

United Nations report blames
Al-Qaida affiliate for deadly
Red Fort bombing



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A United Nations Security Council terrorism monitoring team has officially attributed last year's deadly suicide car bombing at Delhi's Red Fort to Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent, warning that the extremist group is expanding its footprint across South Asia through decentralized networks. In its latest report, released on Wednesday, the council's Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team said the attack, which killed 11 people in November, was "officially attributed" to the group. The report said Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent has evolved from a fragmented organization into a regional terrorist network operating through small, scattered cells supported by logistics and financial networks rather than large militant units. It also warned that the group is attempting to establish cells in Bangladesh, raising concerns about an increasingly volatile regional security environment. The findings differ from the team's February assessment, which linked the Red Fort attack to Jaish-e-Mohammed, an organization the United Nations says has close ties to Al-Qaida. The report also highlighted growing threats from Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan and its reported restructuring, including the creation of new divisions linked to Kashmir and Gilgit.

Quad partners step up
coordination for a free and
open Indo-Pacific



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Quad countries are moving ahead with closer coordination on regional priorities, United States Ambassador to India Sergio Gor said on Thursday after meeting Australian High Commissioner Philip Green and Japanese Ambassador Keiichi Ono in New Delhi. The discussions focused on upcoming Quad initiatives and meetings involving India, Australia, Japan and the United States. In a post on X, Gor said the four nations remain aligned in delivering results for a free and open Indo-Pacific. His remarks come weeks after Quad foreign ministers met in Manila, where they reaffirmed support for an open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific while backing the central role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The ministers also pledged deeper cooperation on maritime security, critical and emerging technologies, economic resilience and humanitarian assistance, emphasizing that regional peace and stability remain central to the Quad's agenda.

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US states recognize August 15 as 'India Day' ahead of India's 80th Independence Day

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A growing number of U.S. states have officially recognized August 15 as "India Day" or "India Independence Day," marking India's 80th Independence Day while highlighting the expanding influence and contributions of the Indian-American community.

Delaware became the latest state to issue a proclamation, joining New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts in formally recognizing the occasion. Delaware Governor Matthew Meyer's proclamation described the state as being strengthened by its cultural diversity and praised Indian Americans for their contributions to business, public service and community life. It also encouraged residents to celebrate India's heritage and the enduring ties between Delaware and India.

The development follows similar proclamations issued on Tuesday by New York Governor Kathy Hochul and New Jersey Governor Mikie Sherrill, who designated August 15 as "India Independence Day" across their respective states. Massachusetts had earlier proclaimed August 15 as "India Day," reflecting growing recognition of one of the fastest-growing and most influential immigrant communities in the United States.

The proclamations are symbolic and carry no legal effect, but they underscore the deepening cultural and people-to-people ties between India and the United States. Across the country, Indian Independence Day is traditionally marked with flag-hoisting ceremonies, cultural programs, parades and community events organized by the Indian diaspora, while U.S. political leaders often acknowledge the community's contributions to the nation's economic, civic and cultural landscape.



Morrison says Modi has put India's national interest at the center of foreign policy



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Former Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi with reshaping India's foreign policy by placing national interests at the forefront while strengthening strategic partnerships across the Indo-Pacific. Speaking during the Indo-Mediterranean Dialogues, Morrison said Modi has pursued a pragmatic approach by engaging countries based on India's interests without abandoning its independent foreign policy. He also praised External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar for helping translate that vision into action. Morrison described India's participation as indispensable to the Quad, saying its engagement gives the grouping unique strategic value. He added that growing cooperation among India, Australia, Japan and the United States on maritime security reflects the Indo-Pacific's rising geopolitical importance and presents new opportunities for Europe to engage with the region.

Pakistani national accused of spying on Indian military arrested in West Bengal



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A Pakistani national arrested in West Bengal was allegedly working for Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence to gather information on the Indian Army, Navy and Railways in eastern India, investigators said on Tuesday. Police said Wahab Alam entered India through the Nepal border in 2012 and lived in different parts of the state using forged Indian identity documents. Authorities also arrested another suspect accused of helping him obtain the fake documents. Investigators believe Alam was planning to flee to Bangladesh before his arrest. Officials are now examining what information he may have passed to handlers in Pakistan and whether others were involved in the alleged espionage network.

Kashmiri diaspora protests in Brussels over violence in Pakistan occupied Kashmir

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Members of the Kashmiri diaspora marched from the European Parliament to the United Nations office in Brussels on Wednesday, condemning alleged human rights abuses by Pakistani security forces in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. Protesters called for international intervention over reports of civilian deaths, restrictions on essential services and the use of force against demonstrators. The rally follows similar demonstrations in Italy and other countries as unrest continues in the region. Human rights groups have reported dozens of civilian deaths in recent months, while several British lawmakers have also urged independent investigations into allegations of excessive force by Pakistani authorities.



Iran-backed Houthi rebels clash with Yemeni government forces

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Fresh fighting between Iran-backed Houthi rebels and Yemeni government forces has raised fears that Yemen's long-running civil war could intensify and further destabilize the Middle East. Overnight into Thursday, clashes in Taiz province killed at least one government soldier and critically wounded another, Yemeni military officials said. The violence follows a series of Houthi attacks that

have killed dozens of government troops since last week. Tribal leaders in Marib also reported government artillery strikes targeting Houthi movements. The Houthis say they are targeting military positions with drones and missiles, but they have also attacked Saudi oil facilities and commercial shipping in the Red Sea. On Tuesday, a Houthi attack on a commercial vessel in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait killed six people, underscoring growing security concerns along one of the region's most important maritime trade routes.

Ukrainian drones strike a major refinery deep inside Russia

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Ukraine said it struck one of Russia's largest oil refining and petrochemical complexes overnight into Thursday, continuing its campaign to disrupt Moscow's energy infrastructure. Ukraine's General Staff said drones ignited a fire at the Gazprom Neftekhim Salavat complex in Bashkortostan, about 800 miles from the Ukrainian border. Regional authorities confirmed a drone attack, saying two civilians were injured and an industrial fire broke out. The strike marked the fourth attack on a major Russian refinery in three days. Separately, officials in Russia's Orenburg region said repairs to the Orsk



refinery, hit on Tuesday, could take up to six months because sanctions have made replacing damaged foreign equipment difficult. Russia also launched overnight drone attacks across Ukraine, including one that struck a passenger train in the Odesa region, killing the engineer and an assistant, Ukrainian officials said.

Poland says it foiled Russian plot to kill Ukrainian-American in Warsaw

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Poland said Thursday it had thwarted an alleged Russian plot to assassinate a Ukrainian-American man in Warsaw after arresting a Russian citizen accused of working for Moscow's intelligence services. Prime Minister Donald Tusk said the suspect was detained on Thursday after authorities intervened just before the planned attack. Tusk said the intended target was a man considered "inconvenient

to the Putin regime," but did not reveal his identity. Polish officials credited the Internal Security Agency and police for preventing the assassination. Russia's embassy in Warsaw did not immediately comment, while Moscow has repeatedly rejected Western accusations of espionage and sabotage. Poland says its role as a key military and humanitarian supply hub for neighboring Ukraine has made it a frequent target of Russian intelligence operations.

Rescuers call for silence as survival window narrows in Colombia



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Rescue crews in western Colombia continued searching for survivors on Thursday as hopes of finding more people alive beneath earthquake rubble diminished. The 7.4 magnitude earthquake that struck on Monday has killed at least 265 people, while nearly 500 remain officially missing, although civilian-run databases estimate the number is much higher. Search teams repeatedly called for silence after hearing possible signs of life beneath collapsed buildings in Cali, one of the hardest-hit cities. Emergency officials said the first 48 to 72 hours after a major earthquake offer the best chance of finding survivors, though rescues remain possible if trapped victims have access to food and water. Authorities said more than 25,800 families have been affected as rescue and relief operations continue across the disaster-stricken region.

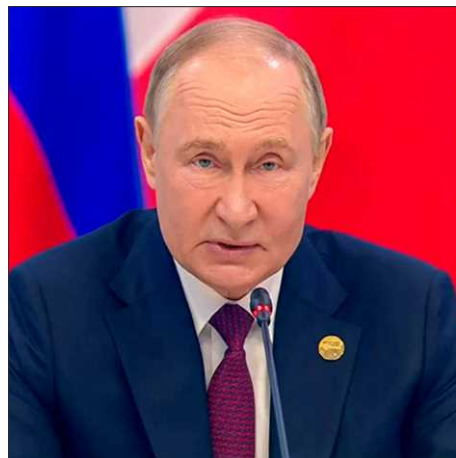
Former Syrian President Assad sentenced to death in absentia for war crimes



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A Syrian court on Tuesday sentenced former President Bashar Assad to death in absentia for murder, torture and crimes against humanity committed before and during the country's 14-year civil war. His brother, Maher Assad, and six other former officials also received death sentences in absentia, while former intelligence chief Atef Najib, who is in custody, was sentenced to death and may appeal. The verdicts are the first against Assad or members of his inner circle since his family's five decades in power ended following the government's collapse in 2024. Assad and his brother fled to Russia, where they were granted asylum, making the ruling largely symbolic.

Putin threatens retaliation over Western seizures of Russian commercial vessels



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday warned that Moscow could retaliate after Western countries seized commercial vessels linked to Russia, calling the actions "piracy" and a violation of international maritime law. Speaking aboard a Russian warship during naval exercises in the Pacific, Putin said any response could occur wherever Russia deemed appropriate and would not necessarily be limited to the waters where ships were detained.

The warning follows the detention of tankers by France and the United Kingdom over allegations they were part of Russia's so-called shadow fleet used to evade sanctions. Pacific Fleet Commander Adm. Viktor Liina said Russia's navy was prepared to inspect and detain commercial vessels serving what Moscow describes as unfriendly nations, signaling a possible escalation in maritime tensions.

Congo's Ebola outbreak spreads to sixth province



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Congo's fastest-growing Ebola outbreak has spread to a sixth province after health authorities confirmed a fatal case in Bas-Uele, officials said on Thursday. Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director-General Jean Kaseya said the victim had traveled from neighboring Haut-Uele before dying in the provincial capital of Buta. The outbreak, caused by the rare Bundibugyo strain of the virus, has infected more than 4,500 people and killed over 2,100, according to government figures. The World Health Organization warned on Wednesday that the outbreak is on track to surpass the deadliest Ebola epidemic on record.

Israel says Gaza drone strike targeted a Hamas commander

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Israel said on Wednesday that a drone strike in northern Gaza targeted a Hamas commander, marking its first publicly announced targeted attack since early August despite international efforts to advance a ceasefire. The Israeli military did not identify the commander or confirm whether he was killed. Hospital officials in Gaza said four injured people

were brought in following the strike in Beit Lahiya. The attack came as pressure mounted to halt targeted strikes under a United States-backed peace proposal that Hamas has accepted but Israel says requires the group's full disarmament before it can move forward. Elsewhere, Pakistan condemned Tuesday's Houthi attack on a commercial vessel in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait that killed six people, including three Pakistani nationals, as regional tensions continued to rise.

Hegseth urges Latin American allies to leave International Criminal Court

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

United States Secretary of War Pete Hegseth called on members of the Americas Counter Cartel Coalition to withdraw from the International Criminal Court, arguing that the court undermines national sovereignty. Speaking at the coalition's conference in Panama on Thursday, Hegseth described the tribunal as "fake and illegitimate" and urged countries to rely on their own judicial systems. He also announced Colombia's admission as the coalition's 19th member and said Operation Southern Spear has significantly reduced suspected drug trafficking across the Caribbean and eastern Pacific. Hegseth highlighted expanded military cooperation with Ecuador, Jamaica, Guatemala and Honduras and encouraged coalition members to increase defense spending, saying Washington would prioritize security partnerships with countries



investing more in their own military capabilities.

United States to expand Arctic security presence with new Coast Guard cutter

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The United States will strengthen its Arctic security posture by deploying an Arctic Security Cutter to Coast Guard Base Kodiak in Alaska, Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin announced on Thursday. Speaking during a visit to the base with Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Kevin Lunday and Senator Dan Sullivan, Mullin said the

vessel would enhance the country's ability to safeguard its interests in the increasingly strategic Arctic region. Although officials did not provide a deployment timeline, the announcement reflects Washington's growing focus on Arctic operations as melting sea ice opens new shipping routes and heightens geopolitical competition. Mullin also said the Trump administration has committed \$25 billion to the Coast Guard, describing it as the largest investment in the service's history.

United Kingdom and France brace for another heat wave as Western Europe sets record

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The United Kingdom and France prepared for another heat wave on Monday as Western Europe recorded its hottest June-July period on record, according to the Copernicus climate agency. France warned temperatures could approach 104 degrees Fahrenheit from Tuesday, while much of England was placed under an amber heat health

alert. Scientists said prolonged heat, drought and worsening wildfires reflected the growing impact of climate change, reinforced by developing El Niño conditions. France has already recorded thousands of excess heat-related deaths this summer, while drought conditions have spread across parts of Britain. Officials warned the latest heat wave could place additional pressure on health services and increase risks for older and vulnerable people.

UNESCO says 2.4 million Afghan girls remain barred from secondary education



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

About 2.4 million girls in Afghanistan remain excluded from secondary education nearly five years after the Taliban returned to power, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization said on Tuesday. Calling the restrictions a grave violation of the right to education, the agency urged the immediate and unconditional restoration of schooling for girls and women. UNESCO warned that the ban is reversing decades of educational progress, worsening poverty and increasing risks such as early marriage and poor mental health. It also said restrictions on female teachers have deepened staffing shortages. While continuing to support community-based education and skills programs, UNESCO stressed that such initiatives cannot replace formal schooling.

Thailand makes school safety a national priority after deadly shooting



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Thailand's Cabinet on Tuesday approved a plan to make school safety a national priority following last week's mass shooting at a secondary school near Bangkok. Under the new measures, all schools will become designated "School Safety Zones" with emergency response plans, security screening, mental health support and dedicated safety centers. The Education Ministry is also working with psychologists and crisis teams to support victims and establish recovery rooms for students and staff. Officials said long-term plans include legislation on school safety and continued mental health monitoring. The move follows Thursday's shooting in Nonthaburi province that left several people dead and dozens injured.



