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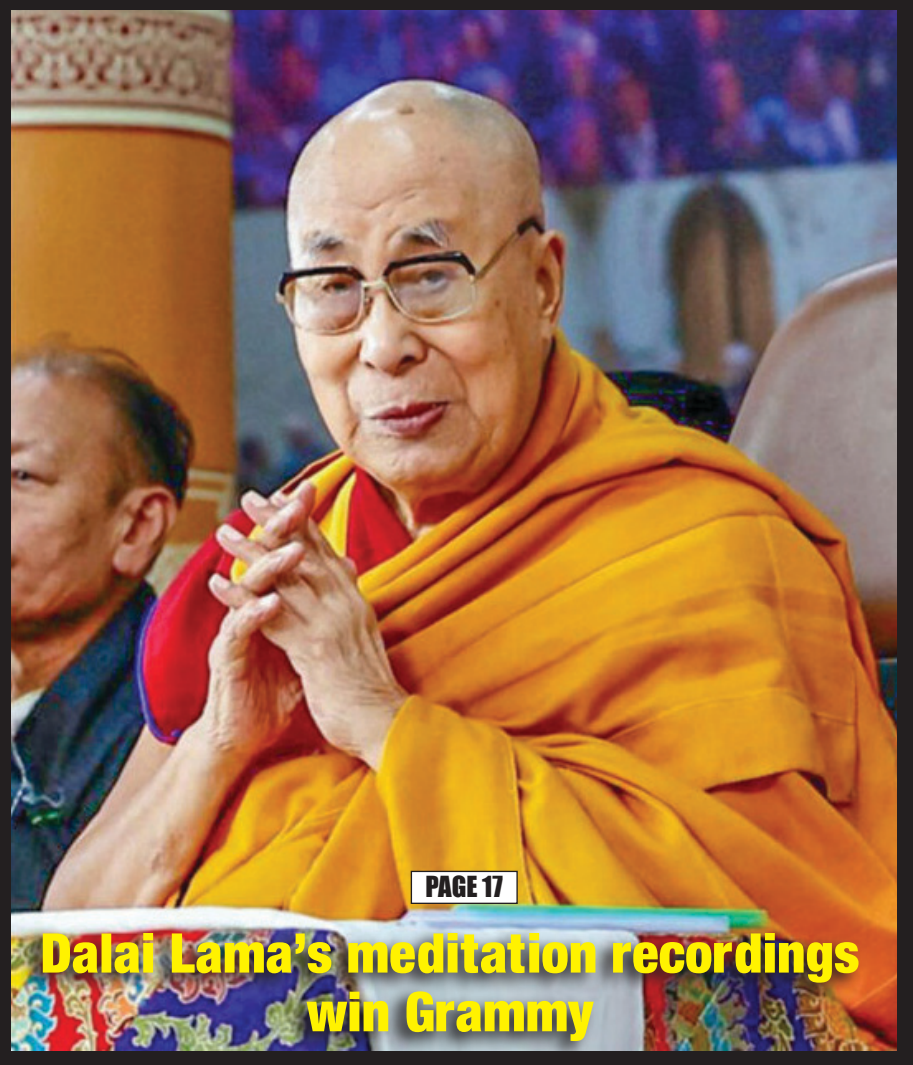
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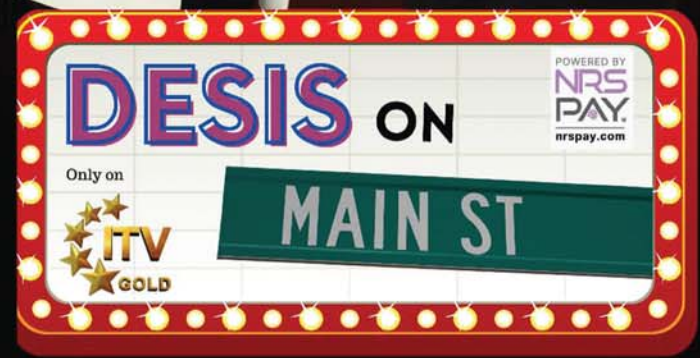
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# PM Modi, President Trump Announce Breakthrough In Trade/Tariffs Deal

FROM NEWS DISPATCHES

**P**rime Minister of India Narendra Modi announced that US tariffs on Indian products had been reduced to 18 percent by Washington, in a breakthrough after months of negotiations between the two nations.

“Wonderful to speak with my dear friend President Trump today. Delighted that Made in India products will now have a reduced tariff of 18%,” Modi posted Feb. 2, on X.com/narendramodi.

President Trump confirmed the deal with a post on Truth Social that a trade deal had been struck with India and tariffs were being reduced to 18 percent from 25 percent.

In a rapidly developing story of high import to both United States and India, leaders of the two countries appeared to have averted a trade confrontation.

President Trump's post on Truth Social following a call with Modi, said, “t was an Honor to speak with Prime Minister Modi, of India, this morning. He is one of my greatest friends and, a Powerful and Respected Leader of his Country,” Trump said, adding, “We spoke about many things, including Trade, and ending the War with Russia and Ukraine. He agreed to stop buying Russian Oil, and to buy much more from the United States and, potentially, Venezuela.”

The President said that step would help “END THE WAR in Ukraine.”

He went on to add, “Out of friendship and respect for Prime Minister Modi and, as per his request, effective immediately, we agreed to a Trade Deal between the United States and India, whereby



U.S. President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi shake hands as they attend a joint press conference at the White House in Washington, D.C., U.S., February 13, 2025.

the United States will charge a reduced Reciprocal Tariff, lowering it from 25% to 18%. They will likewise move forward to reduce their Tariffs and Non Tariff Barriers against the United States, to ZERO.”

Modi, the President said, “also committed to “BUY AMERICAN,” at a much higher level, in addition to over \$500 BILLION DOLLARS of U.S. Energy, Technology, Agricultural, Coal, and many other products.”

Washington's “amazing” relationship with India will be even stronger going forward, the President predicted. “Prime Minister Modi and I are two people that

GET THINGS DONE, something that cannot be said for most.”The President went on to add that Modi had also committed to buying more than \$500 billion dollars products in U.S. energy, technology, agricultural and other sectors.

A White House official told Reuters the Trump administration is dropping the 25% additional tariffs it had previously imposed on Indian imports because of its purchases of Russian oil. In addition, it is lowering a country-specific tariff to 18% from 25 percent.

“We are also dropping the 25% tariff given India's agreement to stop buying

Russian oil,” the official is quoted saying in the Reuters report.

According to Reuters, U.S.-listed shares of major Indian companies rallied on the news about the trade deal mentioned by the two leaders. IT consulting firm Infosys was up 3.53% in afternoon trading, consultancy Wipro rose 7%, HDFC Bank gained 3.4% and the iShares MSCI India exchange-traded fund rallied 3.3%, Reuters reported.

On Saturday, January 31, Trump had broached the idea of a potential deal for India to buy Venezuelan oil after the US seized control over that country.

In August 2025, the Trump administration had doubled duties on imports from India to 50% in a bid to stop New Delhi from purchasing Russian oil, and in January, the President had threatened another rate rise.

Purchases of Venezuelan oil would help replace some of the Russian oil bought by India, the world's third-biggest oil importer purchasing 90 percent of its needs, Reuters noted.

New Delhi has over the last year been reducing its purchases of Russian oil, particularly after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and subsequent sanctions on such purchases by different countries.

“Recently India has begun to slow its purchases from Russia. In January, they were around 1.2 million barrels per day, and are projected to decline to about 1 million bpd in February and 800,000 bpd in March,” according to a Reuters report.

India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is expected to be in Washington starting February 3, ostensibly to carry forward discussion on the latest agreement.

## Emerging US-India Trade Deal Lauded By Community Leaders, Think Tanks

BY A STAFF WRITER

**I**ndian American community leaders, organizations and think tanks applauded the announcement February 2, 2026, of an imminent trade deal between Washington and New Delhi that brings down tariffs on Indian goods and could herald a return to normal bilateral relations after months of tension.

“This agreement is a great relief for India and good news for the United States. The reduction of tariffs to 18 percent is most welcome relief to India and its economy. And at the same time, US can see its exports with India increase,” said Padma Shri recipient Dr. Sudhir Parikh,

chairman of Parikh Worldwide Media/ITV Gold. “Hopefully the Ts will be crossed and the Is will be dotted soon between these two great democracies with the arrival of India's External Affairs Minister Jaishankar,” he added. EAM S. Jaishankar arrived in D.C. February 2, 2026.

