



Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade William Kimmitt, and Minister-Counselor, Foreign Commercial Service, Jonathan Heimer, with Indian representatives on May 5 at the 2026 SelectUSA Investment Summit, at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in Maryland. (Photo caption: T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman, SAH)

\$1,100,000,000 India Inc to Invest in the US

T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman

Twelve Indian companies announced more than \$1.1 billion in new greenfield and expansion projects across multiple U.S. states on May 5 at the 2026 SelectUSA Investment Summit, at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in Maryland. The investments are expected to support jobs in manufacturing, technology, and engineering.

The announcements surpass the cumulative total of all prior investment commitments made by Indian companies at previous SelectUSA Investment Summits and represent the highest number of announcements by any country at this year's event. With these commitments, the summit

highlighted a record \$20.5 billion in investments by leading Indian companies into the United States.

The investments underscore the continued strength and appeal of the U.S. market for foreign investors, according to the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. The commitments span key sectors including pharmaceuticals, advanced manufacturing, energy infrastructure, and emerging technologies. They are expected to generate thousands of jobs in both countries while expanding U.S. production capacity and fostering joint innovation.

"I am proud to advance our goal to double U.S.-India bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030. Through fair, balanced, and mutually beneficial trade, we're attracting world-class investment to the United

States and creating shared prosperity for both nations," said US Ambassador to India, Sergio Gor at the SelectUSA kick-off reception in New Delhi.

A significant portion of the investment is being driven by India's pharmaceutical sector, with more than \$19.1 billion in planned investments in U.S. manufacturing, research and development, and new facilities. Additional investments in steel, connectivity, and energy supply chains are expected to strengthen critical U.S. industrial capacity and enhance supply chain resilience and security.

Minister-Counselor, Foreign Commercial Service, Jonathan Heimer, welcomed the gathering at the summit. (Contd. on page 6)

India Reception Highlights Growing US-India Trade Ties

T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), in partnership with the Embassy of India in Washington DC and SelectUSA, hosted an India Reception during the 2026 SelectUSA Investment Summit on May 4 at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in Maryland, highlighting expanding economic ties between India and the United States.

Director and Head for North America at CII, Shuchita Sonalika, described the industry body as a "committed partner" in strengthening the India-United States partnership and welcomed participating companies from both countries.

and well-being. "We cherish and treasure our relationship with India," she said.

Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of India, Namgya Khampa, said the participation at the summit reinforced a partnership increasingly "being experienced, lived and nurtured outside DC and Delhi," across states, communities and cities in both countries.

Khampa noted that the United States is now India's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade in goods and services surpassing \$240 billion last year. "What I think is particularly worth noting is that we have achieved the scale without there being a comprehensive free trade agreement between our two



Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of India, Namgya Khampa, pose for a group picture at the India Reception on May 4, 2026, at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in Maryland. (Photo courtesy: T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman, SAH)

Governor Lou Leon Guerrero of Guam underlined Guam's strategic importance in the Indo-Pacific, calling the island a key line of defense for national security. She said India is part of a broader Indo-Pacific alliance committed to safeguarding "freedom, and democracy," while emphasizing ties in investment, peace, prosperity,

countries," she said, adding that it reflected the natural complementarities between the two economies.

Referring to the target set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump to achieve \$500 billion in bilateral trade by 2030, she called it an "achievable" goal. (Contd. on page 6)

India Showcases e-Migrate at UN Forum

T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman

On the sidelines of the second International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations organized a side event on May 7, 2026, at the United Nations Headquarters on the theme, "Leveraging Digital Innovation in Migration Governance - The e-Migrate Experience of India."

In his welcome remarks, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, Harish Parvathaneni reaffirmed India's strong commitment to promoting safe and regular migration pathways. He emphasized the need for a clear distinction between migrants and refugees, particularly in the application of legal frameworks governing them.

Ambassador Harish also highlighted the use of India's digital public infrastructure to develop large-scale practical



Minister of State for External Affairs of India, Kirti Vardhan Singh, with Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni and guests on May 7, 2026, at the United Nations, in New York. (Photo caption: UNPMI)

solutions for migrants, citing the e-Migrate platform as an example. He conveyed India's willingness to support partner countries interested in adopting open-source digital platforms for migrant welfare and migration management.

Delivering the keynote address, Minister of State for External Affairs of India, Kirti Vardhan Singh described the e-Migrate portal as a central component of India's digital migration governance framework.

Minister Singh said the platform has strengthened "transparency, protecting migrant workers, and facilitating safe and regular migration" through integrated digital services, verified recruitment systems, multilingual support, and online grievance redressal mechanisms. He also underlined the use of AI-powered language translation tools to improve accessibility and inclusiveness for users.

According to Singh, the portal currently includes nearly 298,000 registered foreign employers and 2,457 active recruiting agents. (Contd. on page 10)

Latin America Gets First Consecrated Ganesha Idol

SAH Staff Reporter

In a milestone for the Hindu community in South America, the first formally consecrated idol of Lord Ganesha in Latin America underwent the sacred Pran Pratishtha ritual this week in Brazil, reflecting the growing reach of Indian spiritual traditions across the region.

The consecration ceremony was held at Centro Cultural Vishva Vidya, a Vedic studies and cultural institution nestled in the mountainous city of Petropolis. The event drew members of the Indian diaspora, Brazilian followers of Vedanta philosophy, and diplomats, underscoring the expanding cultural engagement between India and Brazil.

India's Ambassador to Brazil, Dinesh Bhatia, joined Jonas Masetti, also known by his spiritual name Vishwanatha, in leading the ceremony. Masetti, who received the Padma Shri from the Indian government for his contributions to the promotion of Vedanta and Sanskrit studies abroad, hosted the rituals at the institute he founded.

The Pran Pratishtha ceremony — an elaborate Vedic ritual



(Photo courtesy: X@IndiaInBrazil)

believed to invoke divine presence into an idol — was conducted according to traditional Hindu scriptures and chants. Organizers described the installation as the first large-scale consecration of a Ganesha idol in Latin America.

The development highlights the growing popularity of Hindu philosophy and yoga traditions in Brazil, where interest in Vedanta, meditation and Sanskrit learning has steadily expanded over the past decade. Cultural observers say the event also reflects India's broader use of soft power through

spirituality, education and diaspora outreach.

For the Hindu community in South America, the consecration is being seen as both a symbolic and institutional milestone, potentially paving the way for greater religious infrastructure and organized cultural activity across the continent.

The newly consecrated shrine is expected to emerge as a focal point for devotees, visiting Indians and Brazilian practitioners of Hindu traditions from across Latin America.

Tech, Pharma Drive Bilateral Talks

SAH Staff Reporter

India and the U.S. state of North Carolina have signaled a stronger push toward strategic and economic collaboration, with senior officials from both sides holding talks focused on technology, pharmaceuticals, education and clean energy cooperation.

During an official visit to Raleigh this week, India's Deputy Chief of Mission Ambassador Namgya Khampa met North Carolina Governor Josh Stein to discuss expanding bilateral

engagement as Indian investments in the southeastern U.S. continue to grow.

According to officials familiar with the discussions, the meeting highlighted opportunities for collaboration in pharmaceuticals, advanced technology, higher education and nuclear energy — sectors increasingly viewed as central to the evolving India-U.S. partnership.

North Carolina, home to the globally known Research Triangle Park innovation hub, has emerged as a preferred destination

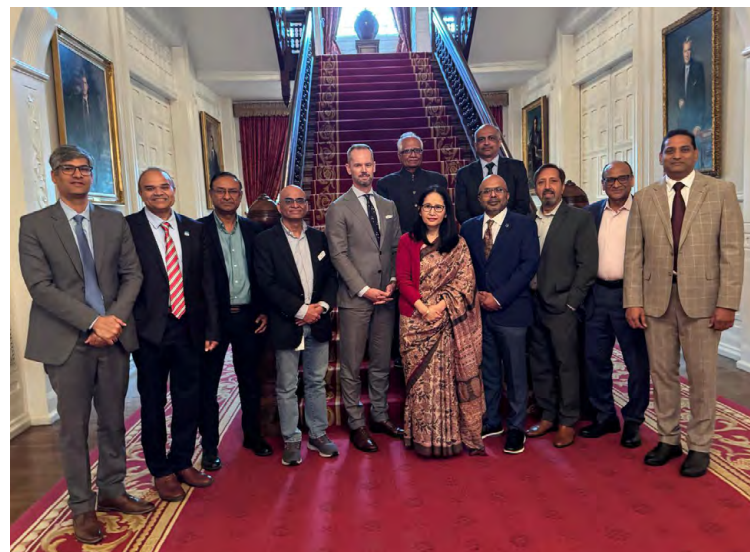
for Indian companies in information technology, life sciences and manufacturing. Indian firms have steadily expanded operations across the state over the past decade, contributing to employment generation and strengthening trade ties.

The talks also explored deeper cooperation in artificial intelligence, software services and research partnerships between Indian academic institutions and North Carolina universities. Nuclear energy figured prominently in the discussions as both sides examined possibilities in sustainable energy and advanced reactor technologies.

The meeting reflects a broader trend in India-U.S. relations in which Indian diplomats are increasingly engaging directly with American state governments to strengthen economic partnerships at the regional level, often described as "subnational diplomacy."

In a statement released after the meeting, officials described the India-North Carolina relationship as being on a "fast-track trajectory," driven by shared interests in innovation, investment and energy security.

While no formal agreements were announced immediately, officials indicated that additional trade and investment initiatives, including potential business delegations and sector-specific partnerships, could be unveiled later this year as both sides seek to expand their economic footprint.



(Photo Courtesy: X@India in USA)

India, Walmart Join Hands on Trade



(Photo courtesy: X@India in New York)

SAH Staff Reporter

The Consulate General of India in New York has partnered with Walmart to organize a strategic webinar aimed at helping Indian businesses expand into the U.S. retail market, officials said.

The webinar, scheduled for May 29, is expected to provide Indian entrepreneurs, manufacturers and exporters with guidance on entering one of the world's largest consumer markets through Walmart's global sourcing and retail network.

According to the Consulate, the initiative forms part of wider efforts to deepen India-U.S. commercial engagement and improve trade facilitation for Indian enterprises seeking international expansion.

Participants will receive insights into Walmart's sourcing standards, supply-chain requirements, compliance expectations and procurement processes, along

with information on how Indian products can be integrated into global retail channels. Consulate officials described the event as an opportunity for Indian businesses to better understand the scale and operational requirements of large international retailers while exploring new export avenues in the United States.

