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India Braces As 50 Percent U.S. Tariffs Come Into Effect

By Pranshu Verma, Victoria Bisset

-NEW DELHI , INDIA
he United States on Wednesday
imposed a 50 percent tariff on
Indian exports, upending the
once-warm diplomatic and trade
relationship between the two
countries.

The tariffs went into effect at 12:01 a.m. Eastern time. President Donald Trump had announced on Aug. 6 that he would double the 25 percent U.S. tariffs against India as punishment for "directly or indirectly importing Russian Federation oil." The initial 25 percent tariff went into effect Aug. 7.

"India is not only buying massive amounts of Russian Oil, they are then, for much of the Oil purchased, selling it on the Open Market for big profits," Trump wrote on social media at the time. "They don't care how many people in Ukraine are being killed by the Russian War Machine. Because of this, I will be substantially raising the Tariff paid by India to the USA."

India – the world's fifth-largest economy and one of the United States' largest trading partners – is now among the highest tariffed by Washington. The U.S. imported \$87.3 billion worth of Indian goods in 2024, according to data from the U.S. Trade Representative.

The Trump administration has become increasingly hostile toward New Delhi, also accusing India of hurting American workers. In response, India questioned Trump's targeting of India over Russian oil purchases, saying China is Moscow's largest buyer yet may be tariffed less than India.



A man reads a newspaper outside the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) after Trump's tariff plan announcement, in Mumbai, India, April 4, 2025.

In mid-July, Trump threatened tariffs on Russia if it did not stop fighting in Ukraine within 50 days, later shortening that deadline to early August. But on Aug. 6 – the day Trump announced the additional tariffs on India – Trump said he would meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and his announced deadline for Russia passed without a tariff change.

In India, the tariff enactment is creating political headaches for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He has said he will protect India's agriculture, seafood and dairy workers from being impacted by a trade deal with the U.S., sectors that

together account for a majority of the country's labor force. On Aug. 7, he said he was willing to "pay a heavy price" to do so.

"You all are witnessing the politics of economic selfishness in the world, how everyone is busy protecting their own self interest," Modi said during a rally in Gujarat on Monday, without referring to a country by name.

But members of Modi's political opposition have latched onto his inability to procure a deal with Trump as a failure of his foreign policy, which they say is heavier on joint appearances, hugs and scripted events than substantive diplomatic engagement.

The tariffs' impact on India could be devastating. A 50 percent surcharge on India would impact 66 percent of its exports to the U.S., and could slash those exports to \$49.6 billion next year, according to a report by the Global Trade Research Initiative. India's apparel, textile, gems, shrimp, carpets and furniture exports would be most affected, the report said, "endangering hundreds of thousands of jobs."

The tariff war has also had geopolitical consequences for Washington. Since Trump announced he would levy a 50 percent tariff on India earlier this month, Modi has courted a cozier relationship with members of the BRICS coalition, which includes China, Russia, Brazil and South Africa. Modi will also visit China at the end of this month, his first visit to the country in seven years.

Two of India's leading stock market indexes, the BSE Sensex and Nifty 50, were down around 1 percent in value as of Wednesday afternoon, losses that were recorded after Tuesday's closing. Both markets were closed Wednesday (August 27, 2025) to mark a Hindu religious festival.

Diamonds are among the products that will be affected by the tariffs. The city of Surat, in India's western state of Gujarat, is the country's diamond capital – and nearly every diamond sold in the world is first cut and polished there. As The Washington Post reported earlier this week, tariffs have brought the town to a near-standstill.

-The Washington Post

Trump Tariffs Upend Lives And Stall Industry In India's Diamond Capital

By Pranshu Verma, Supriya Kumar

jay Lakum has been a diamond worker his entire adult life, like his father before him. His wages as a sorter were modest, but the work was steady, helping Lakum support his 10-person household and contribute to his mother's cancer treatments.

About two weeks ago, he was among a group of 20 workers told abruptly not to show up the next day. He has called dozens of companies looking for work, he said, but none are hiring. All he can think about are the bills coming due.

"I am very stressed," said Lakum, 35. "My mental health is ruined."

He is a direct casualty of the escalating trade war between the United States and India. Nearly every diamond sold in the world is first cut and polished in the city of Surat, in western Gujarat state. The U.S. is the single-largest buyer of these precious stones, purchasing roughly \$5 billion in the last fiscal year, according to India's Gem & Jewelry Export Promotion Council.

But President Donald Trump's 25 percent tariffs on India, which took effect on Aug. 7 and are set to climb to



Ajay Lakum, 35, got laid off from his job as a diamond sorter about two weeks ago in Surat, Gujarat, shortly after President Donald Trump's announcement of 50 percent tariffs on India.

50 percent on Wednesday, have brought this diamond town to a near-standstill, according to interviews with workers, merchants and industry analysts. Export orders are on pause. Union leaders estimate 50,000 workers



Kohinoor Road in Surat, Gujarat, the world's diamond polishing capital.

have been laid off since April, when Trump announced a

-Continued On Page 6

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Trump Tariffs Upend Lives And Stall Industry In India's Diamond Capital

-Continued From Page 4

10 percent baseline duty on nearly all U.S. trading partners and first threatened higher rates on India. Other businesses that serve Surat's diamond workers, from tobacco sellers to lunch stalls, are also in steep decline.

The industry was already struggling as a result of Western sanctions on Russia, a key supplier of the rough diamonds that pass through the workshops of Surat before being displayed in American showrooms. Now, many fear the tariffs will make Indian diamonds prohibitively expensive for major U.S. jewelry companies and send demand plummeting.

Hopes of a diplomatic breakthrough between Washington and New Delhi look bleaker with each passing day. Trump officials have ratcheted up their rhetoric toward India - accusing the country of profiting from Russia's war in Ukraine and hurting American workers - and the latest round of trade talks scheduled for this week has been canceled, according to a person familiar with the negotiations, speaking on the condition of

polishing company on Kohinoor Road, said orders from his American clients have been on hold since Aug. 1, in anticipation of the 25 percent tariff. With the rate set to double this week, he's not expecting business to pick up any time soon.

On the factory floor, 25 diamond workers now ply their trade, down from the usual 50. "There's no business," said Vipul Patel, who has spent a quarter century as a polisher.

To save money on day wages, Rathod told many of his employees to take off six extra days for a recent Hindu holiday. He no longer uses air conditioning in his office, despite the oppressive summer heat. His personal income has fallen from \$690 a month to \$285 in August, he said.

"If it continues like this," he said, "we won't be able to go on."

Amit Korat, president of the Surat Jewelry Manufacturers Association, said businesses will have to diversify if they want to stay afloat. The most natural choice would be to focus on polishing and cutting cheaper

said.

Political backlash

There's no certainty that trade negotiators will come to Surat's rescue.

Trump announced suddenly this month that he would raise tariffs on Indian exports to 50 percent, which he described as a punishment for the country's purchases of Russian oil, casting a deep chill over U.S.-India relations.

Trade talks between the countries were canceled, and the war of words has intensified. India was "cozying up to both Russia and China," White House trade adviser Peter Navarro wrote in the Financial Times last week. "If India wants to be treated as a strategic partner of the U.S., it needs to start acting like one," he continued.

The Modi government has responded by signaling it will strengthen relations with the BRICS bloc, which includes Russia and China, as well as Brazil. Modi has said he is prepared to "pay a heavy price" to protect India's economy from an unfair trade deal with the United



Vallabh Rathod, co-owner of a diamond polishing facility located on Kohinoor Road, Surat, examines diamonds through a small magnifying glass on Aug. 19.



Jay Patel stands at his snack shop on the ground floor of a diamondprocessing building in Surat, Gujarat, which was once crowded with diamond workers on Aug. 19.



Workers polish diamonds at a polishing facility of a building on Kohinoor Road, Surat, on Aug. 19.

anonymity to discuss a sensitive matter.

India's Commerce Ministry and the U.S. Treasury Department did not respond to a request for comment.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi hails from Gujarat but has prioritized protecting other industries, such as seafood, dairy and agriculture, which employ a majority of the country's labor force. Diamond workers and business owners in his home state say no one is looking out for them.

"The U.S. tariffs will completely destroy our industry," said Ramesh Zilriya, president of the Gujarat Diamond Workers Union. He urged the American government "not to impose something that would ruin so many lives."

We all suffer

On Kohinoor Road in north Surat, the beating heart of the diamond industry, there is an odd calm. This stretch of road would normally be humming with the sound of scooters, carrying thousands of diamond polishers, sorters and cutters to work.

The city employed between 800,000 and 1 million diamond workers last year, according to the Gujarat Diamond Workers Union, most of them informal laborers not counted in national surveys. Up to 100,000 could ultimately be out of work if Trump's 50 percent tariffs are enacted, the union estimates.

Vallabh Rathod, 45, the co-owner of a diamond-

lab-grown diamonds, he said, which importers probably would still be able to afford with the tariffs in place.

But Avi Krawitz, who analyses the global diamond trade, said margins are already thin, due in part to the increased price of Russian diamonds under sanctions, and the next round of tariffs could tip Surat over the edge. "It's a big acceleration," Krawitz said, which could force the "downsizing of the industry."

Most American retailers and wholesalers have built up a three-month supply of gems to absorb the initial blow, according to Paul Zimnisky, an independent diamond consultant. But if the Trump administration goes ahead with the 50 percent tariff, he predicted it will send "shock waves" throughout the supply chain.

Everyone is in "wait-and-see mode," Zimnisky added. "It's difficult to conduct business given the current level of uncertainty."