“It's a big breakthrough. It happened because the two leaders spoke. But also a lot of credit must go to newly appointed Ambassador Sergio Gor to India. He has the ear of the President, and this agreement comes within a month of his reaching India,” said M.R. Rangaswami, founder of IndiaSpora, an advocacy organization based in California. “We are very excited that everything seems to be back to normal and we can move forward.”

The US India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) welcomed the agreement, saying, “The reduction of India's reciprocal tariff from 25% to 18% marks an important and positive first step. While the agreement's specifics are pending, today's announcement signals strong political will on both sides to move toward a comprehensive U.S.-India Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) that addresses tariffs, market access, non-tariff barriers, and other trade-related issues across a wide range of sectors.”

Describing it as a “constructive” momentum the USISPF expressed optimism about the future, and committed to helping expand bilateral trade to the \$500 billion target.

Wendy Cutler, senior vice president of the Asia Society Policy Institute, called the announcement of the trade deal, as still “light on details.” “The announcement is certainly a relief to our Indian partners, who have faced some of the highest tariff rates of any partner,” said Cutler, the former Acting Deputy US Trade Representative. “It will help clear the pathway for the U.S. and India to work cooperatively on other pressing matters concerning critical minerals, technology cooperation, and supply chain resiliency.”

Reducing the U.S. reciprocal tariff for India to 18%, gives Indian exporters “a slight edge in the U.S. market over its ASEAN competitors who have secured 19-20% tariffs,” Cutler pointed out.





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## US Trade Chief Says India To Maintain Some Agriculture Protections In Deal With Trump

The Trump administration is working to put the details of its trade deal with India announced on Monday on paper, but it will reduce India's tariffs on American industrial goods to zero from 13.5% and eliminate duties but allow India to maintain some agricultural import protections, U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said on Tuesday.

Greer told CNBC in a live interview that the U.S. would continue to work on access to certain protected areas of India's agriculture sector, but said India's tariffs "for a variety of things, you know, tree nuts, wine, spirits, fruits, vegetables, etc, they're going down to zero."

He did not mention rice, beef, soybeans, sugar or dairy, which are commodities that India excluded from its recent trade deal with the European Union.

Greer confirmed that the deal would reduce the U.S. tariff on most Indian goods to 18% from 50% because of the size and growth of India's trade surplus with the U.S. That reached \$53.5 billion during the first 11 months of 2025, up from \$45.8 billion for all of 2024, according to U.S. Census Bureau data.

Greer said that the Trump administration reached an "understanding and an agreement with the Indians



PHOTO: REUTERS/RUPAK DE CHOWDHURI

A farmer sprays insecticide on his cauliflower field in Kolkata, India, December 19, 2016.

as well on a variety of technical barriers to trade, areas where they have not accepted U.S. standards. We know American goods are safe."

He said there would be "a process for recognizing U.S. standards" but that India would have to go through its own political processes for accepting these standards, adding that it would open up a market of more than 1 billion people to more U.S. goods.

Regarding India's agreement to wind down Russian crude oil imports, he said that prior to 2022 and 2023, India did not import Russian oil and has been working since late last year to wind down imports. India was "making the right choice" to diversify its energy purchases to the U.S. and Venezuela.

He did not specify a start date for the tariff changes, saying that the process for making it official was underway.

"We'll finish papering it, but we know the specifics, we know the details," Greer said. He added that India is maintaining some protection around agricultural goods..

-REUTERS

## Indian Shares Notch Best Day In 9 Months As Reliance, Financials Surge After US Trade Deal

By BHARATH RAJESWARAN AND  
VIVEK KUMAR M

Indian shares jumped to post their best day in nine months on Tuesday, led by Reliance and heavyweight financials, while export-oriented stocks powered a broad rally after the India-U.S. trade deal removed a key market overhang.

Both benchmarks surged about 5% in early trade. At close, the Nifty 50 settled 2.55% higher at 25,727.55 points, while the BSE Sensex gained 2.54% to 83,739.13, to log their strongest single-session rise since May 2025.

U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday announced a trade deal with India that slashes U.S. tariffs on Indian goods to 18% from 50% in exchange for New Delhi

halting Russian oil purchases and lowering trade barriers.

All 16 major sectors logged gains, while the broader small-caps and mid-caps jumped 2.8% each. Forty-six of the Nifty 50 constituents advanced.

Index heavyweight Reliance Industries jumped 3.4%. Top private lenders HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank rose 2.2% and 2.7%, leading the benchmark rally.

The rupee strengthened against the dollar, posting its best day in seven years on expectations that the deal will lure foreign fund inflows towards Indian assets after sustained outflows over the last year.

"Higher tariffs on Indian goods had raised a balance-of-payments risk, contributing to rupee depreciation and triggering foreign outflows in a self-feeding cycle," said Peeyush Mittal, portfolio

manager at Matthews Asia, adding that the trade deal breaks the loop and will lend stability to rupee and stocks.

The delay in the India-U.S. trade deal, lack of exposure to emerging themes such as artificial intelligence and muted earnings were the key reasons for the foreign selling in Indian stocks, since the start of 2025.

Foreign portfolio investors have offloaded shares worth about \$23 billion since the start of 2025, triggering a rare underperformance compared with Asian and emerging market peers.

"The trade deal announcement does change the immediate outlook on India and sets a positive tone, which is good for equities in the short to medium term," said Vineet Arora, managing director at NAV Capital Emerging Star fund, a

Singapore-based foreign investor.

Export-linked sectors such as auto ancillaries, textiles, apparel, jewellery, IT, pharma, seafood, engineering goods, renewables, speciality chemicals, electronics manufacturers will find their flavour again, Arora said.

On the day, all the export-linked sectors surged.

Eternal gained 2.6% on inclusion into Jefferies' model India portfolio, with the brokerage terming it a "FPI favourite". Adani Ports climbed 9.1% on raising the upper end of its core earnings forecast for the current fiscal.

-REUTERS

## India Gives 20-Year Tax Holiday To Foreign Firms Using Local Data Centres

By ADITI SHAH AND DHWANI PANDYA

India said on Sunday foreign companies using data centres built in the country to provide services to global clients will not face any taxes for doing so for more than 20 years, hoping to assuage concerns of possible tax liabilities on the sector.

Scores of data centres have been built in India in recent years, but lawyers told Reuters that foreign companies had been concerned that New Delhi could in future impose taxes on their global income for using a data centre located in the country.

Those concerns were set to rest by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her 2026-27 budget speech, where she said India will "provide (a) tax holiday till 2047 to any foreign companies that provide cloud services to their customers globally, by using data centre services from India."

Vaibhav Gupta, partner at tax firm Dhruva Advisors, said: "This announcement helps in bringing clarity to foreign companies and lends stability in (their) tax position in India till 2047," noting foreign companies would no longer need to worry about potential taxes on their global income on the basis they use a data centre in India.

Google said in October it will invest \$15 billion in an AI

data centre project in Andhra Pradesh state, while Microsoft and Amazon have poured billions into data centres in India. Indian conglomerates like Adani and Reliance are also investing.

Amazon, Microsoft and Google did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the government's tax measure.

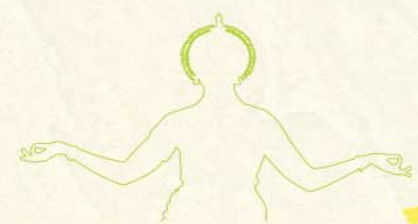
"Data centres will be a major strength for India through which we can provide new services to the world," IT minister Ashwini Vaishnav told reporters.

-REUTERS





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# Indian Ambassador To US Vinay Mohan Kwatra Highlights “Impact”, “Democratisation Of AI” At CSIS Pre-AI Summit

Indian Ambassador to the United States Vinay Mohan Kwatra participated in a Pre-AI Summit panel discussion January 31, 2026, titled “Reflections on Paris and Prospects for New Delhi”, organized by Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), alongside the Ambassador of France.

Sharing details of the engagement on X, Kwatra emphasised “Impact” as a core driver of the upcoming AI Summit in India later in February.

He also outlined India’s approach to artificial intelligence, sharing the country’s perspective on “democratisation of AI” around people, planet and progress with the participating audience.

The discussion focused on advancing global dialogue on AI, with India underscoring impact-led innovation and inclusive growth as key pillars of its engagement ahead of the summit.

All these developments stem from engagements held on January 31, during which Kwatra also detailed India’s people-first approach to artificial intelligence and the structure of the upcoming AI Impact Summit, noting that it is built around three core pillars focused on people, planet and progress.

India’s Ambassador to the US Vinay Mohan Kwatra gestures as he speaks at the CSIS conference.

