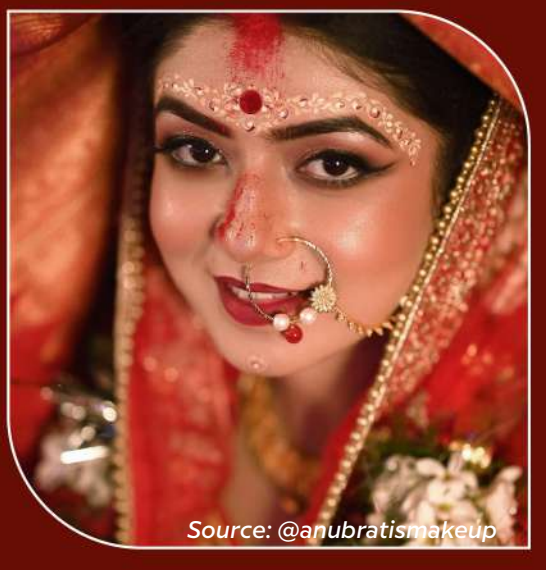

Source: sacred shaadi

ESSENTIAL TIPS

- Eyes: Mauve/pink-gold shadows, thin kajal smudged for tender definition.
- Skin & Base: Dewy, radiant foundation 1 shade brighter for a lit-from-within glow. Blend extra soft; colour-correct mouth/ eyes for evenness.


Source: @anubratismakeup


Source: @anubratismakeup


Source: @anubratismakeup

- Bindi & Forehead Bold red bindi with delicate white chandan curves framing brows.
- Saree & Balance: Bengali drape (pleats left); match gold tones, keep one hero element dominant.
- Lips & Blush: Warm red/ berry lips; rose blush high on cheeks.
- Wedding-day: Do a full trial with your MUA in the same kind of lighting and in your actual saree shade to check how the red, bindi and eye look sit together.

The Gujarati Bride: Luminous, Joyfully Grounded

The Gujarati bride is all about radiance inside and out. She doesn't believe in masking her features or hiding behind layers of makeup. Her beauty is an open celebration, a mirror of the warmth and joy that define her culture. Her face is not built for mystery or shadow; it's crafted to glow in the middle of a garba circle, under strings of fairy lights, surrounded by cousins, music, laughter, and the rhythmic swirl of skirts. When you see her, you don't just see a bride you see a spirit in constant motion, luminous yet grounded, modern yet unmistakably traditional.Her skin tells a story before her words do.

The base is always kept fresh, bright, and luminous meant to enhance her natural glow rather than transform her features. It's the kind of radiance that feels almost alive, like morning sunlight kissing polished brass. Whether she's dressed in the classic Panetar saree which is a symbol of purity and auspicious beginnings with its white body and deep red border or the intricate Gharchola woven with gold zari, her complexion carries a warmth that pairs beautifully with the rich tones of her attire. Luminizing foundations, soft highlighters, and a whisper of blush create that signature lit-from-within glow, making her appear as if she's perpetually bathed in divine light.

Her eyes are a balance of grace and spirit. Unlike the dramatic smokes of a North Indian bridal look, the Gujarati bride prefers soft, soulful definition earthy browns, champagne golds, and gentle bronzes that catch the light in ways that feel natural, not ornate. The eyeshadow blends seamlessly, reflecting subtle sophistication rather than bold contrast. A thin line of eyeliner follows the curve of her lashes, accentuated with kajal that adds intensity without severity. Her brows, perfectly groomed, do more than frame her face, they express her every emotion through the ceremonies: the quiet nervousness of the mandap entry, the shy joy of meeting her groom's eyes, the tears of farewell during the bidaai. Lips, for her, are about harmony. The shades are thoughtfully chosen; soft pinks for morning rituals, corals for sangeet nights, or deep, vintage reds for the final wedding moment. In every case, her lips echo the tones in her jewellery and outfit, completing the portrait of subtle coordination that Gujarati brides master so effortlessly. It's a kind of poetic styling, each colour inspired by marigolds, mehendi, turmeric, and sindoor. At the heart of her beauty lies an authenticity that goes far beyond technique. It's not about contour lines or high-definition finishes. It's about feeling.

The Gujarati bride glows because she's surrounded by love, because her wedding is as much about her family and community as it is about herself. Her makeup reflects her mood that is joyful, emotional, grounded. When she smiles, her entire face brightens; when she cries, even her tears seem touched by gold dust.The Gujarati bride is the personification of suhag-auspiciousness, vitality, devotion. She doesn't merely wear her bridal look; she lives it. Every brushstroke, every jewel, every colour choice connects her to her roots.