The webinar is being facilitated through the India-USA Trade Facilitation Portal, a digital platform developed by India's Ministry of External Affairs to support cross-border commerce and business engagement. Interested participants can register through the official portal, India-USA Trade Facilitation Portal.

The collaboration comes as India continues to position itself as a major global manufacturing and sourcing hub, with multinational corporations increasingly looking to diversify supply chains and expand procurement partnerships in the country.

Western India Culture Celebrated

SAH Staff Reporter

The Consulate General of India in New York hosted a vibrant celebration of Gujarat and Maharashtra Day, bringing together prominent Indian-American leaders, artists and members of the diaspora to commemorate the cultural and economic contributions of the two western Indian states.

The event, held recently in New York City, highlighted the growing role of the Indian diaspora in strengthening ties between India and the United States.

Addressing the gathering, Vinay Mohan Kwatra described the Indian-American community as a "living bridge" between the two nations, emphasizing its role in deepening cultural understanding and expanding economic cooperation.

Former Union Minister Suresh Prabhu praised Gujarat and Maharashtra as major drivers of India's economic growth. He noted that both states have played a pivotal role in shaping

the country's industrial, financial and entrepreneurial landscape over the decades.

A major highlight of the evening was the recognition of several distinguished personalities from public service, arts and community leadership. Ambassador Kwatra honored Suresh Prabhu, Hemant Marathe, Pulkit Desai, Grammy-winning singer Falu Shah, actress Archana Joglekar, actress Pooja Jhaveri and Gujarati folk singer Hardik Chauhan for their contributions in their respective fields.

The Consulate also acknowledged the efforts of community organizations, including the Gujarati Associations of North America and the Federation of Indian Associations, for supporting the event.

The celebration featured cultural performances and community interactions, reflecting the rich traditions of Gujarat and Maharashtra while underscoring the enduring influence of the Indian diaspora in the United States.



Column

Maitreyi Chandra
*An innovative student-leader
at The Village School, TX*

The Lost Art of Doing Nothing: Why Teenagers Need Boredom



The moment boredom strikes, we reach for our phones. Moments once reserved for imagination are now sacrificed to the scroll, replaced by seconds of short-form entertainment that vanish as quickly as they appear. We have effectively "cured" boredom with infinite digital stimulation, but this cure comes with a high cost: the erosion of our creativity, focus, and self-reflection.

Teenagers, in particular, must learn to embrace boredom again. Constant distraction is not just a habit; it is a barrier to the exploration of the mind.

The Creativity Gap

A major issue is that digital stimulation has turned us into passive consumers rather than active creators. Creativity is fueled by daydreaming, which only happens when the mind is free to wander. When we fill every quiet gap with content created by others, we stop generating our own original ideas. Whether in art or science, innovation depends on the ability to think beyond what already exists. Without stillness, our creative thinking becomes limited and our ability to produce unique ideas declines.

The Crisis of Attention

The popularity of short-form content has also damaged our ability to focus. By consuming rapid-fire media, we train our brains to expect quick, effortless rewards. This makes sustained tasks—like studying, reading a book, or completing a complex assignment—feel frustrating and dull. We are losing the "attentional stamina" required for true understanding. When we break our focus every five minutes to

check a notification, we never reach the state of deep work necessary for long-term learning.

The Necessity of Reflection

Beyond academic performance, boredom provides the space for self-reflection. Without silence, we lose touch with our emotions and goals. Instead of processing our experiences or confronting uncomfortable thoughts, we turn to our screens to avoid them. For teenagers still forming their identities, this habit of emotional avoidance can lead to a weakened sense of self.

Choosing Stillness

Embracing boredom doesn't mean throwing away our phones; it means setting boundaries. It means keeping the phone in another room while studying or allowing the mind to wander during a bus ride instead of reaching for a podcast. These small choices retrain the brain to tolerate stillness and reduce our dependency on instant gratification.

While some argue that constant entertainment reduces stress, this "comfort" is a trap that limits personal growth. We must stop viewing boredom as a void to be filled and start seeing it as a space to be utilized. If we don't reclaim our empty moments, we risk losing the qualities that make us thoughtful, intentional individuals. It's time to put the phone down and just be.

Maitreyi Chandra is an innovative student-leader at The Village School, TX who operates at the intersection of neuroscience, music, and community health. She founded Neural Melodies, an initiative that utilizes the "science of sound" to provide sensory-friendly musical tools for neurodivergent children.

OFBJP-USA Celebrates BJP's Assembly Election Gains

T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman

The Overseas Friends of BJP-USA (OFBJP-USA) hosted an event on May 10, 2026, at the India International School in Chantilly, Virginia, to celebrate the Bharatiya Janata Party's recent electoral successes in several Indian states.

The gathering highlighted the BJP's victories in West Bengal and Assam, gains in Gujarat local body elections, a repeat victory in Puducherry, and improvements in Kerala.

Speaking at the event, OFBJP-USA National President Adapa Prasad said it has been 75 years since Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee founded the Jan Sangh in 1951 and noted that the BJP has now secured a victory in Bengal. Referring to the party's electoral success in the state, Prasad described Bengal as a land that laid foundation for several revolutionaries and prominent figures associated with Sanatana Dharma, including Subhas Chandra Bose, Rash Behari Bose, Surya Sen, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, Swami Vivekananda, and Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

Prasad also criticized the political strategies of the CPI(M) and Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress (TMC), alleging voter manipulation and intimidation tactics over the years. He praised the BJP's performance across multiple states and expressed optimism about the party's prospects in future assembly elections.

The event also featured a panel discussion analyzing the election results. Moderated by Sameer Chandra, the panel included Adapa Prasad and local community leaders Utsav Chakrabarti, Ramana Muppalla, and Anita Roy. During the discussion, Chandra described the BJP's victory in West Bengal as more than an electoral outcome, calling it a return of "Sanatan nationalism" to its place of origin after 75 years.

Muppalla said the election results reflected growing public dissatisfaction with what he described as the TMC government's tyranny, alleging



OFBJP-USA members and guests pose for a group picture with Jhal Muri, a popular street snack in Bengal, on May 10, 2026, at the India International School in Chantilly, Virginia. (Photo courtesy: T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman, SAH)

that many voters were reluctant to openly disclose their political preferences before the polls out of fear of being targeted. He also highlighted the state's 93 percent voter turnout, noting that the voting-age population is close to six crore.

Roy, termed the victory in Bengal as "historic." Reflecting on Bengal's political history, she said many residents had initially welcomed Banerjee's rise to power following the Communist era. However, she argued that the latest election results were driven more by anti-TMC sentiment than pro-BJP support. "I feel that this vote is more anti-TMC than pro-BJP," she said.

Chakrabarti said the BJP's victory stemmed from a combination of "pro Hindutva identity" and anti-incumbency sentiment. Drawing on his visits to Bengal over the past decade, he said many residents, particularly among economically disadvantaged communities, had grown increasingly frustrated with what he described as extremist influences and local hardships.

He added that the election results reflected growing public opposition to what he termed "appeasement politics," particularly in border states such as Assam and West Bengal. Prasad described the election outcome as a "turning point" and a "milestone" for India, especially in relation to national security and border-state stability.

Chirag Bhatt of OFBJP-USA presented an overview of the 2026 elections, highlighting the BJP's victories in Bengal and Assam, a second consecutive term in Puducherry, gains in Kerala, and political

developments in Tamil Nadu. According to Bhatt, the elections carried significant implications for India's political landscape, national security, and regional dynamics.

Bhatt also noted the Congress-led UDF's return in Kerala and the emergence of the Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) party in Tamil Nadu as indicators of shifting voter behavior in those states. He concluded by pointing to the BJP's strong performance in Gujarat local body elections.

The presentation emphasized the BJP's electoral performance over the past 12 years and what organizers described as its growing appeal across diverse voter groups in different parts of India.

Professor Venkata Rao Mulpuri of George Mason University praised the BJP's victories in West Bengal and Assam and expressed hope that the party would expand its presence in other states.

Referring to Tamil Nadu politics, he said the emergence of TVK leader Joseph Vijay had disrupted the dominance of Dravidian parties and could pave the way for future BJP growth in the state. He also predicted potential gains for the BJP in Karnataka and Kerala.

Community leaders representing various Indian states also shared their perspectives on the election outcomes during the event. "Sankalp Se Siddhi Tak," a poetic reflection on the journey, sacrifices, and aspirations behind this historic moment was presented by Sreenath Nampally, at the event, where Indira Kumar of the India International School delivered the vote of thanks.

Chicago Yoga Day Preparations

SAH Staff Reporter

Preparations are underway in Chicago for the 12th International Day of Yoga (IDY) celebrations, with the Consulate General of India convening a strategy meeting with leading yoga organizations to expand this year's observance at the city's iconic Navy Pier.

According to the Consulate, the meeting focused on scaling up the 2026 edition of the annual event and broadening community participation through collaborative initiatives centered on wellness and holistic living.

Officials described the discussions as "highly productive," with

participants exploring ways to increase public engagement and make the celebration more inclusive across diverse communities in the Chicago area.

The International Day of Yoga event is scheduled to be held at Navy Pier in downtown Chicago, a venue expected to provide high visibility and attract large public participation.

In a statement, the Consulate said the enthusiastic involvement of yoga leaders reflected a shared commitment to promoting community spirit and spreading the message of yoga more widely.

"Together, we aim to spread the timeless message of yoga to every

corner of society," the statement said. Organizers are also planning new initiatives aimed at bringing greater energy and unity to the celebrations, with officials expressing confidence that the 2026 edition could become one of the largest yoga gatherings in the Midwest.

The International Day of Yoga, observed annually on June 21 following a United Nations resolution adopted in 2014, has grown into a global movement promoting physical and mental well-being through the practice of yoga.

Further details regarding registration and the schedule of events at Navy Pier are expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

South Asia Notes

Elizabeth RocheAssociate Professor,
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Pakistan's Evolution A Year After Op Sindoor

On May 6-7, 2026, India marked the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor. This was the military strike by India to take out terrorist training camps in Pakistan after the April 22 Pahalgam attack in Kashmir that killed 26, mostly tourists. The aim was simple – to puncture the Indian narrative that the situation in Kashmir was peaceful, especially after the 2024 local elections.

