

# The Indian Eye

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Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh interacts with the French Navy officials at Mont-de-Marsan Air Combat Center on Thursday (@IndiaembFrance X/ANI Photo)

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**CORPORATE HEADQUARTER**

255 Old New Brunswick Road  
Suite # 250,  
Piscataway, NJ 08854  
Tel # 917-692-2326;  
# 917- 702-8800

[www.TheIndianEYE.com](http://www.TheIndianEYE.com)

**CALIFORNIA OFFICE**

40931 Fremont Blvd.,  
Fremont,  
CA 94538  
Tel # 510-565-9518

**PUBLISHER**

**Sunil Hali**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**Nilesh Dasondi**

**CHAIRMAN**

**Dr Raj Bhayani**

**NORTH AMERICA BUREAU CHIEF**

**Neeraj Dhar**

510-565-9518

Neeraj1993@gmail.com

**EDITORIAL DESK**

**Ashish K Tripathi**

**Vanshaj Sharma**

**Garima Sharma**

**Vijay Shah**

Tienadesk@gmail.com

**EDITOR (DIGITAL)**

**Ekta Saxena**

Tiedigital.India@gmail.com

**CANADA BUREAU**

**Renu Mehta** - Consulting Editor

renurmehta@gmail.com

**WASHINGTON DC BUREAU**

**Kirit Udeshi**

kjudeshi@gmail.com

**WEST COAST BUREAU Texas & South California**

**Seema Govil** - Cosmo City Media

512.762.7387

Seema@cosmocitymedia.com

**DESIGN DIRECTOR & PRODUCTION HEAD**

**Ripudaman Kaushik**

rdkjunper@gmail.com

**BUSINESS HEAD - Chicago & Mid-West**

**Harish Rao** - 773.973.7394

**BUSINESS HEAD - CANADA**

**Ajay Fotedar**

647.502.1251

ajayfotedar9@gmail.com

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## ENERGY SECURITY

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NEW SOURCES

**As conflict in West Asia and uncertainty over Russian oil supplies grow, India is accelerating efforts to diversify its energy sources from countries like Venezuela**

## OUR BUREAU

New Delhi

India's energy diplomacy is entering a new phase. Faced with a prolonged conflict involving Iran, growing instability in the Gulf region, and signals from Washington that it may once again tighten restrictions on Russian oil exports, New Delhi is moving aggressively to diversify its sources of crude oil and secure long-term energy supplies.

Recent discussions between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Venezuelan Acting President Delcy Rodriguez underline the urgency with which India is approaching the issue. What was once a largely commercial relationship is now evolving into a strategic energy partnership, reflecting broader concerns about supply disruptions, geopolitical uncertainty and the country's growing energy needs.

India remains the world's third-largest oil consumer and imports more than 85 per cent of its crude requirements. As the economy continues to expand and industrial activity grows, energy demand is expected to rise steadily over the coming decades. Ensuring reliable and affordable supplies has therefore become a central pillar of India's foreign and economic policy.

The immediate challenge comes from the continuing conflict in West Asia. Although Indian authorities have repeatedly stressed that fuel supplies remain uninterrupted, policymakers are acutely aware of the risks posed by instability in a region that supplies a significant portion of India's energy imports.

The Strait of Hormuz remains a particular concern. A substantial share of India's crude oil and liquefied



Prime Minister Narendra Modi shakes hand with Acting President of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Delcy Rodriguez, at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi on Thursday (Narendra Modi Photo Gallery/ANI Photo)

petroleum gas imports passes through this narrow maritime corridor. Any disruption to shipping routes could have serious consequences for energy prices and supply chains.

Officials from the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways recently confirmed that Indian ships and seafarers operating in the region remain safe and that maritime operations continue normally. Yet the very need for constant monitoring highlights the strategic vulnerability created by India's dependence on Gulf energy supplies.

It is this uncertainty that has

pushed New Delhi to search for alternatives.

Venezuela has emerged as one of the most promising options. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the South American nation has already become India's third-largest source of crude oil supplies in recent months.

During Delcy Rodriguez's visit to India, energy cooperation dominated discussions. MEA Secretary (East) Rudrendra Tandon described the relationship as a "perfect complementarity" between a country with vast energy reserves and a rapidly growing economy seeking reliable supplies.

"Venezuela has already emerged as the third largest supplier this month," Tandon noted, adding that India is seen as a stable and long-term customer.

The significance of the relationship extends beyond simple oil purchases. Both sides discussed opportunities for Indian participation in Venezuela's energy sector, including upstream exploration and downstream refining activities. Such investments could provide India with greater control over supply chains while helping Venezuela attract for-

*Continued on next page... >>*



eign capital and technology.

The timing of these discussions is particularly significant because of growing uncertainty surrounding Russian oil.

Since the outbreak of the Ukraine conflict, India has emerged as one of the largest buyers of discounted Russian crude. Those purchases have helped India contain inflationary pressures and maintain stable fuel supplies despite global volatility.

However, recent comments from US Secretary of State Marco Rubio have raised questions about the future availability of Russian oil in global markets. Rubio indicated that Washington would prefer to end existing waivers allowing access to Russian crude “as soon as possible.”

Although the final decision rests with the US Treasury Department, the statement signals a potential tightening of sanctions policy.

Temporary exemptions have so far allowed certain countries access to Russian oil in order to stabilise global markets and prevent supply shortages. Yet if those waivers are removed, India could face a more complicated energy environment.

The prospect of renewed restrictions explains why New Delhi is looking beyond traditional suppliers and exploring new partnerships in Latin America, Africa and other regions.

The United States remains the single most important external influence on Venezuela’s oil industry. Years of sanctions sharply reduced Venezuelan production and exports, while recent easing of restrictions has helped revive output and attract foreign investment. Washington now has significant leverage because access to global markets, financing, shipping and energy technology largely depends on US policy decisions. Recent US measures have allowed broader transactions with Venezuela’s state oil company PDVSA and encouraged exports to countries such as India and the US itself. However, any future tightening of sanctions could quickly affect Venezuelan production, exports and investment flows.

For India, this means Venezuelan oil remains available largely because current US policy permits it, making Washington a key factor in New Delhi’s energy calculations

India’s relationship with Iranian oil has been shaped by a combination of energy needs and geopolitical constraints. Before US sanctions were reimposed in 2019, Iran was among India’s top crude suppliers, offering attractive terms such as discounted



Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri calls on the acting President of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Delcy Rodríguez, in New Delhi on Thursday. (@HardeepSPuri/ANI Photo)

freight, extended credit periods and refinery-compatible crude grades. India halted imports in May 2019 under pressure from US sanctions, forcing refiners to diversify supplies.

However, the recent West Asia conflict and disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz prompted India to resume limited purchases of Iranian crude for the first time in seven years after temporary US sanctions relief. The government confirmed that refiners had secured Iranian oil without payment hurdles as part of efforts to protect energy security. Even so, future imports will depend on sanctions policy, commercial viability and regional stability.

India’s energy diversification strategy is not limited to securing additional crude oil imports. Policymak-

ers are also seeking to reduce overall dependence on imported fossil fuels through alternative energy initiatives.

Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri recently announced the rollout of around 5,200 ethanol dispensing stations across major urban centres including Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur. The move is intended to support the adoption of flex-fuel vehicles capable of operating on higher ethanol blends.

The government believes that widespread adoption of flex-fuel technology could significantly increase ethanol consumption and reduce reliance on imported petroleum products.

Puri has also linked the policy to agricultural transformation, arguing that greater ethanol production can encourage farmers to shift towards less



The recent West Asia conflict and disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz prompted India to resume limited purchases of Iranian crude for the first time in seven years (ANI file photo)

water-intensive crops such as maize.

These efforts form part of a broader strategy aimed at improving energy security through diversification not only of suppliers but also of fuel sources.

At the same time, India is expanding its international energy diplomacy. Venezuela’s vast reserves of oil are attracting attention, but discussions during Rodríguez’s visit also covered critical minerals, mining, technology and industrial cooperation.

The South American country possesses substantial deposits of gold, diamonds and other strategic resources that are increasingly important for modern manufacturing and clean-energy technologies. Access to such resources could help India secure supply chains for emerging industries while deepening economic ties with resource-rich nations.

The growing engagement with Venezuela also reflects a larger geopolitical trend. As traditional energy markets become more volatile, India is broadening its diplomatic outreach to countries across Latin America, Africa and the Global South.

Prime Minister Modi highlighted this dimension during his meeting with Rodríguez, describing cooperation between India and Venezuela as important not only for bilateral relations but also for the interests of the Global South.

Ultimately, India’s energy challenge is becoming more complex. The country must simultaneously manage geopolitical risks in West Asia, prepare for potential changes in sanctions on Russian oil, secure affordable supplies for a growing economy and accelerate the transition towards alternative fuels.

The search for new suppliers such as Venezuela is therefore not a temporary response to current events but part of a longer-term strategy. As global energy markets become increasingly shaped by conflicts, sanctions and strategic competition, diversification has become the cornerstone of India’s energy security policy.

For New Delhi, the lesson of recent years is clear: dependence on a limited number of suppliers carries risks that can no longer be ignored. Whether through partnerships with Venezuela, investments in alternative fuels or broader diplomatic outreach, India is seeking to ensure that future economic growth is not held hostage to geopolitical shocks.

The success of that strategy could play a decisive role in determining the country’s economic resilience in an increasingly uncertain world.



## TMC IN TURMOIL

# Rebellion, Corruption Cases and the Battle for Bengal's Opposition Space

*The Trinamool Congress faces its gravest crisis as mass defections, corruption allegations and a leadership revolt threaten to reshape West Bengal politics.*

## OUR BUREAU

Kolkatas / New Delhi

The Trinamool Congress (TMC), which dominated West Bengal politics for nearly a decade and a half under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee, is confronting what may be the biggest crisis in its history. Within days of losing power in the state, the party has been rocked by a dramatic internal rebellion, public allegations against its leadership, and a series of corruption-related arrests involving its leaders.

The developments have exposed deep fissures within the party and raised serious questions about its future as a cohesive political force.

**The most immediate challenge comes from an unprecedented revolt within the TMC legislature party. In a stunning setback for the party leadership, 58 of the party's 80 MLAs reportedly approached Assembly Speaker Rathindranath Bose, claiming control of the TMC Legislature Party and electing recently expelled MLA Ritabrata Banerjee as the Leader of the Opposition.**

If sustained, the move would represent not merely a rebellion but a fundamental shift in the balance of power within the party. The rebel legislators have effectively challenged the authority of the official leadership while asserting that they represent the majority of elected TMC lawmakers.

What makes the rebellion particularly significant is that it is not being framed as a revolt against Mamata Banerjee herself. The dissident fac-



The dissident faction has repeatedly stated that Mamata Banerjee remains their leader and has even proposed that she serve as a chief advisor to guide the opposition (ANI)

tion has repeatedly stated that the former chief minister remains their leader and has even proposed that she serve as a chief advisor to guide the opposition.

Instead, the rebellion appears to be directed primarily against the growing influence of Mamata Banerjee's nephew and Diamond Harbour MP, Abhishek Banerjee.

Expelled TMC leader Sandipan Saha has provided insight into the grievances that triggered the revolt. According to him, the turning point came after the party's electoral defeat when legislators were allegedly instructed not to criticize Abhishek Banerjee and were instead asked to applaud him for his performance.

"No one was permitted to utter a single word of criticism regarding Abhishek. Instead, we were instructed that he had performed exceptionally well and that everyone must rise to accord him a standing ovation," Saha alleged.

The claim reflects a broader perception among dissidents that internal

democracy within the party has weakened and that criticism of the leadership is no longer tolerated. Saha suggested that even veteran legislators who had been active in politics long before Abhishek Banerjee entered public life were compelled to publicly endorse him.

These accusations have transformed the crisis from a routine factional dispute into a debate over leadership style, accountability and decision-making within the party.

The rebellion has also sparked a bitter dispute over procedural legitimacy. Rebel leaders have alleged irregularities in the selection of the official Leader of the Opposition and claimed that some MLAs' names appeared on documents despite their absence from meetings.

According to Saha, concerns over these alleged irregularities prompted legislators to seek intervention from the Assembly Speaker, eventually leading to the formation of the break-away group.

The TMC leadership, however,

has rejected the rebels' claims. Senior leader Kunal Ghosh has questioned the authenticity of signatures submitted by the dissident faction and argued that the matter requires legal examination.

As both sides battle for legitimacy, the dispute could ultimately move beyond the political arena and into the courts.

Compounding the party's troubles is a series of corruption-related arrests involving TMC leaders. Investigative agencies have launched action in multiple cases across West Bengal.

The crisis has also triggered fierce political reactions. TMC MP Mahua Moitra accused the rebel legislators of betraying the mandate of voters who elected them under Mamata Banerjee's leadership.

She argued that the legislators won on explicitly anti-BJP votes and challenged them to resign and seek a fresh mandate.

"The TMC secured 41 per cent of the vote under Mamata Banerjee's name and the TMC symbol," Moitra said, insisting that the rebels could not separate themselves from the political platform on which they were elected.

At the same time, Moitra portrayed the rebellion as an opportunity for what she called a "purification" of the party, suggesting that dissenters were free to leave.

Meanwhile, the BJP has seized upon the turmoil. Senior BJP leader Tapas Roy described the collapse as "inevitable" and argued that the TMC was now experiencing the same political fragmentation that it had previously encouraged in rival parties.

The broader significance of the crisis extends beyond internal party politics. The TMC's ability to function as a strong opposition force in West Bengal will depend on whether it can resolve the leadership dispute, restore organisational discipline and rebuild public confidence.





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# New Karnataka Government Faces High Expectations and Hard Choices

*DK Shivakumar's ambitious agenda promises jobs, infrastructure and governance reforms, but implementation will determine success.*

## OUR BUREAU

Bengaluru / New Delhi

The formation of the new Karnataka government under Chief Minister DK Shivakumar marks the beginning of a significant political and administrative transition in one of India's most economically important states. In his first cabinet meeting and subsequent review sessions with senior officials, Shivakumar unveiled an ambitious roadmap focused on employment, infrastructure, education, rural development and governance reforms.

The announcements have generated optimism, but they also highlight the enormous challenges confronting the new administration. The road ahead will depend not on promises alone but on the government's ability to translate ambitious plans into measurable outcomes.

At the heart of the new government's agenda is employment generation. Karnataka has long been regarded as India's technology powerhouse, with Bengaluru serving as the country's leading innovation hub. Yet unemployment and underemployment remain pressing concerns, particularly among young people.