Source: @Manubhai Jewellers

The Hyderabadi Bride: Nizami Opulence with a Modern Heart

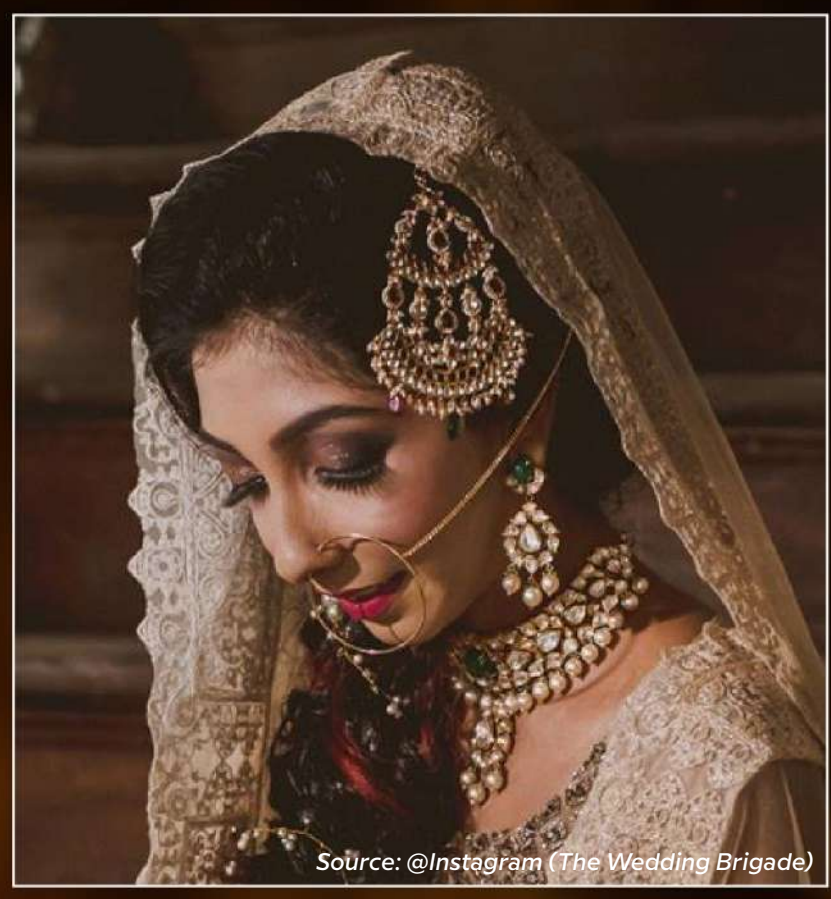
A Hyderabadi bride often looks like royalty from another era who has gracefully stepped into the present. There's something timeless about her presence, as if she carries the echoes of palaces, pearls, and poetry in every step. Her beauty isn't just in the way she dresses or wears her jewellery; it's in the aura she carries, one of quiet grandeur, of pride laced with grace. Her bridal look is a tribute to the old-world charm of the Nizams, infused with the sophistication of modern artistry.

Her makeup begins with a canvas as polished and flawless as porcelain, glowing softly like light reflected off marble floors in an ancient haveli. The base is luminous but never harsh; it has that delicate, candlelit finish that mirrors the warm flicker of chandeliers suspended above royal dining halls. Every brushstroke feels deliberate, intended to preserve that seamless harmony between tradition and modern refinement. The eyes are always the centrepiece. They speak volumes about the soulful elegance synonymous with Hyderabadi beauty. Shades of gold, champagne, and smoky copper shimmer across the lids, as if capturing the hues of antique jewelry and intricately carved brass lamps. Kajal and eyeliner trace the natural almond shape of her eyes, giving them that dreamy, story-filled depth that has long been the heart of Deccani allure.

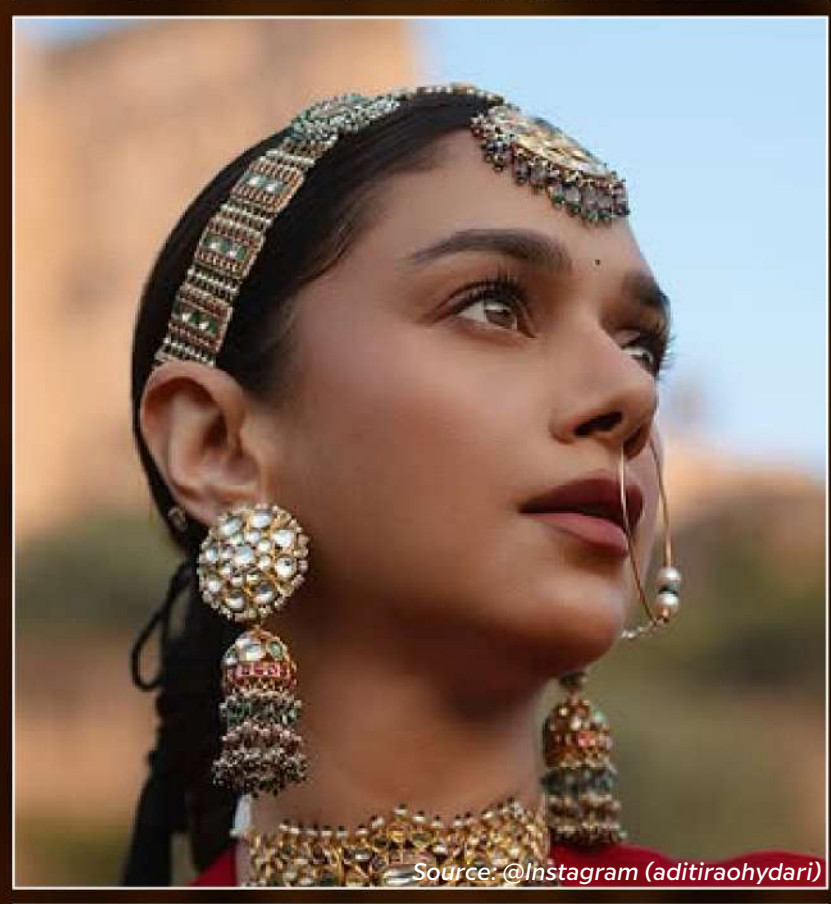
When she looks up, her gaze carries both softness and strength a reminder of women who wore veils of restraint yet ruled with unmistakable authority inside gilded walls. Her brows are perfectly shaped, symmetrical, and deliberate neither overly arched nor too sparse. They lend structural integrity to a face kissed with gentle hues of blush in rose or peach. This flush of colour adds vitality, a subtle warmth that balances the metallic undertones of her eyes and the opulence of her attire. Her lips, painted in shades of regal red, deep mulberry, or velvety pink, complete the story. Each tint echoes confidence, the kind that has long defined Hyderabadi women, known for their refinement, wit, and love for artistry. But what truly completes her transformation is the adornment.

A classic jhoomar (or passa) graces one side of her forehead, catching the light with every movement, as delicate as drops of dawn dew caught on silk.She embodies the very spirit of Hyderabad: a city that thrives on contrasts where Urdu poetry meets cutting-edge design. Whether she's walking down the carved corridor of a heritage venue for her nikah or entering a glittering modern banquet hall for her reception, her look adapts effortlessly to both spaces.