The Pahalgam attack was a particularly brutal one, singling out the men and shooting them execution style in front of their families. But the attack did not evoke the strong international condemnation as the November 2008 Mumbai attacks or even the December 2001 Indian parliament attack.

Was this because the world has moved on from the days of the 9/11 attacks in the US and the subsequent Global War on Terrorism? Or that the world is more concerned with newer conflicts that impact their daily lives, like the Russia-Ukraine war?

Whatever the case, Pakistan, which had been isolated as a global hub of terrorism, seems to have successfully broken out of that corner.

It's now best friends with the US and playing the role of key peace mediator in the US-Iran conflict.

The friendship with the US evolved pretty quickly, with just months separating Islamabad's endorsement of Trump for a Nobel Prize for having successfully brokered a ceasefire with India during Operation Sindoor, marketing itself as a source of valuable rare earth minerals and signing a pact with a firm closely connected to the US President Donald Trump's family crypto business. Of course, Pakistan hiring new lobby firms to reach out to Trump immediately after his win in the November 2024 polls did play its part.

When the Iran war broke out, Pakistan, with its 1,000-kilometer border with the Shia majority country, was immediately seen as a handy mediator and not as a fountainhead of terrorism, as India would have liked the world to perceive Islamabad. The perception of Pakistan changed dramatically – from being known as a nearly failed state to an adept player of global power politics.

One thing that hasn't changed, though, is Pakistan's India policy. Despite India's precision strikes on Bawalpur (headquarters of the Jaish-e-Mohammed) and Muridke (nerve centre of the Lashkar-e-Taiba), besides other terrorist camps and launchpads, terrorist training camps targeting India are flourishing. The only difference is that they have been moved by the Pakistani authorities deeper into their territory.

For now, India's best options seem to be to lie low and bide its time. And guard against the possibility of another attack. "No (terrorist) sanctuary across the LoC (de facto Line of Control border with Pakistan) is safe. We will hit everything. We will go after everything. That has been made clear in the new normal articulated by the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) last year. But the conditions, timing and method will remain ours," Lieutenant General Rajiv Ghai told reporters at a press conference on May 7.

That's the clearest public articulation to date of India's new military doctrine to deal with terrorism.

(Disclaimer: Views expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of South Asian Herald.)

Ottawa Round Set For July



(Photo courtesy: PIB)

SAH Staff Reporter

India and Canada concluded the second round of negotiations for a proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), with both sides describing the five-day discussions in the Indian capital as "constructive and productive" amid efforts to deepen bilateral economic engagement.

The talks, held from May 4-8 at Vanija Bhawan and hosted by India's Department of Commerce, focused on advancing the roadmap agreed upon earlier this year by trade ministers from the two countries, according to a joint statement issued by the Press Information Bureau.

Negotiators discussed a broad range of issues central to the proposed trade pact, including market access for goods and services, intellectual property rights, rules of origin, and technical

barriers to trade. Officials also deliberated on sanitary and phytosanitary measures, which govern food safety and animal and plant health standards in international commerce.

The proposed CEPA is aimed at creating what both governments called a "balanced and ambitious" framework to expand bilateral trade and investment flows between the two G20 economies. The agreement is expected to address tariff reductions, regulatory cooperation, and improved market access for businesses on both sides.

The latest round of talks comes as India seeks to accelerate trade partnerships with major economies while positioning itself as a key manufacturing and export hub. For Canada, the pact could strengthen commercial ties with one of the world's fastest-growing large economies and diversify its Indo-Pacific

economic engagement. Officials from both countries reiterated their commitment to building a mutually beneficial agreement aligned with contemporary economic priorities and evolving global supply chains.

The next formal round of negotiations is scheduled to take place in Ottawa in July 2026. In the interim, both sides will continue "intersessional engagements," including virtual meetings and technical consultations, to address pending issues and maintain momentum in the negotiations.

If finalized, the CEPA is expected to provide Indian exporters with greater access to North American markets while offering Canadian companies expanded opportunities in sectors ranging from agriculture and natural resources to technology and services in India's rapidly growing economy.

Homeland Round Up

BHUTAN

Bhutan pushed ahead with its twin goals of economic modernization and sustainable development, as the government of Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay intensified efforts to implement the 13th Five-Year Plan and the country's long-term vision of attaining high-income status by 2034.

The biggest development came in the energy sector, where Bhutan signed financing agreements worth \$515 million with the World Bank for the 1,125 MW Dorjilung Hydroelectric Power Project. The run-of-river project on the Kurichhu River, developed under a public-private partnership involving Druk Green Power Corporation and India's Tata Power, is expected to become Bhutan's largest hydropower venture. Officials say the project could raise GDP growth, expand electricity exports, and generate employment when completed around 2032.

Economic indicators also remained encouraging. International financial institutions projected Bhutan's economy to grow between 6.8 and 7.1 percent in 2026, driven by hydropower expansion, tourism recovery, and infrastructure investments. Inflationary pressures linked to global fuel prices remain a concern, though poverty reduction trends continue to improve.

Tourism promotion gathered momentum ahead of the Bhutan International Travel Mart scheduled for June in Thimphu. Authorities are positioning the event as a platform to strengthen Bhutan's high-value, low-volume tourism model while promoting regenerative and sustainable travel. The recently introduced 5

percent GST on tourism services and the continued \$100 Sustainable Development Fee remained central to discussions in the sector.

On the social front, disaster preparedness and community resilience received attention during celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of the Bhutan Red Cross Society. Her Majesty Queen Jetsun Pema launched the organization's Development Plan II and inaugurated a disaster response initiative aimed at strengthening national emergency preparedness.

Meanwhile, local discussions focused on youth employment, rural migration, urban infrastructure, climate-related agricultural challenges, and housing concerns. Overall, the week reflected Bhutan's continued balancing act between economic growth, environmental preservation, and the principles of Gross National Happiness.

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh's political and security focus centered heavily on growing sensitivities along the India-Bangladesh border, even as the government pushed ahead with governance and economic planning initiatives.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman urged district-level BNP leaders to treat implementation of the government's election manifesto as a "new battle," emphasizing administrative efficiency, public service delivery, and transparency in distributing aid to flood-affected haor farmers. Meetings involving rural development and religious affairs officials underscored the government's attempt to strengthen coordination at the grassroots level.

However, the most closely watched development involved reports of increased cross-border movement from

India's West Bengal into Bangladesh following the BJP's electoral victory in the neighboring Indian state. Bangladeshi authorities expressed concern over alleged "push-in" incidents and responded by intensifying surveillance and patrols along vulnerable frontier points.

Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman said Dhaka would handle the matter through diplomatic and legal channels while safeguarding border stability. Border Guard Bangladesh and India's Border Security Force reportedly held coordination meetings at several checkpoints, including Hakimpur, in an effort to prevent tensions from escalating and to maintain orderly border management.

On the economic front, preparations accelerated for the FY2026-27 national budget. The Planning Commission granted preliminary approval to a record Annual Development Program worth Tk 3 lakh crore (approximately US\$27 billion). Major spending is expected in infrastructure, healthcare, education, and rural development as the government seeks to stabilize economic growth, contain inflation, strengthen the banking sector, and prepare the country for its graduation from Least Developed Country status later this year.

Socially, authorities intensified Eid-ul-Azha preparations through additional train services, extended shopping hours, and transport coordination measures aimed at easing holiday travel congestion. Localized flooding and urban traffic disruptions were also reported in several districts.

Overall, Bangladesh experienced a relatively stable week marked by heightened attention to border management with India alongside continued efforts to advance economic planning and governance priorities.

Editorial



A Visit With Global Implications

In normal times, this would have been a visit that would have consumed not just the media but ordinary folks as well, the world over. But these are extraordinary times, in the midst of a war in the Middle East for which no one is sure why it all started. The conflict is huffing and puffing along with spurts of gunfire interspersed with talk of ceasefire, deal or whatever. Occasionally, still is the loose talk of that blinding flash of light, which everyone knows what that means.

In all this, there is also a realization that China has been quite restrained on the Iran war in spite of the heavy dependence on crude oil and in the absolute need to keep the Strait of Hormuz open to facilitate all of its imports. And China is a major actor in the Middle East, going far beyond energy products to include technology, trade, investments and opportunities for its business houses.

It is in this backdrop that President Donald Trump is in China to meet his counterpart, President Xi Jinping, a visit that will be measured in optics, atmospherics and substance. Both Washington and Beijing know fully well where the other side is coming from in terms of strategic positioning that includes the economic imperatives. Not too long ago, President Trump toyed with his G2 idea, a partnership between China and the United States to manage global affairs.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S VISIT TO CHINA COMES AT A CRITICAL GLOBAL MOMENT, WITH TENSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND SHIFTING GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS PLACING ENORMOUS WEIGHT ON US-CHINA RELATIONS. BOTH NATIONS UNDERSTAND THAT STRATEGIC STABILITY AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION ARE TOO IMPORTANT TO BE OVERSHADOWED BY TARIFFS, SANCTIONS, OR POLITICAL THEATRICALS.

The idea of a shift to a bipolar world did not get very far in Beijing, which prefers multipolarity, as well as seeing a ploy to “trap” rather than a sincere partnership of equals. The G2 idea of President Trump also caused considerable uneasiness with traditional allies who saw in all this an attempt to marginalize them. It remains to be seen if President Trump brings up his theme again, and the refrain of President Xi.

Strategically and on the economic front, the United States and China have too much at stake to be wasted on empty rhetoric and theatrics. China will undoubtedly want to impress upon the visitor that stability in bilateral relations cannot come about by bouts of tariffs and sanctions, all of which invite reciprocity. The trade imbalance is indeed huge in China's favor, upwards of US\$ 200 billion, but this has been coming down gradually, and Beijing favors a targeted and structural approach to address this issue, not through punitive measures.

But trade is not all in President Trump's trip. America's Asian allies will be paying careful attention to anything that would impact the Indo-Pacific. To China, that would be Washington's posturing on Taiwan, long considered as its renegade province waiting to be reunited, militarily if need be. To Taiwan, it is a question of whether the United States stands by the existing security framework. China has a lot of concerns about the QUAD, a four-nation partnership of the United States, Japan, India and Australia, which has been seen as an Asian NATO with the objective of containing China. And no discussion is complete without North Korea.

A plate full indeed for President Trump.