Speaking during a discussion titled “Exploring Global AI Policy Priorities Ahead of the India AI Impact Summit”, Kwatra said, “This is the first time that the summit is taking place in a Global South country.

“The summit is being anchored on three major platforms. We call it three sutras essentially. The first sutra, or the first anchor of it, is people. Essentially, the underlying theme there is that the cultural diversity of people, the dignity of people, and the access of people to the technology are ensured,” he said.

Explaining the second pillar, he said, “The second part of it, which is important, is the planet. The idea is that any technology is not centred just on a particular geography but is available for the progress of the planet.”

Describing the third element of the framework, Kwatra added, “The third course is the sutra of progress, which must



Indian Ambassador Vinay Mohan Kwatra speaking at the CSIS conference.



India's Ambassador to the US Vinay Mohan Kwatra gestures as he speaks at the CSIS conference.



A section of the audience at the CSIS conference.

lead to economic and technological progress and the prosperity of society.”

His remarks came amid a series of international summits since 2023 that have brought together governments, industry and civil society to deepen cooperation on artificial intelligence.

In this context, India is set to host the AI Impact Summit in February 2026, marking the first time such a global AI summit will be held in the Global South.

The conference also featured Laurent Bili and placed the upcoming summit within the momentum generated by the Paris AI Action Summit, which France and India co-hosted in Paris in February 2025.

Panel discussions during the event focused on domestic and global AI policy agendas, industry views on governance and innovation, and AI-driven development initiatives across the Global South.

Building on this momentum, the India AI Impact Summit 2026 is being projected as a landmark event aimed at strengthening India’s role in responsible and inclusive artificial intelligence.

According to the Ministry of Electronics and IT, outcomes from focused working groups are expected to shape AI policy, skilling strategies and implementation across India and the Global South.

These plans were outlined during the 38th episode of Digital India: Ask Our Experts, where officials presented a roadmap for India’s AI-driven future and highlighted efforts to democratise access to AI, including opportunities for youth, startups, women innovators

and learners from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

Participants also raised questions on open data access, AI infrastructure and healthcare data safety, with assurances that IndiaAI is prioritising secure and inclusive platforms to enable broader participation in the AI ecosystem.

The discussions served as a curtain-raiser for the India AI Impact Expo 2026, scheduled at Bharat Mandapam from February 16 to 20, where real-world AI applications across education, healthcare, agriculture and governance are set to be showcased.

-ANI





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# An Unusual Indian American Running For US Congress From Texas District 31

By ELA DUTT

**A**n Indian American, originally from Andhra Pradesh, is among ten Republican candidates vying for the Grand Old Party's support in his bid for the US Congress in the upcoming March 3, 2026 primaries in Texas. He is not only different because he is an entrepreneur who is totally financing his campaign; he happens to be a rancher and sports a cowboy hat, somewhat of a rarity among Indian Americans.

Abhiram Garapati, whose public persona resembles a Texas cowboy, and he sells hay to prove that, has to beat 9 other Republican aspirants and his opening gambit is – "I have lived the American Dream."

He immigrated to the United States in 1997 at the age of 22 with just \$500 in his pocket, he says. "In 2010, I proudly affirmed my allegiance to the United States, became a U.S. citizen, and renounced my citizenship in my country of birth," which according to his biography on Ballotpedia.org, is India, where he was born in Nuzvid, a town in Andhra Pradesh.

"Through hard work, perseverance, and the grace of God, I became a self-made millionaire by the age of 30," Garapati says on his campaign website garapatifortexas.com. He seems to have a golden thumb going by his entrepreneurial history.

Since his arrival in 1997, Garapati says he founded and led multiple successful businesses and currently serves as the President of Ant Savings, a commercial real estate investment firm he established in 2004. Headquartered in Central Texas, Ant Savings has grown into a "multimillion-dollar enterprise" which the Indian American maintains, has a portfolio spanning multiple states, including office buildings, hospitals, restaurants, and shopping centers.

Garapati earned a bachelor's degree in Electronics and Communications Engineering and completed advanced investment coursework at Stanford University.

"Throughout my career, I have traveled to some of the most remote parts of the United States, forging relationships and doing business with incredible Americans from all walks of life," he says.

Garapati is also a farmer and cattle rancher, raising hay and livestock on his 200-acre ranch in Central Texas and his 60-acre ranch in Florence, Texas, where he lives.

"My deep ties to the land and local economy have given me firsthand insight into the challenges and values of hardworking Texans," he says.

Politically, he represented the 31st Congressional District of Texas as a delegate to the 2024 Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Apart from that, Garapati has tried multiple times to win the GOP's favor. He ran in the Republican primaries for U.S. Congress in 2020, 2022, and 2024.

"For the past eight years, I have been actively involved in Republican grassroots efforts and remain deeply committed to the conservative principles that make our state and nation strong," he says.

Whether that grassroots work has brought him the support needed to win the primary is to be seen on March 3.

Federal Election data (fec.gov) for the period July 1, 2025-December 31, 2025, shows total receipts by the candidate to his campaign of \$55,000, with zero contributions from individuals and committees, in line with his stated commitment. Of his amount, Garapati spent \$16,000 on operating expenditures, and his cash on hand by end of 2025 was \$39,000.

Interestingly, several of his 9 Republican opponents



Abhiram Garapati at a Republican Convention.



Abhiram Garapati with his wife and children.



Abhiram Garapati on his ranch.

have small financial numbers even less than Garapati according to fec.gov data available @fec.gov/data/elections/house/TX/31/2026/.

Married to his high-school sweetheart who he says he has known since kindergarten, Garapati has two children.

"With respect to my faith, I was raised Hindu and adopted Christianity and accepted the love of Jesus Christ

later in my life," Garapati says.

There is even more that makes Garapati different from many candidates nationwide. Not only has he refused all campaign contributions, he is declining a congressional salary and pension, and – he owns no individual stocks and will not trade while in Congress.





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# Smithsonian Asian Art Museum To Return Three Stolen Bronzes To India

By KELSEY ABLES

The Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art is returning to the Indian government three bronzes, museum leaders told The Washington Post, after extensive provenance research indicated that the objects were removed from their original sites illegally.

The trove includes the 12th-century "Somaskanda," which shows Shiva with his wife, the 16th-century "Saint Sundarar With Paravai," as well as a dancing Shiva known as "Shiva Nataraja," made around A.D. 990.

Statues in the form of that last sacred image have become notorious targets of looting and theft.

After early 20th-century writing by art historian Ananda Coomaraswamy pitched the figures as emblems of India's exceptionalism, they exploded in popularity. Souvenirs re-creating the sacred image multiplied at tourist traps and gift shops. Shiva Nataraja statues, meanwhile, disappeared from temples.

"It got really famous from this guy's article, and then every museum in the West needs to have a Shiva Nataraja," said Padma Kaimal, a professor of art at Colgate University who has written about the image-type. It was a time when museums asked fewer questions, and the coveted dancing gods were welcomed into their collections.

The Smithsonian's dancing Shiva will remain on a long-term loan and will be displayed alongside information about its repatriation.

"The return of these sculptures, the result of proactive research, reflects our dedication to ethical museum practice," museum director Chase F. Robinson said in a statement.

In an interview with The Post, Robinson added that the museum believes strongly that the objects' full biographies "are really interesting and compelling stories, and we are increasingly integrating them into our galleries and as a feature of our exhibitions."

The return attests to the sharper attention to objects' origins across the museum world in recent years, as advocates, historians and museum professionals have called, sometimes in vain, for the repatriation of artifacts such as the Benin bronzes and Elgin Marbles held at prominent museums.

The Asian art museum last year appointed Nancy Karrels as associate director of provenance and object histories, a new role at the institution, and last month, the museum announced the return of its first batch of works under the Smithsonian's Shared Stewardship and Ethical Returns Policy, which was adopted by the wider institution in 2022. Those three sculptures from Cambodia were found to have been removed from the country in a period of widespread looting during civil conflict before appearing on the U.S. market.

Previously the Smithsonian had a policy of returning items proved to be obtained illegally, but the 2022 policy widened grounds for return. Museums could deaccession and return objects based on ethical considerations alone, as well as collaborate with origin communities for their care.

**The repatriation of these bronzes to India – made on legal grounds – is a result of the museum's systematic review of its South Asian collection.**

The museum's approach demonstrates a newer way of thinking about and presenting objects: That the very



PHOTO: @SLEDU



PHOTO: @SLEDU

Top, Shiva Nataraja (Lord of Dance); India, Tamil Nadu state, Chola dynasty, ca. 990; bronze sculpture. Above, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

thing that may necessitate an object's return is also part of the story a museum should tell.