The Hyderabadi bride doesn't just wear makeup, she wears meaning. She honours her lineage and the city's Mughal-Deccani fusion culture, yet she carries herself with the assurance of a woman defining beauty on her own terms. Her face is a celebration of the past and a vision for the future a living reminder that elegance isn't frozen in time; it evolves, refines, and redefines itself through every generation. Her quiet poise seems to whisper, "I carry history, but I also write my own chapter."



Source: @Instagram (The Wedding Brigade)



Source: @Instagram (aditiraohydari)



Source: @Instagram (aditiraohydari)

Source: @Instagram (The Wedding Brigade)



The Kashmiri Pandit Bride: Snowlight and Subtlety

A Kashmiri Pandit bride carries the quiet drama of the mountains with her. Her makeup rarely shouts; it glows. The base is fresh and luminous, designed to look like naturally healthy skin touched by crisp air, rather than heavily layered coverage. Her eyes are enhanced with soft kajal and neutral shadows that are browns, taupes, or gentle golds that define her gaze without stealing attention from her traditional jewellery.

Key to her look are the cultural markers: the dejhoor earrings, hanging delicately from threads tied into her hair, and the ornamental headpiece or tarang that adds layered colour and structure to her bridal presence. Her brows are defined but not over-sculpted, maintaining a softness that suits the overall aesthetic. Lips tend to be in the range of rose, muted red, or soft berry; shades that bring life to her face while staying understated.



There is something distinctly serene about a Kashmiri bride's makeup. It feels less like "bridal transformation" and more like a gentle elevation of her natural features. In the middle of rituals, hymns, and family blessings, her face reflects a kind of quiet resilience and grace. It tells the story of a community shaped by history, rooted in ritual, and deeply connected to its homeland, even when the wedding itself might be taking place miles away from the Valley.

MAKEUP & STYLING TIPS INSPIRED BY KASHMIRI BRIDAL

- Prioritize luminous, breathable skin over full coverage. Use a light foundation mixed with moisturizer for a "snow-kissed" finish.
- Stick to earthy tones for the eyes soft browns, taupe, or muted golds that mirror the hues of the valley.
- Use a kajal pencil to define the eyes subtly, smudging slightly for a natural softness.
- Choose lip shades in rose, muted red, or berry tones, reflecting understated elegance.
- Keep brows natural and softly arched, avoiding heavy sculpting. Add a hint of highlighter to the cheekbones and bridge of the nose for that crisp, mountain-inspired glow.



Source: Wed Me Good

CULTURAL RITUAL HIGHLIGHTS

Livun: Cleansing the home to welcome divine energy.
Divagon: Dual-family puja invoking Ganesha's blessings.
Haenz: The saffron-turmeric ceremony, believed to bring glow and blessings.
Dejhoor: The symbolic thread earring marking marital sanctity.
Tarang: Layered headgear denoting purity and joy.
Lagan: The wedding ritual centered on spiritual bonding.
Satraat: The post-wedding reunion with the bride's family.

The Rajasthani Bride: Desert Royalty in Full Colour

A Rajasthani bride is nothing short of regal. Her makeup must stand shoulder to shoulder with leheriya, bandhani, heavy gota-patti, and jewellery that looks like it belongs in a royal treasury. Her eyes are bold, lined heavily with kajal that wraps around the waterline and extends outward, giving her gaze an intense, queen-like quality. Golds, bronzes, and coppers dominate her lids, echoing the mirage-like shimmer of the desert sun.

Her skin often carries a dewy yet durable finish built to withstand long hours of rituals, outdoor functions, and sometimes even desert heat. Contour and highlight help define her features, ensuring that every angle looks sculpted beneath her odhni and heavy matha patti. The lips are nearly always strong players: deep reds, maroons, or wine tones that stand up to the vivid colours of her poshak or lehenga.

A small but impactful detail is the bindi often rich red, sometimes elongated or paired with smaller dots, adding to the regal symmetry of her face. Together with the nath, borla, chokers, and long necklaces, her makeup completes a look that feels like living royalty rather than costume. The Rajasthani bride's face tells the story of palaces, folk songs, and proud warrior-queens. She doesn't just look "bridal"; she looks like she carries a kingdom in the way she holds her eyes and lifts her chin.