In Surat, many businesses depend on the diamond trade, and few have been spared from the slowdown.

Munna Parmar, who sells tobacco from atop his motorcycle on Kohinoor Road, said his daily take-home pay has recently dropped from about \$17 to \$8. "I can't survive," he said.

Just behind him stands Jay Patel, whose small shop specializes in dhokla, a popular vegetarian dish. As lunch crowds have thinned since late July, he said his income has been halved.

"If the diamond industry suffers, we all suffer," he

States.

No one on either side seems to talking about tariff exemptions for India's diamond industry, said Ajay Srivastava, founder of the Global Trade Research Initiative. He said business leaders are hoping that increased domestic consumption can help make up for reduced U.S. demand.

But "there's no one on the scale of America," Krawitz said, which accounts for roughly 50 percent of global diamond jewelry demand.

The economic fallout could spell trouble for Modi in Gujarat, where he first rose to political prominence - and where his Bharatiya Janata Party remains the dominant force.

Bhavesh Bhakhar, 49, has worked as a diamond sorter since he was 13, using his trained eye to assess the quality of gems from around the world. He lost his job on Aug. 7. He's unsure how to provide food for his family and is unable to make payments on an outstanding loan. "The moment I wake up in the morning, I keep thinking about finding work," he said. "I have gone around pleading to everyone to give me a job."

Verma and Kumar traveled to Surat, Gujarat to report this story.

-The Washington Post



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Analysis: China Welcomes Modi As Trump's Trade War Draws Rivals Into Détente

By Niha Masih, Pei-Lin Wu

hinese leader Xi Jinping this weekend will welcome Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the country for the first time in seven years, marking a notable improvement in the neighbors' tense relationship – and one spurred on in no small part by President Donald Trump's global trade war.

Modi is one of the world leaders who will attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit starting Sunday. More than 20 heads of state, including Presidents Vladimir Putin of Russia and Masoud Pezeshkian of Iran, will also attend the regional forum. But Modi's decision to attend, in particular, as the leader of the world's largest democracy and one that until recently had a warm diplomatic and trade relationship with the United States, underscores the way Trump's approach has alienated some friends as well as united foes.

Xi, who has cast himself as a reliable global leader in a multipolar world order, is set to take advantage during the summit of concerns about Trump's unpredictability and irascibility.

The Trump administration on Wednesday imposed a 50 percent tariff on Indian exports, doubling its planned levy as punishment for buying Russian oil. Beijing technically remains in a trade-war truce with the Trump administration, but tensions remain high.

"Trump has facilitated the environment [where] both sides find themselves more agreeable to accommodate the other," said Manoj Kewalramani, chairperson of the Indo-Pacific studies program at the Takshashila Institution, a think tank based in Bangalore, India.

For Xi, the summit is a chance to cement his growing influence. He wants Modi to show that India is not following the U.S. lead in containing Beijing, particularly in the Global South, analysts say.

"On this occasion, optics do matter," said Steve Tsang, director of the SOAS China Institute in London. Xi's priority is to make sure India does not appear aligned with Washington, he said.

Their meeting, however, will not eliminate the structural disputes between the two nations, such as the border or their strategic rivalry, Tsang said.

Relations between the nuclear-armed neighbors sank to their worst in decades following a deadly border clash in 2020, high in the Himalayas, that killed 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers. It marked a turning point in relations: Dozens of Chinese apps, including the wildly popular TikTok, were banned in India, and there were calls to boycott Chinese-made products. China built up villages at different points along its 2,200-mile border with India to project power and provide infrastructure support to military forces.

Their freeze began to thaw in October – a month before Trump won the election – when Modi met Xi on the sidelines of a BRICS summit in Russia. Earlier this year, the two countries agreed to resume direct flights, shut since the pandemic, and China reopened a Tibetan pilgrimage site for Indians after a five-year halt.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, visiting New Delhi last week, called for the two countries to see each other "as partners and opportunities, not as rivals or threats." Modi was similarly upbeat. "Stable, predictable,

Modi was similarly upbeat. "Stable, predictable, constructive ties between India and China will contribute significantly to regional as well as global peace and prosperity," he wrote on social media.

THE TRUMP CARD

Their tentative rapprochement has gained momentum from Trump's unconventional approach to allies and rivals alike.

India - the world's fifth-largest economy and one of



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping attend a family photo ceremony prior to the BRICS Summit plenary session in Kazan, Russia, Wednesday, Oct. 23, 2024.

the U.S.'s largest trading partners – has been hit particularly hard in the trade war and now faces one of the highest tariff rates in the world. But Modi has stood his ground and said earlier this month that he was willing to "pay a heavy price" to protect India's agriculture, seafood and dairy industries.

Trump's tariff pressure accelerated New Delhi's motivation to recalibrate ties with Beijing, said Lin Minwang, deputy director of the Center for South Asian Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai.

"Now India urgently needs to bring China closer to counter the United States," he said. Although India had begun making modest adjustments toward China even before Trump's election, Lin noted, the U.S. president has been the decisive factor.

China, the biggest purchaser of Russian oil, has jumped to India's defense opposing the tariffs on New Delhi. "In the face of such acts, silence or compromise only emboldens the bully," China's ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, said at an event last week, referring to Washington.

Beijing's outreach to New Delhi reflects its efforts to ensure stability on its borders, analysts say.

"Overall, China is seeking to stabilize relations with neighboring countries amid a more volatile relationship with the U.S.," said Yu Jie, a senior research fellow on China at Chatham House, a London-based think tank. "De-escalating tensions with India has been the most successful effort made by Beijing so far," she added.

The détente might already be beginning to pay some dividends.

China – which controls most of the world's rare-earth mining and almost all of the processing, and has used its market dominance as leverage in trade talks with the U.S. – appears to have offered a concession to India.

During Wang's visit to New Delhi, China said it will fulfill the rare-earth material needs of Indian businesses.

Rare earths are essential for key industries, including automotives, defense, health care and electronics. But Beijing's recent export controls on heavy and medium rare earths choked supplies of rare-earth magnets critical for India's auto industry.

At least 50 licenses from the Indian automotive sector have remained pending under the new regime, according to an industry expert who spoke on the condition of anonymity to share details amid ongoing diplomacy efforts. Now, automakers are hoping the Chinese assurance will ease months of disruption.

Sona Comstar, one of India's largest producers of traction motors for electric vehicles, is among the companies most directly exposed.

"It is a challenging situation," said group CEO Vivek Vikram Singh. With two weeks of production losses in June due to the shortages, Sona Comstar has shifted to lightor heavy-rare-earth-free magnets. Though workable for smaller two-wheeler motors, they are less efficient and more expensive.

Singh warned that the industry could even face an existential threat if shipments don't resume soon: "Why would people want to make motors in India? Our customers could just start buying from China."

Data from China's customs agency shows that the export of rare-earth magnets to India fell by more than 50 percent in the second quarter compared with the previous three months, due to cuts in heavy-rare-earth shipments. The numbers climb up in July, which Singh and other Indian industry experts said was due to higher volumes of light-rare-earth magnets shipped.

THE FRONTIER CHALLENGE

After Wang's visit, India and China outlined steps to coordinate on border issues, a long-standing flash point. For China, Tibet-related issues – India hosts the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile – remain a point of strain. China annexed Tibet in 1951 and in recent years has intensified efforts to enforce political and religious control.

Inside India, China's plans for a major hydropower dam in Tibet have raised concerns over communities downstream. Beijing has also fostered strong defense ties with India's archrival Pakistan, which claimed that Chinese-made jets and missiles downed Indian fighter jets in the conflict between the two countries in May. Wang visited Pakistan after his trip to New Delhi, and Pakistan's leader will also attend the SCO forum.

Despite the recent warming of ties, Chatham House's Yu said the deep suspicion persists between the two sides.

"Such suspicion has determined that China-India diplomatic reset works well on the certain domains but [is] not a monumental shift on their bilateral ties," she said.

The current rapprochement, if it continues, could have repercussions for the U.S. Lindsey Ford, a senior director for South Asia at the National Security Council during the Biden administration, said that in multilateral venues such as the BRICS coalition – which is made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – New Delhi has often acted as a brake on initiatives related to global currency reserves that could reduce dependence on the U.S. dollar.

"India has oftentimes, quietly behind the scenes, been the roadblock to China and Russia in those settings," she said. "And that's a roadblock that I think we maybe haven't always appreciated as much as we might, if it's not there."

Ford said Beijing may use this moment to extract concessions from India on issues related to Taiwan and military exercises it holds with the U.S. that could pose a risk to the U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific region.

The competing rise and ambitions of India and China and the asymmetry of power, further complicated by the role of the U.S. in the region, make friction inevitable between the two neighbors, said Kewalramani of the Takshashila Institution.

"You have two powers who are rising concurrently, who both see themselves as global powers and whose interests intersect in each other's spheres of influence increasingly," he said. "So, you're going to have these points of friction that exist."

-The Washington Post



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India And China Are Partners, Not Rivals, Modi and Xi Say

By a Staff Writer

IANJIN, China (Reuters) -India and China are development partners, not rivals, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed on Sunday, as they discussed ways to improve trade ties amid global tariff uncertainty.