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India at 80

Celebrating a nation’s rise and the promise of tomorrow

A proud moment for 1.4 billion Indians and the global Indian family



Dr. Avi Verma

As India prepares to celebrate its 80th Independence Day on August 15, 2026, the entire nation and the global Indian community stand united in pride and gratitude. From the majestic celebrations at the Red Fort in New Delhi to the vibrant flag-hoisting ceremonies across the United States and around the world, the Tiranga will once again symbolize freedom, sacrifice, unity, and the aspirations of a billion-plus people.

On behalf of IndoUS Tribune, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the people of India and Indians around the world on this historic milestone.

The journey of the last eight decades is a story unlike any other—a journey from the struggles of independence to becoming one of the world’s most influential nations.

India’s rise has not been accidental. It has been built through the vision of its founders, the sacrifices of freedom fighters, the dedication of farmers, scientists, entrepreneurs, soldiers, teachers, workers, and generations of citizens who believed in the promise of India.

Today, as India celebrates 80 years of independence, it does so not only as the world’s largest democracy but as a nation increasingly shaping the direction of the 21st century.

The vision of Viksit Bharat 2047

While India celebrates its achievements, it is also looking ahead toward an even greater national mission—the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, a developed India by the centenary of independence.

The goal is ambitious: an India with higher incomes, world-class infrastructure, advanced technology, quality education, accessible healthcare, sustainable development, and opportunities for every citizen.

The India of tomorrow will not be defined only by economic size but by innovation, human development, scientific excellence, and its ability to contribute solutions to global challenges.

The foundation for this future is already

being built.

India: A global innovation and technology leader

The coming decades will be shaped by technology, and India has positioned itself as a major player in the global innovation ecosystem.

From becoming a leader in information technology to advancing in artificial intelligence, semiconductor manufacturing, biotechnology, space exploration, and renewable energy, India is moving from being a technology service provider to becoming a technology creator.

India’s achievements in space exploration have captured global attention. The success of its lunar missions demonstrated not only scientific capability but also the ability to accomplish complex missions efficiently and cost-effectively.

The country’s growing focus on artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing will play a critical role in determining its place in the global economy.

India and the world: A trusted global partner

At 80, India’s influence extends well beyond economic growth.

The world today faces complex challenges—geopolitical tensions, climate change, energy security concerns, and economic uncertainty. In this environment, India has emerged as a nation that seeks cooperation, stability, and balanced partnerships.

India’s leadership in the G20 highlighted its ability to bring diverse nations together and ensure that the concerns of developing countries receive global attention.

As a leading voice of the Global South, India has consistently advocated for fair opportunities, sustainable development, and greater representation for emerging nations in international institutions.

India’s aspiration for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council reflects its belief that global governance must evolve to represent today’s realities.

A nation of more than 1.4 billion people, with one of the world’s largest economies and a long history of contributing to global peacekeeping, believes that greater representation is necessary for a more inclusive international order.

The Indian diaspora: A living bridge between nations

No celebration of India’s global journey would be complete without recognizing the contribution of the Indian diaspora.

Across the United States and the world, people of Indian origin have excelled in medicine, technology, education, business, public service, science, and the arts.

The Indian diaspora represents the values of hard work, family, education, entrepreneurship, and community service. It has become a powerful bridge connecting India with nations around the world.

In the United States, Indian Americans have made remarkable contributions to economic growth, innovation, healthcare, academia, and civic life.

The success of the diaspora is a reflection of India’s greatest strength—its people.

The road ahead: Opportunities and responsibilities

As India enters its ninth decade of independence, the opportunities are enormous—but so are the responsibilities.

The nation must continue working toward reducing economic inequality, expanding educational opportunities, strengthening healthcare systems, creating employment opportunities, and encouraging research and innovation.

A developed India will not be measured only by its GDP but by the quality of life of every citizen.

The next generation will carry the responsibility of transforming the vision of Viksit Bharat into reality.

A message of congratulations and pride

On this historic occasion, IndoUS Tribune proudly congratulates India on completing 80 glorious years of independence.

We salute the sacrifices of those who fought for freedom and honor the contributions of every Indian who helped build the nation.

The journey from 1947 to 2026 has been extraordinary. India has overcome challenges that once seemed impossible and emerged as a confident nation ready to contribute to the world.

As the Tiranga rises on August 15, it will carry with it the memories of the past, the achievements of the present, and the hopes of the future.

The story of India is a story of resilience.

The story of India is a story of democracy.

The story of India is a story of one of humanity’s greatest transformations.

Happy 80th Independence Day to India and Indians around the world.

Jai Hind!.

Democrats seek to block Trump immigration rule on green cards

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Democratic lawmakers introduced legislation on Wednesday to block federal funding for enforcing a Trump administration rule that could make it harder for some immigrants using public benefits to obtain green cards. The proposed Protect American Values Act aims to prevent implementation of the revised "public charge" policy, which critics say gives immigration officials broad discretion to deny permanent residency applications. Supporters argue the rule could discourage eligible families from accessing food, health care and housing assistance. The legislation, backed by more than a dozen senators and dozens of House members, comes ahead of the rule's scheduled implementation next month.

Canada puts military on standby as British Columbia wildfires worsen

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Canada placed its military on standby on Monday as fast-moving wildfires in British Columbia killed one person, forced about 20,000 residents to flee and threatened more communities. The Bald Range wildfire continued burning out of control near Summerland and Peachland after expanding rapidly over the weekend. Officials said more than 10,000 homes remained under evacuation orders, while thousands more were on alert. Defense Minister David McGuinty said the armed forces were prepared to assist if requested by the province. British Columbia officials warned that extremely dry conditions and heavy smoke were complicating firefighting efforts. Authorities said an 80-year-old woman died while evacuating, marking the first confirmed fatality from the fires.

Former Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji dies at 98

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Former Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, who led major economic reforms during China's transition toward a market-oriented economy, died in Beijing on Wednesday at the age of 98, state media reported. Zhu served as premier from 1998 to 2003 after holding several senior positions, including vice premier, governor of the People's Bank of China and mayor of Shanghai. He played a key role in restructuring the country's fiscal and taxation systems, strengthening financial regulation and expanding economic reforms during a period of rapid growth. Chinese leaders praised Zhu as a loyal Communist Party member and an outstanding statesman whose contributions helped shape the country's modernization and opening-up policies.



Karoline Leavitt to step down as White House press secretary

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt will leave her post at the end of August to spend more time with her family, President Donald Trump announced on Wednesday. Trump said Leavitt would continue serving as one of his top outside advisers

and remain an influential Republican voice ahead of the midterm elections. Leavitt, who became the youngest White House press secretary in United States history at age 27, said balancing the demands of the job with raising her two young children led to her decision. Trump praised her work during his administration and 2024 campaign but did not announce a successor.



Bipartisan senators introduce bill to strengthen United States Space Force

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Two bipartisan United States senators introduced legislation on Wednesday aimed at strengthening Space Force readiness as China expands its military and commercial space capabilities. The Space Superiority Readiness Act would increase training, war gaming and simulation for Space Force personnel while requiring an unclassified report to Congress on China's commercial space sector and its potential military applications. The bill's sponsors said the United States must maintain its technological advantage as space becomes an increasingly important military domain. They argued that stronger preparedness is essential to protect satellite communications, missile warning systems and other critical national security capabilities.



August
15

happy
independence
day





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North Korea warns of stronger deterrence over South Korea's submarine program

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

North Korea on Wednesday criticized South Korea's plan to develop nuclear-powered submarines, calling it a step toward nuclear armament and warning it would strengthen its own retaliatory capabilities. In a statement carried by state media, Pyongyang said Seoul's cooperation with Washington on the submarine program threatened regional security and North Korea's maritime sovereignty. South Korea announced the project in May after receiving United States support and aims to launch its first nuclear-powered submarine by the mid-2030s. Seoul says the program is intended to strengthen deterrence against growing regional threats, particularly from North Korea.

Iran says no breakthrough in efforts to revive United States peace deal



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Iran said on Wednesday there has been no progress in efforts to revive the interim peace agreement with the United States, as both sides continue to blame each other for violating the June deal. A senior Iranian official said talks through mediators have stalled over returning to the agreement and setting a timetable for its implementation. Tehran accuses Washington of failing to lift its blockade of Iranian ports and release frozen assets, while the United States says Iran has not fulfilled its commitment to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. The comments came after renewed attacks on shipping in the region and fresh criticism from President Donald Trump, underscoring the growing uncertainty surrounding efforts to end the conflict.

ICE faces backlash over plan to equip officers with electric shock gloves

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement faced growing criticism on Wednesday over plans to equip officers with electric shock gloves designed to subdue people resisting arrest. The agency plans to spend between \$10 million and \$20 million on the devices, which deliver a painful electric shock when pressed against a person's skin but leave no visible marks. Democratic lawmakers and civil rights advocates condemned the proposal as unnecessary and warned it could be abused during immigration enforcement operations. New York Attorney General Letitia James called the plan "outrageous" and cautioned that any misuse of the devices in her state could result in criminal or civil action. Critics also pointed to a pending lawsuit alleging repeated use of similar gloves contributed to the death of a Kentucky jail inmate in 2024.

Swiss government opposes initiative aimed at blocking European Union agreement

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Switzerland's government on Thursday urged parliament to reject a citizen-backed initiative that seeks to block a landmark agreement with the European Union, warning it could create legal uncertainty and undermine the country's political system. The proposal would require major international treaties to win approval from

both a majority of voters and a majority of Switzerland's 26 cantons, making future agreements more difficult to pass. The government said the measure would complicate relations with the European Union and weaken legal and economic stability. Parliament is currently debating the agreement, which would reshape bilateral economic ties before an expected nationwide referendum.

Taiwan stages air raid drill as annual war games enter final phase

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Air raid sirens sounded across Taipei on Thursday as Taiwan carried out civil defense drills alongside its annual Han Kuang military exercises, simulating a possible Chinese attack. Authorities temporarily slowed mobile internet services in northern Taiwan to test communications resilience, while police directed residents indoors and traffic came to a halt during the 30-minute exercise. The government said fixed broadband and Wi-Fi services were unaffected. The drills are part of Taiwan's 10-day military exercises, which include training to repel a potential Chinese invasion and strengthen civilian preparedness. Beijing continues to claim the self-governing island as its territory and has increased military pressure in recent years.



Venezuela seeks release of United Kingdom-held gold reserves for rebuilding effort

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Venezuela plans to intensify efforts to recover about \$4 billion in gold reserves held by the Bank of England as it seeks funding for reconstruction following the devastating earthquakes in June. National Assembly President Jorge Rodríguez said on Wednesday that the government wants to use the assets to rebuild homes,

restore health services, repair electricity infrastructure and clear debris. The gold has remained frozen during a lengthy legal dispute after Britain declined to recognize Nicolás Maduro's government. The announcement came as Venezuela reported monthly inflation had risen to nearly 20 percent in July, partly because the earthquakes disrupted the distribution of goods.

Soccer leaders accuse FIFA of deception over World Cup plans

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

European, North American and Asian soccer leaders accused FIFA on Monday of misleading member organizations over President Gianni Infantino's failed proposal to sell a stake in the World Cup. In a joint open letter, UEFA, CONCACAF and the Asian Football Confederation described the plan as a "fundamental breach of trust" and criticized FIFA's leadership for placing personal authority above the interests of the sport. The confederations said football belongs to players, fans and member associations, not any individual. The criticism follows FIFA's withdrawal of the proposal and an apology over its handling of the issue. Several national associations have since questioned Infantino's leadership, with some calling for his resignation ahead of next year's FIFA presidential election.



New Zealand prime minister survives party confidence vote ahead of election

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon survived a confidence vote within the governing National Party on Wednesday, securing the backing of party lawmakers less than three months before the country's general election. Luxon said he retained the full support of his caucus after a lengthy meeting called amid speculation over his leadership following a series of political controversies. He urged party members to focus on defeating the opposition Labour Party in the November election. Recent opinion polls have shown mixed results, with one survey projecting the governing coalition could retain a narrow parliamentary majority despite declining support in earlier polling.

Spain turns its eyes to the sky for first total solar eclipse in more than a century

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Millions of people gathered across Spain on Wednesday to witness the country's first total solar eclipse in more than a century, as the moon briefly blocked the sun and turned daytime skies dark. Clear weather across much of northern and central Spain offered prime viewing conditions, drawing large crowds to cities, historic towns and designated observation sites. The eclipse was also visible in parts of Portugal, Iceland and Greenland. Spanish authorities expected more than 500,000 additional visitors and deployed over 33,500 security personnel to manage crowds amid extreme heat and wildfire concerns. Special eclipse glasses sold out in many locations as spectators watched one of Europe's most significant astronomical events in decades.

Indian police use tear gas to disperse protest over exam paper leaks

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Police in India's eastern state of Jharkhand used tear gas, water cannons and batons on Monday to disperse thousands of students and unemployed youth protesting alleged recruitment exam paper leaks. Demonstrators marched toward the state legislature in Ranchi, demanding an overhaul of the examination system, cancellation of disputed tests and a federal investigation. Some protesters climbed barricades and clashed with police before officers intervened. Authorities said only minimal force was used after parts of the crowd turned violent. The protests began in late July and follow similar youth-led demonstrations in New Delhi over exam leak allegations that led to the resignation of India's education minister. The Jharkhand government said it had accepted many of the protesters' demands and remained open to further talks.

India's clean energy leadership in green hydrogen

● Ishita Srivastava, Research Associate
Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri

India has become a global leader in making progress on clean energy: by the end of December 2025, non-fossil fuel sources accounted for 51.93 per cent of India's installed power capacity, crossing the 50 per cent mark set by India's second Nationally Determined Contribution. According to IRENA's Renewable Energy Statistics 2025, India ranks fourth globally in total installed renewable energy capacity.