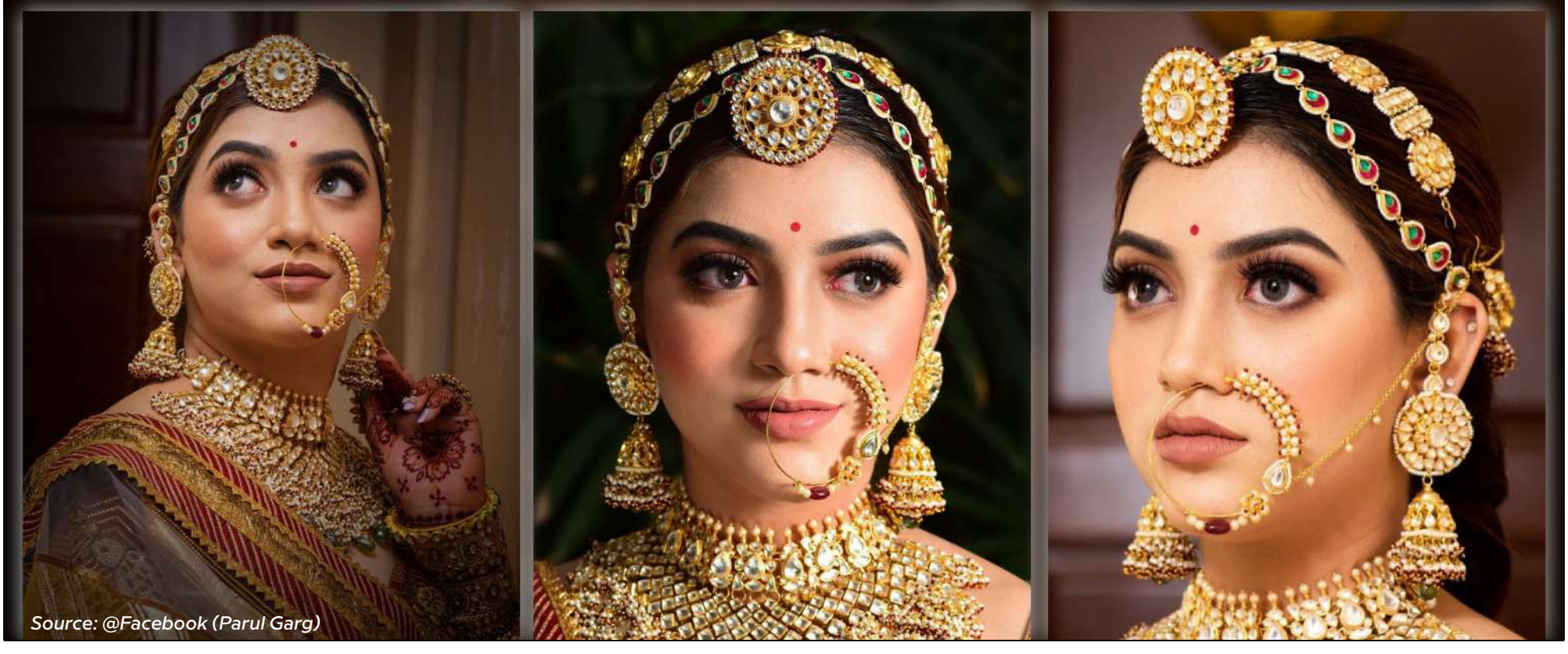
Her look is never just about surface beauty, it's steeped in symbolism. Each stroke of kajal, each gold hue on her eyelid, resonates with centuries of pride and tradition. The choice of warm metallics mirrors not just the desert but the inner fire and resilience of Rajasthani women. Her makeup artist doesn't paint a face; they whisper stories through pigment and powder; stories of valor, legacy, and belonging.

No Rajasthani bridal look is complete without its harmonious union of texture and tradition. The glint of highlighter mirrors the sheen of zari threads, while the vermillion tone on her lips finds echoes in her odhani's border. Every element whether cosmetic or textile, works in rhythm, creating a seamless tapestry of colour and feeling. Her makeup is crafted not to overpower, but to merge gracefully with her ensemble, allowing her presence to command attention without uttering a word.

And when she finally steps out, beneath the weight of jewels and ancestral pride, her makeup becomes more than a visual it's a statement. Cameras may capture her image, but it's the aura she carries that lingers: a fusion of regal grace and desert spirit. In that moment, she doesn't just wear heritage, she becomes its embodiment, radiant and eternal like the golden sands that inspired her look.

ESSENTIAL SKINCARE RULES FOR YOUR BIG DAY

- **Stick to Your:** The week of the wedding is strictly a "no experimentation" zone. Avoid introducing new serums, peels, or facials to prevent unexpected allergic reactions or breakouts.
- **Hydrate Inside and Out:** Drink plenty of water in the 24 hours leading up to the ceremony to keep your skin plump. On the day itself, use a lightweight, hydrating sheet mask in the morning to create a smooth canvas for makeup.
- **De-Puff with Cold Therapy:** If you wake up with puffiness from lack of sleep or excitement, use an ice roller or two chilled spoons under your eyes and along your jawline to tighten pores and reduce inflammation.
- **Don't Forget Body Skincare:** Your face will get a lot of attention, but don't neglect your neck, decolletage, and hands.



Source: @Facebook (Parul Garg)

New Beginnings : Matrimony Corner

Connecting Hearts, Creating Homes
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We're delighted to introduce a brand-new feature in our newsletter – the Matrimony Corner! This special section is designed exclusively for members of our community seeking meaningful lifelong connections.

If you're looking for your perfect match, you can now share your biodata right here in our newsletter. Simply send in your details, and we'll publish them in this section. Interested readers can contact you directly to take the conversation forward.

Our goal is to bring together like-minded individuals from the India–US diaspora, helping families find the right match through a trusted and familiar network.

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For inquiries or to submit your biodata, please write to us at : **diaspora@fianynjct.org.**

Instructions for Matrimonial Submissions:

Photo Requirements:

- Please submit a recent and clear photograph. Blurry or low-quality images may not be accepted.

Ensure all submitted information-such as name, age, education, profession, and family background is accurate and verified. Incomplete or unclear details will delay consideration.

Contact Information:

Provide reliable contact details (phone number and/or email address) that can be used for genuine communication. Double-check all details for correctness to avoid missed connections.

Your careful attention to these guidelines will help create a trustworthy and efficient matrimonial section for the benefit of our community.

Source: @Freepik

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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

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SUBSCRIBERS' SECTION

Impact of New Tariff and Duty Regulations on Shipments Entering the USA After 29 August 2025

Following the imposition of new tariffs and duty regulations on shipments entering the USA after 29 August 2025, the logistics and cross-border trade environment has faced significant operational and commercial challenges.

Clearance timelines have been notably affected. Earlier, shipments were often released prior to arrival; however, under the new regime, customs clearance now typically takes 24–48 hours, resulting in delivery delays and increased holding costs.

Regulatory compliance requirements have also tightened, particularly for C2C shipments. Previously, FDA prior notice was not required, but now each shipment content must be registered with the FDA, along with obtaining a Prior Notice number and certificate, adding complexity and time to the process.

Manifesting has emerged as another major bottleneck. The revised filing requirements mandate additional data fields, making documentation more detailed and time-consuming. This has led to extended staff working hours and increased operational strain.

From a cost perspective, the impact has been severe. Shipments that were earlier duty-free are now subject to a 50% tariff plus applicable HTS code duties. This sharp increase in landed costs has significantly affected trade volumes, with business declining by approximately 30%.