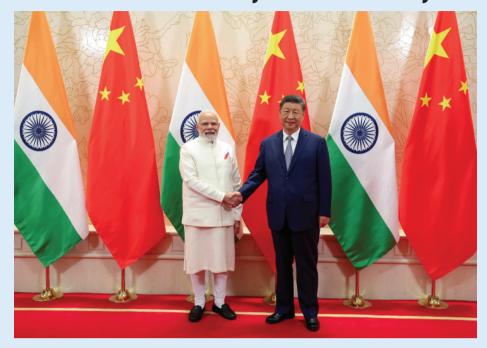
Modi is in China for the first time in seven years to attend a two-day meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation regional security bloc, along with Russian President Vladimir Putin and leaders from Iran, Pakistan and four Central Asian states in a show of Global South solidarity.

Analysts say Xi and Modi are seeking to align against pressure from the West, days after U.S. President Donald Trump imposed a punitive total of 50% tariff on Indian goods, partly in response to New Delhi's purchase of Russian oil. Trump's moves hurt decades of carefully cultivated U.S. ties with New Delhi, which Washington had hoped would act as a regional counterweight to Beijing.

Modi told Xi his country was comzitted to improving ties with China and discussed reducing India's burgeoning bilateral trade deficit of nearly \$99.2 billion, while emphasising the need to maintain peace and stability at their disputed border after a clash in 2020 triggered a five-year military standoff. "We are committed to progressing our relations based on mutual respect, trust and sensitivities," Modi said during the meeting on the sidelines of the summit, according to a video posted on his official X account.

He said an atmosphere of "peace and stability" has been created on their disputed Himalayan border and that cooperation between the two nations was linked to the interests of 2.8 billion people of the world's two most populous countries

The nuclear-armed Asian neighbours share a 3,800 km (2,400 miles) border that is poorly demarcated and has been disputed since the 1950s.



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping during a meeting on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Tianjin, China, August 31, 2025.

India's Press Information

Xi said that China and India are each other's development opportunities rather than threats, Chinese state news agency Xinhua reported. "We must ... not let the border issue define the overall China-India relationship," Xinhua reported Xi as saying. China-India ties could be "stable and far-reaching" if both sides focus on viewing each other as partners instead of rivals, Xi added.

Ties between the nations were ruptured by the 2020 clash, in which 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers died in hand-to-hand combat, following which the Himalayan border was heavily militarised by both sides. Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri told reporters later in the day in that the border situation had evolved over the course of last year, following a patrolling agreement in October. "The situation at the border is moving towards normalisation," he said.

To a question on the U.S. tariffs, he said that Modi and Xi discussed the international "economic situation" and the challenges it created.

"They tried to ... see how to leverage that for building greater understanding between themselves and how to ... take forward the economic and commercial relationship between India and China," he said.

The leaders also discussed expanding common ground on bilateral, regional, and global issues, and challenges like terrorism and fair trade in multilateral platforms, a statement from the Indian foreign ministry said.

DIRECT FLIGHTS, TRADE CURBS

Both leaders had a breakthrough meeting in Russia last year after reaching a border patrol agreement, setting off a tentative thaw in ties that has accelerated in recent weeks as New Delhi seeks to hedge against renewed tariff threats from Washington.

Direct flights between both nations, which have been suspended since 2020, are being resumed, Modi added, without providing a timeframe. China had agreed to lift export curbs on rare earths, fertilisers and tunnel boring machines this month during a key visit to India by China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

China opposes Washington's steep tariffs on India and will "firmly stand with India," Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong said this month.

In recent months, China has allowed Indian pilgrims to visit Hindu and Buddhist sites in Tibet, and both countries have lifted reciprocal tourist visa restrictions.

"I see the meeting as a step in the direction of incremental improvement. The readouts indicate a lot of mixed political signalling ... But there's also a sense of the need to stabilise the relationship in the context of broader geopolitical currents," said Manoj Kewalramani, a Sino-Indian relations expert at the Takshashila Institution think tank in Bengaluru.

Other long-term irritants remain in the relationship, too.

China is India's largest bilateral trade partner, but the long-running trade deficit – a persistent source of frustration for Indian officials – reached a record \$99.2 billion this year.

Meanwhile, a planned Chinese megadam in Tibet has sparked fears of mass water diversion that could reduce water flows on the major Brahmaputra River by up to 85% in the dry season, according to Indian government estimates.

India also hosts the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader whom Beijing views as a dangerous separatist influence. India's arch-rival Pakistan also benefits from staunch Chinese economic, diplomatic and military support.



India's Prime Minister Modi is welcomed by the Indian community upon his arrival for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit at the hotel in Tianjin, China August 30, 2025. India's Press Information Bureau



National flags of China and India fly next to the Meijiang Convention and Exhibition Center, a venue for 2025 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Tianjin, China August 30, 2025.

Northwest Suburban Teachers Union Local 1211 Endorses Raja Krishnamoorthi for U.S. Senate

By a Staff Writer

he Illinois Federation of Teachers Local 1211
(Northwest Suburban Teachers Union Local 1211)
announced its endorsement of Congressman Raja
Krishnamoorthi for the U.S. Senate, September 2,
2025.

Earlier this summer, Krishnamoorthi secured the first labor endorsement of the U.S. Senate primary, earning the support of Local 881 United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW).

"As a product of Illinois public schools, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi knows what our teachers, students, and families need to thrive. That's why the Northwest Suburban Teachers Union Local 1211 is proud to endorse Raja and support his campaign for US Senate!" the IFT Local 1211 President Steve Elza, is quoted saying in a press release from Krishnamoorthi's office. "Our public schools need a fighter, and Raja is the candidate who will stand up for teachers and students," Elza added.

Local 1211 is a 1000+ member teachers' union consisting of teachers, teachers' assistants, paraprofessionals, and school-related personnel. The organization is a member of the Illinois Federation of Teachers.

"As the proud product of Peoria District 150 public



Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Illinois, with supporters.

schools, I know firsthand the power of public education — which is why I am thrilled to have earned the support of the Northwest Suburban Teachers Union Local 1211," Krishnamoorthi said, adding, "I look forward to continuing to work with Local 1211 President Elza and all of their members to ensure that every Illinois child has access to a world-class public education." manshu Dhulia, Ghamasaan takes us to the country's heartland with a tense rural thriller that speaks to India's roots and the rise of a young nation still negotiating with its past. The film stars Pratik Gandhi, Arshad Warsi and Ishita Dutta in pivotal

roles. Ghamasaan is produced by Jyoti Deshpande, Piiyush Singh, Ashwini Chaudhary, Abhayanand Singh, and Saurabh Gupta.

21st September - Marquee Film - Bun Tikki

Chosen as the Marquee Film before the Closing Night, Bun Tikki is a poignant drama moves us to urban India, capturing the confusions, tenderness, and quiet courage of a young child and those around him as they grapple with questions of identity. The film stars legends Shabana Azmi and Zeenat Aman with Abhay Deol alongside and Nushrratt Bharuccha and Rohaan Singh. Produced by Jyoti Deshpande, Dinesh Malhotra, Marijke DeSousa and Manish Malhotra, Bun Tikki also marks the feature film debut of director, Faraz Arif Ansari.

Online movie streaming services

Closing Night - Pinch

CSAFF concludes with the darkly comic and deeply moving Pinch, written, directed, produced, and headlined by Uttera Singh. Following its acclaimed world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival, Pinch arrives in Chicago as one of the most anticipated independent films of the year. The story follows Maitri, a travel blogger whose world is upended by a personal violation during a festival, forcing her to confront guilt, trauma, and ultimately her own power. Singh's fearless vision makes for a fitting and unforgettable closing night.

2025 Chicago South Asian Film Festival Promises An Array Of Films

By a Staff Writer

he sixteenth annual Chicago South Asian Film Festival (CSAFF) will take place in Chicago from September 14 through September 21, 2025. Like every year, the Festival is geared to provide South Asian talent, stories and themes a world platform.

Founded in 2010, and organized by the non-profit organization; Chicago South Asian Arts Council, Inc; CSAFF is dedicated to promoting diversity in the Chicago area through international cinema, conversation and culture, according to its website.

The Festival has gained valuable support over the years from Chicago's local administration, cultural institutions and the South Asian community. These include the support of Chicago's Mayor, the City Film Office, City Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, the Consulate General of India in Chicago, the Consulate General of Pakistan in Chicago, Chicago Sister Cities, the City of Evanston, educational institutions and industry representatives.

The Festival's format consists of premier screenings of films, panel discussions, speaker series, workshops, film awards, receptions, after parties and networking events for filmmakers, film crews, and filmgoers.

Films featured in the Festival fall into



Section of a Poster provided by CSAFF

five different categories, including Fiction Feature Film of more than 30 minutes, Fiction Short Film of less than 30 minutes, Documentary Feature Film of more than 30 minutes, Documentary Short Films of less than 30 minutes, and Episodes of multi episode web series, docuseries or limited series. All the films at the 2025 Festival were completed within two years of the festival date, thus made since 2023 till date

The Festival includes films from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iran and Tibet as South Asian films. All the films shown at the Festival present South Asian content from any of the countries, topics, themes or have producers, directors, screenwriters, composers or actors of South Asian heritage. This protocol is not binding to Chicago based and international student filmmakers.

The Festival organizing committee includes Festival Director Jigar Shah, Co-Founder and Board Member Ketki Parikh, Co-Founder and Board Member Amit Rana and Board Member Arup Raha, Operations Specialist Anup Gurnani, Marketing and Technology Specialist Rahul Rana and Public Relations Specialist Sonya Sachdeva. Aparna Sen, Shabana Azmi, Lillete Dubey, Vishal Bhardwaj and Bhawana Somaaya are the noted film personalities making the Honorary Board.