India's energy transition must be understood in relation to its development needs. The country has not yet reached peak energy demand, and energy access, affordability and security remain central to its development pathway. Its development strategy therefore combines renewable energy growth, energy efficiency, nuclear power, green hydrogen, carbon sinks and carbon markets with industrial competitiveness and job creation.

Green hydrogen has emerged within this as an important facet because it can support decarbonisation in sectors where direct electrification may not be sufficient. Green hydrogen is both a fuel and an industrial feedstock and its production using renewable energy can replace fossil fuel-derived inputs in petroleum refining, fertiliser production, steel manufacturing, and other hard to abate sectors, while also supporting the decarbonisation of long-haul automobiles, railways and marine vessels. The Indian Railways has recently demonstrated the capacity to run hydrogen fuelled trains.

The National Green Hydrogen Mission provides the central policy framework for scaling this opportunity linking energy transition with industrial policy and external economic opportunity. It targets a production of 5 million metric tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030. Production capacity of 862,000 tonnes per year has already been allocated to 18 companies, while 15 firms have been awarded 3,000 MW of annual electrolyser manufacturing capacity. Three green hydrogen hubs have also been identified at Deendayal Port Authority in Gujarat, V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority in Tamil Nadu and Paradip Port Authority in Odisha.

A sectoral focus is connecting green hydrogen with concrete industrial use cases. In fertilisers, data indicates an aggregate procurement capacity of 7.24 lakh metric tonnes per annum of



green ammonia at ₹55.75 per kg. In petroleum refining, green hydrogen is being used to reduce the carbon footprint of the industry, while in steel, five pilot projects with public and private producers are testing green hydrogen for iron reduction and other process applications under Indian operating conditions.

India's green hydrogen strategy also has a clear international dimension with India looking to use voluntary cooperation under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. This international orientation is consequential because green hydrogen is expected to become part of future clean energy trade. Thus India's green

hydrogen effort not only responds to domestic decarbonisation needs, but also positions the country to contribute to the rules, markets and supply chains of a future low-carbon economy in the world.

India is also positioning itself in emerging international hydrogen platforms and partnerships. It entered the international hydrogen community at the World Hydrogen Summit in Rotterdam in 2024 with its first India Pavilion. Cooperation is expanding under the EU-India Trade and Technology Council, where more than 30 joint proposals have been received on hydrogen production from waste. India and the United Kingdom have engaged on hydrogen standardisation, and work is being undertaken with the Germans on market-based mechanisms and joint tender designs for exports. Moreover, Indian companies have secured long-term offtake agreements with Japanese companies for green ammonia and green methanol.

India has been in the forefront of pushing solar energy in the global south not only through its promotion but by the demonstrative effect of its domestic action. Its pro-active actions on green hydrogen would have a similar hugely positive effect in the global south.

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Courtesy: Vandana Jhingan



Securing the maritime commons

● By: Ambassador Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty

India has become a global leader in making progress on clean energy: by the end of December 2025, non-fossil fuel sources accounted for 51.93 per cent of India's installed power capacity, crossing the 50 per cent mark set by India's second Nationally Determined Contribution. According to IRENA's Renewable Energy Statistics 2025, India ranks fourth globally in total installed renewable energy capacity.

India's Peninsular geography provides a long coastline extending to the Persian Gulf in West Asia and towards South East Asia in the East. Unarguably, this was an impetus to explore the vast waters surrounding the Indian Peninsula because it provides easy access to the maritime domain.

THE INDIAN PENINSULA

India's maritime tradition is the world's oldest, with an unparalleled continuity since the Neolithic Age [9th Millenium BCE]. Golbai Sasan, a Neolithic site on the east coast of India in Odisha state, has provided invaluable archaeological evidence of ship-building activities and sea faring forays.

During the Sindhu-Saraswati era [3300-1300 BCE], India had developed a mature sea-faring tradition based on maritime trade. The ancient port of Lothal in Gujarat, constructed around 2300 BCE, is an outstanding example of maritime infrastructure. It had docks, tidal locks and jetties for ships. [Add a photo here - 129 Lothal Royalty-Free Images, Stock Photos & Pictures | Shutterstock. Sophisticated trade networks and infrastructure linked India with contemporary civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt and China.

Vedic era, texts and archaeological evidence suggest early boat-building activities for coastal fishing and commerce. The Rig Veda mentions about Sataritara or the galley with hundred oars. This sea-faring tradition helped develop cartography and study of monsoon-based sailing, using stars for navigation.

This rich maritime tradition was consolidated during the Mauryan Empire (324-187 BCE) which institutionalized maritime administration by setting up a Department of Waterways and Navigation, headed by the Navadhyaksha (Superintendent of Ships) who regulated shipbuilding, sea trade, and port operations. Ancient India's greatest strategic thinker Kautilya, wrote a whole chapter in the Arthashastra dedicated to maritime affairs, underlining its strategic importance. In the post-Mauryan period,



Roman records show extensive trade with new ports in southern India. Around 30 inscriptions in Tamil-Brahmi, Sanskrit and Prakrit have been identified inside the rock-cut tombs in Egypt's Valley of the Kings in Luxor, from the 1st and 3rd centuries CE. Indian merchants left graffiti as evidence. Hoards of Roman gold coins have been discovered in various sites in southern India.

The Delhi Sultanate, established by Muslim invaders, maintained limited naval forces, for riverine warfare and coastal operations rather than large-scale oceanic campaigns. The Mughal rulers also continued to maintain a navy primarily for security and support to the territorial military. The focus was inwards for the empire's expansion

During the 13th century CE, India's maritime power and commerce reached a peak during the Pala Empire in East India and the Cholah empire in South India. Under the Cholah dynasty [9th --13th century CE], large fleets sailed to Sri Lanka, the Maldives and parts of Southeast Asia, including ports in the Srivijaya Empire

in Indonesia, spreading Indian religion and cultural influence in South-East Asia.

The advent of the Europeans led to the marginalization of India's maritime control and commerce. Despite British colonial rule, India retained its shipbuilding tradition and continued to build ships. By the 19th century CE, the British monopolized sea-borne commerce, controlling key ports like Bombay (Mumbai) and Calcutta (Kolkata). India became a source for manpower and material. The Royal Indian Marine [1892 CE] and the Royal Indian Navy (1934 CE) developed with Indian sailors manning both Navy and Merchant ships.

Upon gaining Independence in 1947, India inherited a meagre 33 ships and 538 naval officers to protect a coastline of 7,517 kms, 1,280 islands, 14,500 kms of potentially navigable waterways. India's geographical location makes it proximate to major Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs) in the Indian Ocean. With limited maritime capabilities, India avoided entanglement in the bipolar

world order and promoted the concept of the India Ocean as a Zone of Peace. After independence, India gave priority to coastal defence and integration of the Princely States.

Burdened with land wars in 1948, 1962 and 1965, India was forced to divert resources to the Army and Air Force at the expense of the Navy. India began gradually rebuilding its maritime sector and shipbuilding industry. As India's economy grew, more resources were provided to the Navy and development of ports, vital for maritime commerce and national security.

By the 1990s, the Indian Navy was deployed for UN peace-keeping operations, evacuations of Indian nationals during the war on Iraq and anti-piracy operations in the Arabian Sea. The Navy's blue-water capabilities expanded to support maritime security and international sea-borne commerce, aiming to secure the maritime commons.

Currently, the maritime arena faces



a wide array of challenges - climate change threats, cyclones, sea level rise, human security challenges such as illegal migration, trafficking, piracy, illegal fishing, pollution and sea-bed mining.

The strategic overhang of the maritime factor has driven India's maritime strategy, providing security to around 90% of India's sea trade. The ongoing war in Iran has highlighted the effort to weaponization of international shipping channels - Hormuz - in violation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea III [UNCLOS].

Almost one-third of sailors in the global shipping industry are Indians. Some have lost their lives in the indiscriminate attacks on ships transiting the Hormuz and Bab-al-Mandab. Providing security to international shipping will require diplomacy and dialogue and also a more powerful Navy, to shape a more cooperative geopolitical order.

India's indigenous shipbuilding capabilities have been ramped up. India's maritime strategy is focussed on the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) which is critical for global trade flows - two-thirds of the world's oil shipments, one third of its bulk cargo and half of its container traffic. 40 nations are on its littoral having nearly 40% of the world's population. Despite the importance of the maritime commons, there are limited security structures that can police this space. Naval ships are bound by restrictions to act against offending or rogue merchant vessels.

In 2015, India adopted the SAGAR doctrine [Security And Growth for All in the Region]. This strategy seeks to enhance India's role as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean

Region [IOR] and a first responder in humanitarian and disaster related assistance. India has gone further from SAGAR to MAHASAGAR (Mutual And Holistic Advancement for Security And Growth Across Regions), which extends the maritime domain from the regional and security approach into economic diplomacy, technological connectivity and environmental sustainability and maritime domain awareness. MAHASAGAR aims to support technological connectivity in the Indo-Pacific region, relying on joint Naval exercises, sharing data and encouraging peaceful settlement of maritime disputes, Supporting these policy moves is SAGARMALA



which supports port-led development initiative to modernize and build ports and manage the shift to more efficient transport coastal and waterway

networks to trigger industrial growth, job creation, and sustainable coastal development.

To enable international and regional cooperation to secure the maritime commons, India organized the 2016 International Fleet Review (48 navies participated) and biennial MILAN exercises (47 nations participated in 2024) to build cooperation and interoperability. The IOR is monitored by the Information Fusion Centre [IFC] and naval operations across several maritime theatres have helped in combatting piracy, providing safe passage to international cargo ships humanitarian operations. 28 partner nations and international organizations have joined India in tracking maritime traffic, piracy, and illegal activities in the IOR.

This strategic shift bolsters maritime security, utilizing the Indian Navy's growing blue water deployments. Joint exercises with different navies for maritime security, like the annual Malabar exercises with QUAD partner countries Australia, Japan and USA are conducted periodically. The Indian Navy has spearheaded maritime diplomacy through capacity building, joint exercises, plurilateral conferences, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and Search and Rescue (SAR) activities [Tsunami and Earthquake].

Big power competition is increasing in the IOR, requiring greater vigilance on maritime security. To avoid conflict, India has advocated "A free, open, secure and safe Indian Ocean" as a shared goal for securing the maritime commons, as envisaged in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea III [UNCLOS].

Currently, Despite military strikes, commercial navigation through Hormuz remains closed. Iran has weaponized its geography to disrupt



one of the world's most important energy chokepoints, keeping global energy markets under constant pressure and prolonging a worldwide economic shock. Post-Iran war, global power equations will shift decisively to the maritime domain – an interconnected world depends on maritime routes, energy corridors, digital infrastructure and financial systems. Nations would now also attempt to control digital nodes, cable landing stations, undersea cable runs, data centres and satellite networks.

India's comprehensive plan to strengthen its maritime sector was long overdue. India's vast coastline and strategic location in the IOR creates vulnerabilities and exposes it to maritime security threats. India's maritime reforms and modernization drive mark a pivotal step toward achieving Maritime India Vision 2030 and aligning with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and Sustainable Development Goals 14

India has tasked its Navy through Operation Sankalp, to provide escorts for merchant vessels, conduct maritime surveillance across the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden, and protect sea lines of communication [SLOC] vital to India's economy and energy security. India will have to undertake autonomous actions and where ever possible and synchronize actions to secure SLOC. Operation Sankalp is focussed on protecting Indian shipping, preserving freedom of navigation for India's supply lines and avoiding any regional involvement. India's policy of strategic autonomy precludes joining any formal coalitions, keeping diplomatic channels active with individual countries in the conflict region.

To upgrade its capacity to secure the maritime commons, India is addressing infrastructure gaps, sustainability challenges, workforce inequities and building a truly blue water Navy, with nuclear deterrence capabilities. India aims to become a global maritime hub and a leading maritime power in the next 2-3 decades, to enable it to play a significant player in ensuring the security of the maritime commons.

The author, a retired diplomat, served as Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs; earlier he served as India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh and Ambassador to Thailand.]
Courtesy: Vandana Jhingan

Friday, 14 August 2026

Citizen-centric diplomacy of India

● By: Ambassador Jeitendra Kumar Tripathi (Retd.)

Diplomacy had been traditionally understood as conduct of bilateral relations between the states focussing on the negotiations only in political, economic and security related drivers. However, the advent of the current century, having witnessed a sea change in the ground realities due to the globalisation, rapid scientific and technological development and increased mobility, transformed and expanded the scope of diplomacy focussing on the new dimensions. India also could not remain untouched by this transformation and adopted a foreign policy with the citizen-centric diplomacy at its heart. This policy places the welfare, security and interest of the country's citizen at its core making Indian citizens an important part of its external engagements which has made, in turn, the Ministry of External affairs more responsive to their needs.

How did it evolve?

Until the turn of the last century, the Indians living abroad (NRIs) and persons of Indian origin had no place in the policies of the government as they were considered to be the persons, migrated out of India for their own individual interest with no contribution towards the development of India. However, at the beginning of the current century, it was realised that these Indians not only contribute to the economy of their homeland by way of remittances and investments but also play a significant role in the governments of their residence. The importance of Indian diaspora can be understood by the fact that currently the Indian diaspora, with the population of more than 35.4 million (more than the combined population of Australia and New Zealand) has remitted US\$ 135.46 billion in the last financial year! Moreover, many persons of Indian origin have risen to important positions in academic institutions and in their governments which underlines their importance in our foreign policy calculus. However, lately the Indian governments started paying more attention to this vast reservoir of talent and resources. The annual Pravasi Sammelan and Pravasi awards had given momentum to the outreach to the eminent personalities of Indian diaspora. The Ministry of External Affairs has taken many initiatives to ensure the welfare of Indian citizens visiting abroad for employment, business or educational purposes.