Furthermore, private brokers face a competitive disadvantage, as they do not have provisions for duty-free clearance of C2C gift shipments below USD 100, a benefit currently available to large integrators such as FedEx, UPS, and DHL.

Overall, these changes have reshaped the market, increasing compliance burdens, operational costs, and competitive imbalance across service providers.



Credit: Palvesha Desai
CEO Bombino Express worldwide

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TRAVEL

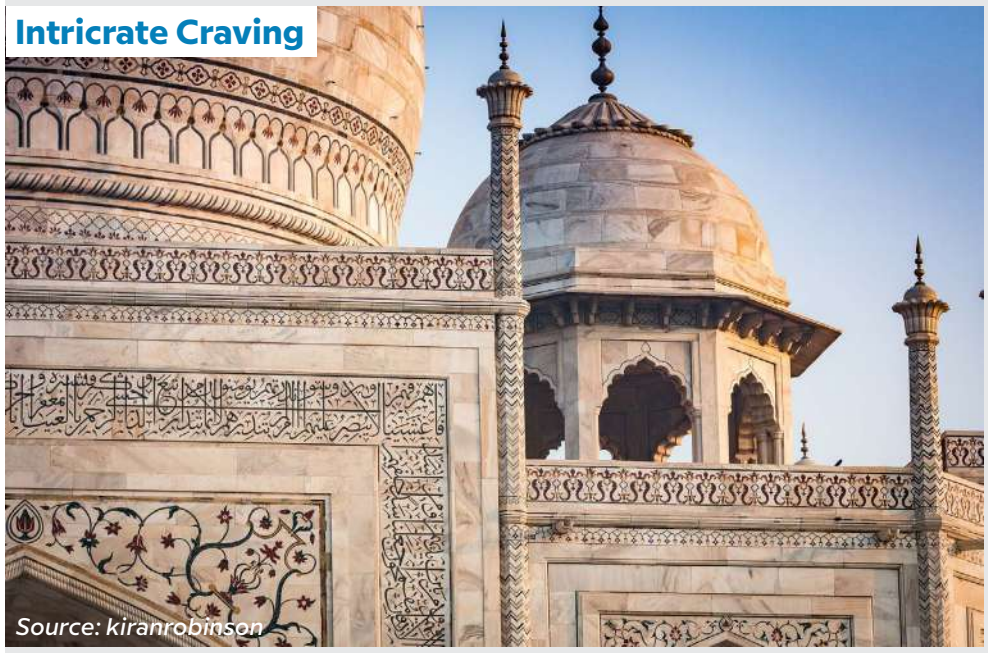
Taj Mahal: A Timeless Symphony in Marble crafted with love

Visiting the Taj Mahal is more than just a sightseeing experience; it's a journey into India's rich history and timeless artistry. Recognized as one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites, this architectural wonder stands majestically on the banks of the Yamuna River in Agra, symbolizing eternal love and devotion. Built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal, the monument captures the poetic beauty of love in marble form.

From its flawless symmetry to the delicate inlay work of precious stones, every detail of the Taj Mahal reflects exceptional craftsmanship and artistic excellence. The changing hues of the monument, from soft pink at sunrise to golden in moonlight, make it a living masterpiece that never looks the same twice. Beyond its romantic allure, the site offers visitors an immersive glimpse into Mughal architecture, gardens, and history that defined an era of grandeur.

A visit to the Taj Mahal is not merely about witnessing a monument; it's about feeling the legacy of human emotion carved in stone. It's a place where history, art, and emotion come together to leave every visitor spellbound.

Intricrate Craving



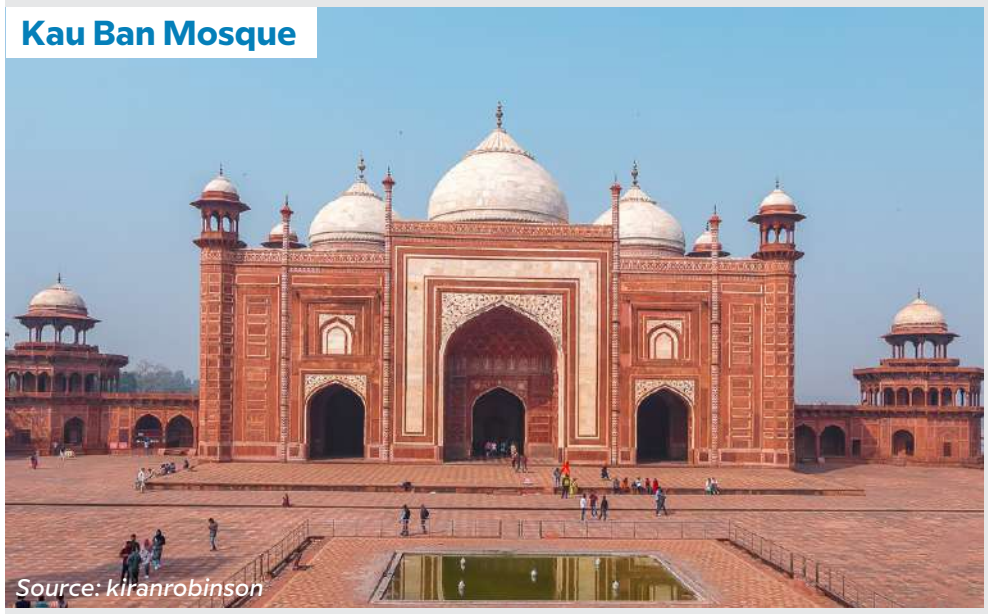
Source: kiranrobinson

Mughal floral arabesque



Source: globetrottingsu

Kau Ban Mosque



Source: kiranrobinson

Lahori Design Symmetry



Source: foaidindia

The Taj Mahal



Source: gqindia

Essential Tips for Diaspora

Entry and Tickets

- NRIs/OCIs: Carry original Indian ID/Passport + OCI to buy a ₹50 Indian ticket (not a ₹1100 foreigner); show at the foreign queue for low-value entry.
- Buy online ASI (asiagracircle.org) or East Gate counter pre-sunrise; includes shoe covers, water, Agra map, saves 1-hour queue.
- Skip the mausoleum interior (no photos, crowded); stay in the gardens for the best views, full ticket still valid.