Opinion

Sridhar Krishnaswami
Senior Journalist and Columnist

A Summit of Importance To The Indo-Pacific

Hopefully, by the time President Donald Trump lands in China, the framework for a deal on the Iran war would have been sorted out. It was the preoccupation with this conflict that made the American leader push back his summit by a month. And the Trump administration knows well that Beijing has been quite professional about the goings-on in the Middle East—giving all necessary verbal support to Iran but substantively nothing. Of course, this has not stopped unverified reports of the supply of missile components and other hardware to Tehran.

China's bottom line is something different: the free flow of oil from Iran and all other imports through the Strait of Hormuz. Iran knows this as well, for its economic lifeline runs through Beijing, the earnings of foreign exchange through the sale of oil from China alone accounting for about 45 per cent of the government's budget. All this is not to forget Beijing's assistance in helping Iran get by sanctions on the sale of oil through third-party avenues. Directly, no one in the West or elsewhere has pointed to China playing a role in propping up Iran's terrorist proxies.

President Trump's visit to China is coming at a critical time for both countries. Beijing must be watching with some comfort, if not glee, that the Western alliance is in disarray over the Iran war and that NATO is divided on the extent of support it can give to American operations. Add to this President Trump's constant tearing into the allies for one reason or another—today it is over Iran, but consistently it is about them not shouldering enough of the costs. The burden of the “free loaders” logic has also been shared to an extent by Japan and South Korea.

With a US\$ 200 billion-plus deficit, President Trump is in China not just to sell a few bushels of corn, but to see how this perennial problem could be addressed. Since the start of the second Trump administration, the Chinese have vigorously frowned on tariffs and aggressively fought back, showing Washington that two can play this game. How the leaders are going to come to an understanding on dealing with this problem remains to be seen, but Beijing has long rejected tariffs and sanctions as short-sighted.

It is China and the Indo-Pacific that are worrisome to many in the region and beyond, and the expectation is

THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IN THE INDO-PACIFIC IS TAIWAN, WITH MANY WORRIED ABOUT THE INTENTIONS OF BEIJING, ESPECIALLY REGARDING THE USE OF FORCE

that President Trump would address these issues. It is only now that folks are talking about freedom of navigation, international law, and the Strait of Hormuz when Beijing has been flouting established norms of navigation in and around the South China Sea. Nations—especially Vietnam and the Philippines—that have competing claims on the Spratlys are jittery about the aggressive posturing of China to the extent of getting drawn militarily closer to Washington.

But undoubtedly, the biggest problem in the Indo-Pacific is Taiwan, with many worried about the intentions of Beijing, especially regarding the use of force. Drawing all the wrong lessons of unilateralism from the Ukraine and Iran conflicts is one thing, but China's posturing has set off hardliners not only in Taiwan but also in Japan; with this, a loud debate on going nuclear that will undoubtedly set off alarm bells in Asia and a clamor for going the nuclear weapons program route.

The rightist swing in Japan is already making the implications clear—increasing defense spending, the export of lethal military hardware, and eventually jettisoning the pacifist constitution. Not long ago, Tokyo angered China by saying that in the event of an invasion of Taiwan, Japan could be drawn into the conflict. As such, Beijing is highly uncomfortable with the four-nation QUAD grouping in the Indo-Pacific that has the United States, Australia, Japan, and India, seeing it more as a military alliance with the principal aim of containing China.

Nations in the Indo-Pacific will be watching the Trump-Xi summit quite closely, for there is already an apprehension that, in an effort to maximize benefits to the United States, Asia could be at the receiving end.

(Disclaimer: Views expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of South Asian Herald)

South Asian Herald

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LG Miller Calls for Stronger AAPI Engagement



Maryland Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller delivering her keynote address at the UMBC event on May 6, 2026, in Maryland. (Photo courtesy: Lt. Governor's Office)

T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman

Lieutenant Governor of Maryland Aruna Miller said Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month serves as both a celebration and a reminder of the sacrifices and contributions of earlier generations while addressing an event on May 6, 2026, at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

“AAPI Heritage Month isn’t just a celebration. It’s a reminder that we stand on the sacrifices and accomplishments of those before us—and that what we do everyday matters. How we live, how we lead, and how we show up. And how we add our rich heritage and our

stories to the American story,” Miller said during her keynote address at the UMBC Institute of Politics event themed “Politics Everywhere: Understanding the AAPI Vote.”

Commending the diversity of the campus community, Miller noted that more than 20 percent of UMBC students identify as Asian American. “Wow. More than 20% of this campus identifies as an Asian American. That’s remarkable. You and I are lucky to be living in the most diverse state in the Mid-Atlantic,” she said.

Highlighting the growing representation of Asian Americans in public office, Miller referenced members of the Maryland General

Assembly, including Mark Chang, David Moon, Kris Valderrama, and Harry Bhandari, describing them as “barrier breakers and history makers.”

Miller emphasized Maryland’s demographic diversity, noting that more than half of the state’s population consists of people of color and that one in six residents is foreign-born. She also reflected on the history of discrimination faced by Asian Americans, citing measures such as the Chinese Exclusion Act and the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

“I bring this up not to rehash old wounds — but to give you an understanding of the journey walked by our community,” Miller

said. “We didn’t all start at the same place. And our journey also included those who embraced the discomfort of being different than the comfort of fitting in.”

She noted that Asian Americans were barred from becoming U.S. citizens until 1952 and pointed to milestones in political representation, including the election of Dalip Singh Saund to Congress in 1956. Miller said there are now 22 AAPI members serving in Congress. Recalling her own experiences, Miller said she was once told that she “didn’t look like a Lieutenant Governor.” She described such moments as familiar experiences for many minorities navigating spaces where they were not expected. “We know that feeling. And we show up anyway,” she added.

Miller also reflected on Maryland’s political history, noting that the state did not elect its first Asian American legislators until 1990, when David Valderrama joined the Maryland House of Delegates. She also highlighted Kumar Barve as the first Indian American state legislator in the United States. Today, Maryland has eight AAPI legislators in its 188-member General Assembly, she said.

Speaking about her own political journey, Miller said her family initially focused on education and assimilation rather than politics. “Growing up, my parents said I could be anything I wanted — a doctor or an engineer. We never discussed politics at the kitchen table,” she said.

She described becoming a U.S. citizen and voting for the first time in 2000 as a turning point. “My

candidate lost, and I knew I had to get involved,” Miller said.

Reflecting on the 2022 gubernatorial campaign alongside Wes Moore, Miller said many doubted whether “two people of color on the same ticket” could win statewide office in Maryland. “They underestimated Maryland voters,” she said, noting that voters elected the state’s first Black governor and first Asian immigrant lieutenant governor.

Miller said Maryland is home to more than 500,000 AAPI residents, including nearly 288,000 eligible AAPI voters who make up more than 6.5 percent of the state electorate. However, she acknowledged that voter participation within the community remains uneven due to language barriers, lack of outreach, and underrepresentation.

“We are often still seen as ‘Foreigners’ in this country,” she said, warning that disengagement creates space for misinformation and manipulation targeting AAPI communities.

Miller said false and misleading political information has increasingly circulated on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, WeChat, and Telegram, often aimed at discouraging participation or creating division among voters.

“We’ve seen false claims about voting rules, eligibility, and election integrity. We’ve seen attempts to pit communities against one another,” she noted.

Encouraging civic engagement, Miller urged attendees to register and vote in every election, including local contests, and to volunteer on political campaigns. “And when the time comes — Run for office. The world needs you in the arena,” she said.

She encouraged students to embrace their identities and participate fully in civic life. “Your generation — is the most diverse, the most connected, and you know exactly what this country can actually be,” Miller told the gathering.

\$1,100,000,000...

(Contd. from page 1)

Addressing the gathering, Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade William Kimmitt said, “The US-India economic relationship is entering a new phase, one defined by investment, industrial capacity and technology partnership. Today’s announcements reflect that we have 12 Indian companies making investment announcements at this summit totaling more than \$1.1 billion, that

is the largest number of announcements we have seen from a single delegation at SelectUSA Summit.”

Recalling his visit to India earlier this year to Bangalore and Delhi ahead of the AI Impact Summit, Kimmitt said the trip “reinforced” his view that “India is emerging as a major force in innovation, technology and advanced industry.”

“In Bangalore, we met with companies and innovators who are not only developing cutting edge technologies but also deploying them at scale...” he added.

The 12 companies include:

- **Abhyuday Group** (Ahmedabad) will invest over \$900 million across five U.S. sites, creating 1,500 American jobs.
- **Jindal Pipe and Jindal Tubular USA (PR Jindal Group)** will invest \$87 million to expand in Texas and Mississippi, creating 140 jobs.
- **Jivo Wellness** (Delhi) will invest \$15 million, creating 50 direct jobs and up to 150 indirect jobs.
- **Polyhose Inc.** will invest \$2 million in Los Angeles to support the

U.S. shipbuilding industry.

- **Sterlite Technologies Ltd.** (Mumbai) will invest \$100 million, creating up to 500 jobs and supporting AI and telecom infrastructure.
- **Techdome Solutions** (Indore) will invest \$7.5 million, creating 100 jobs.
- **RoshAI** (Kerala) will invest \$5 million in Texas, creating 20 jobs.
- **Atri AI** (Chennai) will invest \$2 million in Menlo Park, California.
- **Kissflow** (Chennai) will invest \$2

million in Houston.

- **SatoriXR** (Chennai) will invest \$1.5 million in Michigan, creating 25 jobs.
- **MagnInnovation Lab** (Kerala) will invest \$2 million to establish U.S. field operations and support energy sector applications.
- **Indian Institute of Technology Madras Global Research Foundation** will invest \$4.5 million to establish a U.S. research and collaboration hub in California, with plans for an additional East Coast location.

India Reception...

(Contd. from page 1)

“And I think that with the partnership of those of you in this room and many more beyond, we can get to this goal,” she added.

Highlighting growing economic collaboration, Khampa said US companies are deeply embedded in India’s transformation across digital infrastructure, manufacturing, financial services and emerging

technologies, while Indian companies continue contributing to the US economy through investments, job creation and supply chains.

Deputy Undersecretary for Policy at the International Trade Administration, US Department of Commerce, Brandon Remington, described India as a “valued” strategic partner and said the relationship was delivering tangible benefits for both countries’ private sectors.

“Under President Trump’s leadership and his America first investment policy, the United States has the world’s most attractive consumer market, a thriving culture of innovation and a highly skilled and productive workforce,” he said, adding that reduced regulatory burdens made it an ideal time to invest in America.