More than 110 film entries have been received this year including political and family dramas, comedies, verité films that follow organizers and climate storytellers, intimate stories of love and loss, and animation and experimental shorts, according to the website.

Of these, over 60 films will have Midwest and Chicago premiers, more than 20 films will have premier in US and North

America and over 15 films will have World premiers.

In a first, CSAFF has collaborated with India's Jio Studios with the official selection of three of its upcoming films, Ghamasaan, Saali Mohabbat and Bun Tikki at the festival. The films will be featured in a specially curated section From India to the World. This section brings together three distinct genre films that, when seen together, offer a textured and layered portrait of India. From its deep rural roots to the complexities of its cities, these films reflect the vast spectrum of Indian ethos, resilience, and evolving identity, the press release said.

Films will be screened at two different locations, the Matrix Club at 808 Illinois Route 59 in Naperville, IL 60540 and the AMC River East 21 at 322 East Illinois Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

Films in Fiction series, feature and short, include some remarkable and new films by promising filmmakers. These include, to name a few, The Bird Ek Thi Chidiya in Hindi; Chashma in Hindi; Obsolete in Marathi and English; Dream-Hotline in English, Gujarati and Marathi; Famished in English and Sinhala; The Cycle in Hindi and Punjabi; Red Lavender in English, Tamil and Sinhala; Elijah in Bengali and English, portraying a variety of cultures and languages. Documentary features and shorts include The Caste Rush, Love Chaos Kin, Rhythm of a Flower, A Fly on the Wall and more.

TAL

New Chancery Premises Of Indian Consulate In Seattle Inaugurated

By a Staff Writer

he new chancery premises of the Consulate General of India in Seattle, was officially inaugurated August 26, 2025, by Ambassador of India to USA Vinay Kwatra, in the presence of Governor of Washington State Bob Ferguson, US Senator Maria Cantwell and Mayor of Seattle Bruce Harrell.

Addressing an audience of several elected leaders and prominent Indian American community leaders, Governor Ferguson welcomed the opening of the new Indian consulate as a landmark development, especially in deepening bilateral ties between India and the US Pacific Northwest region.

The new Chancery premises of the Indian Consulate are located in the heart of downtown Seattle (1015, 2nd Ave Seattle,



Ambassador of India to US Vinay Kwatra inaugurating the new chancery premises of Indian Consulate in Seattle in the presence of Washington State Governor Bob Ferguson and Senator Maria Cantwell (26 August 2025, Seattle).



Ambassador of India to US Vinay Kwatra addressing the gathering (26 August 2025, Seattle)



Ambassador of India to US Vinay Kwatra felicitating the dignitaries at the official inauguration of the new chancery premises of Indian Consulate in Seattle (26 August 2025, Seattle). India's Consul General in Seattle Prakash Gupta, on left.



Washington State Governor Bob Ferguson addressing the gathering (26 August 2025, Seattle).



Mayor of Seattle Bruce Harrell addressing the gathering (26 August 2025, Seattle).



Unveiling of the official plaque of inauguration by Ambassador of India to US Vinay Kwatra in the presence of Washington State Governor Bob Ferguson and Senator Maria Cantwell. (26 August 2025, Seattle).



Indian American community representatives participating in an interactive session with Ambassador of India. (26 August 2025, Seattle).



Consul General of India in Seattle Prakash Gupta, addressing the gathering (26 August 2025, Seattle).



addressing the gathering (26 August 2025, Seattle).



Participating dignitaries and Indian American community representatives at the Inauguration ceremony of the new chancery premises of Indian Consulate in Seattle. (26 August 2025, Seattle).

WA -98104) at the prestigious Federal Reserve Building, and spread over two floors, i.e. (1st and 11th). While the first floor houses the Consular section and is open for visitors of consular services and public dealing, the eleventh-floor houses Administrative and Commercial wings. The location had earlier served as Seattle branch of Federal Bank of San Francisco

from 1951 to 2008 and has been listed in the US Federal Government's National Register of Historic Places since 2013.

The announcement for the opening of a 6th Indian Consulate in US was made by the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi in June 2023, and withing five months, it began operations from a temporary location in Seattle in November 2023. The Consulate noted in

its press release that following initiation of its consular operations in July 2024, it has provided consular services to a total of nearly 23,722 applicants from its consular jurisdiction area of Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and Nebraska.

The inaugural ceremony was also followed by a brief interaction of Ambas-

sador of India with representatives of Indian American community. During the visit, Ambassador also interacted with senior leadership of tech companies from the Greater Seattle area, as well as with elected leadership of Washington State, and leaders of Indian origin elected to public office.

ASTROLOGY



This week for you

By Dr. Prem Kumar Sharma

E-mail: psharma@premastrologer.com Contact No - 01147033152/40532026

ARIES:You may sense the approach of a major event, but your preparation ensures

confidence and control. Academic performance needs stronger focus, especially if recent results haven't been promising. Property-related ventures can yield encouraging profits. Those in jewellery, gold, or gem businesses may witness steady earnings this week. However, your professional output may not entirely impress seniors, so stay

TAURUS: Evaluate the bigger picture before
arriving at any firm decision. Your
quick thinking could help resolve
a tense situation at work, earning
admiration. An opportunity to
purchase something pricey at a
bargain may arise—your negotiation skills

consistent and open to feedback.

bargain may arise—your negotiation skills will make all the difference. Recently married couples may enjoy sweet bonding. Romantic relationships remain steady. Watch your eating habits—experiments could upset digestion. A new travel destination might soon find a spot on your itinerary.

GEMINI: You're stepping into a highly rewarding phase that feels unlike anything before. Renewed energy and good health uplift your spirit. Business growth or professional elevation is likely. Academic support or coaching enhances your understanding and performance. Wedding bells may ring for some. Your finances are strong enough to indulge in thoughtful gestures for someone dear.

cancer: Letting others shine at work may reflect positively on you. Bold decisions in social settings may shape your public image for the better. Your partner's quiet demeanour might be puzzling—pa-

tience is key. You'll efficiently tie up responsibilities surrounding a major event or task. In studies, mutual support and exchange of ideas work well. Your health remains manageable with proper care.

LEO: This week enhances mutual understanding and connection with people around you. Your charm will attract friends and supporters, elevating your social standing.

A professional win adds to your reputation, and your attention to detail won't go unnoticed. A previously cancelled trip may be back on track. Physically, you'll feel refreshed and eager to engage in new activities.

VIRGO: An important responsibility may come your way, sharpening your focus. Work life looks promising and productive. Your skills may be in demand on the social front as you take the lead in planning an event. Long-term health issues may show signs of

improvement. A property investment may

begin to pay off. Family tensions begin to

ease. Romantic connections remain steady. A long drive is expected to be enjoyable.

LIBRA: Your positive energy is likely to influence everyone around you. Taking up a sport or physical activity will do wonders for your fitness. Those seeking companionship might discover a budding

romance. Help arrives just when you need it most. Your academic preparation strengthens your confidence. Finances remain balanced, with no major concerns. Your popularity grows in social circles.

SCORPIO: Someone you've been counting

on may fall short—actions speak louder than words. Steering clear of other people's issues helps protect your peace. Workplace politics could surface, so stay alert and assertive. A lucrative job prospect may come your way if you act with strategy. Lack of funding might slow a new project, but

SAGITTARIUS: Start with completing pa-

don't lose hope—it may still take off later.

perwork and formalities—this avoids obstacles later. A new job begins on a positive note. Those in sales or marketing are likely to meet their goals with ease. A spouse's silence may be tough to handle, but patience may help ease tensions. A heartfelt

CAPRICORN: Try to keep a flexible sched-

gesture or surprise gift can brighten a dull

ule—unexpected needs may arise.
A family member's behaviour may seem confusing, but don't jump to conclusions. You may prefer handling a home event

your way, resisting external suggestions. At work, it might feel frustrating if a peer receives favouritism, but your turn will come with consistent performance. Avoid public transport if you're planning to enjoy your journey.

AQUARIUS: Your determination will help

ho be

moment.

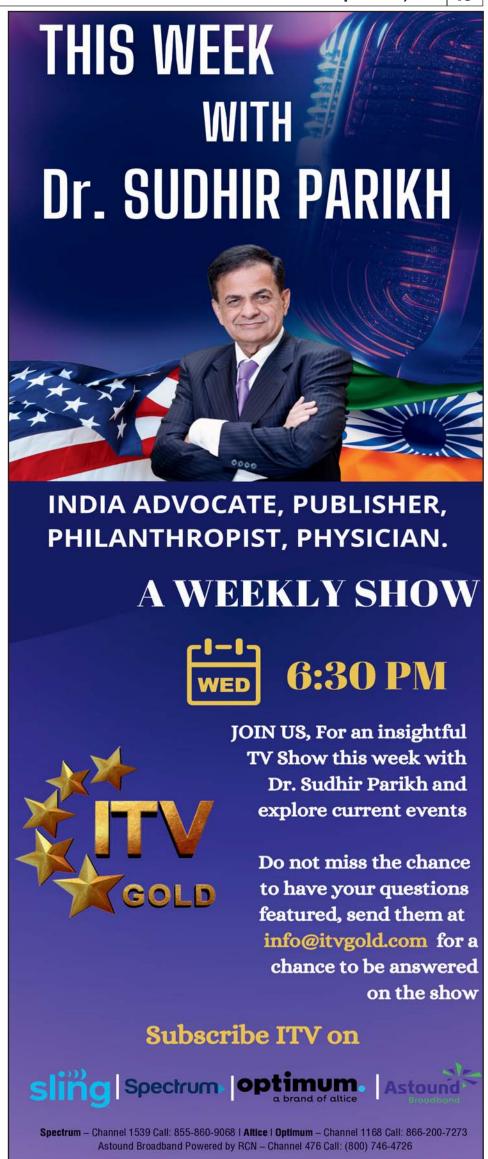
you overcome any obstacle. At home, your ability to organise will be praised. Socially, someone's admiration may boost your confidence. Professionally, completing

tasks before the deadline gives you a distinct advantage. Financial security improves with smart saving and investment decisions. A cleaner diet shows positive effects on your well-being.