Key features of the Citizen -Centric diplomacy

These initiatives cover the period from the application for passport to visa, travel, safe stay and return to India. In view of the growing number of



Indians willing to visit abroad, the Government has opened new passport offices, passport application centres in all districts, digitised the procedure and opened more international airports to facilitate international travel. PDOT (Prior to Departure Orientation and Training) programs are in place, a Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojna has been started to ensure the health insurance of Indians abroad, Migration and Mobility Partnership pacts have been signed with eight countries and Social Security agreements have been signed with nineteen countries to ensure the proper work environment for Indian workers. An e-migrate application has also been launched to educate such citizens about the rules and regulations. MADAD, a multi-lingual help portal, works round the clock to assist Indian citizens in need. It also examines the employment visas, the employer's status and the insurance cover provided by him to the prospective worker. The government has opened more embassies and consulates to cater to the needs of Indian citizens abroad. An Indian community wing, separate from the Consular wing, has been established to ensure well-being of the Indians

living in that jurisdiction. Indian Community Welfare Fund has been established in all our diplomatic missions and posts abroad to assist our citizens in case of emergency through temporary shelters, legal assistance and air tickets to India for the destitutes/stranded Indians. Besides, open houses are being organised in India embassies at regular intervals to listen to and address the grievances of Indian community. Moreover, the government conducted a number of successful rescue operations for the Indian citizens stranded in violence-hit areas. Ukraine, South Sudan, Yemen have been some of such recent operations.

Challenges

The citizen -centric diplomacy also faces its own challenges. The growing number of Indians visiting abroad for various purposes has put a heavy pressure on our missions which already suffer from a shortage of manpower and resource-crunch. Effectively assisting the Indian community in a war-torn country also becomes a challenge in view of unstable situation. Misinformation by Indian touts and social media, and different local legal

systems compound the problems.

The way forward

Allocation of sufficient staff and funds at the disposal of our missions abroad and their adequate training before posting there can mitigate the challenges. The pre- departure orientation should be made compulsory for every Indian going abroad for employment or education. A curb on touts misleading such Indians is imperative.

Conclusion

It is heartening that the importance of citizen in our diplomacy has finally been realised and the Government is addressing their issues with an objective and positive attitude. With allocation of more resources and strict action against the touts, our citizen-centric diplomacy will certainly bear more fruits.

Jeitendra Kumar Tripathi is a retired Indian diplomat who has represented India in senior diplomatic assignments abroad and brings extensive experience in foreign policy and international relations.

Friday, 14 August 2026

India: The trusted first responder

By: Ambassador Suchitra Durai

When a giant wave of sea-water struck Chennai's Marina Beach on the morning of 26 December 2004, pulling in its wake fisherfolk and a group of children playing cricket, little did their brethren know that an entire region had been struck and that, across the Bay of Bengal, local people and foreign tourists on Thai and Indonesian beaches had also been swept away.

The Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 2004 was a natural catastrophe of a magnitude not experienced by humanity in recent times. It resulted in the death of almost a quarter million people and displacement of a couple of million people in 14 countries of the Indo-Pacific.

It also marked the coming of age of India's HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) institutional capacity. India not only dealt with death and destruction in its mainland, particularly in the coastal states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu as well as major devastation in its island territories of Andaman & Nicobar (A&N) islands but also provided speedy assistance to countries in south and south-east Asia including Sri Lanka, Maldives, Thailand and Indonesia. Simultaneously, India launched five HADR operations, two national and three international – Operation Madad (coastal south India), Operation Sea waves (A&N), Operation Castor (Maldives), Operation Rainbow (Sri Lanka) and Operation Gambhir (Indonesia). These involved the three defence services and the Indian coast guard – more than 40 ships, several transport aircraft and helicopters as well as more than 20,000 military personnel were deployed.

India's actions led to its recognition as a credible first responder in the Indo-Pacific region. Soon thereafter, the Disaster Management Act of 2005 was adopted by the Indian parliament providing the legal and institutional framework for disaster preparedness, mitigation and response, a three-layered structure at the national, state and district level and the establishment of a dedicated force, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to respond to such calamities.

The 2004 Tsunami also saw the coming together of the navies of four countries – Australia, India, Japan and the US – to coordinate the delivery of assistance in a collaborative effort that eventually evolved into the Quad.

India has handled several major natural disasters in the last few decades both in its immediate neighbourhood as well in distant lands. In December 2014, India undertook one of its most complex humanitarian missions, Operation Neer, to supply drinking water to the Maldives after that country's only desalination plant broke down. Indian Air Force aircraft and Indian naval ships worked round the clock to supply more than 1,500 tonnes of



drinking water to the Maldives becoming the first country to respond to the request from the Maldives.

In April 2015, when a massive earthquake hit Nepal, India launched a comprehensive rescue and relief mission in the form of Operation Maitri within six hours of the initial tremors. Several thousand stranded Indians and foreign nationals were evacuated by air and land routes and hundreds of tons of essential material were delivered. Several field hospitals were set up. After the relief operations were completed, India launched a major rehabilitation and reconstruction package of around USD 2 billion for Nepal.

Following a devastating earthquake that struck Myanmar in end March 2025, India launched Operation Brahma, a huge tri-services combined with NDRF mission that supplied over 750 MT of materials and equipment including essential medicines and food aid. Field hospitals were set up in Mandalay, while engineering teams were deployed for reconnaissance and assessment of structural damage. Op Brahma was a classic whole-of-government HADR endeavour by the Government of India.

In end 2025, India provided massive support under Operation Sagar Bandhu to Sri Lanka that was hit by cyclone Ditwah. Food, equipment, medicines and other essential items were provided and more than 1000 tons of dry rations were supplied.

Beyond its immediate neighbourhood, India also responded with alacrity to requests from Turkiye and Syria when they were struck by earthquakes in 2023. Under Operation Dost, India was a first responder sending large Search and Rescue (SAR) teams of more than 250 personnel along with medical teams and dog squads to both countries as well as materials support.

In March 2019, India provided HADR to cyclone-hit Mozambique and in 2023 provided assistance to Malawi which was affected by a tropical cyclone.

Recently, on 26 June, 2026 India undertook its most ambitious HADR initiative when 30 tons of humanitarian relief materials accompanied by a 41-member team comprising experienced rescue personnel and medical professionals arrived in two C-17s to earthquake hit Venezuela.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, India supplied 300 million doses of vaccine to 99 countries and 2 United Nations entities under the Vaccine Maitri initiatives since January 2021, along with essential medicines and medical support.

For India, HADR has moved from being an episodic activity to a continuous global engagement. It is an essential feature of India's foreign and security policy that was formally enunciated in

the Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) doctrine announced by Prime Minister Modi during a visit to Mauritius in March 2015 which underpins India's approach to the Indian Ocean Region; it became an intrinsic part of our Indo-Pacific Vision and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) announced in 2019 and evolved into the MAHASAGAR vision outlined by PM Modi in March 2025.

India's approach is not merely reactive. It has also put in place frameworks for international cooperation in the area of prevention and mitigation through contributing towards the setting up of an international tsunami warning system as well as the launch of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). The CDRI (comprising 60 member states) works with 25 small island developing states to build disaster resilient infrastructure including schools, hospitals and homes.

By providing need-based and rapid assistance during emergencies and through its efforts to develop capacities for mutual benefit, India is seen as a reliable first responder and a force for global good.

Suchitra Durai is a former Ambassador of India to Thailand and former High Commissioner of India to Kenya, with extensive experience in advancing India's diplomatic and strategic engagement abroad.

Courtesy: Vandana Jbangan

Ramayana routes and maritime bridges: India and Southeast Asia's living civilizational ties

● By: Amish Tripathi

India's Independence Day is not only a celebration of our freedom; it is a reminder that India's story has never been confined to the borders of the subcontinent. For millennia, the ideas, epics and aesthetics of Indian civilization have sailed with the monsoon winds, walked with pilgrims, and travelled with traders to the lands of Southeast Asia. Today, as we mark 15 August, we also celebrate this shared civilizational journey with Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar, as a living, breathing bridge between our peoples.

In the Indian tradition, a yatra is never just a physical journey; it is a voyage of the soul. One such voyage still lives in the memory of eastern India: the historic Bali Yatra of Kalinga, in present-day Odisha. Each year, on the banks of the Mahanadi, people float tiny boats to commemorate ancient sailors who set out for Bali and beyond, carrying textiles, spices and stories. They did not go merely as traders; they went as storytellers of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, as builders of temples, as bearers of the idea that the Divine resides in all creation. Centuries later, when we walk through Bali's villages and see Hindu shrines, hear Ramayana stories woven into local arts, we realize that this maritime bridge never truly broke. It simply changed form.

That bridge is being consciously strengthened today. During his recent State Visit to Indonesia in July 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the magnificent Prambanan Temple Complex near Yogyakarta, the largest temple dedicated to Lord Shiva in Indonesia. There, alongside President Prabowo Subianto, he unveiled a plaque marking the beginning of the Archaeological Survey of India's conservation and restoration work at this UNESCO World Heritage Site. Prambanan is not just stone on stone; it is poetry in basalt. Its famed Ramayana performances are regarded as among the purest and most sophisticated in the world, Indonesian artistry giving new life to an Indian epic and Indian experts now helping to preserve that shared heritage for future generations.

This spirit of partnership is visible across the Mekong and beyond. In Lao PDR, India has joined hands in restoring Vat Phou, an ancient Lord Shiva temple turned Buddhist site at the base of the sacred Lingaparvata mountain. Here, the stones speak of Shaivism and Buddhism embracing each other, and of how our cultures have never seen faith as a wall but as a window. India is also supporting the preservation of the Ramayana art form



Pha Lak Pha Lam, shadow puppet theatre, and murals in Wat Pa Khae that depict Jataka and Ramayana tales, ensuring that local artists remain the living custodians of this epic, not just its audiences.

In Cambodia, India was the first country to step forward to help conserve Angkor Wat after the trauma of conflict. That commitment has continued through restoration projects at Ta Prohm and Preah Vihear, as well as assistance to Ashram Maha Russey Temple and Wat Raja Bo Pagoda paintings. These are not only technical projects; they are acts of faith in a shared future. Each cleaned stone, each strengthened pillar says to the world that our past is a common inheritance, and its protection is a common responsibility.

Vietnam too has welcomed Indian collaboration. At My Son, another UNESCO World Heritage Site, Indian archaeologists have worked closely with Vietnamese partners to restore temple groups that echo with the memory of Cham kings and Shaivite

rituals. India is also supporting conservation at Nhan Tower and the digitization of Cham manuscripts, bringing ancient wisdom into the digital age so that a young researcher in Hanoi or Chennai can access this shared legacy with a click.

The story of our cultural connect is not limited to monuments. It is carried in sacred relics and living devotion. The recent exposition of holy relics of Lord Buddha and his disciples in Thailand and Vietnam saw millions come forward to pay homage, royalty, leaders and ordinary citizens alike. As these relics travelled from India to Southeast Asia, they retraced the ancient path of the Dhamma, reminding us that compassion and wisdom have always flowed freely across Asia's borders.

Sometimes, history returns home in tangible form. The repatriation of the Leiden copper plates from Belgium, linked to the great Chola rulers and their maritime exchanges with Southeast Asia, is one such moment. Those plates are a metal manuscript

of connectivity, evidence that Indian merchants and rulers engaged with Indonesia and other lands in a spirit of respect and mutual benefit. Their return is not just an emotional event for India; it underlines the shared pride that we and our Southeast Asian partners feel in our intertwined histories.

To weave these strands together, India and its Mekong partners have also created new spaces of dialogue. The MGC Asian Traditional Textile Museum in Siem Reap, established under the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation framework, showcases the rich textile traditions of India, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. When visitors walk through its galleries and see Ikat from Odisha, silk from Thailand, weaves from Myanmar and brocades from Cambodia displayed side by side, they understand that the loom has always been a diplomat, quietly building trust and familiarity across borders.

New chapters are being written even now. Forthcoming projects include the restoration of Ramayana murals at Wat Pa Khae in Luang Prabang and at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh, as well as continued support for Buddhist heritage conservation in Bagan, Myanmar. Each project is a promise: that India's engagement with Southeast Asia will always be respectful of local traditions, grounded in shared values, and focused on empowering communities.

On this Independence Day, as India celebrates its journey from colonial rule to confident modernity, we do so with gratitude for our civilizational companions. Southeast Asia is not a distant region for us; it is family. Our temples may be separated by seas, our scripts may differ, our languages may sound distinct, but the stories carved on stone and sung on stage tell us that we are part of one great Asian saga.

As we look ahead, India's resolve is clear. We will continue to invest in preserving shared heritage, in celebrating shared epics, and in creating new avenues, whether in culture, education, tourism or technology, for our peoples to know each other better. For when civilizations that have walked together for two thousand years renew their friendship in the twenty-first, they do more than honour the past. They light a lamp for the future, one that can guide all of us, across the Mekong and the Ganga, towards peace, prosperity and a deeper understanding of one another.

Amish Tripathi is a bestselling, award-winning author, broadcaster and video game producer.

Friday, 14 August 2026

A life rooted in family and community Chicago remembers Kala Oza

The Indian-American community in the Chicago area is mourning the passing of Kala Oza, beloved wife of longtime Chicago news media journalist and photographer Jayanti Oza. She was 79.

Kala Oza passed away on August 8, 2026, at Central DuPage Hospital in Winfield following a sudden deterioration in her health. Despite medical care and a courageous struggle, she could not overcome her illness. Her passing has brought profound grief to her family and to the many friends and community members who knew and respected her.

For Kala, family was at the center of her life. She was a devoted wife, loving mother, caring mother-in-law and proud grandmother. She shared her life with her husband, Jayanti, standing beside him throughout his long career in Chicago's Indian-American news media. Together, they built a family and a life deeply connected to the community around them.

Kala is survived by her husband, Jayanti Oza; son Bharat Oza; daughters Kiran and Dipti Oza; son-in-law Ajay Dalwadi; and grandchildren Akash, Mahin, Abhi, Elon and Aryana. Her family remembers her not only for her love and affection but also for the values, relationships and memories she created across generations.