Governor of Delaware Matt Meyer said his first official trip as Governor was to India, where

he visited Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad for meetings with senior government officials and business leaders. “We consider the trip a step forward in a relationship, a relationship Delaware has had with India for a long time,” he said.

Maryland Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller highlighted Maryland’s business-friendly environment and its strong ecosystem of Indian-owned companies. Reflecting on her own journey as an

immigrant from India, she said, “In Maryland, we see ourselves as one global Parivar, one global family.”

Miller said the state was investing heavily in quantum computing, artificial intelligence, life sciences, aerospace and defense under Governor Wes Moore’s leadership. “India is a global force in technology, manufacturing and talent, and Maryland wants to grow with you,” she added.



Global Tax Ledger



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Tax Residency Risks for Returning Indians Amid Global Uncertainty

Over the past few months, global tension has escalated in places such as the Middle East, and more Indians are returning home, particularly in the United States and the United Arab Emirates. This is often a hasty decision, made for safety reasons.

While this may solve an immediate problem, it also raises a question: Does it create a new problem? Yes - it does: taxation.

Taxability in India is based on residential status - so how do we determine it?

Basic Conditions

If an individual stays for

- 182 days or above in India in the current year OR
- 60 days or more in the current year AND 365 days or more in the past 4 years

Additional Condition

- If an individual
- Stays for 730 days or more in the last 7 years
- Resident for 2 years out of the last 10 years

A Resident and Ordinarily Resident meets basic and additional conditions and is taxed on global income. A resident but Not Ordinarily Resident meets the basic but not the additional requirements and is taxed on the Indian income, whereas a non-resident is taxed on global income.

Let's take an example:

Miss Sandhya is an Indian citizen who has spent 11 years in the United States and has returned to India to continue to work remotely for her US employer.

The question arises, will her salary earned while working from India be chargeable to tax? Yes. Why?

Since the services are rendered while she is physically present in India, the salary is regarded as income accruing in India and is, in principle, taxable.

Her salary will be taxable in India in case she spends more than 90 days in India. Relief can still be provided under the India-U.S. DTAA as long as:

- Her residence in India is not more than 183 days;
- Salary paid by a non-resident employer; and
- Her employer doesn't have a permanent establishment.

In such a case, the income will be taxable only in the United States.

Another situation, Rohit, an Indian citizen, who immigrated to the UAE to work in 2024. He returns to India and stays for let us say 200 days as a result of geopolitical instability, thus qualifying as a resident. Since he was an Indian citizen before 2024, he will be treated as a Resident and Ordinarily Resident. Accordingly, his worldwide income becomes chargeable to tax whether earned in India or the UAE.

From above the position, it is clear how a decision made in a hurry can land you in a bigger problem.

But that leads to a question: Do the tax laws still impose tax on the basis of physical presence only, or do they take into account cases like forced relocation? For now, the position is clear: your taxability follows WHERE you stay, not WHY you moved.

(Disclaimer: Views expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of South Asian Herald)

India Tops Remittance Rankings

India became the top remittance recipient country in the world and the only nation to surpass 100 billion dollars, the UN agency on migration said, adding that the country received over 137 billion dollars in remittances in 2024.

"India consistently leads as the top recipient of remittances, followed by Mexico," the World Migration Report 2026, released by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), said.

In 2024, India, Mexico, the Philippines and France were the top four remittance recipient countries globally. India, however, continued to be well above the rest, receiving more than \$ 137 billion, and remained the only country to surpass \$ 100 billion, the report said.

The United States of America has consistently been the top remittance-sending country in the world, with a total outflow surpassing

\$ 100 billion in 2024. As per the UN report, the distribution of remittances varies across regions as well, with South Asia estimated to experience the highest growth in 2024 at 11.8 per cent, driven by continued strong inflows to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Since 2010, India has been the top remittance receiving country in the world, receiving 53.48 billion dollars, which grew over the years to 68.91 billion dollars in 2015, 83.15 billion dollars in 2020 and 137.67 billion dollars in 2024.

Asian countries continue to account for the largest share of internationally mobile students. In 2022, more than one million international students came from China, the single largest origin country worldwide. India ranked second, with over 620,000 students abroad. Beyond these two leading countries, origin country numbers drop considerably: Uzbekistan

(150,000), Viet Nam (134,000) and Germany (126,000) follow, while the United States, France, Nigeria, the Syrian Arab Republic and Nepal each had between 95,000 and 115,000 students studying abroad. More than half of the world's internationally mobile students reside in countries in Europe and North America.

The Indian diaspora has been instrumental in the expansion of India's technology sector, the report said.

As per the UN report, all of the five largest migration corridors involving countries in Oceania comprise migrants to Australia, with the largest corridor being from the United Kingdom to Australia. Just over 1 million migrants from the United Kingdom were living in Australia in 2024, and this number has remained relatively stable over the last 35 years. (UNI)

NRIs Move Beyond Realty

Amid the ongoing Iran War, the Indian expatriates in the Gulf region are rapidly shifting their investment preferences away from traditional real estate purchases in India and towards equities, mutual funds, and structured financial planning, according to a new report by Equirus Wealth.

The study, based on responses from 8,300 non-resident Indians (NRIs) across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain, points to a structural transformation in how overseas Indians are approaching wealth creation amid rising geopolitical uncertainty in West Asia.

According to the report, 73 percent of GCC-based NRIs have increased their exposure to Indian equities and mutual funds, while 42 percent said they are willing to deploy fresh capital into Indian equities going forward. Indian equities emerged as the single most preferred asset class for future investments,

significantly ahead of fixed income and global markets.

The survey showed that 42 percent of respondents preferred Indian equities as their primary future investment avenue, followed by fixed income and debt instruments at 23 percent. Around 15 per cent of investors preferred to remain in a "wait-and-watch" mode, while 11 percent favored international equities. Gold and cash/liquid assets each attracted 4 percent preference, while Indian real estate accounted for just 2 percent.

The findings mark a sharp departure from historical investment patterns among Gulf NRIs, who traditionally channeled remittances into property purchases, second homes, land, and other real estate-linked assets in India.

The report noted that Indian real estate is now witnessing broad-based selling, with as many as 40 percent of investors reducing exposure. This indicates a long-term portfolio reallocation rather than a temporary cyclical shift.

Net portfolio allocation trends further highlighted the transition. Indian equities and mutual funds recorded a net positive allocation shift of 54 percent, while gold and fixed deposits/debt instruments saw net increases of 16 percent and 15 percent, respectively. In contrast, real estate registered a net decline of 27 percent, while international equities and cash holdings both slipped by 4 percent.

The report also highlighted improving investor confidence among overseas Indians despite ongoing geopolitical tensions in the region. Nearly 86 percent of respondents said their financial confidence remained stable or had improved.

While 83 percent of investors acknowledged geopolitical risks in West Asia, most respondents indicated they were responding with disciplined financial behavior rather than panic. The report said investors were increasingly prioritizing higher savings, controlled spending and selective portfolio adjustments instead of making abrupt investment exits. (UNI)

Carlton Targets Luxury Homes

EBG Group, a multi-sector Indian conglomerate, announced its partnership with British lifestyle brand Carlton London to launch Carlton Luxury Furniture in India, marking the brand's entry into the country's premium and luxury furniture segment.

Speaking on the occasion, EBG Group Founder and CEO Dr. Irfan Khan said the company plans to establish 600 showrooms across 300 major cities over the next five years as part of its aggressive nationwide expansion strategy.

The company will invest nearly US\$100 million, equivalent to around ₹800-850 crore,



(Logo courtesy: X@carlton_London)

to scale up operations, manufacturing, retail infrastructure, and customer experience centers across India.

As part of the first phase of expansion, EBG Group plans to launch 50 to 60 experience centers by the end of the current financial year, followed by nearly 200 centers by the end of next year.

The initial launches are planned in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Mumbai.

Dr. Khan said each experience center would require an investment of nearly US\$1 million, or approximately ₹8-9 crore.

The company plans to adopt a hybrid retail model comprising company-owned

company-operated (COCO) stores, franchise outlets, and investor-led centers.

"Initially, we will operate the stores ourselves to standardize customer experience and operational processes. Once we establish around 100 to 150 stores, franchise partners can adopt our SOP-driven model independently," Dr. Khan said.

The company said the furniture products are designed in London while manufacturing will be carried out in India through facilities in Hyderabad and other locations, supported by contract manufacturing partnerships.

"The products are designed in London but manufactured in India to suit Indian consumer preferences and customization requirements," he said.

According to the company, the furniture range will focus on lightweight, structurally engineered, highly customizable products with faster delivery timelines.

Highlighting its focus on innovation and

intellectual property, Dr. Khan said EBG Group currently holds nearly 364 patented products, of which more than 100 products are expected to be launched during the current phase.

"These are IP-driven and protected products. The designs and engineering cannot be easily copied," he said.

Beyond furniture, the company also plans to expand into modular kitchen cabinets, bar units, and interior design services under the Tartan brand. The expansion is expected to generate significant employment opportunities across retail, logistics, manufacturing, and backend operations.

Dr. Khan said the company's expansion could create nearly 16,000 to 17,000 jobs over the next few years.

To improve affordability for customers, EBG Group has partnered with banks and NBFCs to offer financing support for purchases. (UNI)

Heroine No. 1: Who Are The Contenders?

Rajiv Vijayakar

It was never so unclear: Is there a Numero Uno heroine today at all?

Ameesha Patel, whose debut film, *Kaho Na...Pyaar Hai* (2000) was the biggest hit that year, and second film, *Gadar—Ek Prem Katha* (2001) the biggest hit and the movie with the maximum footfalls in that entire decade (2000-2009) has come down scathingly on the various actresses' claims to be No. 1 off-late, calling them deplorable PR exercises.

Patel never sustained despite her first two films' successes, thanks to a series of disasters and flops and the occasional hit (*Bhool Bhulaiyaa*). Her comeback film, *Gadar 2*, was one of the four 500 crore-grossers in 2023. But she wonders at actresses making claims to be in the topmost position, terming it a "FakeNo. 1 race" in a sharp statement on X, reported in "Mumbai Mirror."

She has stated, "Most female actresses...are paying their PR teams to call them nos 1 or nos 2, like really, it's 2026 and not 2000 today, 100 crore is nothing (sic)."

She has rightly opined that one must call herself a superstar "only if you have achieved any sort of work that creates history and havoc at the box-office."

This is thus the right time to evaluate the contenders here.