"Historically, museums are much better at aestheticizing the object than contextualizing the object," said Robinson. "Charles Lang Freer was a fantastic collector. He really wasn't interested in the social context, religious context, ritual context," he said, adding that "there has been a change of course in museology of the last generation or two. Increasingly one finds exhibitions and galleries devoted to trying to recontextualize."

Holdings in the Smithsonian's extensive, nearly 180-year-old collection have long sparked calls for repatriation. In late 2022, the National Museum of African Art returned 29 Benin bronzes to Nigeria.

A 2023 Post investigation found that the institution took decades to take action on human remains, including more than 250 human brains. (At the time, Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III said the Smithsonian was accelerating its efforts to return remains and called the period of their collection the institution's "darkest history.")

The research required for returns can be hefty. The National Museum of Asian Art has a team of four people working on provenance research, larger than

other museums of its size, Robinson said. The work underlying the Indian bronze return took years.

"Somaskanda" and "Saint Sundarar With Paravai" were part of the collection Arthur M. Sackler donated to the museum in 1987. The institution received a tip that the pieces appeared in photographs at the Photo Archives of the French Institute of Pondicherry. They sent a curator to visit the archives and found that the statues were documented in temple settings in Tamil Nadu in the 1950s. Such "in situ" photographs form a legal basis in India to establish theft, Robinson said, and "confirm the sculptures' unauthorized removal from India," the museum said in an email.

The "Shiva Nataraja" arrived in the museum later, acquired in 2002 through New York's now-infamous Doris Wiener Gallery. According to the Manhattan district attorney's office, Wiener was known for taking "shopping trips" through South Asia "to select stolen antiquities that would later be smuggled into New York." In 2021, her daughter, Nancy, who was a part of the gallery operations, pleaded guilty to trafficking illicitly acquired works and creating false provenance records.

Robinson said museum researchers attempted to trace the origins of the "Shiva Nataraja" bronze that Wiener sold them. They were not able to find a gallery matching the name that her documents provided as

the source of the object, nor any street matching the gallery's purported address. The object, like the others, was also photographed in a temple in Tamil Nadu in the 1950s.

It was not the only stolen Shiva Nataraja that passed through the Wieners' hands – another was returned from the Asia Society in 2021.

"There's a huge network of extraction, we could call it, that's particularly focused on these Shiva Natarajas," Kaimal, the Colgate professor, said.

The figures are vulnerable to theft not just because of their popularity but because "the temples are out in these tiny villages that can't afford serious security, and people need to see the images during worship so you don't want to lock them away," Kaimal said. At times, copies of the piece have been swapped in during "cleanings," she said.

The bronze shows Shiva dancing on a demon representing ignorance, encircled by a ring of fire and on a lotus base. It is considered "one of the most important, visually thrilling forms of the Hindu god Shiva," according to the Asian art museum, and is rich with symbolism in the objects Shiva holds in his hands, the clothes he wears and more.

Recently the image, which Kaimal says Coomaraswamy's essay argued "shows that India was full of wisdom long before Europe," has appealed to Hindu nationalist sentiments in India. But it also has wider allure.

"These images continue to be very powerful in the present because they have deep meaning for people who identify with these places, all the Indian expats, but also for many people who admire India," said Kaimal, calling them "beautiful, important, precious objects."

Kaimal applauded the Asian art museum's efforts to return the bronzes. "This is big. This is about acknowledging that the ways in which objects made their ways into museums have not always been legal," she said. "That's a huge confession for museums to make."

-THE WASHINGTON POST



ASTROLOGY



This week for you

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

**ARIES:** Work matters move effortlessly. Professional growth looks encouraging, especially when guided by experienced. Financial decisions benefit from careful advice. Excessive closeness with a friend may create misunderstanding. Property-related commitments should be postponed. Travel opportunities prove refreshing. Health improves steadily. Financial dues are to be recovered.

**TAURUS:** Romantic plans bring excitement. Marriage prospects look promising. Younger individuals may enjoy an outing. Relocation or shifting homes is possible for some. Workplace adjustments improve efficiency and ease pressure. Support from a rival may take time but persistence works. Avoid tasks beyond your confidence. Physical wellbeing remains stable, while finances stay balanced.

**GEMINI:** Social interactions place you in the spotlight, helping you build a positive image. At work, you inspire others by leading through action. Competitive situations tilt in your favour. Academic ambitions push you toward learning. Family gatherings see you as the centre of attention. Past romantic connections may resurface. Emotional feelings find acceptance, strengthening love bonds. Health requires attention through rest and routine care.

**CANCER:** Family expectations may feel overwhelming. A younger family member needs guidance, making your role important. Romantic matters may feel distant. Travel delays could cause irritation. Financial limitations restrict home improvement ideas. Career choices demand caution, as impulsive moves may backfire. Income flow may slow temporarily. Maintain emotional balance and avoid stress during sensitive conversations.

**LEO:** Property matters bring encouraging news, favouring you. Some may consider developing land or investing further. Observing traditions around a celebration brings happiness. Love life improves through genuine effort. Leisure travel promises mental refreshment. Workplace deadlines may face delays. Professionals could feel burdened. Financial assistance may come with expectations attached, so weigh commitments before agreeing.

**VIRGO:** Career prospects gain momentum, opening doors to advancement. Business owners may secure beneficial agreements. Family members trust your judgement. Romantic stability supports long-term emotional security. Domestic support helps you move ahead. Visiting a location brings clarity on pending matters. Additional income opportunities emerges. Make decisions with logic rather than haste.

**LIBRA:** A peaceful environment helps you stay relaxed. Concern for a person motivates you to offer support. Career-related uncertainties may require adaptability and patience. Financial returns take longer than expected. Health needs immediate attention. Romantic priorities may pause due to responsibilities. Household expenses could rise, creating financial concern. Planning help restore balance.

**SCORPIO:** Professional situations improve steadily. Those anxious about career security can relax as prospects strengthen. Harmony keeps emotional stress minimal. Financial gains begin to surface. Fitness efforts prove beneficial. Temporary distance from a partner is possible. Travel disruptions may occur, though delays are compensated. Maintain patience and consistency to make the most of opportunities.

**SAGITTARIUS:** You approach matters with a progressive mindset. Domestic decisions taken yield positive outcomes. Active involvement in workplace projects brings recognition and tangible rewards. Sensible spending habits help preserve funds for essential purchases. Social engagements keep you happily occupied. Romantic possibilities grow. This period supports optimism, balanced choices, and emotional fulfilment.

**CAPRICORN:** Favourable changes appear in both family and professional matters. People previously distant become more open to communication. A shift in attitude deepens connections. Smooth workflow allows implementation of ideas. Romantic relationships move toward deeper commitment. Travel opportunities, including overseas journeys. Overall progress feels rewarding. Positive interactions strengthen confidence and emotional stability

**AQUARIUS:** Confidence remains your strongest asset. Recognition arrives for those awaiting appreciation. A visit to or concern for an elder family member is possible. Family gatherings bring lively interactions. Romantic desires move closer to fulfilment. Travel feels pleasant due to engaging companionship. Property investment plans may take shape. Balanced thinking and timely actions help you make the most of opportunities.

**PISCES:** Work efficiency earns appreciation. A positive mindset helps manage challenges with ease. Past financial decisions start yielding visible benefits. Joining a wellness-focused group supports physical improvement. Family responsibilities may feel demanding. A partner may need to stay away. Patience keep relationships steady. This phase encourages resilience, financial awareness to navigate responsibilities.

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# FIA Kicks Off 2026 With Service, Packs Nearly 30,000 Meals For Hungry Children

BY A STAFF WRITER

**T**he Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) began 2026 with a strong message of service and compassion, packing nearly 35,000 meals for children in need at the Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) facility in Schaumburg.

Nearly 100 FIA volunteers, led by Founder and Chairman Sunil Shah and President Richa Chand, gathered at the nonprofit's warehouse to turn empathy into action. By the end of the session, the team had packed 162 boxes totaling 34,992 meals, enough to feed children across the globe through FMSC's humanitarian partners. The effort represented \$10,147.68 worth of food aid.

FIA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and one of the Midwest's largest Indian American organizations, representing more than 300,000 Asian Indians. The organization serves as a bridge between the local community, the United States and India, focusing on cultural connection, civic engagement and service.

Quoting Sir Winston Churchill's words, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give," FIA leaders said the volunteer event embodied the organization's mission. The reality of global hunger remains urgent: More than 821 million people worldwide lack enough food, and thousands of children die

daily from starvation-related causes.