Recognising this challenge, the government has announced measures to fill 56,000 vacant posts and launch a "Youth Employment Bridge" system aimed at equipping young people with globally competitive skills. Employment exchange centres are also expected to connect job seekers with private-sector opportunities.

These initiatives address a critical issue. Karnataka's demographic advantage can become an economic asset only if young people find productive employment. The challenge, however, lies in ensuring that recruitment processes remain transparent and timely while skill-development programmes remain aligned with market requirements.

The government's proposal to give preference to Kannadigas in private-sector employment is likely



Newly sworn-in Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar interacts with senior police officers at his first official cabinet meeting at Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru. (@DKShivakumar X/ANI Photo)

to attract both support and scrutiny. While the move seeks to address local employment concerns, balancing regional aspirations with Karnataka's reputation as a national and global investment destination will require careful policy design.

A second major challenge is the growing rural-urban divide. Shivakumar has openly expressed concern about the decline of the rural economy and increasing migration to cities, particularly Bengaluru.

This is one of the most important structural issues facing Karnataka. While Bengaluru has emerged as a global technology centre, many rural districts continue to struggle with limited economic opportunities. The resulting migration places enormous pressure on urban infrastructure while weakening rural communities.

To address this imbalance, the government plans to establish 10,000 Bharat Jodo Youth Associations across gram panchayats and urban wards, each receiving grants of Rs 10 lakh. The broader objective is to create grassroots development platforms and strengthen local economies.

Whether these initiatives succeed will depend on effective implementation, transparency and sustained monitoring. Rural development programmes often struggle because resources fail to reach intended ben-

eficiaries or because institutional capacity remains weak at the local level.

Bengaluru itself presents another major governance challenge. The city is home to approximately 2.6 million IT professionals and remains the engine of Karnataka's economy. Yet it continues to grapple with traffic congestion, poor road conditions, infrastructure bottlenecks and rapid urban expansion.

Recognising these concerns, the government has announced a Rs 2,000 crore package for road improvements and a one-time exemption from certain building compliance norms for residential properties.

While these measures may provide immediate relief, Bengaluru's problems require long-term urban planning reforms. Managing growth in one of the world's fastest-expanding metropolitan regions will demand co-ordination among multiple agencies, greater investment in public transport and improved civic governance.

Education represents another area requiring urgent attention. According to the Chief Minister, Karnataka currently faces a shortage of nearly 50,000 teachers. The government has promised phased recruitment and better utilisation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds to improve educational infrastructure.

The administration has also placed considerable emphasis on

governance reforms. Shivakumar has repeatedly stressed transparency, accountability and responsiveness. Officials have been instructed to prepare detailed action plans within fifteen days and directly monitor implementation through regular field visits.

Such measures reflect an understanding that policy announcements alone are insufficient. Citizens increasingly judge governments based on service delivery and administrative efficiency rather than political rhetoric.

Law and order is another priority area. The government plans to establish special police squads across taluks to combat criminal activities and curb the influence of rowdy elements. Maintaining public safety will be particularly important as Karnataka seeks to attract investment and strengthen its position as a business destination.

At the political level, the new government must also manage competing social and regional expectations. Discussions surrounding cabinet expansion and demands for greater community representation indicate that balancing political interests will remain a continuing challenge.

The administration will need to ensure that governance priorities are not overshadowed by internal political negotiations. Stability within the ruling establishment will be crucial for maintaining momentum on policy implementation.

Perhaps the greatest test facing the Shivakumar government is financial management. Ambitious welfare programmes, large infrastructure investments, recruitment drives and educational reforms require substantial resources. Efficient utilisation of public funds and proper monitoring of CSR contributions will therefore be essential.

Ultimately, the new Karnataka government has begun its tenure with a broad and ambitious vision. Its priorities—job creation, rural development, educational improvement, urban infrastructure and transparent governance—address many of the state's most pressing concerns.



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# China Pursues ‘National Strategic Integration’ for its Centenary Goals

*By integrating heterogeneous resources and capabilities across diverse domains such as the military, government, economy, science and technology, and society, it constructs a complex architectural framework featuring vertical and horizontal linkages and multi-layered nesting, forming a dynamic network that encompasses the entire national strategic landscape*

ABHISHEK KUMAR DARBEY

In early March 2026, Chinese Premier Li Qiang recommended consolidating and enhancing the ‘Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities’ for the Work of the Government in 2026 at the Fourth Session of the 14th National People’s Congress in Beijing. This recommendation is to pursue ‘National Strategic Integration’ to achieve China’s overarching long-term goals across the economy, defence and security. The idea behind ‘integration’ is to make the development process faster, more efficient, and more effective. The process of such ‘integration’ requires creating a strategic system that facilitates sustained cooperation and collaboration among the concerned agencies, resources and forces across the country. This strategy aims to address the complex security challenges facing China and to provide a long-term strategic framework for realising the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

National Strategic Integration, or the Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities, was put forward by Xi Jinping. It is a system of national strategies, including the 2021–2035 Medium and Long-term Science and Technological Development Plan, the Five-Year Development Plans, Made in China 2025, the Science, Technology and Innovation 2030 Plan, and the National Research and Development Program. These initiatives aim to integrate China’s economy, political system, society and defence apparatus.

The National Strategic Inte-



For the first time, Xi Jinping used the term “Integrated National Strategic System” at the headquarters of the former PLA Strategic Support Force in August 2016 (File photo)

gration is the successor to the Military-Civil Fusion (MCF) development strategy launched in the mid-2010s. Compared with MCF, the National Strategic Integration is a broader and bolder effort to unite China’s economic, technological and national security systems to advance larger national objectives.

The Central Military-Civil Fusion Development Commission

(CMCFDC) is responsible for the top-level design, overall layout, coordination, promotion, and supervision of the implementation of the National Strategic Integration, in close liaison with central- and local-level agencies. CMCFDC and the newly established Central Science and Technology Commission (CSTC) are most likely the principal agencies responsible for and coordinating the

implementation of National Strategic Integration.

Earlier, China pursued MCF to advance defence and socio-economic development goals. The word ‘fusion’ refers to the synthesis of several distinct entities into a unified whole, rendering the resulting entity more valuable or effective than any of its individual components. Chi-

*Continued on next page... >>*



na's MCF strategy is closely linked to the country's objectives of building a strong economy and military under Xi Jinping's regime. It aims to dismantle China's traditional development paradigm in which the military and civilian sectors operate as self-contained, insular and highly monopolistic entities.

National Strategic Integration is said to incorporate MCF's development strategy to achieve key long-term goals. Various terminologies and forms of National Strategic Integration have been used by China since 2016. For the first time, Xi Jinping used the term "Integrated National Strategic System" at the headquarters of the former PLA Strategic Support Force in August 2016. Xi Jinping repeated this terminology at the 19th National Congress of the CPC in October 2017. However, it remained obscure until he re-emphasised its significance at the 20th National Congress of the CPC in October 2022. The 20th Party Congress emphasised strengthening the coordinated strategic planning between the military and civilian sectors, ensuring the alignment of policies and institutions, and facilitating the sharing of resources and factors.

At the 14th National People's Congress in March 2023, Xi Jinping changed this term to "Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities". In his speech at the 14th NPC meeting, Xi Jinping said: "consolidating and enhancing the integrated national strategic system and capabilities constitutes a strategic deployment made by the CPC Central Committee in response to the new circumstance, new tasks, and new requirements facing the endeavour to build a strong country and a strong military, and with a view to better coordinating development and security, as well as coordinating economic construction and national defence construction."

The integrated national strategic system and capabilities constitute a higher-tier, cross-domain macro-system, specifically encompassing two distinct components: the "integrated national strategic system", characterised by cross-domain top-level strategic design and "integrated national strategic capabilities", characterised by a network of deep, cross-system integration. This mega-system spans multiple layers including strategic decision-making coordination mechanisms, multi-dimensional resource allocation systems, institutional and policy alignment frameworks, and capabil-



Building an integrated strategic system means a system free of institutional impediments and barriers (File Photo)

ity integration and sharing networks.

By integrating heterogeneous resources and capabilities across diverse domains such as the military, government, economy, science and technology, and society, it constructs a complex architectural framework featuring vertical and horizontal linkages and multi-layered nesting, forming a dynamic network that encompasses the entire national strategic landscape. The boundaries of this mega-system are characterised by their inherent fluidity and extensibility, and its structural design endows it with significant capabilities for dynamic adaptation and expansion. Its fundamental objective is to achieve the optimal allocation of resources across all domains and to realise a non-linear enhancement of national strategic capabilities.

The National Strategic Integration was pursued during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2020–2025), and it will be carried forward in the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026–2030). It comprises layers such as national, global, and regional strategies, and centres on the principle of 'integration', orchestrating strategic planning, resource allocation, and national defence and security capabilities. Capability building will be in two areas: economic development and national defence and security. The integrated national strategic system will encompass 'national security strategic system' and 'national development strategic system' with the ultimate

objectives of building strategic capabilities in their respective domains.

The 'national security strategic system' encompasses domains such as politics, military affairs, territorial integrity, economy, culture, society, science and technology, cyberspace, ecology, natural resources, nuclear security, overseas interests, outer space, deep sea, polar region, biosecurity, data security, artificial intelligence, finance, and food security. The 'national development strategic system' meanwhile comprises major strategies at the national development level, strategies aimed at strengthening specific sectors, and regional development strategies. It will integrate national defence and military development within the broader framework of economic and social development. These strategic capabilities are indispensable for new tasks under new conditions, including some of Xi Jinping's proposed goals, such as building a modern socialist country, the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and transforming the PLA into a world-class military force by 2049.

Building an integrated strategic system means a system free of institutional impediments and barriers. The integrated national strategic capabilities encompass not only the capacity to maintain static resource reserves but also the dynamic capacity to transform those resources into tangible outcomes that fulfil national strategic objectives.

## CONCLUSION

China's objective behind the 'National Strategic Integration' is to build long-term, sustained strategic capabilities to support the CPC in achieving its goal of a prosperous country and a strong army by 2049. The system aims to effectively optimise all resources, efforts and forces to get the best results and outputs for the national economy and national defence and security. The idea is to create more wealth and influence and to secure interests in a relatively short time, with a high guarantee of security both within the country and abroad. However, the system will be highly centralised with a strict top-down hierarchy.

*Dr. Abhishek Kumar Darbey studies China Military that covers significant activities of China's Armed Forces, and China's defence & security issues in foreign and domestic affairs for more than a decade. His research interests also include China-Africa relations and the Chinese language, literature, history and culture.*

*Views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Manohar Parrikar IDSA or of the Government of India.*

*This article first appeared in the Comments section of the website ([www.idsa.in](http://www.idsa.in)) of Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, on June 4, 2026*

# Using AI to Fight Antimicrobial Resistance

*The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is partnering with India to explore how AI-driven tools can detect and combat antimicrobial resistance faster.*

## SPAN MAGAZINE

U.S. Embassy New Delhi

In the fight against antimicrobial resistance, the greatest danger is often what cannot be seen right away. A patient arrives with an infection, and a doctor begins treatment based on the most likely cause. But the bacteria may already be resistant to the standard drugs being prescribed. Confirming that resistance can take days, and while doctors wait for lab results, the infection may continue to spread faster than the system designed to stop it.

That quiet uncertainty is what makes antimicrobial resistance, or AMR, so dangerous. It is not just another disease. It weakens the foundations of modern medicine itself, making ordinary infections harder to treat. It is also the kind of challenge that demands better tools, faster answers, and stronger partnerships.

That is where Dr. Ashley Styczynski comes in. An infectious disease physician and medical officer at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Dr. Styczynski is in India through the Embassy Science Fellows Program to examine how the United States can support regional efforts to assess and address AMR. Her work sits at the intersection of global health, health security, and innovation, especially as the United States advances artificial intelligence (AI) as a tool to detect, monitor, and respond to drug-resistant infections more effectively.

Dr. Styczynski's role in India is to identify gaps and local priorities, and where collaboration with the United States can help make a difference. National action plans are already in place, but the need for faster diagnostics, stronger surveillance, and scalable technology solutions remains urgent.

### A GLOBAL PRIORITY

The scale of antimicrobial resistance has pushed it into the front rank



AI's role in the AMR response does not stop at diagnosis. AI is also being used to monitor infection trends, process whole genome sequencing data, and even accelerate the search for new antibiotics (Photo: SPAN)

of global public health threats. For years, health experts often described HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis as the “big three” because of the number of lives they claimed each year. AMR now belongs in the same category. “In the past few years, as we’ve been able to gather more robust data, we’ve come to appreciate that antimicrobial resistance is also on par, causing more than a million deaths per year,” explains Dr. Styczynski.

But AMR is not only a threat because of the number of deaths it causes directly. It is also dangerous because it erodes the medical tools that many other forms of care depend on. “So much of what we do in modern medicine is dependent on being able to have antibiotics that effectively prevent and treat infections,” she says. “This includes things like routine surgeries, administering chemotherapy, and managing HIV. All of these things depend on having effective antibiotics. If that goes away, then it really undermines a huge portion of what we consider essential health care.”

That is part of what makes AMR such a pressing issue for both India and the United States. It is a health challenge, but also a systems challenge—one that affects preparedness, economic resilience, and public confidence in care.

### RACE TO DIAGNOSE FASTER

One of the hardest things about AMR is that it does not announce itself clearly. A resistant infection can look, at first, like any other infection. The difference often becomes visible only after laboratory testing, and that process takes time.

When someone has a bacterial infection, laboratories typically need to grow the organism and test it against a range of antibiotics to confirm whether the bacterium is resistant. “This typically takes several days, and in the meantime, you have a patient who may not be receiving effective treatment,” says Dr. Styczynski. “This remains an ongoing gap in addressing AMR: having access to rapid diagnostics that can tell you what you are dealing with and

what it is susceptible to.”