Her cremation was held on August 9 at DuPage Cremations Funeral Chapel in West Chicago. A large gathering of relatives, friends, well-wishers and members of Chicago-area senior organizations attended the final rites. Representatives of several senior community organizations joined the family in bidding her farewell.

A prayer and memorial gathering was held on August 11 at India Hub in Schaumburg, bringing together family members, friends and community leaders. The evening became an occasion to remember Kala's life, her family and the personal connections she formed with those around her.

At the memorial gathering, Chicago-area singers presented devotional bhajans, creating a spiritual



and deeply emotional atmosphere as family members, friends and community members came together to honor Kala's memory and bid her a heartfelt farewell.

Community leaders, senior organization representatives, friends and members of the Oza family shared memories and emotional reflections, remembering Kala with affection, warmth and respect and highlighting the lasting impression she made on those around her.

While Kala may have lived away from her native homeland, she created a life in Chicago centered on family, friendship and community. Her legacy will live on through her husband, children, grandchildren and the many people who were fortunate to know her.

She will be remembered as a woman whose greatest contribution was the love she gave to her family and the relationships she nurtured throughout her life.

The IndoUS Tribune family extends its deepest condolences to Jayanti Oza and the entire bereaved Oza family. Jayanti Oza has been a highly respected and valued member of the IndoUS Tribune family and the Chicago Indian-American media community. We share in the family's grief and pray that they find strength, comfort and peace during this difficult time.

May the Almighty grant eternal peace to the departed soul of Kala Oza and give her family the strength and courage to bear this profound loss.



IndoUS Tribune की भारत के मंदिरों की यात्रा — गोवा अध्याय (तीसरा पड़ाव)

श्री महालसा नारायणी मंदिर, मर्दोल मोहिनी रूप में विराजती विष्णु की दिव्य शक्ति गोवा से विशेष



IndoUS Tribune की विशेष श्रृंखला “भारत के मंदिरों की यात्रा” के गोवा अध्याय में हमारी आध्यात्मिक यात्रा अब तीसरे पड़ाव पर पहुँच रही है। प्रथम पड़ाव में हमने भगवान शिव के पावन धाम श्री मंगेशी मंदिर की ऐतिहासिक और आध्यात्मिक विरासत का दर्शन किया, जबकि दूसरे पड़ाव में कवलेम स्थित श्री शांतादुर्गा मंदिर ने हमें शक्ति, समन्वय और शांति की अद्भुत परंपरा से परिचित कराया। अब हमारी यात्रा हमें मर्दोल स्थित **श्री महालसा नारायणी मंदिर** तक ले जा रही है—गोवा के उन प्रमुख देवस्थानों में से एक, जो सनातन आस्था, सांस्कृतिक निरंतरता और अद्वितीय धार्मिक परंपराओं का जीवंत प्रतीक है।

महालसा नारायणी को भगवान विष्णु के **मोहिनी अवतार** से जोड़ा जाता है। इसी कारण उन्हें नारायणी भी कहा जाता है। वहीं खंडोबा परंपरा में महालसा को देवी पार्वती और भगवान शिव के स्वरूप खंडोबा की पत्नी के रूप में भी पूजा जाता है। इस प्रकार उनके स्वरूप में वैष्णव और शैव परंपराओं का अद्भुत संगम दिखाई देता है।

वेरणा से मर्दोल तक आस्था की यात्रा

महालसा देवी का प्राचीन मंदिर गोवा के **वेरणा** क्षेत्र में स्थित था। पुर्तगाली शासन के दौरान 16वीं शताब्दी में मंदिर को नष्ट कर दिया गया और भक्तों ने देवी की पवित्र प्रतिमा को सुरक्षित स्थान पर पहुँचा दिया। ऐतिहासिक स्रोत इस घटना की सटीक तिथि को लेकर अलग-अलग विवरण देते हैं, लेकिन इस बात पर व्यापक सहमति है कि प्रतिमा को वेरणा से निकालकर मर्दोल लाया गया, जो उस समय पुर्तगाली नियंत्रण से बाहर था।

बाद में मर्दोल में वर्तमान मंदिर की स्थापना और देवी की पुनः प्रतिष्ठा हुई। इस यात्रा को केवल एक मंदिर के स्थानांतरण के रूप में नहीं देखा जा सकता। यह गोवा के हिंदू समाज द्वारा अपनी आस्था, परंपरा और सांस्कृतिक पहचान को सुरक्षित

रखने के दृढ़ संकल्प की कहानी भी है।

महालसा की प्रतिमा के इससे भी पुराने इतिहास को लेकर अनेक लोकपरंपराएँ प्रचलित हैं। कुछ कथाएँ इसे नेपाल और महाराष्ट्र होते हुए गोवा तक पहुँचने से जोड़ती हैं। हालांकि इन प्रारंभिक यात्राओं के ऐतिहासिक प्रमाण स्पष्ट नहीं हैं, इसलिए इन्हें लोकविश्वास और धार्मिक परंपरा के रूप में देखना उचित है।

महालसा का अद्वितीय स्वरूप

महालसा नारायणी की प्रतिमा अपने विशिष्ट स्वरूप के लिए प्रसिद्ध है। देवी को चार भुजाओं में **त्रिशूल, तलवार, छिन्न मस्तक और पात्र** धारण किए हुए दर्शाया गया है। वे एक पराजित आकृति के ऊपर खड़ी हैं और नीचे सिंह अथवा व्याघ्र द्वारा रक्त की बूंदों को ग्रहण करने का प्रतीकात्मक चित्रण मिलता है।

देवी का **यज्ञोपवीत धारण करना** भी उनके स्वरूप की विशेष पहचान है। यह उन्हें सामान्य देवी-प्रतिमाओं से अलग करता है और उनके भीतर निहित विष्णु-तत्व तथा स्त्री-पुरुष शक्ति के समन्वय की ओर संकेत करता है।

महालसा की उपासना की एक और विशेषता है उनका अनेक रूपों में अलंकरण। अलग-अलग अवसरों पर उन्हें **लक्ष्मी, राम, बालकृष्ण, विठ्ठल और वेंकटेश्वर** जैसे विष्णु-संबंधित रूपों में सजाया जाता है। यह परंपरा सनातन दर्शन की उस व्यापक अवधारणा को दर्शाती है कि परम सत्ता अनेक रूपों में भक्तों के सामने प्रकट हो सकती है।

महालसा और शांतदि देवी

मर्दोल मंदिर परिसर में महालसा के साथ अन्य देवताओं के भी मंदिर हैं। इनमें शांतदि देवी तथा लक्ष्मी-नारायण के मंदिर प्रमुख हैं। मंदिर परिसर में महालसा से संबंधित विभिन्न

गणों के छोटे देवस्थान भी हैं और दैनिक पूजा परंपरा में उनका विशेष स्थान है।

एक रोचक धार्मिक परंपरा के अनुसार, संयुक्त धार्मिक आयोजनों में शांतदि देवी को महालसा के दाहिने स्थान का सम्मान दिया जाता है। इसके पीछे यह लोककथा जुड़ी है कि महालसा ने स्वयं शांतदि देवी को यह सम्मान प्रदान किया था।

यह परंपरा केवल धार्मिक व्यवस्था नहीं, बल्कि **सम्मान, सह-अस्तित्व और समन्वय** का सुंदर प्रतीक भी है।

पीतल की विशाल दीपमाला और मंदिर की पहचान

महालसा मंदिर की प्रमुख विशेषताओं में इसकी विशाल **पीतल की समई—दीपमाला** भी शामिल है। लगभग 40 फीट ऊँची इस दीपमाला में अनेक स्तरों पर दीप प्रज्वलित किए जाते हैं। विशेष पर्वों के दौरान जब दीपों की ज्योति जगमगाती है, तो पूरा मंदिर परिसर आध्यात्मिक प्रकाश से भर उठता है।

मंदिर की वास्तुकला में पारंपरिक गोवा शैली का सुंदर प्रभाव दिखाई देता है। लकड़ी के स्तंभ, सुसज्जित प्रवेशद्वार और शांत वातावरण इसे गोवा के अन्य देवस्थानों से विशिष्ट बनाते हैं।

पालखी और धार्मिक उत्सव

मंदिर में रविवार का विशेष महत्व है। इस दिन देवी की **पालखी सेवा** आयोजित की जाती है। फूलों से सजी पालखी में देवी को मंदिर परिसर में भ्रमण कराया जाता है और भक्त भजन तथा स्तुति के साथ इस धार्मिक आयोजन में भाग लेते हैं।

मंदिर का प्रमुख वार्षिक उत्सव **माघ जत्रा** है। इसके अलावा **नवरात्रि** सहित अन्य प्रमुख हिंदू पर्व भी श्रद्धा और उत्साह के साथ मनाए जाते हैं।

इस प्रकार मर्दोल का महालसा मंदिर केवल पूजा का स्थान नहीं, बल्कि एक जीवंत सांस्कृतिक केंद्र है, जहाँ धर्म, संगीत, उत्सव और सामुदायिक परंपराएँ आज भी पीढ़ी-दर-पीढ़ी आगे बढ़ रही हैं।

आस्था और सांस्कृतिक निरंतरता का प्रतीक

श्री महालसा नारायणी मंदिर गोवा के इतिहास का वह अध्याय है जिसमें संघर्ष के साथ-साथ **आस्था की विजय और सांस्कृतिक निरंतरता** भी दिखाई देती है। एक स्थान से दूसरे स्थान तक देवी की प्रतिमा को सुरक्षित पहुँचाने और फिर उसकी पुनः प्रतिष्ठा करने की परंपरा बताती है कि मंदिर केवल पत्थर और लकड़ी की इमारत नहीं होते—वे किसी समाज की स्मृति, पहचान और आध्यात्मिक चेतना के जीवंत केंद्र होते हैं।

मर्दोल में आज भी गूंजती आरती, प्रज्वलित दीप, पालखी की परंपरा और हजारों श्रद्धालुओं की आस्था इस विरासत को जीवित रखती है।

अगला पड़ाव — श्री नागेशी मंदिर

IndoUS Tribune की **“भारत के मंदिरों की यात्रा”** का गोवा अध्याय हमें यह स्मरण कराता है कि गोवा केवल समुद्र तटों और प्राकृतिक सौंदर्य के लिए नहीं, बल्कि अपनी समृद्ध **सनातन धार्मिक और सांस्कृतिक विरासत** के लिए भी जाना जाता है।

श्री महालसा नारायणी हमें सिखाती हैं कि आस्था की शक्ति समय और परिस्थितियों से बड़ी होती है। अब हमारी यह पावन यात्रा गोवा के एक और प्राचीन और पूजनीय देवस्थान **श्री नागेशी मंदिर** की ओर आगे बढ़ेगी। अगले पड़ाव में हम भगवान शिव के इस पावन धाम के इतिहास, स्थापत्य, धार्मिक परंपराओं और लोकमान्यताओं के माध्यम से गोवा की सनातन विरासत की एक और प्रेरणादायी गाथा अपने पाठकों तक पहुँचाएंगे।

From Sawan Shivratri to Mahashivratri

The six-month spiritual journey of Shiva's divine baraat

Two sacred nights, one spiritual journey from devotion to divine union

● By: Dr. Avi Verma

For millions of devotees, Sawan Shivratri and Mahashivratri are two of the most sacred occasions dedicated to Lord Shiva. Sawan Shivratri falls during the holy month of Shravan, while Mahashivratri arrives roughly six lunar months later. Both are marked by fasting, night-long prayers, chanting of Om Namah Shivaya and Abhishekam of the Shiva Lingam.

A beautiful devotional tradition connects the two through the story of Shiva's divine Baraat—his extraordinary wedding procession to Goddess Parvati.

It is important to note that the idea of Shiva beginning his Baraat on Sawan Shivratri and reaching Parvati exactly six months later on Mahashivratri is best understood as a popular devotional or regional tradition, rather than a universally established Puranic chronology. Yet its symbolism offers a profound way to understand the spiritual significance of these two sacred nights.

Why Shravan Is Sacred to Shiva

Shravan, one of the most auspicious months for Shiva worship, is a time of fasting, prayer, pilgrimage and spiritual discipline. Devotees observe Sawan Somwar, perform Rudrabhishek, offer Bilva leaves and undertake pilgrimages to Shiva temples.

Shravan is also associated with the legendary Samudra Manthan, when the deadly poison Halahala emerged from the cosmic ocean. To save creation, Shiva consumed the poison and held it in his throat, becoming Neelkanth—the Blue-Throated One.

The offering of water to Shiva during Shravan can therefore be understood as an expression of gratitude and devotion toward the Lord who, according to the sacred tradition, accepted the poison to protect the universe.

This connection is especially visible in the Kanwar Yatra, when millions of devotees carry sacred Ganga water and offer it to Shiva temples.

Sawan Shivratri: The Beginning of the Journey

Sawan Shivratri comes at the culmination of the Shravan observances and holds special importance for Shiva devotees.

According to the popular Baraat tradition, it marks the beginning of Shiva's journey toward his divine marriage with Parvati.

Parvati, the daughter of Himavan and an incarnation of Sati, performed intense penance to win Shiva as her husband. Shiva eventually accepted her devotion.

But Shiva's wedding procession was unlike any ordinary Baraat.

The bridegroom appeared covered in sacred ash, adorned with serpents and accompanied by Devas, Ganas, ascetics and mysterious beings. Shiva represented the Divine beyond conventional appearances and worldly expectations.

Parvati, however, saw beyond the unconventional appearance. She recognized the divine consciousness within him.

The story carries a timeless message: true devotion looks beyond external form and recognizes the Divine essence.

The Six-Month Journey

The popular devotional interpretation sees Sawan Shivratri as the beginning of Shiva's journey and Mahashivratri as its fulfillment.

The six-month interval can be understood symbolically as a period of preparation, patience and spiritual transformation.

Just as devotees spend Shravan in prayer and discipline, the journey toward Mahashivratri represents the human journey from intention to realization, from seeking to finding, and from individual consciousness toward divine union.

Whether understood literally as a regional tradition or symbolically as a spiritual teaching, the six-month journey gives the Hindu calendar a beautiful devotional continuity.