At the Schaumburg facility, volunteers worked side by side in an energetic, coordinated effort — measuring ingredients, sealing and labeling packages, stacking boxes and moving supplies through the warehouse. Youth volunteers handled much of the heavy lifting, while senior

members labeled nearly 2,000 packages.

Although several other organizations volunteered during the same shift, FIA was the largest group in attendance.

"This was more than just packing meals," FIA leaders said. "Every packet was filled with hope, care and the belief that together we can make a difference."

Chand led the effort on site, coordinating logistics and motivating volunteers throughout the day. FIA General Secretaries Kamlesh Kapoor and Anshul Bindal were recognized for their organizational support. Several board members and directors, including Rajesh Narayan, Cecil Joseph, Subhash Iyer and R.V. Reddy, traveled from across the region to participate.

The event was documented by members of the FIA leadership team, including Executive Vice President Ajanta Talukdar and several vice presidents and secretaries who also assisted with operations and event management.

The service project marked the official launch of FIA's 2026 calendar of events. The organization's next major milestone will be its signature celebration of India's 77th Republic Day, scheduled for Jan. 22, 2026.

More information about FIA is available at [www.fia-il.us](http://www.fia-il.us). Details about Feed My Starving Children can be found at [www.fmsc.org](http://www.fmsc.org).



FIA Chairman Mr. Sunil Shah, President Mrs. Richa Chand alongside the FIA team at FMSC facility.

# FIA-Chicago 1980 And National India Hub Lead Protest Against Targeted Killings Of Hindus In Bangladesh

BY BHAILAL M. PATEL

**Indian-American organizations urge international community to confront religious extremism and protect minority rights**

**T**he Federation of Indian Associations-Chicago 1980 (FIA-Chicago 1980), in collaboration with the National India Hub, organized a powerful public demonstration in Chicago condemning the targeted killings and systematic persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh. The Chicago gathering formed part of coordinated protests held across the United States, uniting voices in a call for justice, accountability, and immediate global attention.

Community leaders, activists, and concerned citizens assembled to denounce the brutal attacks on innocent Hindus targeted solely for their religious identity. Speakers emphasized that these atrocities are neither isolated incidents nor relics of the past; they represent a persistent and escalating pattern of religious persecution.



Chicago community joins nationwide protest condemning targeted killings of Hindus and violence against Hindus in Bangladesh.

Participants highlighted sobering historical and contemporary realities. Bangladesh once had nearly 34% religious minorities—including Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains. Today, that figure has declined to barely 5%, raising urgent questions about the fate of millions over the past 75 years.

Over the last two decades alone, the world has witnessed tens of thousands of terror incidents driven by religious hatred—evidence, speakers said, of an ideological war in which extremist religious ideologies fuel violence, persecution, and systematic brutality.

Leaders warned that silence and pas-

sivity enable genocide. Relying on others for protection, they noted, is not safety—it is a dangerous illusion. The community was urged to recognize the existential threats facing persecuted minorities and to respond with unity, resolve, and sustained advocacy.

"Comfort today can become catastrophe tomorrow," speakers cautioned, underscoring the urgency of action.

While acknowledging that much more must be done to halt religious persecution worldwide, organizers stressed that raising a collective voice is the first and most immediate step. The international community, governments, and human-rights institutions were called upon to confront the root cause—violent religious ideology—and act decisively before further lives are lost.

The demonstration concluded with a renewed commitment to continued awareness campaigns, policy advocacy, and peaceful mobilization until justice and safety are secured for all persecuted communities.



# FIA Marks India's 77th Republic Day With Gala In Suburban Chicago

BY A STAFF WRITER

The Federation of Indian Associations hosted a gala celebrating India's 77th Republic Day on Jan. 25 at the Matrix Club in the Chicago suburbs, drawing elected officials, community leaders and members of the Indian American community.

The event marked one of the organization's largest Republic Day celebrations in recent years and featured cultural performances, remarks from public officials and the presentation of student scholarships.

FIA Founder President and Chairman Sunil Shah addressed attendees, noting the organization's continued growth and recent adoption of a dual-presidency leadership structure. FIA is currently led by Presidents Altaf Bukhari and Richa Chand.

Bukhari thanked guests and dignitaries for their participation and acknowledged volunteers and board members for their work in organizing the event.



PHOTOS: FIA

Left to Right President 2026 Richa Chand, FIA Chairman Sunil Shah, President 2026 Altaf Bukhari.

public office were also present.

Actor and singer Padmini Kolhapure was a special guest at the event.

The program included performances of the Indian and American national anthems, vocal and dance presentations by local artists and cultural groups, and patriotic-themed performances by Shirlzar Dance Academy and Classical Odyssey.

As part of its educational initiatives, FIA announced and distributed scholarship awards to students in the United States and India. U.S. recipients included Ashritha Kukunooru, Pari Jain, Sandeep Pant, Aarush Parikh and Anika Menta. A scholarship was also awarded to Khushi Makwana of India.

During the evening, Dr. Vijay Prabhakar, chairman of Global Eye Magazine, recognized Shah for his leadership and presented Anu Malhotra, FIA's immediate past president, with the Global Eye Ratna Samman Award for her service during 2025.

The event was supported by FIA board members, advisory council members and volunteers, with multiple



The Legendary Bollywood Actress Singer Receiving Award-from-Chairman-Sunil-Shah-President-Altaf-Bukhari-President-Richa-Chand-Past-Presidents-Rita-Singh-Vinita-Gulabani-Pratibha-Jairath



The-Glorious-TEAM-FIA-2026-Ready-to-win-all-challenges-together

Chand spoke about the significance of Republic Day and emphasized civic engagement and community service, particularly among younger generations.

Among the dignitaries in attendance were Somnath Ghosh from the Consulate General of India in Chicago, U.S. Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, Illinois State Rep. Stephanie Kifowit, Cook County Commissioner Kevin Morrison, Schaumburg Mayor Tom Dailly and Hanover Park Mayor Rodney Craig. Several FIA board members who are candidates for



FIA-Scholarship 2026 Winners Receiving Award from the-Legendary Bollywood Actress Singer Padmini Kolhapure

committees overseeing programming, logistics, media, stage management and registration. Numerous local businesses and organizations served as sponsors and media partners.

The formal program concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by FIA secretaries Kamlesh Kapoor and Anshul Bindal. The evening ended with music and community networking.

FIA is an umbrella organization representing Indian American associations across the Midwest and regularly hosts cultural, civic and educational programs throughout the year.





Photo: Dreamstime

## ABC's of H-1Bs: Major Changes Employers Must Know for the 2026 Filing Season (Part 1 of 7)

By David H. Nachman, Esq

IN MEMORIAM



Michael Phulwani



David Nachman



Ludka Zimovcak



Snehal Batra

The H-1B filing season is approaching, and employers and foreign professionals should prepare early for significant changes impacting the FY 2027 H-1B cap. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requires employers to electronically register each prospective H-1B beneficiary and pay a \$215 registration fee before filing a petition. The initial registration period typically opens in early March and remains open for at least 14 calendar days.

Employers should confirm signatory authority and gather degree, resume, and worksite documents early.

If USCIS receives more registrations than available visa numbers, selections will be made no later than March 31, 2026. Only employers with selected registrations may file H-1B cap-subject petitions for the named beneficiaries during the filing window USCIS assigns.

A key integrity reform already in place is the beneficiary-centric selection process, designed to reduce fraud and misuse. Under this system, submitting multiple registrations for the same individual no longer increases selection chances, so employers should focus on accurate, well-supported registrations rather than volume.

### New Weighted H-1B Lottery Begins in 2026

A major policy shift was announced by the Department of Homeland Security on December 23, 2025. Beginning with the FY 2027 cap season, USCIS will replace the purely random lottery with a weighted selection system tied to the Department of Labor wage level framework. The final rule becomes effective February 27, 2026.

Under this approach:

Wage Level I registrations receive 1 entry

Wage Level II receive 2 entries

Wage Level III receive 3 entries

Wage Level IV receive 4 entries

Higher-paid positions may therefore have greater odds of selection. DHS states the goal is to protect U.S. wages and discourage abuse of the program. Employers must ensure the wage level, occupation, worksite location, and job offer details listed at registration match the later-filed petition; inconsistencies can trigger denials, revocations, and increased compliance scrutiny.

This change may create challenges for startups, entry-level hires, and recent graduates, making early planning and alternative visa strategies more important. Options may include cap-exempt H-1Bs through qualifying institutions, other work-authorized categories, or long-term immigrant sponsorship planning where appropriate.