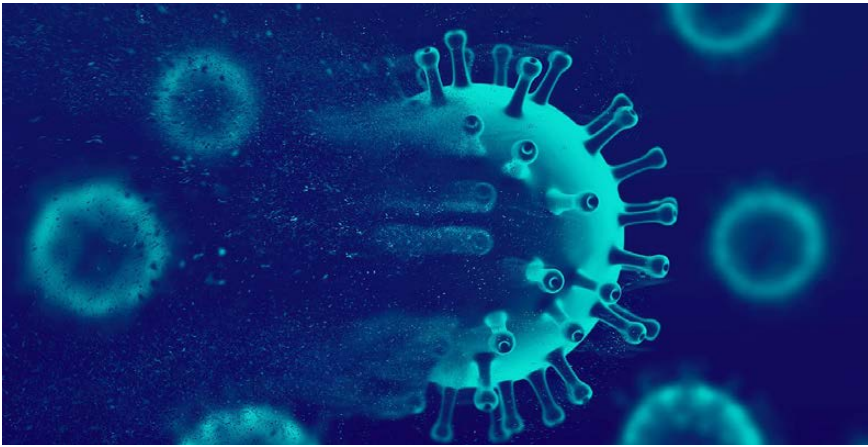
That diagnostic gap is one reason the United States is investing so heavily in AI-driven approaches. AI is helping scientists and clinicians move from delayed confirmation toward earlier prediction. “In the diagnostic space, AI, especially machine learning, is being used to do things like look at individual bacterial cells and understand their behavior on exposure to antibiotics very early, to predict resistance,” Dr. Styczynski says. “So instead of waiting days, you might be able to get a result in minutes or hours.”

She also points to another practical use of AI: helping clinicians decide whether antibiotics are needed at all. “For example, AI can help identify common characteristics of bacteria to create diagnostics that can answer the question up front: is this viral or bacterial, and do I need to give an antibiotic or not?”

For a country like India, where both scale and speed matter, such advances could make a meaningful difference.

*Continued on next page... >>*





One of the hardest things about AMR is that it does not announce itself clearly. A resistant infection can look, at first, like any other infection. The difference often becomes visible only after laboratory testing, and that process takes time (File photo)

**PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT**

AI's role in the AMR response does not stop at diagnosis. Dr. Styczynski also describes how AI is being used to monitor infection trends, process whole genome sequencing data, and even accelerate the search for new antibiotics.

“There have been several companies using AI-based platforms for the development of novel antibiotics,” she says. “Some of them can screen millions of compounds in a matter of hours to identify potential therapies.”

Another promising development involves tailoring treatment decisions more closely to the individual patient. “Some researchers have been able to use large language models to develop personalized antibiograms that can stratify the likely risk of different types of resistant infections, so that antibiotics can be prescribed more accurately while a patient is waiting for a definitive diagnosis.”

Even so, much of the work remains in its early stages. “We know that there is often a lag between the development of a technology and its availability in the rural village where it's really needed,” she says.

That realism is part of what makes her message resonate. U.S. leadership is not only about inventing powerful tools. It is also about building trusted partnerships, supporting systems, and helping move promising technology toward wider public benefit.

That includes public-private efforts such as CARB-X, which is an example of how the United States has supported the early development of new diagnostics and therapeutics, including through novel AI applications, with partners in India also receiving support.

**INDIA'S ROLE**

Dr. Styczynski's current fellowship focuses on gathering information

from more than 80 sources, including stakeholder interviews in Nepal and India, to understand how the United States can support existing national goals. She sees India as especially important because it brings both scientific capability and real-world relevance to the problem. “I think India is well poised to contribute on the technology side as well as on the microbiological side, because some of the pathogens we're most concerned about tend to come from this region.”

That combination gives U.S.-India cooperation a particular advantage. American leadership in AI tools, data analytics, and moving innovation from concept to implementation can work alongside Indian expertise, data systems, and innovation capacity. “Collaborations between the United States and India can inform these tools in a way that creates the most usable and impactful outcomes,” she says. “There is a lot of microbial nuances in the Indian context that could be leveraged to adapt and tune these models to create more useful outputs.”

She also highlights India's increasing contribution to global AMR data, including through partnerships with CDC. “India is providing data through platforms like its AMR surveillance systems, which the CDC is a technical partner in supporting. This helps ensure that we are getting robust data to drive solutions.”

For India, the promise of trusted, high-standard U.S. AI frameworks lies in their ability to strengthen domestic capacity while staying grounded in local needs. For the United States, this work reflects something equally important: making America healthier by confronting shared health threats early, investing in innovation, and building partnerships strong enough to keep pace with a changing microbial world.

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**FIFA WORLD CUP**

# Mayor Mamdani and Governor Hochul Brief New Yorkers on Citywide Preparations

*New Yorkers and visitors urged to text SUMMER26 to 692-692 to receive emergency alerts and updates on summer events*

**OUR BUREAU**

NEW YORK, NY

**M**ayor Zohran Kwame Mamdani and Governor Kathy Hochul have outlined sweeping multiagency plans to keep New Yorkers and visitors safe, informed and moving throughout the 2026 FIFA World Cup™. Today's briefing focused on transportation, infrastructure and emergency preparedness. An additional public safety briefing will be held next week to detail the City's plans to ensure a safe and successful tournament.

"We have spent months coordinating, drilling and preparing so that when the world arrives at our doorstep, we are ready," said Mayor Mamdani. "From the first kickoff to the final whistle and long after, our job is clear: keep residents and visiting fans safe, informed and supported during every moment of this busy summer."

"New York's transit system safely and reliably moves millions every day, and we are ready to shine on the world stage," said Governor Hochul. "The World Cup will be a once-in-a-generation event for our state, and whether you're traveling from Brazil or Bed-Stuy, we have a plan to get you to where you need to go safely."

"After months of planning, we are adding trains wherever fans are going to watch matches while helping to keep them safe," said MTA Chair and CEO Janno Lieber. "Moving millions is what we do, and not just when the World Cup is in town."

"With kickoff just days away, our region is ready to welcome the world. This level of preparation doesn't happen overnight — it is the result of years of collaboration among transportation agencies, public safety officials and government partners across New York and New Jersey,"



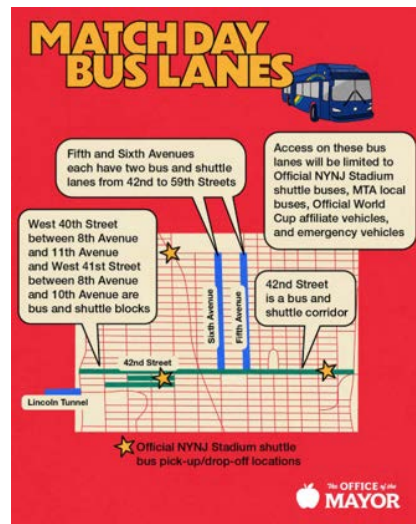
said NYNJ Host Committee CEO Alex Lasry.

"Thanks to the leadership of Governor Hochul, Mayor Mamdani, the MTA and countless partners, fans will have safe and reliable ways to travel throughout the tournament while residents continue to move around the region. We are grateful for their partnership and shared commitment to delivering an unforgettable World Cup this summer."

**Interagency Transportation Planning**

**T**he City and State are coordinating with the NYNJ Host Committee, Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), NJ TRANSIT and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) to direct World Cup-related traffic through designated Midtown Manhattan corridors, helping fans travel to and from matches while minimizing disruptions for New Yorkers.

On match days, dedicated travel corridors will operate along 42nd Street and portions of Fifth and Sixth avenues and 40th and 41st streets. Beginning six hours before kickoff and ending three hours after the fi-



nal whistle, access will be limited to NYNJ Stadium shuttles, MTA local buses, official World Cup vehicles and emergency response vehicles.

The City will also designate each match day a "Gridlock Alert Day" to discourage unnecessary driving, work with businesses to limit truck deliveries in Midtown during peak travel periods and encourage both residents and visitors to use public transportation.

NYC DOT will deploy more than 100 staff members throughout Midtown to manage traffic operations. Personnel will coordinate transportation logistics with FIFA, inspect routes, install and remove temporary bus lanes, adjust signal timing in real time and provide travel guidance to the public, drivers, the trucking industry and local businesses.

The MTA plans to run full service throughout the region on all match days and throughout the tournament to support visitors to the region and the millions of New Yorkers who rely on mass transit to get around every single day.

The MTA will run extra subway service on match days and ful-

ly scheduled commuter rail service at both Penn Station and Grand Central on both its railroads to ensure that the region continues to move.

NYC Emergency Management (NYCEM) has activated a unified citywide coordination structure — including the City's Emergency Operations Center — that will expand as the tournament approaches and in response to severe weather events such as extreme heat and flash flooding.

Built on the same Citywide Incident Management System used for hurricanes, blackouts, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and New Year's Eve celebrations in Times Square, the framework brings together hundreds of City, State, federal and private-sector partners under shared objectives.

The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and NYC Health + Hospitals have spent the past year conducting tabletop exercises and multiagency drills — including a weeklong simulation involving medical demand exceeding capacity — to strengthen preparedness across the city's health care system.

Both agencies have activated the Incident Command System to enhance coordination with NYCEM, FDNY and health care partners. They are collaborating on disease surveillance efforts to rapidly detect and respond to infectious disease threats.

NYC Health + Hospitals has established a Special Pathogen Response Team for high-consequence incidents, while its Office of Biopreparedness and Emergency Management has led operational planning efforts to strengthen readiness and train staff on best practices.



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# GLO-INDIA Hosts Landmark “Icons of Impact” Gala Honoring Leadership and Legacy in New Jersey

## OUR BUREAU

South Brunswick, NJ

The inaugural GLO-INDIA “Icons of Impact” Gala commenced with the traditional Lighting of the Ceremonial Lamp, a cherished Indian tradition symbolizing wisdom, unity, prosperity, and the triumph of knowledge. The lamp-lighting ceremony was led by Dr. Rajeev Mehta, Chairman of GLO-INDIA; H. S. Panaser, President of GLO-INDIA; Mr. Dinesh Mittal, Co-Chairman of GLO-INDIA; and Ms. Rajlakshmi Kadam, Consul (Trade), Consulate General of India, New York, representing Ambassador Binaya S. Pradhan, Consul General of India in New York.

The evening was professionally emceed by Ms. Ajooni Kaur (Sanofi) and Ms. Alicia Kaur (Columbia University), whose grace, professionalism, and enthusiasm helped create a memorable and inspiring atmosphere.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, guests stood for the National Anthems of the United States of America and the Republic of India, beautifully performed by Ms. Alicia Kaur, a former X-Factor participant. Her stirring rendition of both national anthems was one of the evening’s most memorable moments and received enthusiastic appreciation from the audience.

Welcoming remarks were delivered by Dr. Rajeev Mehta, Chairman of GLO-INDIA, H. S. Panaser, President of GLO-INDIA, and Mrs. Rajlakshmi Kadam, Consul (Trade), CGI New York, who spoke about the growing influence of the Indian diaspora and the importance of leadership, service, innovation, and global collaboration.

## GLO-INDIA “Icons of Impact” Honorees

The Global Indian Diaspora Alliance (GLO-INDIA) proudly honored an exceptional group of leaders whose achievements have made a significant impact across business, healthcare, science, technology, public policy, agriculture, and community service.

- Mr. Roop Singh – Chief Executive Officer, Version 1, Ireland; former CEO, Birla Group.
- Dr. Navneet Puri – Distinguished



Pharmaceutical Scientist and former Board Director, Pfizer.

- Dr. Pardeep Gupta – Burroughs Wellcome Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Pennsylvania.
- Dr. Badri Narayanan Gopalakrishnan – Internationally recognized Economist and Strategy Leader.
- Prof. Om Parkash Dhankher – Professor of Agricultural Biotechnology, University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- Mr. Puneet Ahluwalia – Founding Partner, New World Strategies; former Member of the Asian Advisory Committee to President Donald Trump (2016).
- Dr. Sparshil Patel – Compassionate Healthcare Leader dedicated to advancing patient care and community wellness.
- Dr. Sunil Parikh – Distinguished Healthcare Leader recognized for his contributions to medical excellence and community service.
- Dr. Sumul N. Raval – World-renowned Neuro-Oncologist and leader in brain cancer treatment and research.
- Mr. Srujal Parikh – Past President and Board Trustee, Federation of Indian Associations (FIA), and prominent community leader.
- Mr. Ajit Mannon – Chief Global Commercial Data, Digital and AI Officer, Johnson & Johnson.

These distinguished honorees exemplify the spirit of leadership, in-

novation, service, and excellence that the GLO-INDIA “Icons of Impact” Awards seek to celebrate. Their accomplishments continue to inspire future generations and strengthen the global influence of the Indian diaspora.

## Icons of Public Service and Legislative Leadership

GLO-INDIA was also privileged to recognize distinguished elected officials as Icons of Public Service and Legislative Leadership for their unwavering commitment to public service, community development, diversity, and civic engagement.

Special messages and congratulations were received from the Honorable Governor of New Jersey, Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill, and the Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York, recognizing the achievements of the honorees and applauding GLO-INDIA’s efforts to strengthen and empower the global Indian diaspora.

*Proclamations and citations were presented by:*

- Senator Linda Greenstein
- Senator Vin Gopal
- Senator Patrick Diegnan
- Assemblyman Sterley Stanley
- Assemblyman Balvir Singh
- Mayor Samip Joshi
- Mayor Neena Singh
- Mayor Hemant Marathe

The organization was also honored by the presence of Commissioner Shanti Narra,

While representatives from TiE and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) were unable to attend due to prior commitments, GLO-INDIA sincerely appreciates their continued support and goodwill.

A special note of gratitude is extended to Dr. Manjeet K. Panaser, President of the Women’s Council, whose leadership and support helped contribute to the success of the event. Special appreciation is also extended to Ms. Ajooni Kaur and Ms. Alicia Kaur for their outstanding contributions as emcees and performers.

GLO-INDIA further extends its heartfelt thanks to Mr. Raj Tiwari for his tireless dedication, hard work, and commitment in helping make the inaugural Icons of Impact Gala a tremendous success.

The organization also expresses its sincere appreciation to the Indian-American media community for their unwavering support and extensive coverage of the event. Special thanks are extended to Prof. Indrajit Saluja, Mr. Sunil Hali, Mr. Harvinder Singh, and Mr. Suniel whose participation and media coverage helped showcase the achievements of the honorees and the mission of GLO-INDIA. Their support reflects the strong spirit of unity, collaboration, and commitment that continues to strengthen the global Indian diaspora.

*Continued on next page... >>*



# GLO-INDIA Hosts Landmark “Icons of Impact” Gala in New Jersey



# Ambassador Pradhan cites New Trade Portal as Central to Mission 500 at GLO-INDIA Gala

NEERAJ DHAR

New York, NY

The inaugural 'Icons of Impact' Gala, organized by the Global Indian Diaspora Alliance (GLO-INDIA), brought together an influential gathering of Indian-American achievers, diplomats, legislators, business leaders, academicians, and community advocates, while also serving as a platform to spotlight a significant new initiative aimed at strengthening economic ties between India and the United States.

Addressing GLO-INDIA's network of more than 18,000 members across five continents, GLO-INDIA President H.S. Panaser expressed gratitude to participants and supporters of the landmark event.