Mahashivratri: The Great Night of Shiva

Approximately six lunar months later comes Mahashivratri—the Great Night of Shiva.

Among its many traditions, Mahashivratri is celebrated as the night of the divine marriage of Shiva and Parvati. Their union represents Shiva and Shakti—consciousness and divine energy.

Without Shakti, consciousness cannot manifest; without Shiva, energy lacks its eternal foundation. Their union therefore represents the harmony underlying creation itself.

Another important Mahashivratri tradition is the story of Lingodbhava.

According to this legend, Brahma and Vishnu once disputed their supremacy. Shiva appeared before them as an infinite pillar of light. Brahma searched for its top and Vishnu for its bottom, but neither could find its beginning or end.

The message is profound: the Supreme Reality is infinite and beyond human

measurement.

The Shiva Lingam is therefore not merely an object of worship; for devotees, it represents the limitless, formless reality of Shiva.

Two Shivratri, One Spiritual Message

Seen together, Sawan Shivratri and Mahashivratri create a remarkable spiritual arc.

Sawan Shivratri comes at the end of Shravan—a month of devotion, purification, fasting, pilgrimage and surrender.

Mahashivratri, roughly six months later, becomes the Great Night associated with Shiva-Shakti, the infinite Jyoti, spiritual awakening and divine realization.

The six-month Baraat can thus be understood as a metaphor for life itself: Every destination requires a journey. Every realization requires preparation. Every union requires surrender.

The Shiva-Parvati story also reminds

us that seemingly opposite forces can complement one another. Shiva represents stillness and consciousness; Parvati represents Shakti, action and creative energy. Together they represent the completeness of existence.

For devotees, therefore, the journey from Sawan Shivratri to Mahashivratri is much more than a movement across the Hindu calendar.

It is a journey from devotion to realization, from discipline to fulfillment, and from seeking Shiva outside ourselves to discovering the Divine within.

Whether one views the six-month Baraat as regional tradition, oral legend or spiritual metaphor, its message remains timeless:

The journey toward the Divine requires faith, patience, discipline and surrender.

And when the journey reaches its destination, Shiva and Shakti are no longer two.

They are one eternal reality.



बाल्मीकि रामायण में छुपे कुछ विरले प्रसंग सीताजी ने रामजी को अहिंसा का उपदेश क्यों दिया?

रामजी और सीताजी के मधुर सम्बंधों के बारे में महाकाव्य भरे पड़े हैं। हर ग्रन्थ में सीता जी को रामजी की पतिव्रता अनुगामिनी के रूप में दर्शाया गया है। रामचरितमानस में सीता के रूप शील और सुकोमलता की बहु चढ़ कर प्रशंसा की गई है। जब रामजी ने पहली बार सीताजी को जनक की वारिका में देखा तो एकटक देखते ही रह गए। उनके मुँह से एक शब्द नहीं निकला। तुलसी बाबा भी बस इतना ही लिख पाए:

कंकन किंकिनि नूपुर धुनि सुनि,
कहत राम लखन सन राम हृदय गुनि
मानहु मदन दुंदुभी दीन्ही,
मनसा बिस्व बिजय कहैं कीन्ही

सीता जी की पायल की मीठी ध्वनि सुन, रामजी के मन में प्रेम की टीस जाग उठी। लखन से मन का भाव कहने लगे। और फिर अपने आप को टटोला। मेरे मन में तो ऐसा विचार कभी आया ही नहीं। यह आज क्या हो रह रहा है? रघुकुल की मर्यादा याद हो आयी:

रघुबंसिंह कर सहज सुभाऊ,
मनु कुपंथ पगु धरड़ न काऊ

रघुवंशी सहज रूप से कभी कुपथ पर पैर नहीं रखते। और मैं यूँही बहका जा रहा हूँ, सीता जी की भी हालत कुछ कम नहीं थी। रामजी का सौंदर्य देख:

स्याम गौर किमि कहूँ बखानी,
गिरा अनयन नयन बिनु बानी

इतना मोहक सौंदर्य कि, जीभ के पास आँखें नहीं हैं, और आँखों के पास वाणी नहीं है। जो देखा जा रहा है, वह वर्णन करना असम्भव है। ऐसा था, राम सीता का प्रथम मिलन, जो स्वयंवर के बाद, विवाह के पवित्र बन्धन में बँध गया।

विवाह के बाद अयोध्या आकर सीता जी बड़े संयम और मर्यादा के साथ ससुराल में रहने लगीं। उन पर रामजी की रानी होने का गौरव भार आ पड़ा, जिसे उन्होंने बड़े प्रेम से निभाया। फिर वह दुर्भाग्य की घड़ी आ पहुँची, जब राजा दशरथ को रामजी के लिए, वनवास का आदेश सुनाना पड़ा। और पूरी अयोध्या शोक सागर में डूब गई।

यह प्रसंग रामचरित मानस और वाल्मीकि रामायण में लगभग समान रूप से है। लेकिन इसके आगे कि कथा, वाल्मीकि रामायण में थोड़ा अलग रूप से है। जब रामजी लक्ष्मण और सीता के साथ वनों में घूम रहे थे, तो उनका सामना बहुत सारे राक्षसों से हुआ। कुछ तो वाकई दुष्ट एवं निर्दयी थे, जिन्होंने ऋषियों मुनियों को तंग कर रखा था। लेकिन कुछ उनके साथ निर्दोष भी थे, जो दुष्टों के साथ होने के कारण मारे जाते थे। यह देख सीता जी का हृदय एक दिन इतना द्रवित हो गया। निर्दोषों का वध देख, वह बहुत विचलित हो गई। उन्होंने इस बारे में, रामजी से बात करने की सोची। यहाँ सीता जी का एक ऐसा रूप सामने आता है, जो दूसरों के दुःख से जल्दी पिघल जाती हैं। ऋषि वाल्मीकि ने, सीता के इसी रूप को अरण्यकाण्ड के नौवें सर्ग में चित्रित किया है। यहाँ सीता एक पत्नी नहीं, बल्कि एक उपदेशक के रूप में उभर कर आती है। और रामजी को अहिंसा पर एक अच्छा खासा उपदेश दे डालती हैं। यह लेख सीता जी इसी रूप को उजागर करने का एक छोटा सा प्रयास है।

अधर्मम् तु सुसूक्ष्मेण विधिना प्राप्यते महान् ।
निवृत्तेन च शक्त्यो अयम् व्यसनात् कामजाद इह ॥ 3-9-2
त्रीणि एव व्यसनानि अत्र कामजानि भवन्ति उत ।
मिथ्या वाक्यम् तु परमम् तस्मात् गुरुतरा उभौ ॥ 3-9-3
पर दार अभिगमनम् विना वैरम् च रोद्रता ।
मिथ्या वाक्यम् न ते भूतम् न भविष्यति राघव ॥ 3-9-4

एक दिन सीता जी रामजी के पास बैठी थी, तो उन्हें बड़े विनम्र भाव से कहने लगी। हे आर्यपुत्र, आप एक महान पुरुष हैं। काम वासनायों से उपजे विकारों एवं व्यसनों से रहित हैं। लेकिन जिन राक्षसों के वध के काम में आप लगे हुए हैं, वह आपको परीक्षित रूप से, अधर्म की ओर ले जा रहा है। फिर वह और भी गम्भीरता से समझाती है कि, इस जगत में काम वासना से तीन व्यसन उपजते हैं। पहला मिथ्या भाषण अर्थात् झूठ



बोलना। आम लोग अपने अपने स्वार्थों को साधने के लिए अक्सर झूठ बोलकर रहते हैं। दूसरा व्यसन है, परस्त्री गमन। और तीसरा व्यसन है, किसी के साथ बिना किसी वर के कूरता पूर्ण व्यवहार करना। मैं भली भाँति जानती हूँ कि, आप कभी मिथ्या नहीं बोलते। पर स्त्री गमन की अभिलाषा आप जैसे संयमी में हो ही नहीं सकती। धर्म को नाश करती वाली यह कुत्सित इच्छा न आप में है और न ही कभी होगी। आप जैसा मर्यादा पुरुष इस संसार में दूसरा कोई और नहीं है। आप केवल एक पत्नीव्रती यानि मुझ में अनुरक्त रहने वाले, एक धर्म निष्ठ एवं सत्य प्रतिज्ञ पुरुष हैं, इसीलिए मैं आपका बहुत आदर करती हूँ।

तृतीयम् यद् इदम् रौद्रम् पर प्राण अभिहंसनम् ।
निर्वैरम् क्रियते मोहात् तत् च ते समुपस्थितम् ॥ 3-9-9

परंतु दूसरों के प्राण हरने का जो कार्य आपके सम्मुख उपस्थित है, जिसे आप भाई लक्ष्मण के साथ मिल कर इस दण्डकारण्य में कर रहे हो, उसे देख मेरा चित्त बहुत व्याकुल होता है। मैं आपके इस कृत्य के बारे में निरंतर सोचती रहती हूँ, फिर आपके कल्याण के बारे सोच कर मुझे डर लगता है, आपका इस तरह प्रतिदिन अहिंसा करना मुझे बिल्कुल भी अच्छा नहीं लगता।

स्नेहात् च बहुमानात् च स्मारये त्वाम् न शिष्ये ।
न कथंचन सा कार्या गृहीत धनुषा त्वया ॥ 3-9-24
बुद्धिः वैरम् विना हन्तुम् राक्षसान् दण्डक आश्रितान् ।
अपराधम् विना हन्तुम् लोको वीर न कामये ॥ 3-9-25

मेरे मन में आपके प्रति जो स्नेह एवं आदर है, उसी को मध्य नजर रखते हुए, आपसे विनती करती हूँ कि, आप सब राक्षसों से वैर न करें। और उनकी निरपराध अहिंसा न करें।

क्व च शस्त्रम् क्व च वनम् क्व च क्षात्रम् तपः क्व च ।
व्याविद्धम् इदम् अस्माभिः देश धर्मः तु पूर्यताम् ॥ 3-9-27

कहाँ शस्त्र धारण? और कहाँ वनवास? कहाँ क्षत्रिय का कठोर कर्म और कहाँ प्राणियों पर दया और करुणा? यह दोनों विरोधी जान पड़ते हैं। कृपया आप मेरी इस बातों पर ध्यान देकर, इस हिंसामय कर्म को जितना कम हो सके उतना कम कर दीजिए।

स्त्री चापलात् एतत् उदाहृतम् मे धर्मम् च वक्तुम् तव कः समर्थः ।
विचार्य बुद्ध्या तु सह अनुजेन, यत् रोचते तत् कुरु म अचिरेण ॥ 3-9-33

मैंने अपने नारीगत चपल स्वभाव के कारण आपको यह उपदेश दिया है। आप अपने भाई के साथ मिलकर, इस पर गम्भीरता से विचार करें, और उसके बाद आपको जो भी उचित लगे, वही करें। रामजी ने सीताजी की बातों को बड़ी गम्भीरता से सुना। कुछ देर विचार करने के बाद बोले।

हितम् उक्तम् त्वया देवि स्निग्धया सदृशम् वचः ।
कुलम् व्यपदिशन्त्या च धर्मजे जनक आत्मजे ॥ 4-10-2

रामजी बोले हे देवी, तुम्हारा मुझ पर अत्यधिक स्नेह है, इसीलिए तुमने मुझे अहिंसा का अपना सुझाव दिया। तुमने अपने संवाद में मेरे हित की बात कही, जो मुझे अच्छी लगी। मैं तुम्हारी इन भावनाओं का आदर करता हूँ, लेकिन एक बात तुम भली भाँति जानती हो कि, हम क्षत्रियों का सबसे बड़ा धर्म होता है, निस्सहाय और कष्ट में पड़े प्राणियों की सहायता करना। यदि कोई भी संकट में हो या किसी दुःख से घिरा हो तो, उनकी रक्षा करना।

ते च आर्ता दण्डकारण्ये मुनयः संशित व्रताः ।
माम् सीते स्वयम् आगम्य शरणयाः शरणम् गताः ॥ 4-10-4

इस वन में बहुत सारे ऋषि मुनि बड़े शान्त भाव से रह कर तपस्या करते हैं। वह किसी को तंग नहीं करते, केवल शांति से जीना चाहते हैं। यह राक्षस लोग प्रतिदिन उनकी दिनचर्या में विघ्न डालने आ जाते हैं। कई बार तो उन्हें मार कर, उन्हें अपना आहार भी बना लेते हैं। यह ऋषि गण मेरे पास शरणागत के रूप में आकर सहायता की माँग करने लगे। तो ऐसे में, मेरा यह धर्म बन जाता है कि, मैं इनकी सहायता करूँ। मेरा यह विरुद्ध है कि, मैं शरणागत को कभी ठुकराता नहीं हूँ।

सरनागत कहूँ जे तज्जाहि निज हित अनहित अनुमानि
ते नर पाँवर पापमय, तिन्हहि बिलोकत हानि

आज भी मेरी यही स्थिति है। मैं इनसे प्रतिज्ञा कर चुका हूँ कि, मैं इनकी रक्षा करूँगा। अब मैं अपनी इस प्रतिज्ञा से पलट नहीं सकता। रघुवंशी अपने वचन के बड़े पक्के होते हैं-

रघुकुल रीति सदा चली आई, प्रान जाहि पर वचन न जाहि

इस कार्य को करते यदि मैं पाप का भागी भी बनता हूँ, तो वह मुझे स्वीकार है। उस पाप का दण्ड भोगने के लिए भी तत्पर हूँ।

संश्रुत्य न च शक्ष्यामि जीवमानः प्रतिश्रवम् ॥ 4-10-17
मुनीनाम् अन्यथा कर्तुम् सत्यम् इष्टम् हि मे सदा ।