Alia Bhatt

Alia Bhatt still seems to be the top contender. Her Sanjay Leela



(Photo courtesy: Hype PR)

Bhansali's *Love & War* and YRF's Alpha are set for release in 2026-2027. She has a cameo in *Tumbbad 2* and is slated to do Bhansali's Baiju Bawra. Never mind then if *Jigra* (2024) bombed.

Deepika Padukone

The lady's been immensely lucky. Her *Pathaan* and *Jawan* crossed 500 crore (\$60 million) in 2023, and *Kalki 2898 AD*, *Fighter* and *Singham Again* have all crossed the 200 crore (\$24 million) mark though their success levels are debatable. There is King to come, but she is likely to take a break now as she is pregnant again.

Kriti Sanon

Sanon's releases have always been a mixed bag. Her last, *Tere Ishq Mein*, was hyped as a success, ditto her OTT debut as actor-producer, *Do Patti*, in a dual role. She also did a super job as a robot in *Teri Baton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya*, which did



(Photo courtesy: Publicity Photo)

average business. Her next, *Cocktail 2*, looks very promising.

Rashmika Mandanna

This lady is rocking so far as Hindi box-office is concerned, though *Thamma* and *Sikander* underperformed. With the *Pushpa* franchise, *Animal* and *Chhaava*, Rashmika is soaring. But will she sustain, or become another Asin from the South, who simply faded out after four big hits, remains to be seen. She too is doing *Cocktail 2*.

The four actresses seem to be the only ones seriously in the race.



(Photo courtesy: Publicity Photo)

Kangana Ranaut seriously does not count!

Katrina Kaif, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Kajol, Vidya Balan and Sonakshi Sinha are now veterans, well-past any race.

Priyanka Chopra Jonas, never mind *Varanasi* or any other assignment she takes up, is concentrating on Hollywood.

Sara Arjun, despite the *Dhurandhar* franchise, is not making any tall claims.

Shraddha Kapoor had *Stree 2* opening the 600-crore (\$72 million) club, but nothing else to show.

And Janhvi Kapoor, Ananya Panday, Yami Gautam Dhar, Triptii Dimri & Wamiqa Gabbi *et al* have miles to go. The throne's bare.

Entertainment Round Up

MIFF 2026 Begins

Registration is now open for South Asia's oldest documentary, short fiction and animation film festival, Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF), to be held in Mumbai from June 15 to 21, 2026.

The week-long event will take place at the NFDC Complex on Peddar Road and is expected to attract filmmakers, artists, students, media professionals and cinema enthusiasts from around the world. Recognized as one of the oldest and most prestigious non-feature film festivals in South Asia, MIFF provides a wide-ranging platform to filmmakers, artists, media professionals and cinema lovers from across the world. Participant registration for the upcoming

MIFF event has begun through the official festival portal. Interested participants can register online through the official MIFF website.

The Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) is a

landmark event and holds the distinction of being the oldest and largest film festival dedicated to documentary, short fiction and animation films in South Asia. Established in 1990 (initially as the Bombay International Film Festival), MIFF has evolved into a vibrant platform showcasing masterpieces from Indian and international filmmakers. (UNI)



(Photo courtesy: X@kanganateam)

Kangana's Patriotic Drama

Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut's upcoming film "Bharat Bhagya Vidhata" is all set for a theatrical release on June 12 with the makers unveiling the date along with a new poster dedicated to real-life acts of courage.

Based on true events, this thriller shifts the focus from weapons and violence to humanity and determination, especially within government hospitals, where ordinary people displayed extraordinary courage.

The film depicts the extraordinary true story of hospital staff—nurses, ward boys, cleaners, elevator operators, security guards, and administrative staff—who steadfastly performed their duty in the face of armed threats. When the entire city was gripped by terror,

these individuals not only fulfilled their duty but also ensured that humanity and the spirit of India prevailed.

Ranaut said, "We often celebrate superficial heroism, but true courage is quiet. It stands up, stands firm, and takes charge. Bharat Bhagya Vidhata is an untold story of courage, sacrifice, humanity, and unity. Of ordinary people who stood between terror and life. This is patriotism in its purest form. I am proud to be a part of this story and excited to bring it to audiences on the big screen on June 12th."

Presented by Dr. Jayantilal Gada (Pen Studios), Bharat Bhagya Vidhata is produced by Pen Studios, Manikarnika Films, and Parmansh Creations, in association with Eunoia Films LLP and Floating Rocks Entertainment Pvt. Ltd. The film is written and directed by Manoj Taparia, and will be distributed by Pen Marudhar.

Along with Ranaut, the film also stars Girija Oak, Smita Tambe, Amrita Namdev, Esha Dey, Priya Berde, Asha Shelar, Suhita Thatte, Rasika Agashe, Aditya Mishra and Zahid Khan. (UNI)

Jackie Fantasy Drama

Bollywood star Jackie Shroff's upcoming film "The Great Grand Superhero" is slated for a theatrical release on May 29.

Presented by Zee Studios and Amdavad Films, the film brings a completely new and emotional twist to the Indian superhero genre. The film transports you to a world where fantasy, innocence, and mystery combine to create a unique cinematic experience.

The teaser depicts a child's fantasy-filled world, where a grandfather-grandson relationship turns into a unique superhero journey.



(Photo courtesy: X@bindasbhaidu)

However, the story isn't just about emotions, but also the thrill of aliens and mysterious events, making it even more intriguing.

At the center of the film is Shroff, who will be seen in a character that is extremely warm and completely different from his previous roles. Speaking about the film, the 69-year-old actor said, "With the Great Grand Superhero, we are fulfilling every child's dream. If your soul remains young and your spine remains strong till the age of 90, that is the real superhero. Children's dreams should always come first."

Directed by National Award-winning director Manish Saini, the film also features Pratik Smita Patil, Bhagyashree Dassani, Sharat Saxena, Mihir Godbole, Durgesh Kumar, Saharsh Shukla, Shivansh Chorge and Kumar Saubh in pivotal roles. (UNI)

Courtroom Drama Release

Intense courtroom drama "System" headlined by Sonakshi Sinha,

Jyotika and Ashutosh Gowariker, is set to unleash on May 22.

Helmed by Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari, it is presented by Baweja Studios, mounted by Pammi Baweja, Harman Baweja and Smitha Baliga, and scripted by Baweja, Arun Sukumar, director Tiwari, Tasneem Lokhandwala, and Akshat Ghildial.

Prime Video's upcoming legal drama is set for a global premiere across 240 territories, marking one of the streamer's major Indian original releases this year, reports DEADLINE.

The film was announced earlier this year during the Prime Video Presents India showcase in March, where the streamer unveiled a broad slate of 69 upcoming films and series.

The film follows the unlikely connection between Neha Rajvansh (Sinha), a public prosecutor, and Sarika Rawat (Jyotika), a courtroom stenographer who comes from a humble background. Per the synopsis, "Despite their distinctly different social standings, the team unites to fight for justice and truth, even if it means going up against the most powerful."

For Prime Video India, the picture is the latest in a long line of movie originals, including "The Mehta Boys," "Maja Ma," and "Ammu." No theatrical launch for this one.

"System is a gripping legal drama that brings together two headstrong women from contrasting worlds, bound by their own ideas of justice," said Harman Baweja. "Brought to life through powerful performances by Sonakshi Sinha, Jyotika, and Ashutosh Gowariker, the movie reflects our shared vision of telling meaningful, cinematic stories." (UNI)



(Photo courtesy: X@NFDC India)



Weekly Horoscope

MAY 15 - 21

BY ASTROLOGER MANISHA KUSHIK

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ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 20)



Love: Knight of Coins
Mood: Judgment
Career: The Fool

Professional growth may take center stage, with chances of a fresh opportunity encouraging you to step out of your comfort zone. Financial prospects may improve gradually. Emotional sensitivity at home may require patience. Romance may feel steady and reassuring. A short getaway may help recharge your energy.

Lucky Number: 2 • Lucky Color: Pink

TAURUS (Apr 21 – May 20)



Love: Temperance
Mood: Knight of Wands
Career: Ten of Coins

Financial stability may guide your decisions this week, allowing you to plan ahead with clarity. Career responsibilities may increase, but your consistency is likely to bring recognition. Family life may feel supportive. Romance may demand thoughtful communication. Health may benefit from regular routines.

Lucky Number: 5 • Lucky Color: Green

GEMINI (May 21 – Jun 21)



Love: Two of Swords
Mood: The Hanged Man
Career: The Empress

Creative pursuits may bring rewarding outcomes, especially in professional matters. Financial inflow may improve through new ideas. Personal relationships may require balanced decision making. Romance may progress quietly. Travel may offer refreshing experiences. Health may remain stable with mindful habits.

Lucky Number: 1 • Lucky Color: Golden

CANCER (Jun 22 – Jul 22)



Love: The Magician
Mood: Two of Coins
Career: The Tower

Emotional clarity may help you navigate complex personal matters. Career fluctuations may test your patience, but adaptability may support progress. Financial decisions may need careful planning. Family advice may prove valuable. Romance may require understanding. A change of environment may bring a renewed perspective.

Lucky Number: 7 • Lucky Color: Cream

LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 23)



Love: The World
Mood: The Sun
Career: Ten of Cups

Creative expression may enhance your professional image and open new doors. Financial caution may be advisable despite positive trends.

Family interactions may need attention to avoid misunderstandings. Romance may feel uplifting. Health may improve through disciplined efforts. Travel may bring enjoyable experiences.

Lucky Number: 6 • Lucky Color: White

VIRGO (Aug 24 – Sept 23)



Love: Four of Coins
Mood: Justice
Career: Eight of Cups

Career reflections may encourage you to reassess your current path and explore better options. Financial progress may seem gradual but stable. Family matters may need a flexible approach. Romance may require patience. Health may improve with balanced habits. Property decisions may demand careful evaluation.

Lucky Number: 11 • Lucky Color: Orange

LIBRA (Sept 24 – Oct 23)



Love: Judgment
Mood: Three of Swords
Career: Temperance

Social interactions may open new possibilities, both personally and professionally. Career progress may depend on your ability to stay organized. Financial matters may stabilize gradually. Romance may bring unexpected developments. Health may improve with mindful choices. Travel plans may prove beneficial.

Lucky Number: 4 • Lucky Color: Royal Blue

SCORPIO (Oct 24 – Nov 22)



Love: Strength
Mood: The Lovers
Career: Two of Wands

Financial planning may require discipline as expenses could rise. Career opportunities may emerge through innovative thinking. Family gatherings may bring joy. Romance may deepen with honest expression. Health may improve through better dietary choices. Travel may offer memorable experiences.