**He described one of the evening's most noteworthy moments as the address delivered by Ambassador Binaya S. Pradhan, Consul General of India in New York, who emphasized the growing momentum in India-U.S. relations and introduced the newly launched India-USA Trade Facilitation Portal.**

Speaking to an audience of nearly 200 distinguished members of the Indian diaspora, Ambassador Pradhan highlighted the remarkable trajectory of bilateral trade between the two nations. He noted that In-



dia-U.S. trade reached a record \$241 billion over the past year, making the United States India's largest trading partner for the fourth consecutive year.

"The partnership between India and the United States is in one of its strongest chapters yet," Ambassador Pradhan said, adding that both countries have embraced an ambitious target known as "Mission 500," which aims to more than double bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030.

A key focus of the Ambassador's remarks was the launch of the 'India-USA Trade Facilitation Portal', a first-of-its-kind government-backed digital platform developed by the Consulate General of India in New York.

Designed to simplify cross-border business engagement, the portal connects verified Indian exporters,

manufacturers, artisans, startups, and service providers directly with U.S. importers and buyers. The initiative seeks to create trusted commercial partnerships while reducing barriers often faced by small and medium-sized enterprises entering international markets.

According to officials, the platform offers a growing ecosystem of services, including virtual exhibitions showcasing Indian products and services, webinars on U.S. market trends and regulatory compliance, market-entry guidance, sector-specific networking opportunities, and dedicated support for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), women-led businesses, and One District One Product (ODOP) artisans.

The portal is available free of charge and is intended to expand ac-

cess to global opportunities for businesses that may lack the resources or networks traditionally required for international trade.

Describing the Indian-American community as one of the most influential diaspora groups in the world, Ambassador Pradhan noted that its nearly four million members include doctors, business founders, professors, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and public servants. Their deep understanding of both countries, he said, places them in a unique position to strengthen the India-U.S. partnership and serve as a living bridge between the world's two largest democracies.

"Every great trade relationship is, at its heart, a relationship between people," he said, encouraging diaspora leaders to mentor entrepreneurs, facilitate business connections, and help create opportunities for smaller enterprises across India.

The Consul (Trade) also reinforced the importance of the new initiative during the event, describing the Trade Facilitation Portal as a trusted gateway connecting U.S. importers with a carefully vetted database of Indian exporters.

The platform, she noted, is designed to foster an ecosystem for shared growth.

As India and the United States deepen their strategic and economic partnership, the launch of the India-USA Trade Facilitation Portal is being viewed as a practical step toward translating ambitious trade goals into tangible opportunities for businesses and communities on both sides of the globe.

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- Loving-Kindness Meditation by Lama Aria Drolma
- Radha-Krishna dances by Preya Patel & Vivarta Arts
- Kirtan & Chair Yoga

### Panelists



Yakub Mathew  
Banker, Author



Lama Aria Drolma  
Buddhist Nun



Nayan Kishnadwala  
Finance, Temple Trustee



Sharon Epstein  
Yoga Teacher



Parveen Chopra  
Moderator

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# Mayor Mamdani Recommends Melanie Hartzog and Janette Sadik- Khan to Serve on MTA Board

*Mayor also announces Dan Garodnick and David Jones will continue serving on MTA Board*

## OUR BUREAU

NEW YORK, NY

**M**ayor Zohran Kwame Mamdani has announced his recommendation of Melanie Hartzog and Janette Sadik-Khan to serve on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Board, underscoring his administration's commitment to delivering a safe, affordable and reliable transit system.

Hartzog and Sadik-Khan bring a wealth of experience in government, nonprofit leadership and transportation policy. If confirmed by the New York State Senate, they will help advance the Mayor's vision for a transit system that works for riders, including his commitment to making buses fast and free.

**Mayor Mamdani also announced that Dan Garodnick, former New York City Council Member and former Director of the Department of City Planning, and David Jones, President and CEO of the Community Service Society of New York, will continue to serve on the MTA Board as mayoral appointees.**

"Millions of New Yorkers use public transit every day to get to their jobs, take their children to school and visit loved ones. They should not settle for a system that is expensive, unreliable and inaccessible. My administration is committed to building a transit system that people can count on — one with fast buses, reliable service and public infrastructure that meets the needs of a growing city," said Mayor Mamdani. "Melanie and Janette have dedicated their careers to delivering results for New Yorkers,



and alongside Dan and David, they will help ensure that this city gets fast and free buses, and that riders have strong advocates at the table. I'm grateful for their willingness to serve."

"As a lifelong New Yorker, I understand just how essential our public transportation system is to the people of this city because I use it every day and always have," said Melanie Hartzog, President and CEO of The New York Foundling. "I'm honored by Mayor Mamdani's recommendation that I serve as a member of the MTA's Board of Directors and by the opportunity to help ensure our transit system is not just affordable, accessible and reliable, but delivers the level of service New Yorkers expect and deserve."

"The New York City region works because its transit system works," said Janette Sadik-Khan, principal with Bloomberg Associates and former Commissioner of the NYC Department of Transportation. "As we enter a new transportation era, we need a transportation action plan that matches our ambitions. I am grateful to Mayor Mamdani for the opportunity to serve on the MTA Board and to be a vote and a voice for all riders looking for affordable transportation and the access that our buses and rail provide to jobs,



housing and opportunities."

### About Melanie Hartzog

**Melanie Hartzog** is the President and CEO of The New York Foundling, one of New York's longest-serving nonprofit organizations. The Foundling serves more than 30,000 people every year in the New York area and Puerto Rico and has more than 40 programs across five service lines including child welfare, developmental disabilities, education, juvenile justice and health and behavioral health.

Prior to joining The Foundling, Hartzog served as New York City's Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, overseeing the city's social service agencies. She previously served as the Director of the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget, where she oversaw the largest municipal budget in the United States, responsible for funding all city programs and services for New Yorkers. Before joining the Office of Management and Budget, Hartzog served as Executive Director of the Children's Defense Fund. Previously, she served as Family Services Coordinator for the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services and Deputy Commissioner of the Administration for Children's Services. She also led a social services unit in the

Mayor's Office of Management and Budget, and she was Director of Policy and Advocacy for the Human Services Council of New York City, Inc.

Hartzog holds a Master of Science degree from the New School's Milano School of International Affairs, Management and Urban Policy and Bachelor of Arts from Eckerd College.

### About Janette Sadik-Khan

**Janette Sadik-Khan** was Commissioner of the NYC Department of Transportation from 2007–2013 under Mayor Michael Bloomberg, leading one of the most sweeping revitalizations of the city's streets in a half-century.

During her tenure, New York City added nearly 400 miles of bike lanes and the first parking-protected bike paths in North America. The department she led set in motion more than 60 plazas across the city, including the historic plazas that opened Broadway through Times Square to people, sparking economic recovery throughout the area. She collaborated with the MTA to launch the city's first seven rapid bus lines and oversaw hundreds of intersection and street redesigns that contributed to the city's record-low traffic fatalities. Sadik-Khan oversaw the 2013 launch of Citi Bike, which sees more than 200,000 daily rides and which has expanded to become the world's largest city bike share system outside of Asia.

She currently advises mayors of cities around the world as a principal at Bloomberg Associates, a pro bono consultancy that is part of Bloomberg Philanthropies. She has assisted mayors and their teams in developing safer, people-focused street redesigns in cities like Detroit, Chicago, Mexico City, Bogotá and Bratislava, including the building of 60 pedestrian plazas in neighborhoods across Milan and assisting London Mayor Sadiq Khan with the sweeping pedestrianization of Oxford Street.





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# NYPD Announces Fewest Murders, Shooting Incidents, and Shooting Victims in Recorded History for The First Five Months of The Year

*Major Crime Declined 10.6% Citywide and More than 6% in Transit in May*

## OUR BUREAU

New York, NY

Police Commissioner Jessica S. Tisch has announced that the NYPD delivered the fewest murders, shooting incidents, and shooting victims in recorded history for the first five months of the year. Year to date, murders were down 20.9% (102 vs. 129), the lowest level ever recorded for the first five months of any year, beating the previous record of 113, set in 2014 and 2017. Shootings were down 5.7% with 247 total incidents, surpassing the previous record of 262 set in 2025, and shooting victims were down 7.1% with 289 total victims, surpassing the previous low of 309 set in 2019.

The NYPD also broke records for the month of May. In May, there were two fewer shooting incidents compared to the previous record low set in 2025 (51 vs. 53), and seven fewer shooting victims than the previous record also set in 2025 (58 vs. 65).

Overall major crime decreased 10.6% citywide (9,662 vs. 10,809) with 1,147 fewer reported crimes compared to last May. Year to date, major crime was down 6.2% (44,955 vs. 47,929) with reductions in all five boroughs.

The NYPD continued to deliver historic lows in crime in New York City's public housing with the fewest murders, shooting incidents, shooting victims, and robberies for the first five months of any year in recorded history.

"Across our city, the NYPD is delivering on its mission to keep New Yorkers safe," said NYPD Commissioner Jessica S. Tisch. "With record lows in murders, shooting incidents, and shooting victims, as well as the safest start to the year in public housing, and continued reductions in subway crime, New Yorkers across every corner of our city are benefitting from a police department that is focused and strategic. These accomplishments are the result of a precision policing approach that follows the data, goes after guns, takes down gangs, and puts our officers where and when they are needed most. In the month of May, crime plunged by 10.6% citywide. As we enter the summer and prepare for an unprecedented number of large-scale events, the men and women of the NYPD will continue to put in the hard work necessary to keep New York City safe."

### Historic Lows in Shootings Citywide

In May, the NYPD continued to deploy its precision policing approach to combat gun violence. Year to date, shootings reached a record



low of 247, beating the previous low of 262 in 2025, and shooting victims reached a record low of 289, beating the previous record of 309 set in 2019. In May, shooting incidents reached a record low of 51, beating the previous low of 53 set in 2025, and shooting victims reached a record low of 58, beating the previous low of 65 set in 2025.

For the month, shooting incidents and shooting victims dropped compared to last May with a 3.8% (51 vs. 53) and 10.8% (58 vs. 65) decrease, respectively. Year to date, shooting incidents declined 5.7% (247 vs. 262) and shooting victims declined 7.1% (289 vs. 311). Brooklyn led the city with a 47.6% reduction in shooting incidents (11 vs. 21).

The announcement comes on the heels of the safest Memorial Day weekend in the city's history with only three shooting incidents and four shooting victims across the four-day stretch, from Friday, May 22 through Monday, May 25, breaking last year's record when there were seven shooting incidents and seven shooting victims.

The NYPD's sustained efforts to dismantle violent gangs have also contributed to reductions in shootings citywide and the number of guns taken off the streets. So far this year, NYPD detectives have carried out 20 gang-related takedowns, and the department has seized nearly 2,000 guns.

### Driving Down Major Crime

Major crime decreased 10.6% in the month of May, and major crime was down 6.2% citywide for the first five months of the year, with reductions in all five boroughs and nearly 3,000 fewer crimes than the same time last year.

Additionally, across major crime categories:

- Murder declined 20.9% (102 vs. 129) year to date, a record low, and there were reductions in all five boroughs;
- Burglary declined 19.5% (871 vs. 1,082) in May, the second lowest in recorded history, and there were double-digit declines in every borough year to date;
- Robbery declined 18.1% (1,165 vs. 1,423) in May and was down 11% year to date (5,198 vs. 5,838);
- Auto theft declined 13% (1,072 vs. 1,232) in May with Manhattan experiencing a 44.3% reduction. Auto theft was down 9.6% year to date (4,734 vs. 5,237);
- Grand larceny declined 12.4% (3,625 vs. 4,136) in May and 4.6% year to date (17,716 vs. 18,576).

Felony assaults increased slightly by 0.4% (2,734 vs. 2,722) in May. Over the past several years, there has been an increase in felony assaults, and the main drivers of those increases are domestic incidents (54% increase since 2020), assaults on police officers (103% increase since 2020), and assaults on other government workers (200% increase since 2020).





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# BAPS Charities Walkathon Unites 50,000 for America250 Kickoff in Parsippany and Beyond

OUR BUREAU

Parsippany, NJ

As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, BAPS Charities launched its 2026 Spirit of Service Walk-Run, underscoring a commitment to strengthening American civic engagement. The event, marked by a stirring national anthem and united by 50,000 participants across the United States and Canada, marks an early milestone for America250 and inspires a collective spirit of service.

The kickoff was joined by Congresswoman Anililia Majia (serving as the U.S. Representative for New Jersey’s 11th congressional district) noted “I’m truly grateful to come together in a community focused not only on improving our own health, but on taking meaningful action to support the well-being of others.

By using the gifts available to us, we can create impact not just individually, but across our communities and beyond.” A Tapestry of Service: The American Story in Action While the statistics are vast, spanning over 100 cities and decades of impact, the true story of the Walk-Run is found in the individual lives it touches. BAPS Charities’ efforts are rooted in national resilience, with members providing relief after Hurricanes Milton and Helene and local families planting over 2 million trees, viewing service as a bridge between cultural heritage and civic duty.

The Heart of the Walk: The “Spirit of Service” was embodied by three generations walking side by side. From young students in New York to professionals in California, the walk served as a renewal of a two-century-old American promise: that we stand together in service to each other. “Seeing my children wave the flag at the start line made me realize that service is how we truly belong to this country,” said one local volunteer.

Strengthening Local Partnerships In Parsippany, approximately 400+ participants gathered at 3 Entin Road to raise awareness for Carol G. Simon Cancer Center: Patients who need cancer treatment services turn to Carol G. Simon Cancer Cen-



ter at Morristown Medical Center and Overlook Medical Center. They offer: Comprehensive, state-of-the-art treatment services, provided by board-certified physicians in comfortable, family-friendly surroundings Integrated, holistic treatment combining traditional medicine with complementary therapies, including nutritional counseling, music therapy, relaxation, guided imagery, meditation and yoga Coordinated, multidisciplinary treatment.

Access to clinical trials through national Cooperative Oncology Groups. Gagnon Cardiovascular Institute The Gagnon Cardiovascular Institute at Morristown Medical Center is the largest cardiac surgery program in New Jersey, known for its advanced heart care and nationally recognized expertise in cardiology and heart surgery.

This organizations are directly



impacting the lives of local residents. Organizers note that the Walk-Run’s growth is a testament to the power of collective action, drawing diverse communities together in support of meaningful causes. “Charity means making a difference in the lives of people you may never meet. Today, your support helps our patients; individuals you may never know, yet your

generosity allows us to continue this important work. We are deeply grateful. I also want to emphasize the importance of well-being: many cancers are preventable, and early detection greatly improves outcomes. With the advances in treating cancers, we are hopeful and proud of what we can offer our patients. Your health matters.”