### Limited H-1B Numbers Still a Challenge

Although the statutory cap is 65,000 visas, 6,800 are reserved annually for nationals of Chile and Singapore, leaving 58,200 regular H-1Bs, plus an additional 20,000 for U.S. master's degree holders.

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Due to this limited supply, employers should identify sponsorship needs early and allow sufficient time for Labor Condition Application (LCA) preparation, including prevailing wage review and proper job description alignment.

### Presidential Proclamation Adds New Considerations

A Presidential Proclamation effective September 21, 2025, imposes potential restrictions on certain newly filed H-1B cases unless a \$100,000 government fee is paid.

While not universally applicable, employers and beneficiaries should evaluate whether it applies before filing, scheduling consular appointments, or traveling internationally.

With wage-based selection, tighter scrutiny, and limited numbers, the 2026 H-1B season demands careful planning and informed decision-making from both employers and foreign professionals.

### Contact Information

If you or your family members have any questions about how immigration and nationality laws in the United States may affect you, or if you want to access additional information about immigration and nationality laws in the United States or Canada, please do not hesitate to contact the immigration and nationality lawyers at **NPZ Law Group**.

You can reach us by emailing [info@visaserve.com](mailto:info@visaserve.com) or by calling us at 201-670-0006 extension 104.

We also invite you to visit our website at [www.visaserve.com](http://www.visaserve.com) for more information.



# Dalai Lama's Grammy Win Overwhelms Tibetans Worldwide

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama has been awarded a Grammy Award for his audiobook 'Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness The Dalai Lama' at the prestigious ceremony held on Monday February 1, 2026.

The Dalai Lama won the award in the audiobook category, where he was nominated alongside Elvis, Rocky & Me: The Carol Connors Story by Kathy Garver, Into the Uncut Grass by Trevor Noah, Lovely One: A Memoir by Ketanji Brown Jackson, and You Know It's True: The Real Story of Milli Vanilli by Fab Morvan.

Reacting to the achievement, Tenzin Topdhen, director of the Tibet Museum, expressed happiness over the honour, calling it a moment of joy for Tibetans and peace-loving people across the world.

"We are overwhelmed and of course Losar is coming near and it's a good news for Tibetans and peace loving countries around the world because what we see from China over the time they do lot of transnational aggression not only in PRC but across Asia and now we see it across America as well and the message from His holiness is love, peace and compassion so it's like we put forward transnational compassion..." Topdhen told ANI.

Tenzin Lekdhen, spokesperson of Students for Free Tibet, said the award has brought immense joy to Tibetans both inside and outside Tibet.

"When he was nominated for the Grammy awards, Tibetans not just in-exile but also in Tibet and our supporters in the whole world really celebrated that moment and today when we got this news that his holiness was really awarded the Grammy we are joyous beyond expectations," Lekdhen said.

He added that the award carries special significance for Tibetans living under difficult conditions. "The main reaction, I think it's from the Tibetans inside Tibet, they have been facing huge hardships under the Chinese occupation and getting this good news of Grammy award, I think it's a momentous and joyous moment for Tibetans inside Tibet... it's also a strong message for China as it

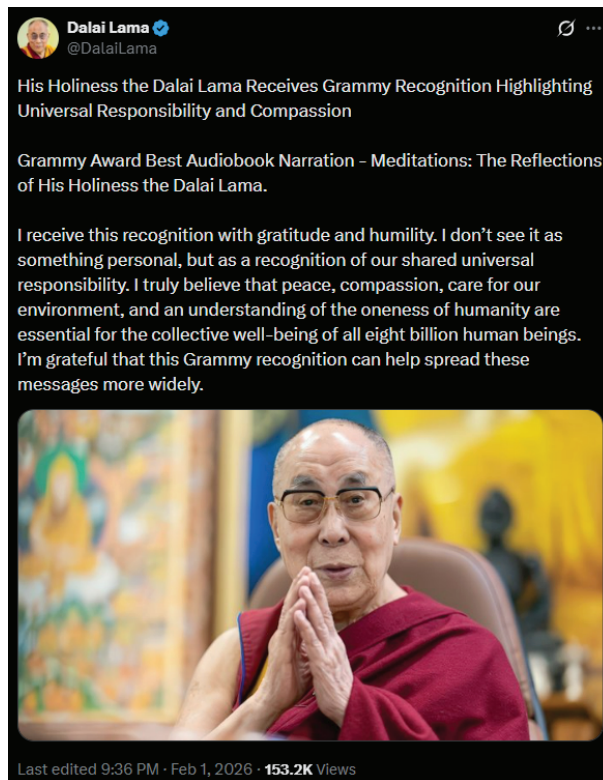


PHOTO: X.COM @DALAILAMA

The Dalai Lama.

has been putting efforts in damaging Dalai Lama's image not just in Tibet but in the whole world so this prestigious award clearly sends a message to China..." he said.

The album was nominated in the category of Best Audio Book, Narration, and Storytelling Recording, for the 68th Annual Grammy Awards, held on Monday (Local



PHOTO: COURTESY ANI

The Dalai Lama.

Time). The event took place at Los Angeles. The Dalai Lama collaborated with sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan and his sons Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash on this album, which is a combination of spoken words and music to celebrate the values of peace, compassion and hope.

In response to the award the Dalai Lama's office posted a message from the Spiritual leader saying, "I receive this recognition with gratitude and humility. I don't see it as something personal, but as a recognition of our shared universal responsibility. I truly believe that peace, compassion, care for our environment, and an understanding of the oneness of humanity are essential for the collective well-being of all eight billion human beings. I'm grateful that this Grammy recognition can help spread these messages more widely."

-ANI

## Lock Upp New Season To Be Out On Netflix

The makers of the reality show 'Lock Upp' on Tuesday announced a new season of the show at the Netflix India slate event in Mumbai.

Following the success of the first season hosted by actor and politician Kangana Ranaut, Ekta Kapoor's reality show is now set for a new season, this time on Netflix.

"A captive reality format that's made in India, and streamed by the world! India's most newsworthy personalities are locked away in a new-age prison, all because they have been condemned in the court of public opinion. Will they own their story and fight for their redemption? Or will they be cancelled forever?" read the logline of the new season, as quoted in a press note by Netflix.

The first season was streamed on Amazon MX Player.

The new season has found its streaming destination with Netflix. The streaming giant shared the official poster of the show on its Instagram handle today. While sharing the poster, they wrote, "Get ready to lock in, Netflix is getting a reality check. Watch Lock Upp, coming soon, only on Netflix!"

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DUTGKzEEnH3/>

The makers of Lock Upp said in a statement, "Balaji Telefilms' Lock Upp is a bold, distinctive reality format designed to provoke and entertain while

fully embracing the thrill of the unexpected. Fueled by public opinion, spectacle, and the unfiltered unpredictability of headline-making personalities, the show delivers high-energy entertainment with undeniable heat. Our creative collaboration with Netflix marks an exciting milestone as we launch our first reality series together," as quoted by Netflix press note.

The host of the new season has yet to be announced.

The stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqui was crowned the winner of the first season of 'Lock Upp'. Munawar lifted the winner's trophy, beating contestant Payal Rohatgi in the final race. He was declared the winner after receiving more than 18 lakh votes.

Apart from the trophy, Munawar also won Rs 20 lakh, a car and an all-expenses-paid trip to Italy. The show pitted 20 contestants against each other in a jail-like setting.

Celebrities like Poonam Pandey, Kaaranvir Bohra, Ali Merchant, Zeeshan Khan, Mandana Karimi, Nisha Rawal, Sara Khan, Vinit Kakar, Babita Phogat, Swami Chakrapani, Tehseen Poonawalla, Siddhartha Sharma, Prince Narula, and Chetan Hansraj were also a part of the controversial show.