Transport from Airport (AGR)

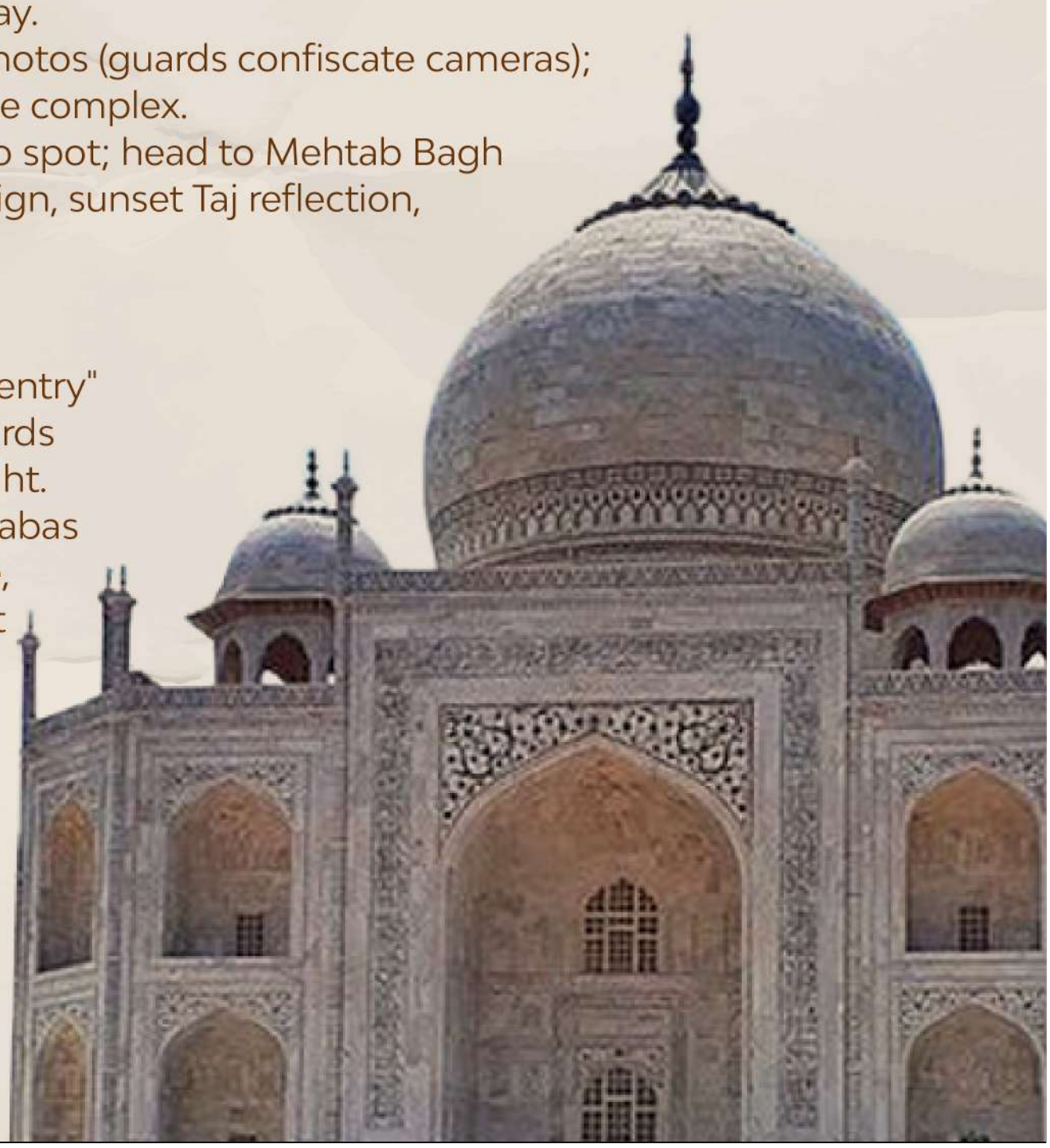
- 15-min prepaid taxi/AC cab (~₹400-600) direct to East Gate; negotiate or use Ola/Uber apps with an Indian SIM.
- Avoid touts at arrivals offering "Taj tours" (₹2000+ scams); pre-book via hotel or IRCTC cab.
- Yamuna Expressway toll ₹500 from Delhi, fastest if flying from Delhi then drive (2hrs).

Crowd and Timing Hacks

- Weekday sunrise East Gate (opens ~6 AM Jan); fog adds magic, lines <30min vs 2hrs midday.
- No twirls/dress pulls for photos (guards confiscate cameras); tripod/video banned inside complex.
- Exit via Diana Bench photo spot; head to Mehtab Bagh across the river (₹400 foreign, sunset Taj reflection, fewer crowds).

Scams and Savings

- Ignore "closed Taj" or "VIP entry" touts (₹5000 rip-offs); guards ignore them & walk straight.
- Eat pre-visit at Taj Ganj dhabas (₹100 thali); no food inside, carry nothing extra for fast security.
- Bargain guides to ₹300/hr; free audio guide via app is better for history without upsell.



Top Rated restaurants near Taj Mahal



Esphahan – The Oberoi Amarvilas

Where: Inside The Oberoi Amarvilas, ~600 m from Taj East Gate.

Style & why go: Formal Indian fine-dining, curated tasting-style menus, very intimate, advance reservations essential.



Taj Bano – ITC Mughal (Taj Hotel group)

Where: ITC Mughal / Tajganj, a short drive from Taj.

Style & why go: Formal Indian fine-dining, curated tasting-style menus, very intimate, advance reservations essential.