Continued on next page... >>

# BAPS Charities Walkathon Unites 50,000 for America250 Kickoff



# Mayor Mamdani Marks National Homeownership Month with Free Home Inspection Initiative

*Program will help homeowners and small property owners identify needed repairs, avoid costly violations and keep buildings safe at no cost*

## OUR BUREAU

NEW YORK, NY

Mayor Zohran Kwame Mamdani and Department of Buildings (DOB) Commissioner Ahmed Tigani kicked off the City's No-Penalty Inspection Program, giving homeowners and small property owners access to free visual inspections of their buildings and expert guidance from June 1 through July 10.

As New York City marks National Homeownership Month, the initiative is part of the Mamdani administration's broader effort to reduce costs for homeowners, prevent small maintenance issues from becoming expensive emergencies and help New Yorkers preserve one of the most important sources of stability and wealth available to working families.

By calling 311, property owners can schedule a free inspection and receive guidance on repairs, safety requirements, permits and maintenance needs. When issues are identified, DOB inspectors will provide recommendations and resources to help property owners address them before penalties are incurred.

The program builds on the Mamdani administration's efforts to support homeowners and strengthen pathways to homeownership. Through Block by Block, the administration's housing plan, New York City is expanding programs that help residents stay in their homes, make needed repairs and protect themselves from predatory practices, including the City's first Mayor's Office to Prevent Deed Theft, an enhanced HomeFix program and a new Mortgage Assistance Program.

"Too often, homeowners only hear from government when something has gone wrong and a fine is already on the way," said Mayor Mamdani. "We're working to elevate programs that have long existed, and this one is about making city government a partner, not a punisher. By providing free inspections and expert guidance, we're helping New Yorkers keep their homes safe, avoid unnecessary costs, and protect one of the most important investments they will ever make."

"Whether you're a first-time or a longtime homeowner, it can be hard to keep up with required maintenance and make improvements. Our administration is here to help, thanks to DOB staff across the city who will provide expert guidance to property owners without risk of penalty,"



said Leila Bozorg, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Planning.

"At the Department of Buildings we know that dealing with building repairs and regulations can sometimes feel stressful or complicated, which is why initiatives like our No Penalty Inspection Program are designed to give New Yorkers straightforward, expert guidance in a respectful and transparent way," said Buildings Commissioner Ahmed Tigani. "DOB is working every day to make it easier for owners to properly maintain their properties and navigate the building process with confidence. Before hiring a construction professional, give us a call first and let our team provide you free expert guidance on your next home repair project."

"For property owners already struggling with high insurance and utility costs, these free inspections offer a unique opportunity to assess the state of their properties without the fear of large fines or penalties," said Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Commissioner Dina Levy. "As we work with owners to reduce barriers to needed repairs, we hope they will take advantage of this program. Not only do free, no-penalty inspections reduce stress and costs for owners, they also help keep New Yorkers safe in their homes."

The No-Penalty Inspection Program provides expert advice for New Yorkers to determine whether their properties are in good condition and plan repairs, if necessary. During the scheduled

inspections, DOB staff can discuss any additional building concerns property owners have and direct them to additional assistance from DOB or other City agencies. If inspectors do find violations, they will give homeowners guidance on how to correct them before any penalties are incurred.

Through this program, DOB inspectors can examine:

- Decks and patios
- Retaining walls
- Facades for buildings under six stories
- Boilers
- Gas piping systems
- Unregistered private elevator devices
- Sidewalk vaults
- Business signs

In an effort to expand the program to benefit even more people, this year marks the first time that inspections of sidewalk vaults and gas piping systems have been included.

New Yorkers can schedule an inspection by calling 311, which will connect them with the appropriate DOB unit to arrange a field visit.

The Department of Buildings has operated the No-Penalty Inspection Program since 2005. Over the past two decades, the Department has conducted thousands of free inspections across the five boroughs, helping homeowners and small business owners identify maintenance issues, improve safety and avoid unnecessary costs.



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# NYC Health + Hospitals have names Hillary Jalon as Chief Quality Officer and Manny Saez as Senior Vice President of Facilities

NEERAJ DHAR

New York, NY

NYC Health + Hospitals have announced the appointments of Hillary Jalon as Senior Vice President and Chief Quality Officer and Manny Saez, Ph.D., as Senior Vice President of Facilities Development. As Chief Quality Officer, Jalon oversees the public health care system's core quality functions, including quality assurance, performance improvement, accreditation, patient safety, and risk management, as well as care experience and wellness.

She also leads NYC Health + Hospitals' continuous improvement efforts, including growing a Quality Academy and Healthcare Administration Scholars Program and serving as faculty for the Clinical Leadership Fellowship Program — initiatives designed to build performance improvement capacity and a culture of excellence and equity across the system. As Senior Vice President of Facilities Development, Saez oversees an approximately \$10 billion portfolio consisting of over 300 projects spanning more than 20 million square feet of real estate across the health system. His portfolio includes opening the recently constructed NYC Health + Hospitals/South Brooklyn Health, upgrading and maintaining critical hospital infrastructure throughout the system, and managing a dedicated team of 100 facilities staff and 700 full-time engineers and tradespeople.

"Hillary and Manny bring deep expertise, extraordinary dedication, and a genuine commitment to providing high-quality care to our patients and the best working environments for our many staff members," said Mitchell Katz, MD, President and CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals. "Hillary has been a driving force in building a culture of quality



and safety across our system, and her leadership will continue to raise the standard of care we deliver to every New Yorker. Manny has been the steady hand behind some of our most complex infrastructure work, ensuring our facilities will be safe, sustainable, and resilient for years to come. I am proud to see both of them step into these expanded roles that will help steer the future of the city's public health care system."

"Quality is not limited to a single department or discipline — it is a shared commitment to providing our patients with the highest standard of care across every team, every unit, and every interaction at NYC Health + Hospitals," said Hillary Jalon, Senior Vice President and Chief Quality Officer. "I am deeply grateful to work alongside such an incredible team in the Office of Quality & Safety. It is a true privilege to continue building on the efforts we've achieved together to support our exceptional clinicians and staff who show up every single day to deliver the safest, most equitable care possible to the many New Yorkers who depend on us."

"I am part of an extraordinary

team in the Office of Facilities Development, and I am honored to continue to lead the many engineers, tradespeople, and support service staff members who keep the lights on and our system running 24/7 to provide life-saving care whenever New Yorkers may need," said Manny Saez, Ph.D., Senior Vice President of Facilities Development. "I am committed to ensuring that our hospitals, community health centers, and specialty care locations are safe, sustainable, and modernized to provide state-of-the-art, reliable care to the over one million patients we serve each year."

Jalon brings 30 years of experience in healthcare quality. As Senior Vice President and Chief Quality Officer, along with core quality and safety functions, Jalon also currently oversees several systemwide programs including Hospital Violence Interruption Programs, a provider recruitment effort, and continuing professional education at NYC Health + Hospitals. She brings extensive experience in quality improvement from prior roles at NYC Health + Hospitals/Community Care, where she served as associate executive di-

rector of quality, and at the United Hospital Fund, where she was director of quality improvement. She has a proven track record working with interdisciplinary teams to improve clinical outcomes, including reducing preventable readmissions and hospital-acquired infections, and has trained countless leaders in quality improvement methods.

**Jalon currently chairs the MetroPlus Quality Assurance Performance Improvement (QAPI) Board Committee and serves as an advisory board member and faculty for the Greater New York Hospital Association/United Hospital Fund Clinical Quality Fellowship Program.**

She is also a member of Joint Commission's Health System's Corporate Liaisons. She began her career at New York-Presbyterian Hospital and is currently an Associate Professor at New York University's Wagner School of Health Policy and Management, where she teaches and mentors students to think critically and creatively about how to improve health care systems.

Saez holds certifications as a Building Operator from the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services and as an OSHA Authorized General Industry Trainer. He serves as an adjunct professor in the Master of Public Health program at Saint Joseph College and in the Healthcare Master's program at Lehman College.

He earned a Ph.D. in Business Management from Capella University, a Master of Administrative Science from Fairleigh Dickinson University, and a Bachelor of Science with Honors from Fordham University.



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# Surati Holi Hai 2026 Returns to Jersey City With a Spectacular Celebration of Colors, Music, Dance & Culture

*Largest Family-Friendly Festival of Colors on the East Coast Brings Together Thousands for a Day of Live Performances, Cultural Celebration, Food & Community*

## OUR BUREAU

Jersey City, NJ

Surati for Performing Arts proudly announces the return of “Rimli Roy & Surati Holi Hai” 2026 – The Festival of Colors on Saturday, June 6, 2026, at Exchange Place, Jersey City from 12 PM to 8 PM.

Now recognized as one of the East Coast’s largest and longest-running Holi celebrations, Surati Holi Hai continues its mission of bringing together diverse communities through art, culture, music, dance, and the joyful spirit of color. The festival is expected to attract thousands of attendees from across New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and beyond for a vibrant day-long waterfront celebration inspired by the traditional Indian spring festival of colors.

Programming and live performances will take place from 12 PM to 3 PM featuring an exciting lineup of artists and performers. Surati is thrilled to present this year special guest artists visiting from India - Sumit Roy (Man with the Golden Voice & Calypso King), Rajesh Roy (Composer, film-maker and performer) and sensational multi-lingual Bollywood playback singer Pritha Majumdar.

Surati guest artists from India Sumit, Rajesh and Pritha will also be performing as part of the Surati Baul Blues Band on Thursday, June 4 at the Voices International Festival presented by Jersey City Theatre Center at White Eagle Hall starting at 7 pm. The performances will feature original compositions of the artists.

Holi Hai performances will also feature Surati leading dancers Harsha Harikumar (Bharatnatyam, Kuchipudi and Mohiniattam), Hitanshi Patel (Bharatnatyam), Moushumi Phukan (Bihu), and Masala Bhangra Founder Sarina Jain. The Surati dance team will perform a surprise piece led by Artistic Director Rimli Roy and



danced story-telling of the history and significance of Holi. Live music and multicultural performances are a central highlight of the festival experience.

“Holi is more than just a festival of colors, it is a celebration of unity, acceptance, peace, celebration and human connection. Our motto continues to be ‘When everyone is Colorful, no one is different’” said Rimli Roy, Founder and Artistic Director of Surati for Performing Arts.

Surati’s Holi Hai has become one of Jersey City’s most vibrant and beloved cultural celebrations, bringing together thousands of residents and visitors to experience the joy, traditions, and spirit of Holi. We are proud to support Surati and this outstanding event, which showcases the rich cultural diversity that makes our city so special. Celebrations like Holi Hai foster connection, understanding, and a sense of belonging, reminding us that our diversity is one of Jersey City’s greatest strengths.

-Christine Goodman, Director of Cultural Affairs, City of Jersey City

At 3:30 PM, the festivities transi-



tion into the highly anticipated color celebration featuring synchronized color tosses, live DJ music, dancing, audience participation, and interactive entertainment throughout the waterfront venue.

Attendees will also be able to explore a vibrant marketplace of local vendors and community organizations offering traditional Indian cuisine, beverages, arts and crafts, jewelry, clothing, cultural merchandise,

and interactive activities throughout the day.

Like previous years, Surati Holi Hai aims to create a truly multicultural and inclusive experience welcoming people of all ages, backgrounds, and communities to celebrate together through art and shared joy. The festival is free to attend, while registration is recommended. Attendees can also buy the VIP experience which

*Continued on next page... >>*



# Surati Holi Hai 2026 Returns to Jersey City

includes an exclusive tent with direct stage view, colors, food, drinks and private restrooms.

Surati Holi Hai 2026 is made possible through the generous support of community organizations, tourism partners, cultural institutions, and local businesses committed to celebrating diversity, arts, and multicultural community engagement.

2026 festival sponsors include: Exchange Place Alliance, Hudson County Cultural Affairs and Tourism (Visit Hudson), Newport, Neiha Kapoor – Keller Williams Realty Metropolitan and Curry On Indian Restaurant. Community partners include

NJPAC Community Engagement, Blue Foundry Bank, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of NJ, Newport Ice Rink & Racquetball and Bike JC.

Surati's year-round arts and cultural programming is made possible through the continued support of state, county, and community arts organizations dedicated to expanding access to multicultural artistic experiences and public programming. Year-round programming support includes New Jersey Tourism (VisitNJ), Hudson County Cultural Affairs (Visit Hudson), Jersey City Arts and Culture Trust Fund, New Jersey Arts and Culture Renewal Fund and Dance NYC.



# New York State Senate adopts resolution for August 15, 2026, as India Independence Day



## OUR BUREAU

Albany, NY

The New York State Senate adopted Resolution J1935, memorializing the Governor to proclaim August 15, 2026, as India Independence Day in the State of New York. During the discussion, several New York State Senators spoke warmly about India's civilizational heritage, democratic traditions, Mahatma Gandhi's enduring message, and the remarkable contributions of the Indian-American community to New York and the United States.

The remarks reflected the deep people-to-people bonds between India and the United States and the growing role of the Indian-American diaspora in strengthening communities across New York.

The Consulate General of India,

New York expressed its sincere gratitude to Senator Mr. Jeremy Cooney for sponsoring the adopted resolution. The Consulate also thanked the Hon'ble Senators and the New York State Senate for their warm recognition of India's rich heritage and the invaluable contributions of the Indian-American community to New York.

"Across the globe, Indians are making lasting impacts in their communities, and this is an opportunity to join together and celebrate and reflect on our shared history, culture, and heritage," said New York State Senator Jeremy Cooney.

"Gandhi once said that the future depends on what we do in the present. That message of Gandhi is inspiration even for Indian Americans today and for future generations too," said New York State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

"India has been around for thousands of years. It has been a civilization. It has been a country. It has been a model of democracy for actually a lot longer than our country. But we celebrate the contributions of Indian Americans to our communities right here in New York and in the United States," said New York State Senator John C. Liu.

"The Indian American community is woven into the fabric of our everyday life in the 61st District. They are our neighbors raising families here, working in critical professions, and helping shape the character of our region," said New York State Senator Jeremy J. Zellner.

"Let us continue our tradition of friendship. What we have in common is more than what separates us. We share so much, and let us continue that relationship," said New York State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky.

"I am proud to represent a district that is enriched by a dynamic and growing Indian population whose culture, traditions, entrepreneurship, and community spirit really strengthen our neighborhoods every single day," said New York State Senator Steven D. Rhoads.

"There are large Indian American communities throughout New York State. They have become integral to our communities, not only participating as business owners and civic leaders, but also academically excelling in our schools. They truly are the path to the future," said New York State Senator Jack M. Martin.