PISCES: Being in the spotlight may feel up-

lifting, so savour every moment.
At work, your leadership is recognised and rewarded with greater authority. You may dedicate efforts towards achieving your ideal

physique. A spontaneous encounter with someone new could spark romantic interest. Travel plans bring joy and new experiences.



Divorced Desi Woman Worries About Talking About Her Dating Life

By Sahaj Kaur Kohli

ear Sahaj: As a divorced woman dating in my late 40s, how do I show up authentically when desi family and friends ask about it? This is a no-brainer when I speak to my non-desi friends here. ... However, the thought, "What will people say" hounds me at other times.

- Divorced

Divorced: I wrote a book called "But What Will People Say?" for a reason. I understand the implications of cultural judgment and how damning it can be.

You are in control of how much you disclose to family and friends. Showing up authentically doesn't mean oversharing; it means being rooted in your truth even if you choose to share less. This might look like having a short, confident response ready, changing the subject without apology or only opening up to those who respond with curiosity, not criticism.

You can even find creative ways to neutralize the conversation. You can be playful ("If they're talking about me, at least I'm keeping the community entertained.") or matter-of-fact ("I'm dating and getting to know new people.") or you can be curious ("Why do you think it surprises people when women date after divorce?").

You don't owe anyone an explanation or justification for your relationship



choices. It's tempting to keep modifying your story for acceptance, but every time you do, you subtly teach yourself that their approval matters more than your truth. Instead of playing this defensively, frame the narrative in ways that honor your path and allow you to feel ownership of your journey. This may sound like: "This stage has been freeing. I'm making choices that feel right for me." Or even: "I'm figuring out what I want in partnership and life. It's been empowering." This will also let you stand firm if someone pushes by saying, "I appreciate your concern, but I'm happy with my choices."

In some cases, authenticity doesn't mean transparency. You're entitled to your privacy, so explore what it means for you to answer questions in a way that's honest and self-protective, without molding yourself to their comfort or out of fear of "log kya kahenge."

Dear Sahaj: My parents are immigrants from Hong Kong and can be toxic when it comes to how I feed my family. I am a mom to a rising second grader and would

like our entire family to be more plantforward. My son likes my vegetarianleaning meals.

However, my parents constantly pester me and tell me that he isn't "getting enough nutrition" from legumes like lentils and chickpeas. Or even tofu. Why? Because growing children need to have balanced meals. I constantly remind them that Buddhists are vegan and manage to live full, healthy lives. They, on the other hand, believe that Buddhists are just "built differently." Sorry? They're normal humans, just like me?

It's not that they're UNFAMILIAR with cuisines outside Cantonese and other Chinese food – I grew up in the '80s and '90s and was eating my fair share of North American things. It's just that there's not enough meat.

- Plant Forward

Plant Forward: What you're dealing with isn't really about lentils, tofu or even nutrition. Rather, it's about deep-rooted generational beliefs.

It sounds like your parents may associate meat with status, strength or abundance in some way. It's also possible they feel like you are challenging their parenting approach that is rooted in a food-as-love culture. It may not be rational, but that's why finding a way to build a bridge rather than screaming at each other on different sides of the issue may be an important approach. You want to use language that connects your shared

values. This may sound like: "I agree that he needs a balanced meal! That's why I make sure he has a variety, like grains, vegetables, fruit, beans and nuts."

You may consider acknowledging their concern so they feel heard and then offering simple, relatable reassurance. For example, if they are constantly focusing on "nutrition," use this as a way to educate and address their fears. This might sound like, "You keep saying he's not getting nutrition, but what is it you are actually worried about?" They may say something about his growth or strength, and you can educate and reassure: "Lentils have iron just like beef." Or: "These foods give him strength. Tofu and beans have the same building blocks as meat, just like how fish and pork are different but still make you strong.'

Maybe there's also a way to have your parents be involved in the food preparation by having them help make the lentils, so you can show them how you add flavor to it or asking them to make the soup your kid loves together – but with tofu instead of pork. You may even share with them how the pediatrician is reporting on your son's growth and strength to help calm their nerves.

And if they keep circling back, prepare a statement you can repeat to hold your boundary. This may sound like: "I know you care, and I appreciate that. I'm not changing this approach right now."

-The Washington Post

My Partner Ignored A Friend's Racist Joke. Is Our Relationship Toast?

: Every year, my partner's family goes on vacation to a location that's extremely White – I'm talking like 5 people of color per 100 people. Oftentimes, as the only POC, the beach town can feel isolating because everyone an ady knows each other, knows the same people, grew up in the same area and has similar upbringings (upper-middle class, White and from the Northeast).

When we go out to town, I've heard people say wildly racist things in public. And recently, someone close to my partner made a joke that was clearly derogatory toward South Asians. As the only South Asian in the group, I immediately clocked it, but my partner didn't even bother to call this family friend out on it or correct him. I've expressed my dismay to my partner about it and am worried that if we end up having children together, they'll feel the same way I do when we go on vacation to this location: isolated and alone.

I am interested in raising my children in a diverse area with other South Asians, so they can be exposed to my culture and interact with people of similar backgrounds. My partner, however, would prefer to live near his parents and family – a place where there are few POC in general. At the beginning of our relationship, my partner seemed accepting of my culture and was open to trying the food, watching Bollywood mov ies together and asking questions. Now, I feel as if he's done a 180 and isn't receptive to the possibility of even having children with 'ethnic' names or raising them in a diverse area. I've told him I am happy to attend his yearly vacations sometimes but that I need to assert my boundaries, possibly going every other year instead. He sees this as a rejection of his own culture. However, I do regularly see both his parents, siblings and friends outside of these vacations and maintain good relationships with them. Is there a way to compromise on these fundamental issues, or is this relationship toast?

-Wishing for the Best, Preparing for the Worst

A: This is not just about vacations or where to live. This is about whether your partner can stand with you in difficult moments, respect your cultural needs and identity, or see the impact on your future family. He is minimizing racism by not speaking up or acknowledging your discomfort; this will inevitably create a deep rupture in your relationship, if it hasn't already. If he sees your boundary-setting as a personal rejection, it suggests he hasn't fully reckoned with the racial and cultural dynamics you're naming. That's not something that goes away on its own. What you are feeling right now is enough to bring up a larger, more serious conversation. One around his own willingness to put in the work to understand and educate himself on these dynamics, as well as his role within them. Simply put: Your partner has privilege - and therefore, influence and power – in ways you don't. If he's not willing to confront that, and use it, then how can you confidently feel safe in the relationship? Even more, the way I see it, also as a South Asian partnered to a White man, your future kids are going to be raised in a society that reflects your partner's cultural values and norms – by default. So being intentional about how and where your kids get to see and engage in our cultural values and norms is not just a "nice to have" ... it's necessary and important. Be very direct with your partner about this: "For me, it's nonnegotiable that our kids are raised in a diverse community and exposed to my culture through (name specific traditions or factors). Can you see yourself fully on board with that?" Your relationship is probably "toast" if he continues to dismiss racism, if he refuses to engage when you're hurt or if he's unwilling to raise

kids in a way that honors both your cultures. It makes sense that giving your children a name that honors your history and cultural background is important to you. I'm curious to whom these names are considered "ethnic." This might seem innocuous, but that word choice alone centers Whiteness and is a part of the problem. Partnership requires both people to sometimes go beyond their comfort zones. If you feel like you're constantly compromising on core values while he interprets your needs as rejection or unimportant, can that be a fulfilling relationship for you long-term?

Being with someone of another culture or background should be an expansive experience, not a restrictive one. If you are the only person stretching, your resentment will only continue to grow ... and that is not sustainable. One activity you can do together is take some time to each write out what's nonnegotiable about family, culture and raising children. Then come together and compare the list. Is there overlap? Is there enough room to build a life together?

Of course intertwining your lives will require compromise, but please don't mistake compromise for sacrifice. It's only a compromise if both of you are willing to meet in the middle somewhere. Giving something up while your boundaries are being dismissed is a sacrifice. There are some things – such as safety and belonging – that cannot and should not be up for negotiation in a relationship.

In a world that is already unkind, othering and discriminatory to people with marginalized identities like you, you truly deserve intimate relationships that are soft, safe, affirming and inclusive.

-The Washington Post

Turn Summer's Best Vegetables Into A Colorful, Gently Spiced Korma

By G. Daniela Galarza

oward the end of last August, when the melons and peaches at the market mingled with gigantic heads of broccoli and plump plums, friends and family came to visit. Among them was Granny Kathy. Though Kathy was excited to meet little Cyrus, she made sure to clarify that she wasn't much of a baby person. "But let me know if there's anything around the house I can help with," she said in a text exchange, noting that she had worked as a plumber in an earlier stage of her career. My partner, Joe, and I were excited to see her regardless, and I thought about how I could make her feel welcome. "What can I cook for you while you're here?" I

"Vegetable korma," she wrote back. I love when people know what they feel like eating, and, when I ask, don't hesitate to tell me. It's so much easier than guessing or prodding. It also gives me more time to plan and experiment.