Lucky Number: 17 • Lucky Color: Brown

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 – Dec 21)



Love: Three of Wands
Mood: The Hierophant
Career: Ten of Cups

Professional progress may bring a sense of achievement, especially in pending tasks. Financial gains may come through smart planning. Family connections may strengthen. Romance may require trust and openness. Physical activities may boost energy levels. Travel may provide emotional comfort and relaxation.

Lucky Number: 2 • Lucky Color: Light Grey

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 – Jan 21)



Love: King of Coins
Mood: The Fool
Career: The Emperor

New beginnings may shape your career path positively this week. Financial matters may require prompt attention. Family life may improve through communication. Romance may bring promising developments. Health may benefit from consistency. Travel plans may finally materialize, bringing satisfaction.

Lucky Number: 18 • Lucky Color: Maroon

AQUARIUS (Jan 22 – Feb 19)



Love: The Devil
Mood: Two of Cups
Career: The Hermit

Networking may play a key role in shaping your professional future. Financial collaborations

may prove beneficial. Family support may offer strength. Romance may deepen through emotional understanding. Health may improve with mindful practices. Travel planning may require attention to detail.

Lucky Number: 3 • Lucky Color: Yellow

PISCES (Feb 20 – Mar 20)



Love: Seven of Coins
Mood: The Hermit
Career: The Magician

Creative ideas may help you move forward in professional matters. Financial growth may come through collaborative efforts. Family responsibilities may need attention. Romance may require appreciation and patience. Health may benefit from adequate rest. Travel plans may bring meaningful experiences.

Lucky Number: 4 • Lucky Color: Magenta

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A Personal Reflection on Britain's South Asian Success Story

Lord Karan Bilimoria

When I reflect on my journey in Britain, I do not see it only as a personal story. I see it as part of a wider South Asian story: families who arrived with courage, worked with dignity, built businesses, educated their children, served their neighborhoods, and strengthened the country they now call home.

Today, that contribution is visible everywhere. In England and Wales alone, the Asian, Asian British and Asian Welsh population stood at 5.5 million in the 2021 Census, including 1.9 million people of Indian heritage, 1.6 million of Pakistani heritage and more than 600,000 of Bangladeshi heritage. But behind every statistic is a human story: the corner shop opened before dawn, the doctor on the night shift, the student far from home, the restaurateur building trust table by table.

I have been privileged to serve this community in different ways. When I founded Cobra Beer in 1989, much of our early journey was built alongside Britain's curry restaurant community. These restaurants were often family businesses, created through long hours, sacrifice and immense pride. They were not merely places to eat; they were cultural gateways, employers, community anchors and symbols of aspiration. At its height, the curry restaurant sector grew to around 12,000 restaurants in the UK, helping make South Asian food part of Britain's everyday life.

Supporting that ecosystem was never just about building a business. It was about standing with South Asian entrepreneurs who



Lord Karan Bilimoria. (Photo courtesy: Lord Bilimoria's Office)

helped transform the British high street. I saw first-hand how a small restaurant could support a family, employ people, introduce customers to a culture, and give a new generation the confidence to aim higher.

That same spirit has shaped my wider work in public life. As Founding Chairman of the UK India Business Council, and as Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for India, I have always believed that the British Indian community can be one of the strongest living bridges between the United Kingdom and India. The relationship between our countries is built

every day by families, students, entrepreneurs, professionals, investors, doctors, teachers and community leaders who understand both worlds.

Education has also been central to my work. For many South Asian families, education is more than achievement; it is dignity, mobility and hope. As President of UK Council for International Student Affairs, founding Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Students, my various roles in academia, including being the first Indian born Chancellor of a Russell Group University,

the University of Birmingham, I have consistently argued that international students should never be reduced to numbers in an immigration debate. They are young people with ambition, families with hope behind them, and future contributors to Britain.

This matters profoundly to South Asia. In 2024/25, students from India and China accounted for nearly half of all non-EU international students in the UK. Many South Asian students arrive with extraordinary potential. They enrich our campuses, strengthen research, and often become lifelong

ambassadors for this country. Defending the Graduate route, and a fairer approach to international students, has therefore been both an education issue and a community issue.

In the House of Lords, I have always seen my role as one of bridge-building: between communities and institutions, between enterprise and government, and between Britain and the wider world. As a crossbench peer, I have had the independence to speak on issues that matter deeply to our community: business, education, immigration, diversity, entrepreneurship, international trade and the UK's relationship with India.

As a Zoroastrian Parsi, I know that the South Asian story is not one story, but many. I have been proud to serve as Patron of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe in the UK, supporting Britain's oldest South Asian faith community and reminding people that even smaller communities can make an outsized contribution to national life.

The South Asian community has earned its place through hard work, resilience and service. We must now use that place wisely — to mentor, to participate, to lead and to give back. Our task now is not simply to celebrate how far we have come, but to ensure that the next generation goes further, not only for the South Asian community, but for Britain as a whole.

Lord Karan Bilimoria is a member of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom and the founder of Cobra Beer, a household name in the UK.

(Disclaimer: Views expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of South Asian Herald)

Jenifer Rajkumar Condemns Antisemitic Graffiti in Forest Park

New York State Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar has condemned the antisemitic graffiti discovered in Woodhaven, stating, "There is no place for antisemitism in my hometown of Woodhaven or anywhere in New York."

In a statement, Rajkumar said Nazi hate symbols were spray-painted along the Orange Trail in Forest Park on the night of May 10.

"This vile act of antisemitism seeks to intimidate our Jewish community and spread hate and fear. Our community will not tolerate it," she said. Rajkumar added that she spoke directly with the 102nd Precinct and commended its swift coordination with the NYPD Hate



(Photo courtesy: Jenifer Rajkumar)

Crimes Task Force to investigate the incident and identify those responsible.

The Assemblywoman also praised the New York City Parks Department for its prompt response in removing the graffiti.

"I also commend the Parks Department for acting quickly to remove these hateful markings and restore the space for my constituents who use this trail every day," she added. "We will not allow hatred to take root in our community. We will confront antisemitism with moral clarity, hold those responsible fully accountable, and stand united against every form of hate. Love will always win over hate in New York."

India Showcases...

(Contd. from page 1)

He also highlighted the e-Migrate mobile application, which allows users to track applications, verify recruiting agents, and access grievance redressal services. The keynote address was followed by a panel discussion featuring an exchange of best practices in migration and mobility governance.

Kim Eling, senior director at IOM, praised India's leadership in digital migration governance. Saúl Pacurucu, vice minister of Human Mobility of Ecuador, discussed Ecuador's experience with circular migration programs and digital consular services aimed at creating safe and formal labor mobility pathways.

Levinson C. Alcantara, assistant secretary of the Department of Migrant Workers of the Philippines, outlined the Philippines' end-to-end digital migration governance model, including online orientation programs, contract verification systems, and welfare support services for migrant workers.

Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, Abdulaziz M. Alwasil, highlighted Saudi Arabia's labor governance reforms and integrated digital platforms such as Qiwa, which are designed to improve contractual transparency, labor mobility, and worker protection for the country's large expatriate workforce.

Florian Laudi, commissioner for Multilateral Affairs of Germany, emphasized the expanding partnership between India and Germany in the areas of skilled migration, labor mobility, vocational training, and digital migration systems, noting the mutual benefits of migration cooperation between the two countries.

The IMRF serves as the principal platform for UN member states to review and discuss progress in implementing the Global Compact for Migration, the first intergovernmental agreement addressing all dimensions of international migration. Convened by the President of the General Assembly, the forum is held once every four years.



Beauty Basics with
Shahnaz Husain

Beat The Heat With These “Summer-Friendly” Foods

Summer, the hottest time of the year, is already underway, and we can feel the temperature rising. The scorching heat may drain your body and affect how you look and feel.

The food and drink you consume during the summer will play a vital role in helping you get through the heat wave, as even healthy people can succumb to heat-related health issues.

Lots of fruit and vegetables are also great sources of water.

Are you looking for food to beat the heat this season? Here are a few summer-friendly foods that will help you cool down.

Spinach, 93% water

Spinach is an exceptionally hydrating, nutrient-dense leafy green, made up of around 93% water, so it's good for hydration.

This leafy vegetable is rich in calcium, iron and magnesium. Use spinach as the base of a fresh summer salad, sandwiches or add a handful to your smoothies, offering 2.9g of protein per 100g. Including raw or lightly cooked spinach in your diet helps increase fluid intake, contributing to improved digestion and energy levels.

Ridge Gourd

Ridge gourd (turai/luffa), a light and spongy vegetable, is made up of over 90% water content, which helps regulate digestion and hydration. It is a fiber-rich summer vegetable that cools the body, aids digestion, and is low in calories. It's best enjoyed in curries, soups, and as a stir-fry.

Ridge gourd, which cooks quickly, is one of nature's easiest detox foods. Ridge gourd, the summer-friendly vegetable, has a cooling effect on the body, which can be beneficial in managing heat-related issues. Ridge gourd is not just naturally hydrating but also very light

as a vegetable. The high amount of fiber makes one feel full even after eating a small portion of food, and also at the same time keeps the stomach light throughout the day. Ridge Gourd can be used in various culinary preparations, including curries, stir-fries, soups, stews, and salads. It can also be juiced or added to smoothies for a nutritious boost.

Broccoli

Comprised of roughly 91% water, it acts as a food-based hydration source, similar to cucumber or watermelon, that can maintain your energy levels in the scorching heat by keeping your body cool, fresh and energized. Add raw broccoli florets to salads and slaws for a crunchy, nutritious boost. Pair it with other fresh vegetables, nuts, and seeds for a delicious and healthy meal.

Tender Coconut Water

This is the go-to drink in summer.

The cooling properties, together with its minerals and electrolytes, make coconut water an ideal energy drink provided by Nature.

Coconut water is filled with electrolytes which keep the body hydrated and the skin toned. The power drink contains vitamins, minerals, calcium, potassium, and magnesium in its natural form to

help beat the heat during summer while keeping one hydrated and energetic throughout the day and boosting your digestive capacity.

Fruits and Vegetables: A part of your daily diet must consist of fresh fruits and vegetables, eaten raw, with the skin, as far as possible. Watermelon, musk melon, pears, papaya, plums, berries, apricots, cherries, mango, and oranges are found abundantly in the summer season. They supply the nutrients that keep our skin and hair healthy and beautiful.