The Nawaabs – Jaypee Palace Hotel

Where: Jaypee Palace, a little further, but still used by Taj visitors.

Style & why go: Upscale Awadhi/Mughlai with kebabs, biryanis, rich gravies; classic "royal" dinner vibe.



Taj Terrace (Hotel Taj Resorts)

Where: Rooftop at Hotel Taj Resorts near the eastern gate.

Style & why go: Candlelit fine-dining with Taj-facing rooftop, live music, and very popular for romantic dinners.



Rooftop Restaurant – Taj Jharokha (Hotel Atulyaa)

Where: Hotel Atulyaa, ~600 m from Taj.

Style & why go: Rooftop restaurant with Taj proximity, elegant but slightly less formal than Oberoi/ITC, still "premium tourist hotel" vibe.



The Salt Cafe

Where: Fatehabad Road, Tajganj, with Taj views from the rooftop.

Style & why go: Trendy global restaurant/bar, stylish interiors, cocktails, good for a younger crowd or groups wanting a chic night out.

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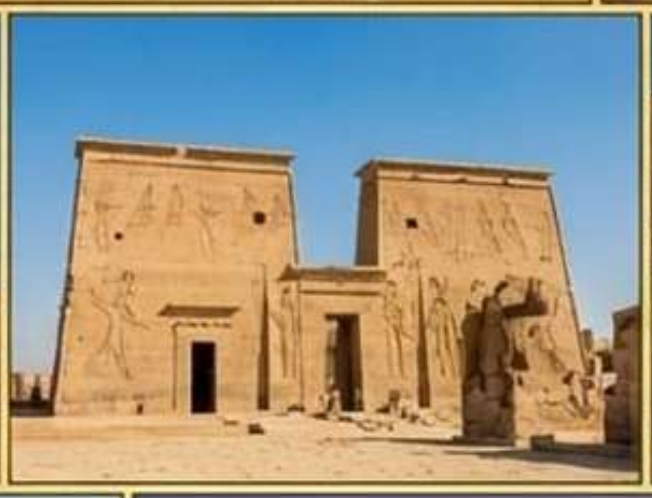
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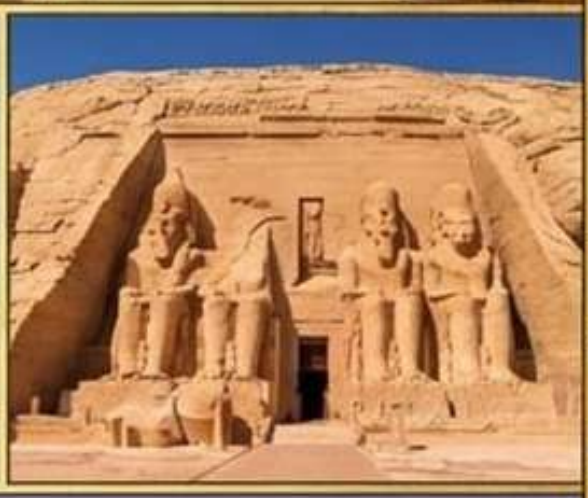
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NextGen Sports Desk

Yuki Bhambri Storming ATP Doubles Elite

Indian Ace Hits Career-High No. 20, Eyes Greater Glory

Indian tennis standout Yuki Bhambri has surged to a career-best world No. 20 in the latest ATP doubles rankings, marking a historic breakthrough as the first Indian man to crack the top 20 since Rohan Bopanna. The 33-year-old vaulted from No. 22, propelled by a stellar third-round run at the Australian Open alongside Sweden's Andre Goransson, where they notched gritty wins over local wildcards James Duckworth and Cruz Hewitt, then staged a comeback triumph against Santiago Gonzalez and David Pel.

Bhambri's ascent builds on a banner 2025, including a US Open semifinal berth with New Zealand's Michael Venus and his maiden ATP 500 crown at the Dubai Tennis Championships, partnering Australia's Alexei Popyrin in an epic final. Now India's top-ranked doubles player after ending Bopanna's long reign, he gears up for ATP 500 events in the Middle East and a Davis Cup clash against the Netherlands. With momentum building, expect Bhambri to chase even loftier peaks in the seasons ahead



Yuki Bhambri with his men's double partner

His remarkable consistency and adaptability across partners underline his growing stature on the global doubles circuit. With renewed confidence and form, Bhambri has cemented his place among the world's elite, inspiring a new generation of Indian tennis hopefuls. As he sets his sights on a Masters 1000 breakthrough, all eyes will be on his continued rise through 2026.

Team India Seeks Divine Blessings at Kerala's Iconic Temple

Stars Don Traditional Attire Ahead of Series-Clinching T20 Clash

Members of the Indian cricket team made a poignant pilgrimage to the historic Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, drawing inspiration from one of the world's richest shrines, before their fifth T20I against New Zealand at Greenfield Stadium tomorrow. Captain Suryakumar Yadav led the group, including all-rounder Axar Patel, batter Rinku Singh, and spinners Kuldeep Yadav, Varun Chakravarthy, and Ravi Bishnoi, all clad in crisp traditional white dhotis as they offered prayers to Lord Vishnu.

This visit continues a spirited tradition throughout the series, following stops at the Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Temple in Simhachalam and other sacred sites, underscoring the team's blend of faith and focus. With the series locked at 3-1 after New Zealand's emphatic 50-run victory in Visakhapatnam, powered by Tim Seifert's 62 and Devon Conway's 44, India eyes a commanding 4-1 finale. Shivam Dube's fiery 65 offered resistance in the loss, but tomorrow's matchup at the venue where India boasts three wins in four T20Is promises redemption and momentum toward the T20 World Cup starting February 7.