The Consulate General of India, New York deeply appreciated this recognition by the New York State Senate, which reflects the close bonds of friendship, democracy and shared values between India and the United States.



# Indo-American Arts Council Announces Sanat Chattopadhyay as Vice Chairman of the Board

## OUR BUREAU

New York, NY

The Indo-American Arts Council (IAAC) is proud to announce the appointment of Sanat Chattopadhyay as Vice Chairman of the Board, effective May 1, 2026. A globally respected business leader and committed philanthropist, Chattopadhyay brings to IAAC a distinguished record of executive leadership, strategic vision and deep support for Indian and Indian-American institutions and causes.

As President of Merck Manufacturing, Chattopadhyay oversees global manufacturing and supply operations for pharmaceuticals, vaccines, biologics and animal health products. Over the course of his career, he has helped lead major global healthcare initiatives, including the expansion of Gardasil and the launch of KEYTRUDA, while also serving on several influential boards in the U.S. - India corridor. His appointment reflects IAAC's continuing commitment to bold leadership in service of its cultural mission.

"Sanat is a remarkable leader with global stature, operational depth, and an abiding commitment to giving back," said Dr. Nirmal Mattoo, Chairman of the Indo-American Arts Council. "We are truly excited to welcome him as Vice Chairman of the Board. His judgment, generosity, and passion for mobilizing institutions will be of enormous value to IAAC. With Sanat joining Rakesh Kaul in the role



of Vice Chairman, IAAC will now benefit from the strength of two Vice Chairmen as we advance our cultural mission with greater leadership depth and momentum."

"I am honored to join IAAC as Vice Chairman of the Board," said Sanat Chattopadhyay. "IAAC has built an extraordinary legacy over the last twenty-six years by championing artistic excellence, cultural dialogue, and the creative spirit of the Indian diaspora. I look forward to working closely with the Board and leadership team to help make a transformational difference in the organization's next phase of growth and impact."

"Having seen Sanat's effectiveness on other boards, I can say with confidence that he brings both strategic strength and a collaborative spirit," said Rajeev Kaul, Board Member, Indo-American Arts Council. "He has the rare combination of discipline, warmth, curiosity, and cultural engagement that makes him an exceptional fit for IAAC. His wide-ranging interests, including film and acting, give him a natural affinity with IAAC's mission to celebrate and elevate the arts."

Chattopadhyay is a prominent Indian-American leader in the global biopharmaceutical industry. He holds a degree in Chemical Engineering from Jadavpur University and a postgraduate degree from the Indian Institute of Management, Mumbai. In addition to his corporate leadership, he serves on the Boards of Governors of IIM Mumbai, the USA-India Chamber of Commerce, and the USA-India Strategic Partnership Forum. His philanthropic contributions have supported COVID-19 aid to India, the Ramakrishna Mission, Jadavpur University, and the Indo-American Arts Council.

The Indo-American Arts Council is a not-for-profit arts organization passionately dedicated to promoting, showcasing, and building awareness of the arts and artists whose heritage lies in the Indian subcontinent in the performing arts, visual arts, literary arts, and folk arts. IAAC supports all artistic disciplines in classical, fusion, folk, and innovative forms influenced by the arts of India.

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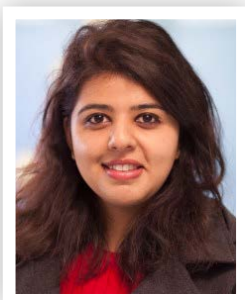
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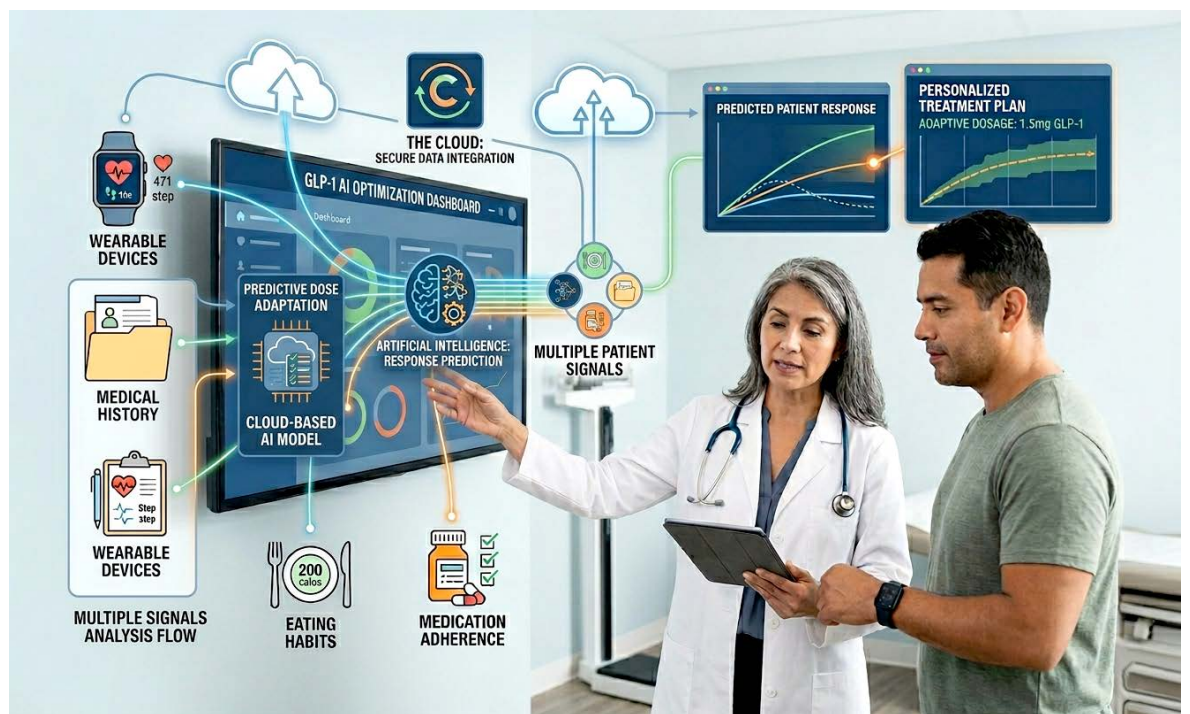
**Shivam Gupta** is a Software Development Engineer at AWS, specializing in distributed systems, cloud infrastructure, backend engineering, and applied AI. He focuses on building reliable, scalable, and observable large-scale production systems.

He holds a Master's in Computer Science from the University of Florida, where he researched machine learning and generative AI using HiPer-Gator supercomputing infrastructure. Previously, he built cloud-native backend systems and financial data platforms at Barclays. Shivam is also an active researcher and keynote speaker at international conferences covering AI, cybersecurity, and distributed systems.



**Shivai** is a biotechnology professional with a PhD in Biomedical Sciences (Immunology), specializing in life sciences, data engineering, and AI-driven R&D transformation. Currently a Scientific & Digital Solutions Consultant at Genedata (Danaher), she helps global pharma and biotech companies optimize enterprise platforms and data pipelines for biologics and bioprocess R&D using SQL and Python. Previously, at the University of Florida, she led machine learning and in-silico screening research for autoimmune disease therapies, contributing to multiple first-author publications.

She bridges scientific depth with digital fluency to build scalable, analytics-driven frameworks for biopharma innovation.



BY SHIVAM GUPTA AND SHIVAI

**W**eight loss drugs like GLP-1 medications have changed how doctors treat obesity, but they come with a major challenge. Not everyone responds to them in the same way. Some people lose significant weight quickly, while others see slower or limited results. The question now is not just whether these drugs work, but who they work best for and why.

This is where artificial intelligence and cloud computing are starting to play an important role. Instead of looking at a patient in isolation, AI systems can analyse many signals at once, such as changes in body weight over time, eating habits, activity levels from wearable devices, medical history, and even how consistently someone takes their medication. By combining all of this information, AI can help predict how a person might respond to a specific treatment.

Cloud computing makes this possible at scale. Health data is generated in many places, hospitals, pharmacies, mobile apps, and fitness devices. The cloud brings all of this information together securely so it can be analysed in real time. This allows doctors and health systems to monitor progress continuously rather than relying on occasional checkups.

Shivam Gupta a software developer and expert in ML, explains this shift as moving toward predictive healthcare systems, where cloud-based AI helps anticipate how patients will respond before treatment is

fully adjusted. Shivai Gupta an expert in digital biotechnology, highlights the importance of using biomedical data and machine learning together to better understand how the body reacts to these medications.

**However, the goal is not to replace doctors. Instead, it is to give them better tools. AI can highlight patterns that are difficult to see manually, such as early signs that a drug is not working well or that a patient may experience side effects.**

There are still challenges. Health data is often incomplete, inconsistent, and sensitive. Protecting patient privacy and ensuring fairness across different populations is critical. There is also the risk of over-relying on data trends without understanding individual human differences.

Even with these challenges, the direction is clear. Healthcare is slowly shifting from a “one-size-fits-all” approach to a more personalized system, where treatments are continuously refined based on real-world data.

AI and cloud computing are becoming the foundation of this change, helping make weight loss treatment more precise, adaptive, and effective for more people.



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# NEWSMAKERS OF THE WEEK

*Selected stories about Indian diaspora from our website [www.theindianeye.com](http://www.theindianeye.com)*

## PIYUSH GOYAL

### Minister lauds role of Indian diaspora in Canada



**T**oronto: Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal highlighted the role of the Indo-Canadian community in strengthening bilateral economic relations and deepening people-to-people ties during his three-day visit to Canada, which concluded on May 28 and focused on trade, investment and ongoing negotiations for the India-Canada Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

The visit included engagements with academia, innovation centres, government leaders, business councils, institutional investors and members of the Indian diaspora in Toronto and Ottawa.

According to the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, the engagements “reinforced the sustained momentum in the India-Canada economic partnership” and highlighted India as “a premier global destination for investment, technology collaboration, and long-term partnerships.”

During the visit, Goyal addressed faculty, researchers and students at the University of Toronto’s Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, where he spoke about India’s economic progress and opportunities to strengthen bilateral trade, investment and people-to-people ties.

He also visited the Ontario Centre of Innovation and held discussions with Canada-India Tech Connect on sectors including artificial intelligence and quantum computing. Goyal highlighted opportunities for cooperation in “AI, cleantech, agritech, and deep tech.”

In a key engagement, Goyal met Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, to discuss collaboration in manufacturing, technology, infrastructure, clean energy, food processing and critical minerals.

The minister also interacted with representatives of regional chambers and business leaders operating in the India-Canada corridor to discuss strengthening commercial engagement and boosting investment flows amid ongoing CEPA negotiations.

Meetings were also held with institutional investors, including Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan and CPP Investments, on investment opportunities in infrastructure, renewables, logistics, financial services and the digital economy in India.

The minister encouraged businesses to explore partnerships in sectors such as clean energy, aerospace, infrastructure, food processing and technology, stating that India’s “growing global economic stature is opening new av-

enues for Indian industry worldwide.”

He also interacted with members of the Canada-India Foundation and highlighted “the invaluable contribution of the Indo-Canadian community in bringing the two nations closer through stronger business engagement and people-to-people ties.”

## TIFFANY TRUMP

### President’s daughter visits Jaisalmer’s Sonar Fort and Taj Mahal



**J**aisalmer: US President’s daughter Tiffany Trump and his son-in-law, Michael Boulos visited Sonar Fort, a famous tourist destination in Jaisalmer with US Ambassador to India, Sergio Gor on Sunday.

Tiffany said in a post on X, “Having the most incredible visit to India with our dear friend US Ambassador to India, Sergio Gor.”

Gor said in a post on X, “Incredible day in Jaisalmer! Visited the historic Jaisalmer Fort and other beautiful places. Rajasthan is truly remarkable!”

Former Desert and government official Vijay Balani said that Tiffany was very down to earth. Balani said, “She did not have any attitude even after being the daughter of the US President... She saw the entire palace... When she got to know that a lot of families still live in this palace, she was shocked.”

Earlier on Saturday, Tiffany shared a picture with her husband from her trip to the Taj Mahal, calling the monument “stunning”.

In a post on X she said, “The stunning Taj Mahal”.

Both spent Saturday afternoon at the Taj Mahal in Agra, exploring the rich history and architectural magnificence of the 17th-century monument.

The duo, who are on a private visit to India, seemed to be having a great time exploring the nation’s iconic landmarks. Tiffany and Michael were spotted taking multiple pictures at the Taj Mahal.

Like countless visitors who flock to the monument and strike memorable poses against its breathtaking backdrop, Tiffany and Michael also embraced the romantic charm of the Taj Mahal.

From sharing smiles to holding each other’s hands, Tiffany and Michael made the most of their visit, capturing cherished memories at one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Earlier, on Friday, Tiffany and Michael Boulos visited Delhi’s famous Akshardham Temple.

In a post on X, Tiffany Trump described the experience at Akshardham Temple as “incredible”. *Continued on next page... >>*

MANAV SHAH

Golfer qualifies for maiden U.S. Open



**L**os Angeles: Indian-American golfer Manav Shah described his qualification for the upcoming U.S. Open 2026 as a “dream come true” after becoming the first Indian Golf Premier League (IGPL) player to secure a place in a Major championship since the league’s inception last year.

The 34-year-old will make his maiden Major appearance at the iconic Shinnecock Hills Golf Club from June 18, capping off a journey built on perseverance, discipline, hard work and an enduring connection to his Indian roots.

“It’s been a roller coaster ride. I was pretty emotional as soon as I saw that it was final, that I had qualified. It’s been amazing,” Shah said after the US Open qualification.

“All the support I’ve had has really been heart-warming, and it’s been the beginning of a dream come true for sure,” he added.

Born to Indian-origin parents and raised in Bakersfield, California, Shah began playing golf at the age of six. What started as father-son bonding soon became a defining force in his life.

“My dad fell in love with the game when he moved here from India. We would always go play, and I kind of grew up in a tough neighbourhood for a while here in the US. So, it was sort of a place for me to stay out of trouble,” Shah said.

“It obviously taught me a lot of great things about life and honesty, discipline, and hard work. So, I was very blessed that I got to start in that way with golf early,” he said.

**Shah, who played collegiate golf for UCLA and graduated with a degree in Political Science in 2015, has spent the last decade travelling across continents as a professional golfer. He has won eight professional titles globally, with his biggest breakthrough coming at the 2022 Quito Open on the PGA Tour Latinoamerica.**

The victory made him only the second Indian-American golfer to win a PGA Tour-sanctioned event after Arjun Atwal.