Eat more fresh vegetables, which are light on the stomach and easily digestible. Vegetables should be lightly cooked in summer. They ensure the proper elimination of wastes so that the skin is free from clogged pores and problems like pimples and acne.

Lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber, radish, apples, oranges, pineapple, grapefruit, and so on can easily be added to salads. Add nuts and seeds, Lemon juice, mint, and green coriander to make a low-calorie dressing. Yogurt is also a wonderful beauty food, while buttermilk and paneer can be included.

(Disclaimer: Views expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of South Asian Herald.)



Human Palate Psychology

M. Rajendran

Gummadikaaya (Pumpkin) Chutney of Teluguland*



(Gumadikaya Chutney)

lentil pancake), idli (a steamed rice-and-lentil cake), and even as a sandwich spread for kids or a quick breakfast.

For Gen Z, the alternative to Pumpkin is courgette (zucchini). At the same time, the remaining ingredients and process remain

the same. Try it, I have, and the results were amazing.

*Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

Ingredients

- One medium, firm Pumpkin — skin on, cut into roughly 1-inch chunks.



(Zucchini Chutney)

- 2 green and 2 dry red chillies.
- 50 grams of washed and soaked tamarind, or juice extracted from One Lime
- Half a teaspoon of sesame seeds
- 2 seeds of Garlic
- ½ teaspoon of food Oil,
- Pinch of cumin seeds,
- Pinch of fenugreek seeds,
- 10-12 curry leaves,
- ½ teaspoon turmeric powder
- Salt as per taste.

Instructions for Preparation

- Roast chillies, seeds and spices separately in a pan.
- In the same pan, roast the Pumpkin until tender, then let it cool for 5-10 minutes or keep it under a fan.
- Grind the green chillies, dry red chillies, fenugreek seeds and sesame seeds to a fine paste in a processor. (You may use the *Rubbu Rolu* (Bharat's another

performance word) mortar pestle to get that authentic taste)

- Place the pan on the stove, add the cooled Pumpkin, and coarsely grind the spices, mixing well until the pumpkin pieces are evenly coated.
- Add crushed garlic, fenugreek powder, turmeric and salt
- Mix the tamarind, cover, and cook over low to medium heat until the water evaporates.
- Add cilantro and sesame, give a good stir, then sauté for 2-3 minutes.
- Leave the mixture to cool in the pan.
- After 5-10 minutes, you can serve hot or refrigerate for up to 3-4 days.

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India Bow Out After Historic Run at AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup

Anirudh Nair

It was a tournament to remember for the Indian U-17 Women's National Football Team, as they reached the quarterfinals of the AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup for the first time. The young Tigresses were just one match away from qualifying for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, but their dream came to an end after a 3-0 defeat to powerhouse China in the quarterfinals.

India were drawn into a group with Australia, Lebanon, and record champions Japan. Australia and Japan defeated India 2-0 and 3-0, respectively. Despite the losses, the relatively narrow margins were viewed positively and ultimately proved crucial. The goal difference came into play in India's final group-stage match against



Pamela Conti celebrates with her India U-17 side as they qualify for the quarter-finals of the 2026 U-17 AFC Women's Asian Cup. (Photo courtesy: All India Football Federation)

Lebanon, where they secured a dominant 4-0 victory. Goals from Joya and Alva Devi Sanjam, along with a brace from Pritika Barman, sealed India's historic place in the

quarterfinals through the third-place rankings.

India's current head coach is Pamela Conti, a former Italian international with 90 caps for her

national team. She has previously coached Atlético Madrid Women's U-17 side, as well as Venezuela's senior and U-20 women's teams. Under her leadership, Venezuela qualified for its first-ever FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup in 2024.

"It is an incredible achievement," Conti told the-aiff.com after India qualified for the quarterfinals.

"I am very happy. There are hardly enough words to describe it. I am only grateful to these players, who from day one have always followed everything we asked of them."

"For me, the most important thing is that we have given happiness to India, a country that welcomed me so warmly from the beginning," she continued.

"Now we can say that we are among the top eight teams in Asia.

If someone had told me this a few months ago, I would not have believed it."

Conti was appointed ahead of the 2026 U-17 Women's Asian Cup and has already made significant progress with Indian women's football in just a few months in charge. While the loss to China was disappointing, the campaign is being viewed as a promising beginning rather than the end of the journey.

With the AFC and FIFA introducing a revamped system that will see the U-17 Women's Asian Cup and FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup held annually, Conti and her squad will have multiple opportunities to compete for a place on the global stage in the years ahead. The team's breakthrough campaign has also raised hopes of a brighter future for women's football in India.

Sports Round Up

Wheelchair Glory



(Photo courtesy: AI generated)

Uttar Pradesh emerged victorious in a thrilling final against Haryana to win the 5th National Wheelchair Cricket Championship at the Shaheed Vijay Pathik Stadium, here.

Under the captaincy of Somjeet Singh, Uttar Pradesh lifted the national title for the third time on Saturday, further cementing their dominance in Indian wheelchair cricket.

Batting first, Uttar Pradesh posted an impressive total of 191/9 in their allotted 20 overs. Haryana responded with a spirited chase and scored 186/8 in 20 overs, falling short by just 5 runs in a nail-biting finish. (UNI)

Archery Bronze Win



(Photo courtesy: X@airnewsalerts)

India's Sahil Jadhav won a bronze medal in the men's individual compound event at the Archery World Cup 2026 Stage 2 here in China.

The 25-year-old Indian archer defeated veteran Martin Damsbo of Denmark 147-144 in the bronze match for his maiden Archery World Cup medal.

Ahil Jadhav was trailing 30-29 at the end of the first set but gradually recovered through the next four to secure the victory. Earlier in the quarter-finals, the eighth-seeded Indian edged Austria's Nico Wiener, the 2021 world champion, in a shoot-off after both archers were tied at 147, according to olympics.com.

However, Sahil went down 147-145 against Nicolas Girard of France - the reigning world champion - in the semi-finals to enter the bronze medal playoff. (UNI)

Wrestling Row Deepens

The Wrestling Federation of India has barred Olympian wrestler Vinesh Phogat from participating in domestic competitions until June 26, citing alleged indiscipline and violation of anti-doping regulations.

In a 15-page show-cause notice issued on Saturday, the federation accused Phogat of failing to provide the mandatory six-month prior notice before returning from retirement, terming it a violation of the WFI constitution, United World Wrestling (UWW) regulations and anti-doping norms.

The federation said her actions had harmed the image of Indian wrestling and caused "national embarrassment." WFI has sought her explanation on four major allegations and asked why disciplinary action should not be initiated against her.

Phogat had announced her retirement from wrestling after

being disqualified from the Paris Olympics 2024 due to being overweight ahead of a bout. However, she later withdrew her retirement decision and indicated her intention to return to competitive wrestling.

The latest action also comes after the International Testing Agency (ITA) reportedly issued a notice to Phogat on May 4 for allegedly missing a doping test scheduled in Bengaluru on December 18, 2025. (UNI)

Tour de France India



(Photo courtesy: AI generated)

Karnataka is set to host India's first-ever edition of the globally renowned Letape by Tour de France cycling event, with Mysuru chosen as the venue for the inaugural race scheduled on October 4, 2026.

The event, announced by NEB Sports on Friday in association with Karnataka Tourism and the Amaury Sport Organization (ASO), organizers of the Tour de France, marks the entry of India into the international Letape amateur cycling series conducted across more than 20 countries.

NEB Sports officially unveiled the event logo and website at a press conference here, describing the initiative as a major boost for sports tourism and endurance sports culture in Karnataka. Letape

Mysuru will feature four race categories catering to cyclists of varying skill levels — a 100-km competitive race, a 50-km ride for fitness enthusiasts, a 20-km family ride, and a 1-km community ride for children.

The cycling routes will pass through Mysuru and the Krishna Raja Sagar (KRS) region, showcasing the city's heritage landmarks, broad roads, and scenic surroundings.

Letape by Tour de France is the official global amateur cycling series run by ASO. The series now includes over 30 events worldwide with participation exceeding 50,000 riders annually. (UNI)

IPL Protocol Crackdown

Hours after BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia warned IPL franchises and players that the board "isn't sitting idle" over repeated protocol breaches during IPL 2026, the BCCI issued a strict advisory to all 10 franchises regarding multiple violations related to discipline, conduct and security during the ongoing season.

In a seven-page document sent to all teams, Saikia warned that repeated violations could damage the reputation of the IPL, the franchises and the board itself. While the advisory did not mention any franchise, player or official by name, it highlighted several serious issues that have come to the board's notice. These included unauthorized visitors entering hotel rooms, franchise owners interacting with players during matches, vaping at venues and players or officials leaving team hotels without approval.

"It has come to the attention of the BCCI that certain incidents of misconduct and protocol violations have occurred involving players, support staff, and team officials during the course of the

current IPL season," Saikia said in the advisory. (UNI)

ICC Nominee List

Nahid Rana, Jatinder Singh and Ajay Kumar have been nominated for the ICC Men's Player of the Month award for April following impressive performances in ODI cricket.

Bangladesh pacer Rana earned his nomination after playing a key role in his side's 2-1 ODI series win over New Zealand at home. The 23-year-old claimed eight wickets at an economy rate of 4.46 and was named Player of the Series. His standout performance came in Mirpur, where he picked up five for 32 in Bangladesh's 55-run victory in the second ODI.

Oman captain Jatinder Singh made the shortlist after scoring 266 runs in five ODIs during the ICC World Cup League 2 in Nepal. He struck a brilliant 139 off 91 balls against Nepal, registering the highest ODI score by an Oman batter.

UAE left-arm seamer Ajay Kumar completed the men's shortlist after taking nine wickets in his first two ODI appearances. He returned figures of three for 34 against Nepal and six for 35 against Oman.

In the women's category, Laura Wolvaardt, Imesha Dulani and Laura Cardoso have been nominated. South African skipper Wolvaardt impressed against New Zealand and India, including a blistering 115 off 53 balls in a T20I. Sri Lanka opener Dulani starred in the ODI series win over Bangladesh and followed it up with an impressive show in the T20Is against the same opponents, while Brazil's Cardoso enjoyed a memorable month with 203 runs and 17 wickets in T20Is, including remarkable figures of nine for four against Lesotho. (UNI)