-ANI

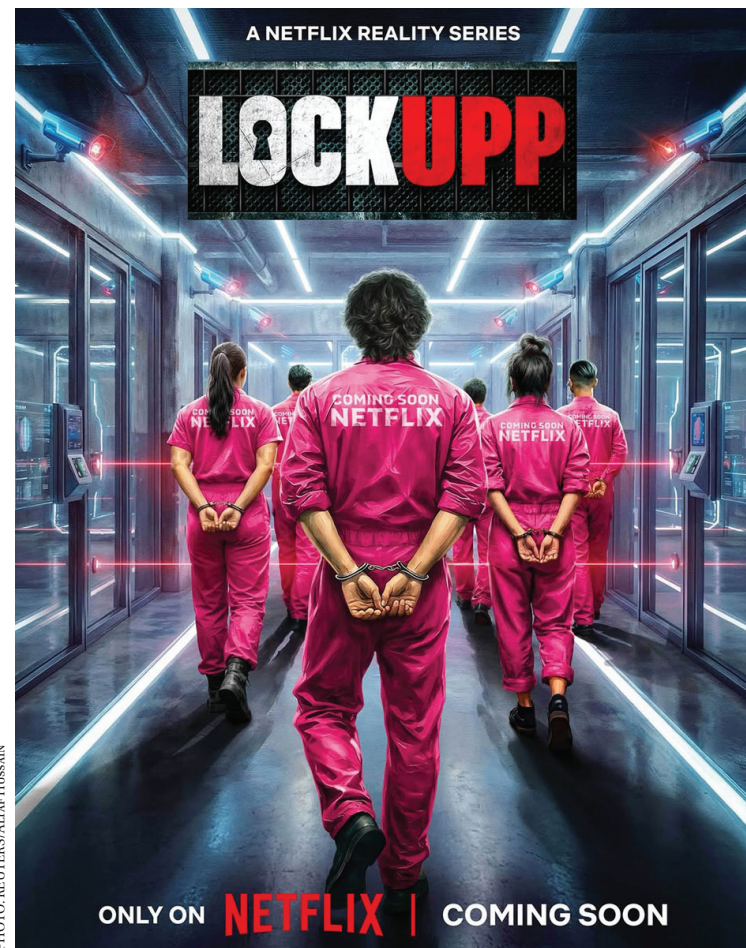


PHOTO: REUTERS/ALTAJF HUSSAIN



Bloomberg, The Washington Post

By Kate Krader and Adam Thompson

# Five Top Tables:

## The best restaurants in New York City right now



Photo: www.oysterbarny.com

Welcome to Five Top Tables, a column from Bloomberg Pursuits to guide your dining decisions in major cities around the world, including London, Dubai, Paris, Brussels, Manila and Edinburgh.

New York is both easy and hard when you want to go out to eat. There are an estimated 18,000 restaurants across the five boroughs, so no matter what you're craving, someone is doing a good job of making it. Whether it's quality Indian food - the Big Apple's is better than London's, experts say - or a flaky Jamaican patty or a not-too-pricey steak, New York's got it. Yet finding the best places is not easy in a city so vast. There are plenty of great restaurants, but alongside them disappointments. With costs climbing, it doesn't pay to make dining mistakes.

### New: Danny's, Flatiron

Joining NYC's ever-expanding cache of clubby dining rooms comes Danny's, named for its owner, media executive Dan Abrams. On any given night, you'll see him working the white-cloth-covered tables and spacious booths.

The menu boasts a series of highlight-reel dishes, created by chef Ed Tinoco, a veteran of the vaunted Alinea Group.

His chopped kale salad (\$24) might make you flash back to your favorite '90s tortilla bowl, studded with broken blue corn chips and chunks of avocado in a lime vinaigrette. It's piled high so it looks like a Christmas tree.

On the main course side, supple taleggio-filled agnolotti, submerged in creamy tomato sauce (\$34) is another comfort food staple.

So is the craggy fried chicken with a couple of tender maple-flavored biscuits alongside (\$34).

It's rich food, but no matter what, save room for the salty deep-dish chocolate chip cookie, served in a little skillet (\$24).

The cocktail list rounds up current favorites, starting with dirty martinis with blue cheese olives.

All the wines are American, including interesting picks from less obvious regions like Colorado and Ohio. 46 W. 22nd St.; [dannysnyc.com/](http://dannysnyc.com/)

### Business Meal: Le Veau d'Or, Upper East Side

There are only 50 seats at this transportive French dining room, and they're tough to book at dinner - the place is jammed with UES brigades wearing bow ties and premium cashmere.

But at lunch, the dark-wood-paneled dining room is a little easier to get into.

You'll see tables of people from Midtown offices talking shop as they tuck into the \$85 set menu.

Starters include lush pâté en croute or a platter of oysters or little necks served with a little plate of well-seasoned chipolatas sausages. As a main, the mustard-laced steak tartare is superlative; so is the crisp-skinned confit de canard. The beauty of lunch in this escapist room is that you can make it a quick and efficient meal, or linger a little longer over the \$18 île floutante, a cloud of meringue in a sea of yellow custard. Along with classic cocktails, there's a European wine list if you decide to make a day of it. 129 E. 60th; [lvdnyc.com/](http://lvdnyc.com/)

### Value: Bánh Anh Em, East Village

Since it opened last April, this long, narrow Vietnamese dining room, an outpost of Banh on the Upper West Side, has been a sensation, and not just for the local NYU crowd. It doesn't take reservations, and at night there's always a line, but one that's well worth your time.

Among the handful of bánh mì choices, all served on golden, freshly baked rolls, the OG is stocked with the coarse house pâté, ham slices, hot sauce and shredded pork floss.

Another winner: the bánh mì heo quay, a pile of crispy fried pork belly with herbs and sautéed greens. (Both are \$14.95.)

The rotating phos all boast housemade rice noodles in meaty broth. One day there might be everything chicken with a few eggs thrown into the bowl, in a deeply flavored broth (\$19.95).

The hearty bún suon chả giò is a rice noodle salad with marinated grilled pork, pickled vegetables and a crispy spring roll for a textural bonanza (\$19.95). 99 Third Ave.; [banhanhem.com/](http://banhanhem.com/)

### No Reservations: Grand Central Oyster Bar, Midtown

The closest you'll get to a time machine in New York - for the vibe, if not the prices - is to descend a couple ramps in Grand Central Station until you see the vaulted arches of Grand Central Oyster Bar.

The giant space is a sea of red- and white-cloth-covered tables serving up to 440 commuters, tourists and business lunchers. The menu is almost as enormous as the space. There are around 100 options, including a rotating oyster selection, with prices starting at \$3.25 a piece for Copps Island Bluepoints from Connecticut. Choices extend to fried calamari with marinara sauce (\$19.95) and linguine with garlicky littleneck clam sauce (\$36.95), plus daily changing seafood specials like blackened local swordfish with avocado salsa (\$45.95). 89 E. 42nd St.; [oysterbarny.com/](http://oysterbarny.com/)

### DINE: Raoul's, Soho

Happy 50th anniversary to Raoul's, the intimate dining room that started bringing the cool kids to Soho decades before Balthazar arrived in the neighborhood. Maitre d' Eddie Hudson, who's been here since 1978, still works the door, and peppercorn-crusted steak au poivre with hand-cut pommes frites (\$64) is still the bestseller. There's also buttery trout Amandine with haricot verts (\$46) and, to start, frisée salad with lardons, a poached egg and the surprise addition of sweet pistachios (\$26).

Jean-Michel Basquiat, Lorne Michaels and Kate Moss have all been regulars; it likewise registers high on Bloomberg's DINE listings. "It had been a minute since I last ate at this pillar of the New York food scene," Patrick Niro wrote in a recent DINE review. He continued: "From the Martini(s) plural, to the steak tartare, seared foie gras, crab beignets, steak au poivre, creme brulee all chased down by a delicious (albeit a little young, 2022) Monthelie Red Burgundy.... GREAT NIGHT, GREAT RESTAURANT. Already looking at the calendar to plan my next visit." Another DINE reviewer is more succinct: "Greatest steak au poivre on this side of the Atlantic." 180 Prince St.; [raouls.com/](http://raouls.com/)



# Cricket-Pakistan Sweep T20 Series V Australia To Get World Cup Boost

**P**akistan steamrolled Australia by 111 runs in the final Twenty20 International to complete a 3-0 series sweep on Sunday, signalling their preparedness for the upcoming Twenty20 World Cup.

Opener Saim Ayub smashed 56 off 37 balls while Babar Azam chipped in with an unbeaten 50 to power Pakistan to a strong 207-6 at the Gaddafi Stadium.

Shadab Khan, who hit five sixes, provided the late flourish with 46 off 19 balls.

Australia, who rested several members of their World Cup squad from the tour, folded for 96 in 16.5 overs to succumb to their biggest defeat in T20 Internationals.

Australia spinner Adam Zampa, who sus-



PHOTO: SCREENSHOT FROM YOUTUBE

tained a groin injury, did not bat.

Faced with a steep chase, Australia wobbled early in their pursuit.

Pakistan speedster Shaheen Afridi bowled rival captain Mitchell Marsh in the first over and dismissed Matt Renshaw in the third to leave Australia reeling at 16-3 inside three overs.

Marcus Stoinis (23) and Cameron Green (22) tried to put Australia's chase back on track before left-arm spinner Mohammad Nawaz (5-18) intervened.