मैं इन राक्षसों का विनाश कर के ही रहूँगा। अपनी प्रतिज्ञा और वचन से पीछे नहीं हट सकता। क्योंकि सत्य का पक्ष लेना मुझे अत्यंत प्रिय है। लेकिन तुमने अपने प्रेम एवं आदरवश जो भी कहा, मैं उसका सम्मान करता हूँ। तुम मिथिलेश कुमारी हो, इसलिए तुम्हें इस तरह का परामर्श देना शोभा देता है। मेरे अंग संग रह कर, जो तुम मुझे सदमार्ग पर चलने के लिए प्रेरित करती रहती हो, उसके लिए मैं तुम्हारा आभार प्रगट करता हूँ।

यह थी रामजी और सीता जी एक प्रेम भारी वार्ता, जिसमें दोनों ने अपना अपना पक्ष बड़ी सुदृढ़ता से एक दूसरे के सामने रखा। दोनों ने एक दूसरे के भावों को समझने का प्रयास किया। यह आज के किसी भी विवाहित युगल के लिए एक उदाहरण रूप में प्रस्तुत किया जा सकता है।

“जय श्री राम”



Rajendra Kapil
Phone: 847-962-1291

Personal finance insights: News & Features

Mini Feature: IRAN WAR - LONG-TERM EFFECTS

● Dr. K C Gupta, YBB Personal Finance

CONTRARIAN INDICATORS

AAII Bull-Bear Spread -1.0% (below average)
CNN Fear & Greed Index 64 (greed)
NYSE %Above 50-dMA 61.75% (positive)
SP500 %Above 50-dMA 66.40% (positive)

ICI Fund Allocations (Cumulative), 6/30/26

OEFs & ETFs: Stocks 63.07%, Hybrids 3.86%, Bonds 16.93%, M-Mkt 16.15%

INTEREST RATES

CME FedWatch
Cycle peak 5.25-5.50%
Current 3.50-3.75%
FOMC 9/16/26+ hold
FOMC 10/28/26+ hike

Treasury

T-Bills 3-mo yield 3.87%, 1-yr 4.01%;
T-Notes 2-yr 4.19%, 5-yr 4.35%, 10-yr 4.65%; T-Bonds 30-yr 5.19% (normal yield-curve);
TIPS/Real yields 5-yr 2.13%, 10-yr 2.40%, 30-yr 2.96%
FRNs Index 3.786%

Bank Rates www.depositaccounts.com/

Stable-Value (SV) Rates, 8/1/26

TIAA Traditional Annuity (Accumulation) Rates
Restricted RC 5.25%, RA 5.00%
Flexible RCP 4.50%, SRA 4.25%, IRA-101110+ 4.15%
TIAA MYGA 4.60% (3-yr), 4.80% (5-yr), 4.85% (7-yr)
TSP G Fund 4.875% (previous 4.500%)

India Fear & Greed MMI 81.93 (extreme greed)

Weekly ETFs: INDA +1.13%, INDY +1.21%, EPI +1.61%, INDH +0.97% | SPY +3.51%

The data above are as of Sunday preceding the publication date.

FINANCIALS

RBI MPC held repo rates at 5.25%; projections: CPI +5.0%, GDP +6.7%.

Kotak Mahindra Bank is buying Deutsche Bank's (DB) India retail & wealth management businesses (16 of 17 branches; 1,000 employees). DB-India will continue operations in corporate & investment banking in India. In a similar vein, Citibank-India sold its consumer banking business to Axis Bank in 2023. Deregulation in financials (banking, investments, insurance) has meant that foreign companies in India are focusing on their stronger areas & disposing weaker



areas.

FINTECH

Singapore's MacRitchie (affiliated with Singapore's sovereign investment company Temasek) is reducing stake in Indian PB Fintech from 6.48% to 3.88%. Shares may be offered with up to 4.6% discount & the remaining holdings will be subject to 60-day lockup. PB Fintech owns Policybazar (online insurance & investments) & Paisabazar (online lending). These companies operate as quote services, or insurance & credit aggregators, for many 3rd parties.

INDUSTRIALS

Adani Enterprises & French Dioxyde partner for low-carbon chemicals. A pilot plant will produce formic acid (used in textiles, agriculture & manufacturing) using renewable energy & captured carbon dioxide & the collaboration will later launch commercial-scale manufacturing. The collaboration will also explore the production of other emissions-reducing chemicals used in various industries.

INFRASTRUCTURE

UK Shell sold Spring Energy renewables (Solar & wind power) unit in India to Aditya Birla Renewables (Grasim Industries) & BlackRock Global Infrastructure Partners. Shell moved into renewables early but is now going back to its core fossil fuels, processing & servicing businesses.

IT/TECH

Indian visa processing contractor VFS Global is using AI for processing 45,000 visas/day. The final visa decisions are by Indian embassies/consulates.

SPECIAL TOPIC - IRAN WAR - LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Wars have deaths & destruction. There are also long-term economic effects.

Iran war started out as a brief war but now is dragging on.

Iran has held against vastly superior US military power through the use of homegrown drones, missiles & speedboats. It has disrupted traffic through the Straits of Hormuz & Bab al-Mandeb.

So, it's time to assess long-term effects of a potentially long US-Iran war.

The immediate effects are from disruptions in oil & natural gas/LNG production & shipments. LNG requires special facilities & ships & it's hard to ramp up global production. Damaged facilities will take time to repair. It may be months after the end of Iran war for Middle Eastern (ME) oil/gas shipments to reach pre-war levels.

If these Straits remains closed, there will be buildups of oil inventories & production will have to be cut.

Several ME countries expanded into the production of fertilizers ingredients (ammonia, urea, etc), industrial chemicals & gases, & those now face delivery problems.

There are large desalination plants to support ME population in many areas. Any damage to those may make many ME cities inhabitable.

Delivery problems for pharma were a surprise. Trading houses in ME became prominent aggregators & distributors of pharma APIs (active pharmaceutical ingredients) from China, India, etc. This may have been a convenient way to mask API origins, but now, huge amounts of APIs are sitting in ME warehouses, some with expiration dates.

Oil/gas importing countries include developed countries (Europe, parts of Asia including Japan) & EMs (China, India, parts of Asia). Some country SPRs have rather low levels of reserves (India) & they are forced to buy oil/gas at high spot prices. Japan has the largest SPR with almost a full year supply.

Inflationary impacts will be seeping through global economy through higher prices for energy & many goods & services. Adverse economic impacts will lead to several weak currencies.

For more information, see <https://ybbpersonalfinance.proboards.com/>

Chaitanya celebrates spiritual wisdom, dance and service at Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago



By: Dr. Avi Verma

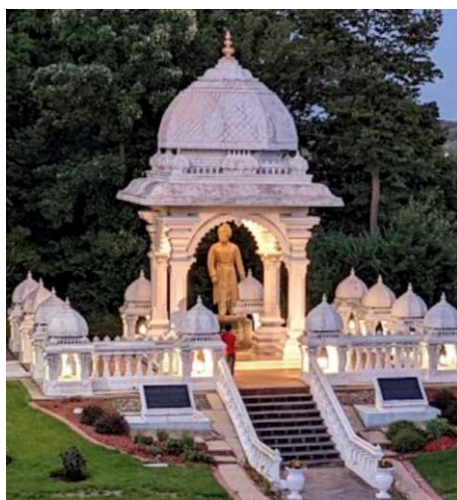
The Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago (HTGC) hosted “Chaitanya,” a fundraising program celebrating spiritual wisdom, classical dance and selfless service, on Saturday, August 8, in support of its Vivekananda Spiritual Center (VSC).

Opened in 2010 and renovated in 2025, the VSC conducts weekly programs dedicated to gaining, nurturing and sharing spiritual wisdom. Its three foundational objectives—adoration of the Supreme, fellowship and selfless service—are centered on spiritual growth.

“Chaitanya” was presented as an imagined dialogue between Swami Vivekananda and his followers, exploring themes including bhakti, or devotion; the role of worship in the pursuit of enlightenment; and the significance of deities such as Rama, Krishna, Shiva and Goddess Kali. The program also drew lessons from the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita, while emphasizing compassion and the importance of a mother’s presence.

Answers in the presentation were drawn from Swami Vivekananda’s recorded quotations, with classical dance sequences woven throughout to interpret his teachings. The program concluded with an excerpt from his renowned address at the World’s Parliament of Religions.

The performance was choreographed, directed and performed by Nirmala Madhava of California’s PAMPA Dance Academy, established in 1992. Twenty dancers from PAMPA participated. Madhava has choreographed numerous traditional and original Bharata Natyam



and Kathak compositions and has trained dancers internationally.

The fundraising program raised more than \$25,000 after expenses. Once an outstanding pledge is fulfilled, the total is expected to approximately double. The funds will support future VSC programs and the development of a digital media library containing religious and spiritual resources.

Planned uses include educational materials for Hinduism 101, Dharmic Values and Bhagavad Gita for Children; video-recording equipment; a large television for educational programs; outreach education subscriptions; services for interfaith families; and support for artists participating in VSC programs. A portion will also help launch selfless-service projects through the VSC Youth Wing.

“Chaitanya” also strengthened public awareness of the VSC and its growing role in the community. HTGC maintains close ties with the Chicago-based Vivekananda Vedanta Society and used the program to deepen its relationship



with Sevalaya, an India-based nonprofit organization dedicated to service.

an opportunity to connect with organizations sharing similar values.

The event highlighted the intersection of spiritual education, cultural expression and community service, while providing

HTGC thanked the sponsors, volunteers, performers and attendees whose support contributed to the program’s success.



Naperville Indian community celebrates Raksha Bandhan with local firefighters

By: Dr. Avi Verma
Members of the Indian community in Naperville came together to celebrate Raksha Bandhan with local firefighters, highlighting the festival's message of family, protection and community bonds.

The celebration was held in partnership with Balagokulam Naperville Aurora and brought community members together with firefighters from the Naperville Fire Department. Naperville Mayor Scott Wehrli also joined the gathering, underscoring the connection between the city's diverse communities and its first responders.

Raksha Bandhan, popularly known as Rakhi, is a Hindu festival traditionally celebrating the bond between brothers and sisters. During the festival, a sister ties a sacred thread, or Rakhi, around her



brother's wrist as a symbol of affection, protection and a lifelong commitment to stand by each other through life's challenges.

In Naperville, the tradition took on a broader community meaning as participants extended the spirit of Raksha Bandhan to firefighters who serve and protect the community. The gathering provided an opportunity for

Indian American families, children and community members to express appreciation for local first responders.

The event also reflected the growing role of cultural celebrations in bringing together Naperville's diverse population. For families participating through Balagokulam, the celebration offered children an opportunity to learn about an important Indian tradition while

connecting with public servants in their community.

The observance demonstrated how festivals such as Raksha Bandhan can transcend their traditional family setting and become occasions for expressing gratitude, strengthening community relationships and sharing Indian cultural traditions with the broader American community.

Chicago Indo-US Lions Club initiative reaches more than 1,000 Illinois families

Statewide health and back-to-school outreach provides free screenings, medical consultations and essential school resources

By: Dr. Avi Verma
The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) – Chicago hosted its annual Independence Day celebration last week at The Matrix Club, Naperville, featuring cultural performances, a live music concert, and a symbolic show of unity between two FIA groups that have operated separately for 16 years.

The program began with the U.S. and Indian national anthems and remarks from FIA leaders, including Founder and Chairman Sunil Shah and President Anu Malhotra. Cultural performances included patriotic dances by Shekhar Dance Academy and Shelzar Dance Academy.

The event drew prominent guests, including Consul General of India in Chicago Somnath Ghosh, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, Naperville Mayor Scott Wehrli, Schaumburg Mayor Tom Dailly, State Representative Michelle Mussman, and Alderwoman Shweta Baid of Aurora. Ghosh praised the Indian diaspora's "deep commitment to both India and America," while Krishnamoorthi emphasized the need



to safeguard democracy.

One of the evening's notable moments was the appearance of Hemant Patel, president of another FIA group that split from FIA Chicago 16 years ago. Patel described the reunion as "two brothers meeting again" and urged collaboration between both organizations. Shah agreed, calling it a "joint celebration" and expressing hope for continued cooperation.

The cultural segment was followed by the presentation of community awards to contributors and sponsors.

The night concluded with a live performance by Bollywood composer and singer Jatin Pandit, joined by Raahul Jatin and other vocalists. The concert featured popular songs from Pandit's career and drew enthusiastic audience participation.

The event ended with both FIA leaderships affirming their shared mission of serving the Indian American community and celebrating India's independence. Patel invited Shah and Malhotra to upcoming FIA events later in August, signaling further opportunities for collaboration.

Everything you need to know about IUHS School of Medicine

● By: Dr. Avi Verma

1. Location: Our study center is based on the Caribbean island of St. Kitts, but there is no requirement to travel there. The administrative office is in Winnipeg, Canada.

2. Program Structure & Exams:

- ▶ **Preclinical Phase (Years 1 & 2):** Fully online, divided into 11 study blocks. The first block is 12 weeks, the rest are 8 weeks each. After completion, students take the IUHS Exit Exam, and U.S. students also prepare for Step 1.
- ▶ **Clinical Phase (Years 3 & 4):** 80 weeks of rotations—48 weeks core, 32 weeks electives. Students then take the IUHS Exit Exam 2 and officially graduate. U.S. students also take Step 2 before graduation.

3. Assessments:

- ▶ End-of-block graded exams
- ▶ DxR Clinician virtual patient simulation graded assignments
- ▶ Non-graded DAR exams (at the end of Blocks 3, 6, 9) to identify

knowledge gaps.

- ▶ Lectorio self-assessments which are mandatory but not graded.

4. Teaching methods:

- ▶ **Systems-based learning:** Integrates anatomy, pathology, and pharmacology within each body system.
- ▶ **Problem-based learning:** Encourages critical thinking and challenges students to draw on all the knowledge they have acquired as they would in a real-life scenario when treating a patient.
- ▶ **Spaced repetition:** Reinforces knowledge through periodic review, enhancing long-term retention.

5. Clinical rotations:

- ▶ U.S. students can complete all rotations at the main affiliated hospital in Chicago, Illinois with additional sites in Texas, West Virginia, California, Nevada, Missouri and Arizona (subject to availability). Clinical rotation preparation starts around Block 8.
- ▶ Australian students have a



dedicated clinical director assisting them with the arrangements for clinical placements.