In my experiences eating korma at restaurants and in the homes of cooks from the Indian subcontinent, the dish can look a lot like other Central or Southeast Asian stews, with a rich sauce enrobing meat and/or vegetables. In my mind, kormas were nutty and creamy. I couldn't remember making it before, so I started flipping through my cookbooks. But the more I read about korma – also spelled kurma, qorma or qurma – the more befuddled I got.

Some korma recipes contained coconut flesh or milk, others used cashews, and still others called for almonds. In "Quick & Easy Indian Cooking," Madhur Jaffrey adds heavy cream to her quick chicken korma; in a recipe for the Wall Street Journal, Floyd Cardoz based his korma sauce on vogurt.

All of them had a mix of spices, but I couldn't tell whether there was one flavor, texture or ingredient that was essential to a korma.

Feeling overwhelmed, I decided to cook. The first korma recipe I made was Meera Sodha's, with roasted cauliflower and blackened raisins, from her second book, "Fresh India." (She published an adaptation of the recipe in her Guardian column some years ago.) I fell in love with the velvety consistency of the sauce, which was the result of pureeing cashews that had been soaked in boil-

Sodha wrote that, until she tasted a particularly good korma at an East London restaurant when she was 18, she had dismissed the dish as "the curry for people who were scared of curries." I decided to ask her what makes a korma a korma. "I'm not a purist," she told me, "but if you break down what really makes a curry-house korma taste like a korma, it's the slow-cooked sweet onions, plus the sweet spices and creamy nuts.

That was the kind of gentle guidance I needed to begin tinkering. I started by dicing a sweet Vidalia onion. As it browned in a Dutch oven, I turned to my spice cabinet, and I pulled out a jar of garam masala that was heavy on the cardamom and black pepper. I added chopped garlic and fresh ginger to the onions while I considered what

It was a Sunday, and I'd just returned from the farmers market with so much produce in tow: sturdy ears of corn, hefty zucchini, colorful string beans, ripe tomatoes and shiny sweet peppers. I decided to chop a colorful variety of summer's best to add, along with a can of chickpeas.

Then there was the question of the nutty base, and I didn't have any cashews or almonds on hand. What I did have - what I always have - was a jar of cashew butter. Sometimes I make a sort of cheater cashew milk by blending water and cashew butter, and I thought maybe I could do something like that here. As I stirred cashew butter into the aromatics in the pot, I added a can of light coconut milk. Its looser consistency helped the cashew butter melt into the vegetables, forming a creamy, sweet-

Later, I asked Sodha whether she'd ever used cashew butter in her korma. "I haven't," she said, "but I think it's a clever idea, and would add instant body and creaminess, and remove a lot of the faff of soaking and blending your

Indeed, it does streamline the process. After a taste, I added more ground pepper and a touch of maple syrup, to pull out the sweetness in the onions and peppers. This was a fine dish on its own, but I decided to add a garnish of Sodha's almond and blackened raisin topping. The colorful, softened vegetables in the nutty, creamy sauce beneath the crunch and pop of toasted almonds and sweet raisins were marvelous. I made the dish a few more times before our visitors arrived. And when I finally cooked it for Granny Kathy, it felt like a fitting and proper feast. After eating a bowlful, she pronounced it "great!" and served herself seconds before washing all the dishes with her signature, dazzling smile

Summer Vegetable Korma

Saucy and rich, this korma is packed with summer



Summer Vegetable Korma

vegetables. You can use whatever vegetables you have on hand - fresh or frozen - but a colorful variety is ideal, and preparing them so that they cook evenly is essential (see Notes). Chickpeas add protein and texture, though other beans or cubed firm tofu can be used in their place. Yogurt and homemade cashew broth are common additions to kormas, but this streamlined dairy-free version uses light coconut milk and cashew butter. It's inspired by a recipe from cookbook author Meera Sodha, whose korma is sweet and spicy. Sodha finishes hers with a topping of toasted almonds and raisins. The garnish adds a lovely crunch and sweetness, but is optional here.

Total time: 45 minutes

Storage note: Refrigerate for up to 4 days.

Notes: In general, when using fresh vegetables for this recipe, the hardier the vegetable, the smaller it should be cut. Dice vegetables such as carrots, potatoes, cauliflower bell peppers, summer squash, string beans or broccoli. Strip leafy greens such as kale, chard and cabbage off of their thick stems, and thinly slice.

Tomatoes, spinach and other tender vegetables can be roughly chopped. (Eggplant is not recommended unless it's diced, salted and briefly pan-fried first.) Cut fresh corn kernels off the cob. Cherry tomatoes can be left whole, or halved if large. If using frozen vegetables, there is no need to defrost. Keep in mind that frozen peas and corn take almost no time to cook, and should be added near the end of simmering to avoid overcooking. If you use mostly dense vegetables, such as potatoes, carrots and cauliflower, you may need to add water to thin the sauce. If you use primarily watery or frozen vegetables, including summer squash, spinach and tomatoes, you may wish to simmer the korma uncovered to allow excess moisture to evaporate.

INGREDIENTS

For the korma:

- -2 tablespoons olive oil
- -1 medium yellow onion (8 ounces), diced
- -4 garlic cloves, finely chopped

- -One (2-inch) piece fresh ginger, minced or finely
- -2 1/2 teaspoons garam masala, store-bought or homemade (see related recipe)
- -4 cups vegetables, such as bell peppers, summer squash, dark leafy greens, tomatoes, carrots, corn or peas, chopped or otherwise prepared as needed (see Notes)
 - -1/2 teaspoon fine salt, plus more to taste
 - -2 tablespoons unsalted cashew or almond butter
 - -One (15-ounce) can light coconut milk
 - -Water, as needed
 - -One (15-ounce) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
 - -1 tablespoon maple syrup, plus more as needed
 - -Freshly ground black pepper
 - -Flatbreads, for serving

For the optional topping:

- -1 teaspoon olive oil
- -1/3 cup sliced almonds, preferably blanched
- -1/3 cup golden raisins
- -Flaky sea salt (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Make the korma: In a large Dutch oven or 5-quart saucepan over medium-high heat, heat the oil until shimmering. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until just starting to brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium-low, and stir in the garlic, ginger and garam masala, letting the aromatics warm up for just a few seconds. Add any hardy vegetables (see Notes) and the salt, and stir, scraping up any browned bits that are stuck to the bottom of the pan.

Stir in the cashew butter and coconut milk, swirling the nut butter into the vegetables so it melts into the sauce. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a lively simmer, cover (see Notes) and cook, stirring occasionally and adjusting the heat as needed, until the vegetables are fork-tender and the broth thickens, 8 to 10 minutes.

Adjust the heat to medium. If the korma seems dry, add water, 1/4 cup at a time, until it is as saucy as you'd

Stir in any frozen or tender vegetables (see Notes), plus the chickpeas and maple syrup. Simmer until all of the vegetables are warmed through and coated in the sauce, 2 to 4 minutes.

Taste, and season with black pepper and more salt and maple syrup, if desired. Remove from the heat.

Make the optional topping: In a small (8-inch) skillet over medium heat, heat the oil until shimmering. Add the almonds and raisins, and cook, stirring occasionally, until a few of the raisins blacken and puff up and the almonds are golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt, if desired, and remove from the heat.

Serve the korma family-style, topped with the almondraisin mixture, if desired, and with flatbreads on the side.

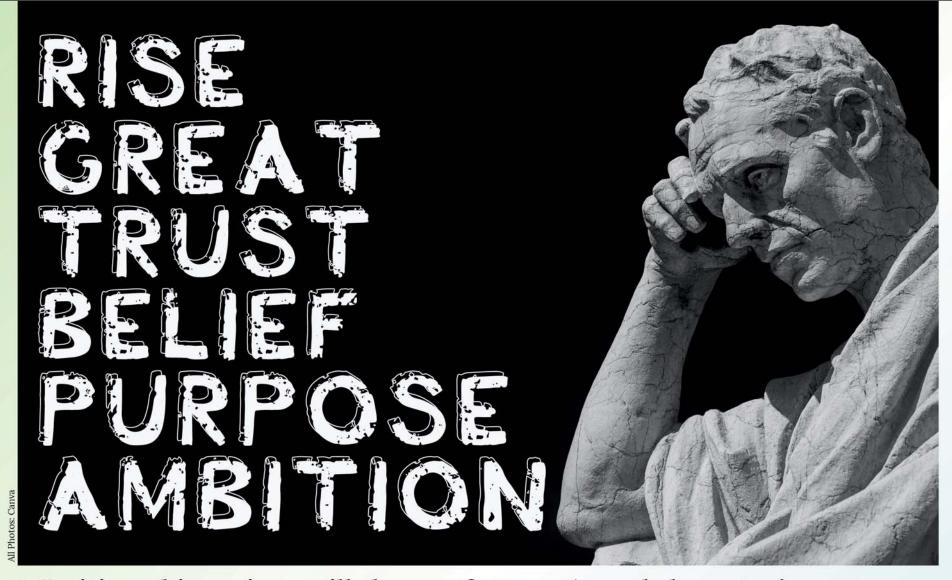
Nutritional information per serving (1 1/2 cups, without the optional topping) | 383 Calories: 44g Carbohydrates, 0mg Cholesterol, 21g Fat, 9g Fiber, 12g Protein, 8g Saturated Fat, 638mg Sodium, 17g Sugar

This analysis is an estimate based on available ingredients and this preparation. It should not substitute for a dietitian's or nutritionist's advice.