“Winning a PGA Tour-sanctioned event always holds a little more weight and value. That was eventually a springboard for me to play on the Korn Ferry Tour the year after. So, that win set up a lot of good things to come,” Shah said.

ICE

Agency arrests Indian national in Los Angeles



**L**os Angeles: US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Los Angeles on May 23 (local time) reported the arrest of Parminderpal Singh, 26, an Indian national, on Thursday (local time).

In a post on X, the agency said, “ICE Los Angeles arrested Parminderpal Singh, 26, of India, on May 21. Singh’s criminal record includes vehicle theft, grand theft, trespassing, and vandalism. He is in ICE custody pending removal.”

According to the official statement, Singh has a prior criminal record that includes vehicle theft, grand theft, trespassing, and vandalism. ICE stated that he is currently in custody pending removal proceedings.

Earlier in September 2025, Harjit Kaur, a 73-year-old Sikh woman who had spent three decades in the United States, shared her ordeal after she was arrested by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and deported to India.

She described her ordeal with the ICE. “Their behaviour was very bad. I was arrested on 8 September... I was arrested and taken to Bakersfield, where I stayed for 8-10 days. I was then taken to Arizona, from where I was sent to Delhi...”

She told that she was given chips and cookies for food.

Kaur, who had unsuccessfully applied for asylum in the US, was arrested by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials on September 8. She moved to California in 1991 with her two young sons and lived and worked there while making several unsuccessful asylum attempts in the US.

She was moved to a holding facility in Georgia on September 19 and deported to India on September 22, never getting to visit her US home or bid a proper farewell to family and friends.

Harjit Kaur had filed multiple appeals all the way up to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and lost each time.

During the weekly media briefing in September, the Ministry of External Affairs highlighted that 2,417 Indian nationals have been deported or repatriated from the United States since January 2025. MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal reiterated India’s firm stance against illegal migration, emphasising commitment to promoting legal pathways for migration.

“The number of deportations that have happened from the United States since January 2017: 2417 Indian nationals are deported or repatriated from the United States... We want to promote legal pathways of migration. India stands against illegal migration,” Jaiswal said.

*To read more about Indian diaspora and Global Indians, log on to and follow our website [www.TheIndianEYE.com](http://www.TheIndianEYE.com)*

# India's Growth Story Faces Global Headwinds, but New Engines Offer Hope

*Services exports, remittances and strategic reforms are emerging as key buffers against mounting external challenges.*

## OUR BUREAU

New Delhi / Mumbai

India's economic outlook remains broadly positive, but the road ahead is far from smooth. While the country continues to benefit from a strong services sector, rising foreign investment opportunities and resilient remittance flows, policymakers face the challenge of navigating an increasingly uncertain global environment marked by geopolitical tensions, trade disruptions and volatile export markets.

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Annual Report 2025-26 offers a revealing picture of both the strengths and vulnerabilities of the Indian economy. Its assessment suggests that India's external sector remains resilient, yet sustaining growth will require careful management of emerging risks and a continued push for structural reforms.

One of the most significant challenges confronting the Indian economy is uncertainty in global trade. The RBI notes that merchandise exports remain vulnerable to ongoing geopolitical conflicts and global policy instability. As supply chains are reshaped and international trade patterns become more unpredictable, export-dependent sectors face the prospect of slower growth and fluctuating demand.

This challenge is particularly important because merchandise exports continue to play a critical role in generating employment and foreign exchange earnings. A prolonged period of global uncertainty could reduce demand for Indian goods and put pressure on the country's external balance.

However, India's services sector is increasingly acting as a stabilising force. According to the RBI, net services exports grew by 15.3 per cent year-on-year during April-December 2025. Software and business services alone accounted for 77.8 per cent of the country's total services exports, highlighting the growing importance of knowledge-based industries in In-



The RBI believes that the conclusion and implementation of ongoing bilateral and regional trade agreements can improve export competitiveness (ANI file photo)

dia's economic model.

The central bank remains optimistic about future prospects in this area. "Robust global IT spending, as projected by Gartner, bodes well for India's software services exports," the report states. This reflects a broader shift in the Indian economy, where digital services and technology-enabled businesses are becoming key drivers of growth.

The challenge now is ensuring that India can continue to maintain its competitive edge in these sectors. Global competition in technology services is intensifying, and sustaining growth will require continuous investments in skills, innovation and digital infrastructure.

Another important pillar supporting India's external stability is remittance inflows from overseas Indians. The RBI expects steady inward remittances from non-Gulf countries to continue supporting the current account balance during 2026-27.

This trend reflects the growing geographical diversification of India's diaspora earnings. Traditionally, remittances from Gulf countries

have played a major role in supporting household incomes and foreign exchange reserves. A broader remittance base reduces dependence on any single region and provides greater resilience against economic shocks abroad.

Yet relying on remittances alone cannot be a long-term development strategy. The larger challenge remains creating sufficient high-quality jobs within India to absorb the country's expanding workforce while maintaining income growth.

To address some of these challenges, policymakers are placing greater emphasis on attracting foreign investment and strengthening domestic manufacturing capabilities. The RBI points to several initiatives that could support this objective.

Among them are the Union Budget 2026-27 measures offering tax holidays and safe-harbour provisions for foreign companies developing data centres in India. These initiatives are expected to make the country more attractive for global technology investments.

The report also highlights infra-

structure investments worth US\$250 billion committed until 2047 through initiatives announced at the India AI Summit 2026. Such investments have the potential to strengthen India's position in emerging technologies and create new growth opportunities across sectors.

"The Union Budget 2026-27 announcements pertaining to tax holiday and safe harbour for foreign companies for developing data centres in India, and infrastructural investments to the tune of US\$250 billion committed till 2047 in the India AI Summit 2026 augur well for attracting FDI," the RBI said.

Foreign direct investment is increasingly seen as a solution not only for bringing capital into the economy but also for facilitating technology transfer, innovation and productivity improvements.

Similarly, the liberalisation of foreign direct investment norms in the space sector represents another attempt to attract global capital and expertise. By allowing up to 100 per cent FDI in satellite manufacturing and related components, India hopes to position itself as a significant player in the rapidly expanding global space economy.

Trade agreements are another critical part of the solution. The RBI believes that the conclusion and implementation of ongoing bilateral and regional trade agreements can improve export competitiveness, reduce import dependence and expand investment opportunities. Successful execution of these agreements could help Indian companies access larger markets and strengthen integration with global value chains.

Ultimately, the RBI's assessment presents a picture of an economy at a crossroads. India's traditional vulnerabilities—external shocks, export uncertainty and geopolitical risks—have not disappeared. Yet new strengths are emerging in the form of software exports, business services, diversified remittance inflows, technology investments and strategic reforms.





## TECH EYE

# Apple's cheaper, lighter Vision Pro successor may not launch until 2028

## OUR BUREAU

Washington, DC

Apple is continuing work on a cheaper and lighter successor to its Vision Pro headset, but the next-generation device is unlikely to arrive before late 2028 or 2029.

According to Mac Rumours, Apple is still exploring a follow-up to the Vision Pro, which debuted as the company's premium mixed-reality headset.

However, the project appears to be on a longer timeline as Apple works to address two key challenges: reducing the device's weight and lowering its price.

According to Mac Rumours, Apple needs to develop a slimmer design for the Vision Pro, which currently carries a price tag of USD 3,499, before it can make a meaningful return to the category.



As per the reports obtained by Mac Rumours, the headset business is essentially "on ice" until those goals are achieved. The planned Vision Pro successor is distinct from the long-rumoured "Vision Air." That project was reportedly cancelled last year.

While work on a future Vision headset continues, Apple's immediate attention has reportedly shifted to smart glasses.

As per Mac Rumours, the company's smart glasses initiative has become a primary focus, with former members of the Vision Products Group reassigned to that effort.

According to the report, Apple is now targeting "late 2027" for the release of its first smart glasses.

The latest update follows Apple's refresh of the Vision Pro lineup in October 2025, when the company introduced an updated version of the headset powered by its M5 chip.

The reported timeline suggests that Apple's broader wearable computing strategy may prioritise smart glasses in the near term, while development of a more accessible Vision Pro successor continues behind the scenes.



# The Credibility Problem in Extraordinary Ability Cases: Why Evidence Matters More Than Ever in EB-1 and O-1 Petitions



BY CYRUS D. MEHTA AND MANJEETA CHOWDHARY \*

In visa categories such as EB-1 and O-1, evidence is the cornerstone of the petition. The USCIS Policy Manual identifies the types of evidence that may support O-1 and EB-1 petitions, underscoring that these classifications are fundamentally evidence-driven. In EB-1 cases, the central issue is whether the beneficiary has achieved sustained national or international acclaim and reached the top of the field. O-1 petitions similarly require evidence of distinction, extraordinary ability, or extraordinary achievement in the beneficia-

ry's profession. USCIS decides these cases based on documentary proof. Put simply, evidence is the lens through which the agency determines whether a beneficiary is truly extraordinary. Where evidence is central, credibility is essential. That is precisely why caution is warranted when evidence appears formulaic, crowd-sourced, or manufactured.

One increasingly visible pattern in EB-1 and O-1 petitions is the repetition of strikingly similar combinations of supporting documentation: the same professional memberships, the same categories of awards, similar judging invitations, comparable forms of published material, and increasingly

familiar expert opinion structures and narratives. In many instances, these strategies are not developed independently based on the beneficiary's unique career trajectory, but are influenced by online discussion forums, Reddit threads, WhatsApp groups, Discord communities, YouTube videos, paid consultants, and informal immigration networks where beneficiaries exchange information about "what worked" in prior cases.

This concern becomes particularly relevant in the context of paid publications, staged awards, or carefully developed judging opportunities. The issue is not necessarily whether money changed hands or whether an opportunity was strategically pursued. Public relations firms serve legitimate business purposes, some reputable awards involve nomination or participation fees, and professional visibility is often a normal aspect of career advancement. Nor is there anything inherently improper about pursuing speaking, judging, or leadership opportunities. The more difficult inquiry is whether the evidence genuinely reflects independent recognition within the field or whether it appears manufactured primarily to satisfy an immigration criterion.

There is a meaningful difference between media recognition that arises because a beneficiary's work generated genuine professional attention and media coverage obtained primarily to create "published material" evidence. Likewise, there is a difference between a respected and competitive award recognized within a pro-

fession and an accolade that appears prestigious in title but carries limited significance in practice. Judging opportunities may strongly support extraordinary ability where a beneficiary was selected because of recognized expertise; however, where judging opportunities appear carefully arranged primarily to generate immigration evidence, questions regarding probative value inevitably arise.

The concern becomes more serious when supporting evidence contains exaggerated, unsupported, or potentially misleading information. In extraordinary ability petitions, the question is not simply whether a document fits a regulatory category, but whether the underlying claims are accurate, independently supported, and reflective of genuine professional recognition. When publicity-generated articles, curated awards, or arranged judging opportunities include overstated claims, credibility concerns begin to emerge. In these evidence-driven classifications, unsupported factual assertions carry greater consequences because they go to the central question USCIS must decide whether the beneficiary has truly achieved distinction in the field.

A related concern is the increasing reliance on Artificial Intelligence to develop extraordinary ability narratives. When relied upon uncritically, AI may generate generalized expert letters, polished but unsupported narratives, or language that overstates the evidentiary record. In extraordinary ability petitions, persuasive drafting cannot substitute for independently verifiable facts. We also refer our readers to a prior blog, "To What Extent Can Immigration Practitioners Ethically Rely on Chat GPT to Aid their Practice", <https://blog.cyrusmehta.com/2023/09/to-what-extent-can-immigration-practitioners-ethically-rely-on-chatgpt-to-aid-their-practice.html>, where we demonstrate that a support letter for an O-1B petition generated by ChatGPT may be polished but superficial. It is incumbent on the applicant to provide more details and not simply rely on the AI generated product. The USCIS may also be able to detect a letter generated by AI and not give it the same weight.

This phenomenon is understandable. Extraordinary ability classifications remain among the most subjective areas of immigration law. Unlike petitions based on clearly defined educational or occupational requirements, EB-1 and O-1 petitions often require USCIS to evaluate concepts that are inherently more difficult to assess objectively, including distinction, acclaim, originality, influence, recognition, or significance within a field. Given this uncertainty, it is natural for beneficiaries to seek predictability and to look toward examples of successful cases, online discussions, and recurring forms of evidence that appear to have persuaded USCIS in prior filings.

To be clear, there is nothing inherently improper about shared information or recurring forms of evidence. Professional memberships, judging opportunities, media coverage, published articles, and industry awards may all serve as highly probative evidence in the appropriate context. Online communities may also play an important educational role by helping applicants better understand complex regulatory criteria that might otherwise seem inaccessible. Similarly, artificial intelligence can be an effective tool for organization, drafting, issue spotting, and synthesizing large volumes of information.



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The concern, however, arises when strategy becomes so standardized that evidence begins to appear curated for immigration purposes rather than reflective of genuine professional distinction. Extraordinary ability petitions are not intended to function as checklist exercises. The inquiry is not whether a beneficiary has assembled the same evidence discussed online or obtained credentials others have successfully relied upon. Rather, the relevant question is whether the evidence persuasively demonstrates that this beneficiary has attained sustained acclaim, distinction, or extraordinary achievement within the field.

Recurring evidence is not inherently weak or improper, and beneficiaries need not avoid it simply because others have used it successfully. The problem is not repetition, but the use of evidence chosen mainly to satisfy a regulatory category rather than to reflect genuine professional distinction. That is when credibility concerns begin to arise, especially if the supporting evidence is exaggerated, unsupported, or detached from authentic recognition in the field.

This issue also raises ethical concerns. Immigration attorneys must critically evaluate evidence, not simply compile it. Third-party materials, particularly publicity-driven articles,

questionable awards, or strategically arranged judging opportunities, require close review when their claims seem exaggerated, unsupported, or unrelated to genuine professional recognition. The fact that similar evidence succeeded in earlier cases does not make it reliable, and meeting a regulatory category does not prove the underlying claims are true. When factual assertions cannot be independently verified, the issue is no longer just evidentiary weakness, but credibility. The USCIS can potentially charge the noncitizen applicant with fraud or misrepresentation, which would result in permanent inadmissibility under section 212(a)(6)(C)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Knowingly, submitting fraudulent material about one's credentials can also incur criminal liability

under federal penal statutes such as 18 USC 1001. An attorney who knowingly assists their client in submitting such material can also be charged criminally with aiding or abetting conspiracy. Moreover, the attorney would also be violating their ethical obligations under the state analog of ABA Model Rule 3.3 and pursuant to 8 CFR 1003.102(c) for knowingly making a false statement, which is part of the federal rules that sanction immigration practitioners.