Indian cricket team members visit Thiruvananthapuram temple ahead of ODI against Sri Lanka

Dalai Lama Claims First Grammy at 90, Amplifying Global Message of Peace

Spiritual Leader's 'Meditations' Audiobook Earns Top Honor in Storytelling Category

From the glitz of Los Angeles, the 68th Annual Grammy Awards delivered a moment of profound serenity as the Dalai Lama, at 90 years old, secured his first win in the Best Audiobook, Narration, and Storytelling Recording category. The acclaimed project, Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, blends his gentle narration with evocative music from artists like Rufus Wainwright, who graciously accepted the award onstage.

In a heartfelt social media post, the Nobel Peace Prize recipient expressed, "I receive this recognition with gratitude and humility. I don't see it as something personal, but as a recognition of our shared universal responsibility." He emphasized enduring values like peace, compassion, environmental stewardship, and human oneness as vital for the well-being of eight billion people worldwide, underscoring the audiobook's themes of heart, harmony, kindness, and journey.


Source: Indian Express

At 90, Dalai Lama wins first-ever Grammy Award

This milestone, announced February 1, 2026, resonates deeply across communities valuing wisdom and cultural bridges, with the meditative insights now streaming on platforms like Spotify and YouTube. Wainwright's acceptance highlighted the honor of channeling such timeless guidance, marking a fusion of spirituality and artistry that elevates global discourse. As the Tibetan leader in exile continues inspiring millions from India, this Grammy affirms his voice's far-reaching harmony.

Chalamet Shatters Oscar Records at 30 with Triple Nod Triumph

Young Star's 'Marty Supreme' Dual Honors Signal Bold New Era in Hollywood

Timothée Chalamet has etched his name into Academy Awards history, securing his third Best Actor nomination at just 30 years old for his riveting portrayal of table tennis prodigy Marty Mauser in Josh Safdie's "Marty Supreme." This milestone crowns him the youngest male actor ever to earn three acting nods, following acclaimed turns in "Call Me by Your Name" and "A Complete Unknown," a feat that underscores his meteoric ascent in an industry long dominated by seasoned veterans.

His latest recognition also places him in rarefied company alongside Marlon Brando and Jennifer Lawrence, the only other performers to reach three acting nominations at such a young age. Chalamet's accolades extend further: he also shares a Best Picture nomination as producer on the A24 breakout, which has grossed over $80 million since its Christmas Day debut. At 30 years and 26 days, he eclipses Warren Beatty's 58-year-old record as the youngest to double up in acting and producing for the same film, positioning "Marty Supreme" among the ceremony's top contenders with nods for directing, screenplay, and editing. The film's record-setting run, now A24's biggest domestic hit, has turned the once-risky sports dramedy into a central pillar of this awards season.


Source: Hollywood Reporter

Timothee Chalamet at Oscars

Fresh off a record-shattering Golden Globe win in comedy/musical and last year's top acting prize at The Actor Awards, Chalamet faces stiff competition from Leonardo DiCaprio, Ethan Hawke, Michael B. Jordan, and Wagner Moura in Best Actor. A potential victory would rank him as the second-youngest Best Actor winner ever, trailing only Adrien Brody. As the 98th Oscars approach in March, Chalamet's blend of raw talent and savvy production signals a vibrant future for Hollywood's next generation, with studios already circling his next slate of projects as bellwethers for the post-franchise era.

Border 2 Storms Past Rs 300 Crore Worldwide, Showcasing Renewed Theatrical Power

Sunny Deol's Patriotic Sequel Captivates Global Audiences in Opening Wee

From New York to Mumbai, Sunny Deol's "Border 2" has stormed the box office, crossing Rs 300 crore worldwide after just seven days in theaters. The war drama, directed by Anurag Singh and featuring Varun Dhawan, Diljit Dosanjh, and Ahan Shetty, raked in Rs 224.25 crore net in India, with a global gross of Rs 308.5 crore, including Rs 40 crore from overseas markets.

Released January 23 ahead of India's Republic Day, the film exploded with Rs 30 crore on opening day, peaking at Rs 59 crore on the holiday Monday before settling into a steady weekday pace of Rs 11.25 crore on Thursday. Trade analysts note its rock-solid hold in mass circuits and heartland regions, fueled by powerful word-of-mouth that positions it for a strong second weekend despite new releases.

Overseas, the sequel shines brightest in North America, surpassing $1.3 million in its debut weekend across the US and Canada alone, underscoring Deol's enduring star power among audiences here. In the UK, it notched healthy opening weekend earnings of over $386,000, while Australia and other territories added to the momentum.

This global resonance highlights how tales of valor continue to bridge cultures, drawing crowds to theaters nationwide. As the film eyes Rs 250 crore domestically, its triumphant run reaffirms Bollywood's theatrical vitality in 2026.



Movie poster from the film 'Border 2'

Arijit Singh Bids Farewell to Bollywood Playback at 38

Singer Pivots to Classical Roots, Fans Celebrate Iconic Legacy

Acclaimed playback singer Arijit Singh, whose emotive voice has defined Bollywood's soundtracks for over a decade, announced Tuesday that he will no longer accept new film assignments, marking a bold shift at age 38. In an Instagram post, Singh expressed deep gratitude to listeners for their enduring support, calling his journey "wonderful" while committing to complete pending commitments this year.

The decision, rooted in a desire to return to Indian classical music, his training since age three, stems from creative restlessness and a wish to explore independent artistry beyond commercial pressures. "I got bored pretty quick... I need to do some other music to live," he shared on X, emphasizing this as one of several factors after long contemplation. Collaborations with global stars like Ed Sheeran and sold-out O2 Arena shows underscore his stature, yet Singh seeks fresh expression as a "small little artist."

Across the globe, the move has inspired self-reinvention, flooding social media with tributes to hits like "Tum Hi Ho" and "Kesariya" that captured universal emotions. Industry peers echoed the sentiment, viewing it as an opportunity for new voices while Singh's influence endures in live performances and original works. This graceful transition reaffirms his pivotal role in elevating Indian music globally.



Veteran Singer "Arijit Singh"

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