-The Washington Post

16 September 5, 2025

DESI TALK



U.S. citizenship reviews will sharpen focus on 'moral character,' memo says

IN MEMORIAM



Michael Phulwani



David Nachman



Ludka Zimovcak



Snehal Batra

The Trump administration has signaled it will further scrutinize immigrants seeking U.S. citizenship by ordering authorities to double down on efforts to determine whether applicants have "good moral character," according to a recent policy memo issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

On Friday, USCIS called for a more "rigorous, holistic and comprehensive" approach to evaluating those applying for naturalization, stating that "good moral character" is defined by an individual's "behavior, adherence to societal norms, and positive contributions." USCIS officers have been instructed to judge "on a case-by-case basis," the memo stated.

Experts say the directive and its vague language are reflective of the Trump administration's broader moves to limit legal immigration, leaving wiggle room for USCIS officers to make subjective choices about who gets to become a U.S. citizen.

While the order "is not necessarily a break from past practice," it emphasizes USCIS officers' ability to "impose their subjective interpretations of this fuzzy concept in their evaluations of naturalization applicants," said Jane Lopez, an associate professor of sociology at Brigham Young University who specializes in immigration and citizenship policy.

According to Lopez, all applications for U.S. citizenship, permanent residency, tourism visas and student visas are by default subject to evaluation by one or more USCIS officers. These officers already have the "authority to deny that application for a multitude of reasons," she added.

The latest move could "make it harder for noncitizens to obtain legal belonging in the United States," she said, since USCIS officers "must evaluate something they cannot consistently describe or define." By David H. Nachman, Esq

President Donald Trump has cracked down on immigration in his second term, launching what may be the largest domestic deportation operation in U.S. history and threatening to strip U.S. citizenship from some of those who have been naturalized. In April, USCIS also announced it would screen immigrants' social media for purported antisemitic activity and use any posts it finds as potential grounds for denying visa and green-card applications.

During his first term, Trump issued a sweeping executive order that significantly revamped the federal government's approach to illegal immigration by allowing the removal of those who "in the judgment of an immigration officer ... pose a risk to public safety or national security."

"Good moral character" has been a requirement for obtaining U.S. citizenship since the Naturalization Act of 1790. But Lopez said citizenship applicants are now faced with the additional burden of proving they have "positive attributes," rather than simply demonstrating they have not been convicted of crimes or taken part in other kinds of misconduct.

The USCIS memo cites "family caregiving, responsibility, and ties in the United States" as examples of positive attributes, as well as educational achievement and long-term community involvement.

In response to a question from The Washington Post about how "good moral character" will be defined, USCIS spokesman Matthew J. Tragesser said in a statement said that the memo ensures officers are accounting for applicants' contributions to U.S. society, "including community involvement, achievements, and financial responsibility rather than the absence of their misconduct." He said that U.S. citizenship should be offered only to "the world's best of the best."

Gabriel J. Chin, a professor and scholar of immigration law at the University of California at Davis, said the latest guidance is "so loose and discretionary that it is obviously susceptible to arbitrary enforcement."

"Many birthright U.S. citizens do not have sufficient educational or economic achievements that would entitle them to a visa to immigrate to the United States," Chin said in an email. "If they had not been born here, they would not make the cut."

12 Romantic Pairs We Would Love To See Again

By Rajiv Vijayakar

airs mean a lot in Hindi Cinema, often shaping the fate of a film. Some of these star-pairs have worked with each other again and again, while others have done just one film. But their joint appeal and chemistry was and is so strong that we just want to watch them again.

AAMIR KHAN-KAREENA KAPOOR

Films: 3 Idiots, Talaash, Laal Singh Chaddha

Chemistry: 9/10

Why we want more: No one expected such a superb chemistry between their (late) first-time pairing in 3 Idiots. This was a film that was neither centered on them nor on their love story and still they resonated with a rare magnetism, leaving us thirsting for more. The other two films were not up to the mark as cinema, but their chemistry was impeccable and so we want to see more of AK and KK together!

AJAY DEVGN-KAJOL

Films: Hulchul, Gundaraj, Ishq, Pyaar To Hona Hi Tha, Dil Kya Kare, Raju Chacha, U Me Aur Hum, Toonpur Ka Superrhero, Tanhaji—The Unsung Warrior

Chemistry: 9/10

Why we want more: Soulmates in real life, they have a mixed track-record at the box-office, but their on-screen chemistry is more intense than ebullient. Even in films like Toonpur..., which was about their reel-life kids, and the diametrically contrasting Tanhaji..., it is obvious that they 'completed' each other in the most charming and wholesome way possible.

AKSHAY KUMAR-AISHWARYA RAI BACHCHAN

Films: Khakee, Action Replayy Chemistry: 8/10

Why we want more: This is a combo that has not really been exposed to the audience: in Khakee, the emphasis was not on their romance and Aishwarya's character was negative, while Action Replayy did not fare well and had them in part in aged roles, that too with a bucktoothed Akshay. Wish we could watch them in regular roles, and yes, maybe in yet another Akshay laugh-riot.

ANIL KAPOOR-MADHURI DIXIT-NENE

Films: Tezaab, Ram Lakhan, Parinda, Kishen Kanhaiya, Total Dhamaal among bits

Chemistry: 9/10

Why we want more: This is one team that will probably never stale. Beginning with the flop Hifazat (1987), they became a huge attraction with Tezaab (Madhuri's breakthrough film) and Ram Lakhan. Crackling chemistry was seen also in their flop, Khel, as well. And in Total Dhamaal they came together 19 years after Pukar, a flop wherein they also showed sparks.

DHARMENDRA-HEMA MALINI

Films: Sharafat, Tum Haseen Main Jawan, Naya Zamana, Jugnu, Raja Jani, Seeta Aur Geeta, Jugnu, Dost, Patthar Aur Payal, Pratiggya, Sholay, Charas, Chacha Bhatija, Dream Girl, Azaad, Dil Kaa Heera, Ali Baba Aur Chalis Chor among the hits. Latest films: Tell Me O Kkhuda, Shimla Mirchi (with Dharmendra in a romantic



Anil Kapoor and Madhuri Dixit Nene in Total Dhamaal.

cameo)

Chemistry:10/10

Why we want more: After the Raj Kapoor-Nargis team, no one was so exciting and charismatic as the South Indian Dream Girl and the Punjab da (Not Just A) He-Man with a heart of gold and a fist of steel. Their unbroken dream run began with Sharafat and Tum Haseen Main Jawan in 1970 and extended to 11 unbroken jubilees followed by many more. If cast today, they will still be incredibly magical.

HRITHIK ROSHAN-DEEPIKA PADUKONE

Film: Fighter Chemistry: 8/10

Why we want more: They were brilliant in Fighter, which was not exactly a romance. So what can't they do by way of a chemical romantic reaction on-screen if cast in a mature romance?

RANBIR KAPOOR-KATRINA KAIF

Films: Ajab Prem Ki Ghazab Kahani, Raajneeti, Jagga Jasoos

Chemistry: 8/10
Why we want
more: We have seen
their lighter kind of
pairing in one film,
a serious team-up
in the second, and
a wacky combo in
the third. Katrina

Kaif was lucky for

Ranbir Kapoor in his early career, which must be why he cast her in his maiden co-production, Jagga Jasoos. And both are completely into growth as artistes, experimenting with challenging roles. Here's a team we can watch again and again, that too in varied genres, because they are

individually versatile as well.

RANVEER SINGH-DEEPIKA PADUKONE

Films: Goliyon Ki RasLila—RamLila, Bajirao Mastani, Finding Fanny, Padmaavat, 83

Chemistry: 9/10

Why we want more: Their personae are so relatable to their respective genders and they are such powerhouses of energy that they simply crackle on screen together. In Padmaavat his character craved for her but they did not share a single frame, and yet one could sense his passion for her based on just a painting! And yes,



Hrithik Roshan and Deepika Padukone in Fighter.

their desi flavor has a mass appeal from Nashik to New York and from Mumbai to Melbourne. What a real-life as well as reellife pair this one is!

SALMAN KHAN-KATRINA KAIF

Films: Yuvvraaj, Maine Pyar Kyun Kiya, Ek Tha Tiger, Tiger Zinda Hai, Tiger 3 Chemistry: 9.5/10

Why we want more: They are simply the perfect reel pair. Their real-life romance has metamorphosed smoothly into a healthy and affectionate friendship as Katrina is now married. They are major market-forces individually and simply look wonderful together. Their screen union is getting increasingly magical in the Tiger franchise and we hope that we can see them not just in Tiger 4 but also in other films.

SALMAN KHAN-SONAKSHI SINHA

Films: Dabangg, Dabangg 2, Dabangg 3 Chemistry: 9/10

Why we want more: When a fresh pairing whets curiosity, and then actually surpasses expectations, it is such a rare event that the pair becomes an electric proposition. We miss this team—Dabangg 3 came in 2019 and backfired, so we want to see them in a non-Dabangg setup now.

SHAH RUKH KHAN-KAJOL

Films: Baazigar, Karan Arjun, Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham..., My Name Is Khan, Dilwale

Chemistry: 9.5/10

Why we want more: If ever there was a complete package of a lead pair after Raj Kapoor-Nargis, Dharmendra-Hema Malini and Rishi Kapoor-Neetu Singh, it was this one. The SRK-Kajol USP was that there was no hint of off-screen romance, and yet they looked so made-for-each-other on screen! They had five blockbusters and no flops in a row, and their record remains unsullied because even ...Khan worked overseas. Ditto Dilwale.