Nawaz removed both the set batters and ran through Australia's middle and lower order to set up Pakistan's massive victory.

-REUTERS

## Pakistan To Boycott T20 World Cup Group Match Against India

**P**akistan will boycott their February 15 match of the Twenty20 World Cup against arch-rivals India in Colombo, the Pakistan government said on Sunday while approving the team's participation in the global showpiece.

"The government... grants approval to the Pakistan cricket team to participate in the ICC World T20 2026, however, the Pakistan Cricket Team shall not take the field in the match scheduled on 15th February 2026 against India," the post on the government's official X account said without elaborating on reasons behind the decision.

Pakistan, who are scheduled to play all their matches in Sri Lanka, would forfeit two points if they boycotted the India match. There was no clarity on what would happen should the neighbours meet in a knockout game.

Bilateral cricket remains suspended between the nuclear-armed neighbours, who engaged in a military conflict that nearly snowballed into a fully-fledged war last year.

Their fraught political relations prompted the governing International Cricket Council (ICC) to broker an arrangement allowing them to play at a neutral venue when their neighbour hosts a global tournament.

The 2009 champions had earlier announced their squad for the 20-team tournament beginning on February 7, maintaining that their participation was subject to government approval.

Their decision to boycott the India match is a serious blow to the tournament because an India-Pakistan clash remains cricket's greatest blockbuster, which is why they are clubbed together in the same group in ICC events.

The ICC said it was awaiting an official communication from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) conveying their "position of selective participation".

"While the ICC respects the roles of governments in matters of national policy, this decision is not in the interest of the global game or the welfare of fans worldwide, including millions in Pakistan," the Dubai-based body said in a statement.

"The ICC hopes that the PCB will consider the significant and long-term implications for cricket in its own country as this is likely to impact the global cricket ecosystem, which it is itself a member and beneficiary of."

### ASIA CUP PRECEDENT

The governing body said a successful tournament was its priority, while sounding an optimistic note.

"The ICC's priority remains the successful delivery of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup which should also be the responsibility of all its members including the PCB," it said.

"It expects the PCB to explore a mutually acceptable



PHOTO: REUTERS/SANJESH KUMAR/FILE PHOTO

Cricket – ICC Men's Champions Trophy – Group A – India v Pakistan – Dubai International Stadium, Dubai, United Arab Emirates – February 23, 2025 India and Pakistan fans react in the stands

resolution, which protects the interests of all stakeholders."

This is not the first example of geopolitical tension affecting the tournament.

Bangladesh have been replaced by Scotland in the global showpiece following their refusal to travel to India over safety concerns.

The latest setback is a continuation of the soured India-Pakistan relations which manifested in last year's Asia Cup in Dubai.

India beat Pakistan three times in the tournament, including in the September 28 final, but declined to shake hands with their opponents and refused to accept the trophy from Asian Cricket Council chief Mohsin Naqvi, who is also Pakistan's interior minister.

Namibia, United States and the Netherlands are also in Group A from which two sides will advance to the tournament's Super Eight stage.

"I extend my best wishes to the Pakistan team for the World Cup," Naqvi, also the PCB chairman, was quoted as saying by Geo TV.

"I hope the team will return with the T20 World Cup trophy."

The PCB supported Bangladesh's demands to shift their matches to Sri Lanka. The ICC ruled out any threat to Bangladesh players or fans in India and rejected their late demand for a schedule change.

-REUTERS



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Gujarati Hindu parents looking for a suitable match for US born 42-yrs daughter, MBA, well established in her profession, never married, vegetarian, beautiful, energetic and far younger looking. Please send biodata with recent photos to: rasprit24@gmail.com

02/06-SL

MALE

Hindu parents seek suitable alliance for their U.S. born successful physician-entrepreneur son, 34 years, 6'0", never married, handsome, excellent character with no student loans, professionally well established, well settled in Los Angeles owning spacious home in an upscale neighborhood. Seeking U.S.-born female, never-married, professionally educated with strong family values with no vices, wishing to settle in Los Angeles and build a future. Caste no bar. Kindly email biodata with a recent candid photograph : LosAngelesShah@gmail.com.

01/16-SL

MALE

Gujarati Patel family invites matrimonial correspondence for their US born handsome son, 39, 5'8", previously married, no kids, business degree, hotel business in Chicago. Seeking suitable match from Gujarati family with no children. Send biodata & recent pics to: arpitpatel1635@gmail.com

01/02-01/23-MS

Hindu, 55 yr old, non-smoker/ non-drinker, established in finance and entertainment. Looking for 45-50 yrs old from good family. 929 666 1363

12/16-01/16/26-JG

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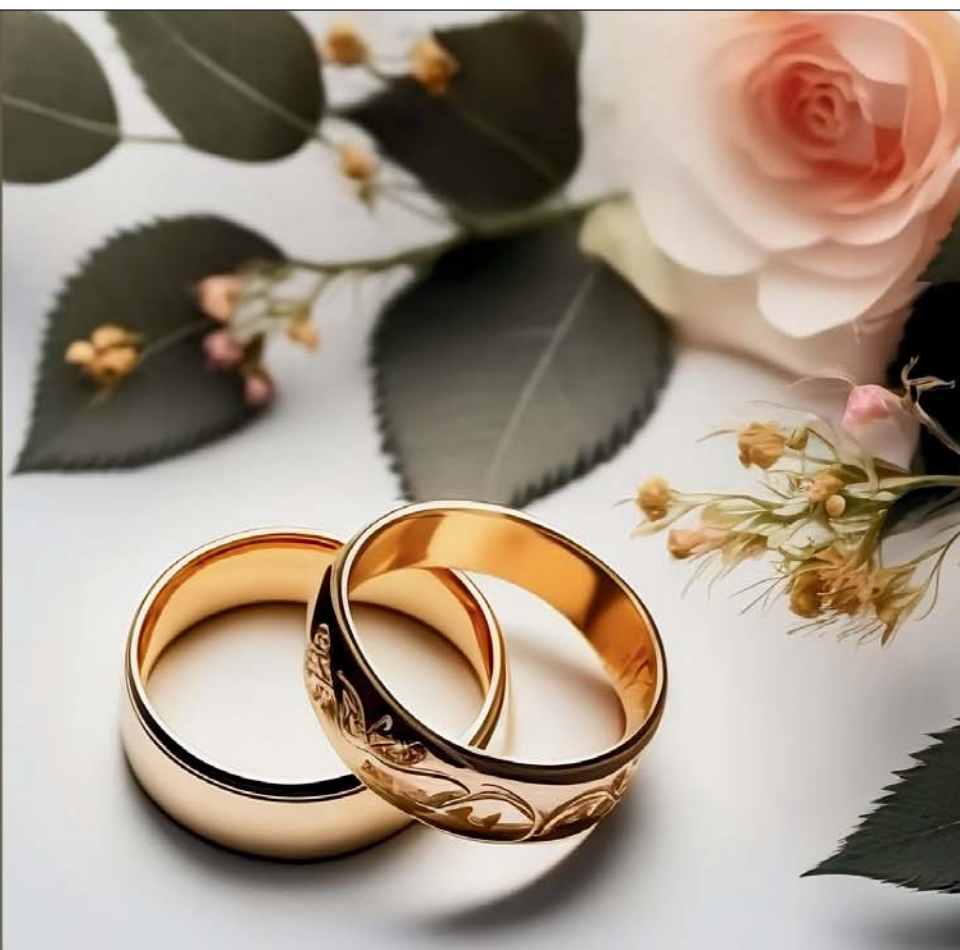
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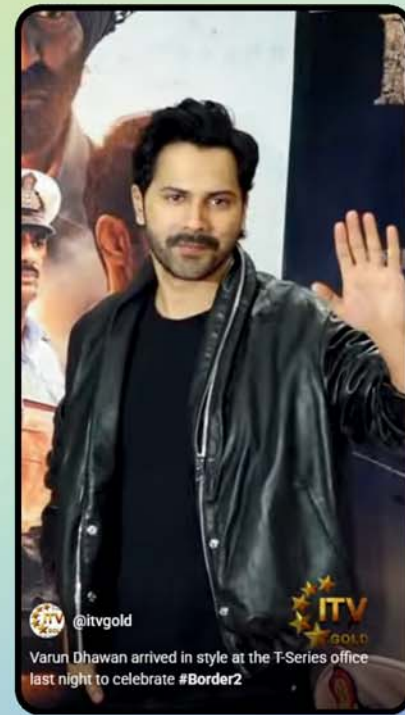




# Shorts

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*Perfect for a quick scroll break!*



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