6. DxR Clinician: is a medical education software designed to help students develop clinical reasoning and diagnostic skills. It provides virtual patient cases that simulate real-life medical scenarios, allowing students to practice taking patient histories, ordering diagnostic tests, making differential diagnoses, and developing treatment plans.

Key Features:

- ▶ Interactive case-based learning with simulated patient encounters
- ▶ Clinical reasoning training to improve diagnostic accuracy
- ▶ Access to medical history, physical exams, and lab results
- ▶ Immediate feedback on decision-making and reasoning DxR Clinician is integrated into IUHS's problem-based learning (PBL) and case-based learning (CBL) curricula to enhance students' ability to apply medical knowledge in real world scenarios.

7. Live lectures: Learn from top-tier professors who also teach at prestigious universities through live, interactive lectures. Sessions are scheduled on weekdays, and if you miss one, you can easily catch up with recorded lectures available in the virtual library at your convenience.

8. Question and Concept Sessions:

In addition to live lectures, students can participate in weekly live Q&C sessions with the academic advisor for their current block of study. These sessions provide valuable support for students studying from home, fostering engagement with both peers and faculty.

9. Lectorio: is a digital learning platform providing medical education resources. It offers a comprehensive, AI-driven learning system designed to support medical education through high-quality video lectures, question banks, and advanced learning tools.

Key Features:

- ▶ Comprehensive Medical Curriculum Support – Covers

preclinical and clinical subjects aligned with USMLE, NBME, and other global medical exams.

- ▶ High-Quality Video Lectures – Taught by expert professors from leading medical institutions.
- ▶ AI-Powered Adaptive Learning – Personalized study recommendations based on student performance.
- ▶ Question Banks & Clinical Case Scenarios – USMLE-style questions, explanations, and performance tracking.
- ▶ Spaced Repetition & Smart Recall – Helps reinforce learning and improve long term retention.

Lectorio supplements the education delivered, improves student performance, and provide flexible, self-paced learning opportunities.

10. Mentorship: IUHS integrates the Integrated Clinical Medicine program into the preclinical years of the MD curriculum, allowing students to gain early exposure to clinical settings. This hands-on experience gives IUHS students a competitive edge over their peers from other universities.

IUHS students become comfortable and confident in a clinical environment before starting clinical rotations having developed the necessary clinical skills. Working alongside a local physician mentor, each student spends 20 hours per month shadowing and discussing cases with their mentor, a doctor from their own community. Under the guidance of IUHS's clinical director, students select a mentor who fits their needs and location. This early integration of clinical skills enhances learning, bridging the gap between theory and practice, and making the transition to full-time clinical training more seamless and rewarding.

11. Get in Touch: You can ask me anything about IUHS if you still have more questions!

Join IUHS to transform your dream of becoming a medical doctor into reality.

For more information and to apply, visit www.iuhs.edu



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Healthy Heart, Healthy Life

Part 5 – Heart Failure & Cardiomyopathy: When the Heart Struggles to Keep Up understanding heart failure, cardiomyopathy, warning signs, diagnosis, and modern treatment

● By: Dr. Avi Verma

Introduction

In the first article of the Healthy Heart, Healthy Life series, we explored how the heart functions as the body's life-sustaining pump. Part 2 examined Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) and ways to reduce the risk of heart attack. Part 3 focused on high blood pressure, the "Silent Killer," and its damaging effects on the heart, brain, kidneys, eyes, and blood vessels. Part 4 examined heart rhythm disorders, including arrhythmias and atrial fibrillation, and the modern treatments available to protect the heart.

In this fifth installment, we turn to heart failure and cardiomyopathy—conditions in which the heart muscle becomes weakened, enlarged, stiff, or otherwise unable to pump blood as effectively as the body needs. The term "heart failure" does not mean the heart has stopped working. Rather, it means the heart is struggling to meet the body's demands. Early diagnosis, appropriate treatment, and lifestyle changes can significantly improve symptoms and quality of life.

What Is Heart Failure?

Heart failure, sometimes called congestive heart failure (CHF), is a chronic condition in which the heart cannot pump enough blood to meet the body's needs.

When pumping becomes less effective, blood and fluid can build up, particularly in the lungs, legs, ankles, and abdomen. Heart failure can develop gradually or follow damage caused by a heart attack or another cardiovascular condition.

Importantly, heart failure is not a single disease. It can result from coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart valve disease, abnormal heart rhythms, or diseases of the heart muscle.

Understanding Cardiomyopathy

Cardiomyopathy refers to diseases that affect the heart muscle, changing its size, shape, thickness, or ability to pump and relax.

Three important forms include:

Dilated Cardiomyopathy: The heart chambers, particularly the left ventricle, become enlarged and weakened, reducing the heart's pumping ability. Causes can include genetic conditions, infections, certain medications or toxins, and excessive alcohol use.

Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy: The heart muscle becomes abnormally thick, which can interfere with the heart's ability to fill with blood and, in some patients, obstruct blood leaving the heart. Some forms are inherited.

Restrictive Cardiomyopathy: The heart muscle becomes stiff and cannot relax and fill normally. Although the heart may contract relatively well, its filling capacity is impaired.

Two Major Types of Heart Failure

Heart failure is also classified according to how effectively the left ventricle pumps.

Heart Failure with Reduced Ejection Fraction (HFrEF): The heart muscle has reduced pumping strength. Ejection fraction measures the percentage of blood pumped from the left ventricle with each contraction.

Heart Failure With Preserved Ejection Fraction (HFpEF): The heart may squeeze relatively normally but is often stiff and does not relax and fill properly.

This distinction is important because modern treatment is increasingly tailored to the specific type and cause of heart failure.

Know the Warning Signs

Symptoms may develop slowly and can easily be mistaken for normal aging or lack of fitness. Common warning signs include:

- ▶ Shortness of breath, especially during activity or when lying down
- ▶ Unusual fatigue or weakness
- ▶ Swelling of the feet, ankles, legs, or abdomen
- ▶ Persistent cough or wheezing
- ▶ Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- ▶ Reduced ability to exercise
- ▶ Difficulty sleeping because of breathing problems
- ▶ Loss of appetite or nausea
- ▶ Sudden or unexplained weight gain caused by fluid retention

For people already diagnosed with heart failure, monitoring daily weight can be useful because a rapid increase may signal increasing fluid retention. Patients should follow their physician's instructions about when to report changes.

What Causes Heart Failure?

Major causes and risk factors include:

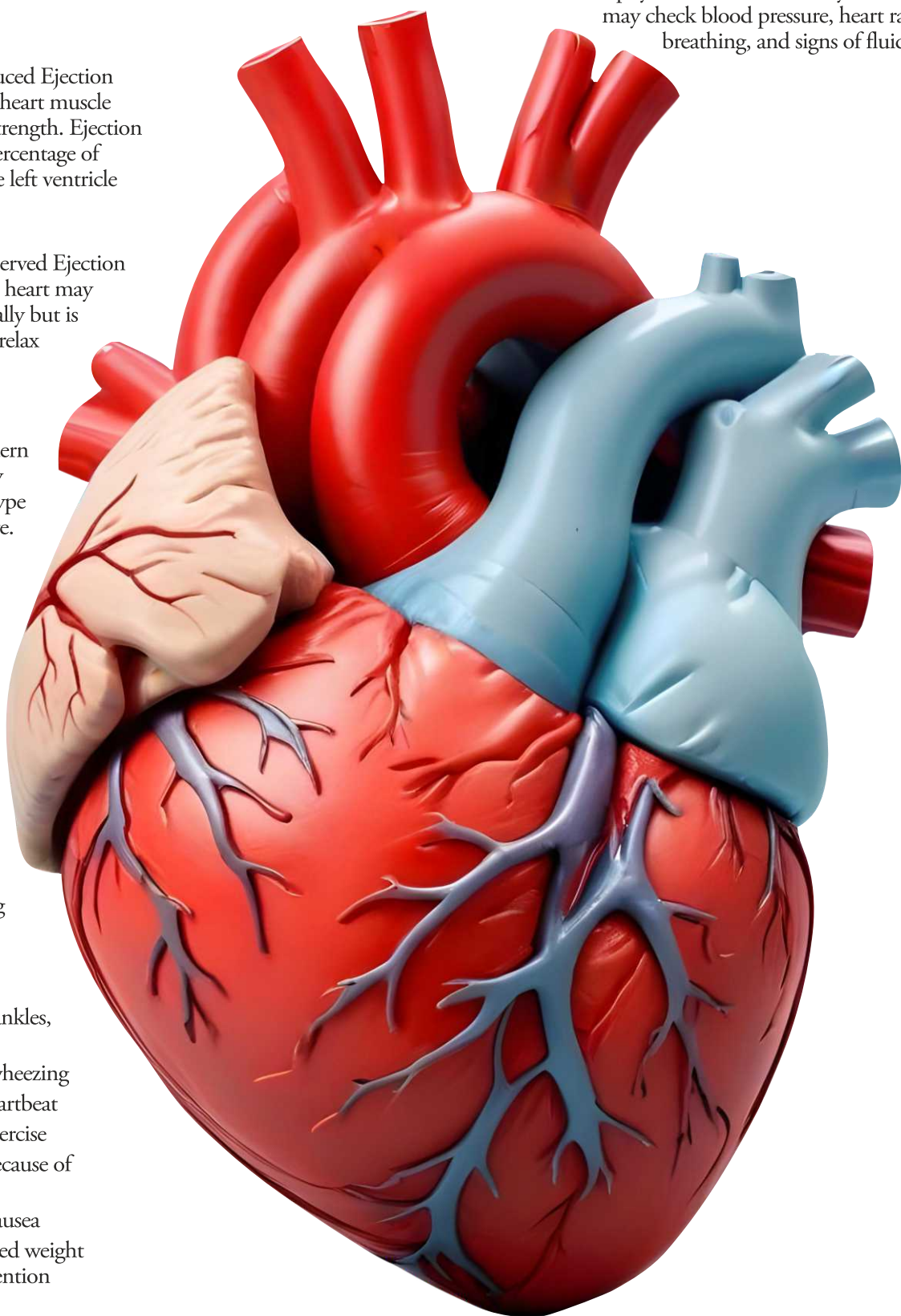
- ▶ Coronary artery disease and previous heart attacks
- ▶ Long-standing high blood pressure
- ▶ Diabetes
- ▶ Heart valve disease

- ▶ Abnormal heart rhythms
- ▶ Cardiomyopathy
- ▶ Congenital heart disease
- ▶ Inflammation or infection of the heart muscle
- ▶ Certain medications or cancer treatments
- ▶ Obesity and metabolic disorders
- ▶ Excessive alcohol use

This is why controlling cardiovascular risk factors early can help prevent or delay heart failure.

How Is Heart Failure Diagnosed?

Diagnosis begins with a medical history and physical examination. Physicians may check blood pressure, heart rate, breathing, and signs of fluid



accumulation.

Common diagnostic tests include:

Electrocardiogram (ECG/EKG): Evaluates electrical activity and may reveal rhythm abnormalities or evidence of previous heart damage.

Echocardiogram: Uses ultrasound to examine the heart’s chambers, valves, pumping function, and ejection fraction.

Blood tests: BNP or NT-proBNP may help determine whether heart failure is contributing to symptoms.

Chest X-ray: Can show an enlarged heart or fluid congestion in the lungs.

Depending on the situation, physicians may also use stress testing, cardiac MRI, CT imaging, or cardiac catheterization.

Modern Treatment

Heart failure is a serious condition, but modern cardiology has significantly expanded treatment options.

For many patients with reduced ejection fraction, treatment may include several classes of medications, including ARNI/ ACE inhibitors/ARBs, evidence-based beta blockers, mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists (MRAs), and SGLT2 inhibitors. Diuretics may be prescribed to reduce excess fluid and relieve congestion.

Lifestyle changes are equally important. Patients may be advised to follow a heart-healthy diet, limit sodium when recommended, exercise safely, maintain a healthy weight, avoid tobacco, control diabetes and blood pressure, and take medications exactly as prescribed.

Advanced Therapies

Some patients may benefit from Cardiac Resynchronization Therapy (CRT), which coordinates the contractions of the heart’s ventricles.

An Implantable Cardioverter-Defibrillator (ICD) may be recommended for selected patients at increased risk of dangerous ventricular arrhythmias and sudden cardiac death.

For patients with advanced heart failure, a Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD) may provide mechanical support to the left ventricle. In carefully selected patients, LVAD can serve as a bridge to heart transplantation or as long-term therapy.

For a small number of patients with severe, advanced heart failure, heart transplantation may offer an opportunity for substantially improved survival and quality of life.

Prevention Begins Early

Many pathways leading to heart failure begins years before symptoms appear. Controlling blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, and weight, avoiding tobacco, exercising regularly, eating a heart-healthy diet, and treating coronary



artery disease can reduce cardiovascular risk.

People with a family history of cardiomyopathy or unexplained sudden cardiac death should discuss that history with their physician. In selected cases, genetic evaluation or screening may be appropriate.

Conclusion: Listen to Your Heart

Heart failure is serious, but it does not mean that life has come to an end. Modern medications, devices, procedures, mechanical support, and transplantation have transformed the

treatment of advanced heart disease.

The key is early recognition and consistent medical care.

New or worsening shortness of breath, unexplained swelling, unusual fatigue, declining exercise tolerance, or sudden weight changes should not simply be dismissed as aging.

Your heart works every minute of every day. Give it the attention it deserves.

Know your risks. Recognize the warning signs. Seek medical advice early. A

healthy heart is not only about living longer, it is about living better.

Disclaimer

The information presented in this Healthy Heart, Healthy Life series is intended solely for educational and public awareness purposes. It is not intended to replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment, nor should it be considered a medical consultation. Readers should consult their physician or another qualified healthcare professional regarding any questions or concerns about their heart health or before making decisions related to their medical care.



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