SIDDHARTH MALHOTRA-KIARA ADVANI

Film: Shershaah Chemistry: 8/10

Why we want more: Just one film (that too before they wed each other!) for the cutest young couple on the block? Bahut na-insaafi hai, especially now that they are individually recognized as charismatic youngsters.

The Washington Post

5 Tips For Renting A Car In Europe

By Natalie B. Compton

I thought my husband was unflappable. Then we went on a road trip in Europe this summer, and I realized he'd never truly been tested.

There were the tiny Slovenian villages where the roads were barely wide enough for our boxy Ford Tourneo Courier to pass through unscathed. There was the gargantuan VW camper van I made us rent in Croatia, and promptly scraped on the way out of a tight underground parking garage. Then there was the recurring terror of being passed by drivers on blind turns on Albanian single-lane highways.

It was during these harrowing moments, and dozens more like them, that I discovered the true depth of my husband's patience and resilience. Lesser drivers would have handed in the keys, but not Dan. Our marriage survived the test, and we learned a few things about driving in Europe along our fourcountry adventure. Here are some takeaways.

Get an International Driving Permit

Getting an International Driving Permit (IDP) is incredibly easy, but you may not always need one to drive in Europe. The rules vary from country to country; you can check the embassy websites of the places you're visiting to learn more. In our case, we needed one for Slovenia and Albania and didn't for Croatia and Montenegro.

In places where an IDP is required, rental car agencies may ask you for it and your U.S. license (and may deny you a car if you don't have one), but not always. When we picked up the rental car in Ljubljana, Slovenia, the counter agent took our U.S. license and never asked to see the IDP.

Still, it's a good idea to follow the rules when an IDP is required. In some countries, you could be fined hundreds of euros for not having one or your license officially translated into the local language.

Stick to a small car

Like many Americans, we envisioned spending our road trip taking in Europe's spectacular natural beauty and quaint, historic towns. We didn't envision the stress of navigating 90-degree turns through tight alleyways and over single-lane bridges. To take some of the edge off, rent a small car - and one with an automatic transmission, unless you really know your way around a manual even if you prefer a big SUV at home.

We'd tried renting a compact sedan in Slovenia for this reason, but a Sixt employee surprised us with an upgrade to a larger vehicle. It sounded like a nice gesture, but we should have declined.

If you want to go the camper van route, try renting one before your trip so you can get used to its heft. Then take it on the narrowest roads you can find and pretend like you have busy Europeans inching sorry, millimeter-ing - behind you while you navigate hairpin turns. #VanLife is exciting, but it comes at a cost.

Beware of map apps

Google Maps may work all over the world, but it's not always the best tool for navigating the roads you're traveling. Petar Janković, who owns the camper van company Eagle's Path Campers, recommended Apple Maps for our trip from Croatia to Albania. Tamara Štekar, the owner of our farmstay Kmetija Štekar, said Google Maps is her go-to in Slovenia - but with a caveat





Drivers should still be discerning of the routes the Get the good insurance app suggests; Štekar said (and we confirmed) Google Part of the appeal of renting the van was financial. Maps can often suggest gravel roads as the shortest It was more economical to camp our way from route, which end up making for slower (and bumpier) driving.

Lane Nieset, a freelance writer in Paris, also warns that Google Maps may not always flag local driving rules. In Italy, for example, drivers can get fined for entering limited traffic zones (or zona traffico limitato, ZTL, in Italian).

Google Maps had me driving illegally near Ponte Vecchio," she said. "Waze is the only thing that'll get you out of Florence alive." Susan Plaggemars, an interior designer in Florence who manages the Casa Bruciata guesthouse in Chianti, said she relies on a combination. She says Waze is much better at pointing out speed cameras and navigating highways, while Google Maps seems to have a better grasp of winding roads in wine country.

And lastly, make sure you download whatever map tool you have for offline use, should you find yourself service-less on the road.

Pay your traffic tickets

Speed traps. Ambiguous parking signs. If you get hit with a ticket abroad, pay the fine (yes, even if you don't have plans to go back anytime soon). Following local laws is the right thing to do, and the issue can snowball if you ignore it. Travel experts have said some countries may charge late fees, send your bill to collections or prevent you from renting a car from the same company, among other headaches.





Croatia to Albania than to drive a traditional rental car and stay at hotels. On the morning we picked up the van, Janković asked whether we wanted to upgrade our insurance.

I'd already paid for the basic package, which required a \$580 deposit at pickup. It seemed comprehensive, covering just about everything except any damage we caused ourselves, and why would we cause any damage?

For the sake of frugality, I declined to add more coverage. It was my second mistake of the van reservation. The first happened a month ago at booking, when I used my airline loyalty program credit card (for the miles! Fool!) instead of the one that has rental car coverage. (Although, Nieset said, some international rental car companies may not honor credit card insurance.)

Then we grazed a concrete beam in a parking garage - making an expensive shredding sound, like the iceberg ripping into the Titanic. We sent Janković the bad news and photos of the damage. It would cost our security deposit plus \$929 to fix.

When I think back to the rest of the trip, it feels like a miracle we didn't cause any more damage - that an errant rock didn't crack our windshield on gravel roads, that we didn't bang into more concrete structures.

If I could do it all over, I would still rent the van. But I would have gone with the better insurance.

Riz Ahmed Rises To The Occasion In 'Relay'

By Ty Burr

ntil it goes kerblooey in the last 15 minutes, "Relay" is the very model of a modern genre thriller: Taut, tight, squeezing the maximum of suspense and character detail from the minimum of gestures. No surprise, it's from Scottish director David Mackenzie, whose filmography is one lean nearmasterpiece after another, with the terrific 2016 neo-Western crime drama "Hell or High Water" a standout.

On top of that, "Relay" stars Riz Ahmed, the rare film talent who can hold the screen by doing absolutely nothing, his big, watchful eyes conveying a mind ferociously at work. Ahmed plays "Jon" - it's almost certainly not his real name - who's a New York-based fixer for a very specific clientele: corporate whistleblowers who've chickened out. We first see him arranging a meeting between a smug CEO (Victor Garber) and an intimidated former employee (Matthew Maher). The CEO gets his incriminating documents returned, Jon keeps a copy in his safe for insurance (plus payment from both parties) and the employee gets his life back.

It's a sweet little operation, and the best part is that Jon remains invisible throughout, issuing his instructions to both sides via an untraceable telephone relay service so that his voice is never heard. The character has something in him of Harry Caul - the reclusive surveillance expert played by Gene Hackman in Francis Ford Coppola's "The Conversation" - and we glean just enough from Jon's regular visits to his AA group to sense that loneliness is his necessary armor.

But there's always a woman, isn't there, and here it's Sarah Grant (Lily James of "Downton Abbey" and "Baby Driver"), a scientist on the run from a team of corporate thugs after lifting a damaging suppressed report from the agribusiness she used to work for. Reaching Jon through the relay service - whose anonymous employees read the text that he types into a teleprinter for the deaf - Sarah is given baroquely detailed directions designed to smoke out her pursuers, ensure her safety and ultimately set up the handoff.

The best scenes by far in "Relay" are the three-way cat-and-mouse games set in motion by Jon's directives, with fake-outs at Pittsburgh International Airport serving as a delicious early highlight. The villains are a black ops team of outsourced HR department hoodlums led by Dawson (Sam Worthington), who's as sharp in his way as Jon is and who's cheered by having a worthy enemy for once. As a director, Mackenzie is heir to Howard Hawks, Sydney Pollack and other masters of no-frills filmmaking, and "Relay" is, for much of its running time, a fascinating action film about process. Jon is the only character on screen who has the whole picture in his head, and we follow his feints and settings of bear traps with the awe reserved for true professionals, the ones who don't have to talk to get things done.

At the mid-movie mark, the characters start deepening, and Ahmed makes Jon's gradual reemergence into the light a moving thing indeed. It would be easy for "Relay" to start getting soggy around now, but it stays true to the idea of two scared people working up the nerve to talk to each other in actual audio and maybe even in person. There's a tenderness at this movie's core that's never overplayed. It's just there.

The script by first-timer Justin Piasecki isn't brilliant, but it doesn't need to be; it just has to provide a scaffold for Mackenzie's to-the-point storytelling. An example is a mid-movie scene in Times Square, where Jon and Sarah have to improvise a document drop while Dawson's goons scramble to ID their opponent. A lesser film-maker might make hash of the various bits of business unfolding amid the bustling crowd of locals and tourists, but Mackenzie, with the aid of cinematographer Giles Nuttgens and editor Matt Mayer, keeps it clear and bold



Riz Ahmed in "Relay."



Sam Worthington in "Relay."

as a New York Post headline.

That said, hints of B-movie cheapness lurk in Tony Doogan's synth-based score, and even Mackenzie can't save "Relay" from a formulaic twist that squanders the emotions that have been carefully built up and that leads the final act into a rote shoot-out-and-chase action finale. All the stuff before that - the way Jon outthinks everyone else in the movie, the way Ahmed plays the role so close to his chest - is much more interesting.

"Relay" is the rare film that maintains suspense so

expertly you're sad to see it resolved. All movies come to an end, of course. Too bad this one throws in the towel.

R. At area theaters. Contains strong language. 112 minutes.

Ty Burr is the author of the movie recommendation newsletter Ty Burr's Watch List at tyburrswatchlist.com.

-Special to The Washington Post

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