Recent developments further reinforce the importance of evidentiary credibility in extraordinary ability petitions. In *Matter of Texperis, Inc.*, 29 I&N Dec. 491 (AAO 2026), the Administrative Appeals Office issued a significant precedent decision confirming that USCIS may continue to preserve findings relating to fraud

or willful misrepresentation even after a petition has been withdrawn. Although the case arose in the H-1B context, the AAO's reasoning rests upon broader USCIS authority and immigration principles that are not confined to a single visa category. For evidence-driven petitions such as EB-1 and O-1 filings—where eligibility often turns on documentary submissions—the practical implication is difficult to ignore: withdrawal may not necessarily resolve concerns arising from unsupported or misleading evidence once it enters the administrative record. The decision serves as an important reminder that, in evidence-driven petitions, credibility concerns may outlast the petition itself.

*\*Manjeeta Chowdhary is an Associate at Cyrus D. Mehta & Partners PLLC.*

*Cyrus D. Mehta, a graduate of Cambridge University and Columbia Law School, is the Managing Partner of Cyrus D. Mehta & Partners PLLC in New York City. Mr. Mehta is a member of AILA's Administrative Litigation Task Force; AILA's EB-5 Committee; former chair of AILA's Ethics Committee; special counsel on immigration matters to the Departmental Disciplinary Committee, Appellate Division, First Department, New York; member of the ABA Commission on Immigration; board member of Volunteers for Legal Services and board member of New York Immigration Coalition. Mr. Mehta is the former chair of the Board of Trustees of the American Immigration Council and former chair of the Committee on Immigration and Nationality Law of the New York City Bar Association. He is a frequent speaker and writer on various immigration-related issues, including on ethics, and is also an adjunct professor of law at Brooklyn Law School, where he teaches a course entitled Immigration and Work. Mr. Mehta received the AILA 2018 Edith Lowenstein Memorial Award for advancing the practice of immigration law and the AILA 2011 Michael Maggio Memorial Award for his outstanding efforts in providing pro bono representation in the immigration field. He has also received two AILA Presidential Commendations in 2010 and 2016. Mr. Mehta is ranked among the most highly regarded lawyers in North America by Who's Who Legal – Corporate Immigration Law 2019 and is also ranked in Chambers USA and Chambers Global 2019 in immigration law, among other rankings.*



# How Music Listening or Playing an Instrument Improves Business Focus

*Music is not just entertainment. When used thoughtfully, it becomes a cognitive tool that supports concentration, emotional regulation, and mental clarity*



HIRAV SHAH

In today's business environment, focus has become a scarce resource. Constant notifications, rapid decision cycles, and mental fatigue make it difficult to sustain attention on complex tasks. While many professionals look to productivity tools or time-management techniques, one powerful and often underestimated method for improving focus is music—either by listening to it intentionally or by playing a musical instrument.

Music is not just entertainment. When used thoughtfully, it becomes a cognitive tool that supports concentration, emotional regulation, and mental clarity.

## Music and the Brain: Why Focus Improves

Music influences the brain's attention and emotional centres. Certain types of music help regulate brain waves, creating a mental state that supports sustained concentration. This is especially helpful in business tasks that require deep thinking, analysis, or creative problem-solving.

Listening to music can reduce mental noise. It masks background distractions, stabilises mood, and helps the mind settle into a rhythm. When the brain is less reactive to external interruptions, focus naturally improves.

## Listening to Music: A Practical Focus Aid

For many professionals, listening to music during work creates a mental boundary between distractions and task execution.

*How music helps while working:*

- Reduces stress and anxiety, which often disrupt focus
- Improves mood, making it easier to stay engaged
- Encourages rhythm and flow during repetitive or analytical tasks
- Supports longer periods of sustained attention

Instrumental music, classical compositions, ambient soundscapes, or low-tempo tracks work best for focus-driven work. Music with heavy lyrics or sudden tempo changes can pull attention away, especially during reading, writing, or strategic



For many professionals, listening to music during work creates a mental boundary between distractions and task execution (File photo)

thinking.

The key is intentional listening. Music should support the task, not compete with it.

## Playing an Instrument: Training the Mind for Business Focus

Playing a musical instrument offers an even deeper benefit. It actively trains the brain to focus, coordinate, and stay present.

*When someone plays an instrument, the mind must:*

- Read patterns and sequences
- Maintain rhythm and timing
- Coordinate multiple sensory inputs
- Correct mistakes in real time

This process strengthens attention control, patience, and discipline—skills that directly translate to business performance. Over time, individuals who play instruments often develop better mental endurance and sharper concentration.

Instrument practice also improves the ability to slow down thinking. This is especially valuable in leadership and decision-making, where calm evaluation matters more than speed.

## Music, Emotional Regulation, Better Decisions

Business focus is not only about attention; it is also about emotional balance. Stress, frustration, and mental overload are major enemies of clarity.

Music helps regulate emotions by lowering stress levels and stabilising mood. When emotional noise reduces, decision-making improves. *Leaders and professionals are better able to:*

- Think rationally under pressure
- Avoid impulsive reactions

- Maintain composure during uncertainty

Playing music, in particular, provides a healthy outlet for emotional release. It creates mental space, which often leads to clearer thinking once work resumes.

## Creativity, Strategy, and Mental Flexibility

Music stimulates creative thinking. It encourages pattern recognition, abstract thinking, and mental flexibility—all essential for strategy and innovation.

**Many business insights emerge not during intense effort, but when the mind is relaxed yet attentive. Music creates this state. It allows ideas to surface naturally, improving problem-solving and long-term planning.**

## How to Use Music Effectively for Business Focus

To gain real benefits, music must be used with intention.

*Simple guidelines:*

- Use instrumental or low-lyric music for focused work
- Match music type to task complexity
- Keep volume moderate and consistent
- Avoid constantly switching tracks
- Separate “focus music” from leisure music

For those who play instruments, even short practice sessions—10 to 15 minutes—can reset the mind before or after demanding work.

## Conclusion: Music as a Mental Performance Tool

Music listening and instrument playing are not distractions when used correctly—they are mental performance enhancers. They improve focus by calming the mind, regulating emotions, and training attention. In a business world that demands clarity, patience, and sustained thinking, music offers a simple yet powerful advantage.

By integrating music intentionally into daily routines, professionals can improve focus, make better decisions, and approach work with greater mental balance.

*Hirav Shah is the Global Business Strategist, Game Changer, and Author of 19+ books—trusted worldwide for validating big decisions of entrepreneurs, sportsmen, and entertainers.*

Email: [Business@hiravshah.com](mailto:Business@hiravshah.com)



# Ranveer Singh Controversy Exposes Fault Lines in Bollywood's Power Structure

*The Don 3 dispute has evolved into a larger debate over authority, due process and the future of industry governance.*

## OUR BUREAU

Mumbai

The controversy surrounding actor Ranveer Singh's reported exit from *Don 3* has grown far beyond a disagreement between an actor and a production house. What began as a dispute over a film project has exposed deeper tensions within Bollywood's institutional framework, raising questions about who has the authority to regulate industry disputes, how conflicts should be resolved, and whether traditional industry bodies remain relevant in a rapidly changing entertainment landscape.

At the center of the controversy is the Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE), which had issued a non-cooperation directive against Ranveer Singh after receiving a complaint from Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani's Excel Entertainment regarding the actor's departure from *Don 3*. According to reports, the producers alleged losses of around Rs 45 crore in pre-production expenses following the actor's exit.

However, the situation took a dramatic turn when FWICE withdrew its directive after intervention from the Indian Motion Picture Producers' Association (IMPPA), opening a new chapter in an already contentious dispute.

The episode has revealed a growing institutional tug-of-war within the film industry. FWICE defended its initial action by stating that it was responding to a formal complaint and following its internal procedures. General Secretary Ashok Dubey explained that the federation issues non-cooperation directives when members violate its rules and emphasized that the organization "doesn't ban anyone."

Yet the producers' body strongly questioned FWICE's authority in the matter. IMPPA President Abhay Sinha argued that the federation had acted without consulting the producers' association and insisted that such disputes should be handled within producer organizations.



**Ranveer Singh himself has largely remained silent. Through his spokesperson, the actor stated that he preferred to handle professional discussions with "dignity, maturity and mutual respect" and had consciously chosen not to engage in public speculation. (ANI)**

"We would resolve the issue within the Producers' Association itself and requested them to remove the ban," Sinha said, adding that IMPPA had successfully handled far larger disputes in the past.

The disagreement highlights a fundamental governance challenge within Bollywood: overlapping jurisdictions among industry bodies. As different associations represent producers, directors, artists and workers, questions often arise about where authority begins and ends.

The controversy became even more complicated when Cine and TV Artists' Association (CINTAA) President Poonam Dhillon publicly criticized the process. She expressed surprise that a decision of such significance had been taken without consultation with affiliate organizations.

"Any decision of this magnitude should involve all concerned parties. Unilateral decisions are never right," Dhillon said.

Her intervention shifted attention from the dispute itself to the

manner in which it was handled. Dhillon argued that actions affecting a major film production could have consequences extending far beyond a single actor.

"It would not have affected only Ranveer Singh. There are lightmen, technicians, spot boys, make-up artists, stuntmen, costume makers and many others whose livelihood depends on film shoots," she noted.

This observation points to one of the central dilemmas facing the film industry. High-profile disputes are often framed around stars and producers, but the economic consequences ripple through an ecosystem that supports thousands of workers. Delays, cancellations and prolonged conflicts can disrupt livelihoods throughout the production chain.

The issue attracted attention from prominent film personalities as well. Actor and politician Kangana Ranaut voiced support for Ranveer Singh, describing professional obstacles as an inevitable consequence of success.

"It's impossible not to make enemies when you are successful," she remarked, suggesting that industry conflicts often accompany professional achievement.

Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma adopted an even more confrontational stance, openly criticizing FWICE's actions. He described the non-cooperation directive as an example of an outdated union structure attempting to assert its influence.

Varma argued that organizations like FWICE are neither courts nor regulatory authorities and questioned their role in adjudicating commercial disputes. He further emphasized the economic importance of stars in sustaining the industry's employment ecosystem.

"It is stars like Ranveer Singh who create employment to those lakhs of FWICE workers," Varma said.

His comments reflect a growing divide between traditional industry institutions and those who believe market forces and contractual agreements should determine outcomes.

Meanwhile, Ranveer Singh himself has largely remained silent. Through his spokesperson, the actor stated that he preferred to handle professional discussions with "dignity, maturity and mutual respect" and had consciously chosen not to engage in public speculation.

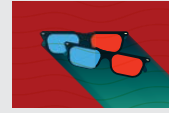
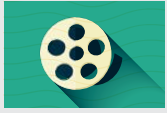
That restraint may ultimately prove significant. With FWICE withdrawing its directive and IMPPA promising an amicable settlement, the dispute appears to be moving away from public confrontation toward institutional negotiation.

As India's film industry grows into a more corporate and globally integrated business, such disputes are likely to become increasingly common. The challenge will be creating mechanisms that balance the interests of producers, artists and workers while ensuring transparency, fairness and institutional credibility.

For now, the Ranveer Singh controversy serves as a reminder that Bollywood's biggest battles are often fought not on screen, but behind the scenes.



# Bollywood Gup-Shup



## ANUPAM KHER

Actor fondly reflects on 45-year journey, struggles, lessons

For more than four decades, legendary actor Anupam Kher has remained one of the most enduring and versatile figures in Indian cinema.

From his breakthrough performance in 'Saaransh' in 1984 to a career spanning over 500 films across multiple languages and genres, Kher has continually reinvented himself while leaving an indelible mark on the entertainment industry.

Speaking to ANI, Kher reflected on his remarkable journey and looked back on the milestones, challenges, and lessons that have shaped his career.

"I came to Mumbai from Lucknow on June 3, 1981. I came here because someone had opened an acting school here. I read the advertisement, and he said that he will give me Rs 5,000 per month and a house. Unfortunately, he could not fulfil his promise. At that time, I was the youngest lecturer in Lucknow. I was around 24-25 years," Kher recalled.

## NEETU KAPOOR

Actress praises comedian Kapil Sharma

Actress Neetu Kapoor praised his 'Daadi Ki Shaadi' co-star Kapil Sharma describing the comedian as an "amazing person" who she claims has done a "brilliant job" in the film.

Daadi Ki Shaadi was released in theatres on May 8. Kapil Sharma played the role of Tony in the movie with Neetu Singh donning the lead role in the film.

In an interview to ANI, Neetu Kapoor lauded the "cheerful" nature of the Kapil Sharma on the sets of the film. She also praised the performance of the actor in the movie.

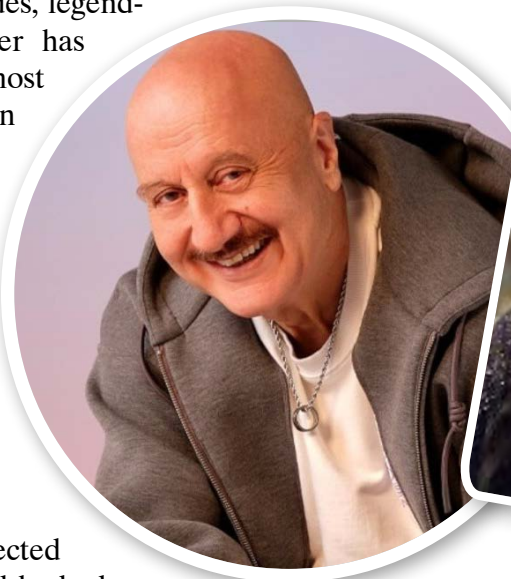
Neetu Kapoor said, "Kapil is an amazing human and he is so cheerful, it's a lot of fun to be with him. And he has done a very good job in this movie. He was not Kapil Sharma. He was playing the character Tony. He was total Tony. For a moment, you won't feel like he is Kapil Sharma, the stand-up comedian or his show or whatever he does. He is Tony, he is total Tony. And he has done some scenes so brilliantly that I told him, I said you have done so different."

## KRITI SANON

Star offers prayers ahead of 'Cocktail 2' release

Bollywood actor Kriti Sanon visited the sacred Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Tirumala on Wednesday, where she offered prayers and sought the blessings of Lord Venkateswara. Dressed in a simple traditional attire, the actress participated in temple rituals amid tight security. Kriti's visit comes at a time when she is looking forward to the release of her upcoming film 'Cocktail 2'. The film's trailer has been unveiled and Kriti is set to share the screen with Shahid Kapoor and Rashmika Mandanna.

The almost three-minute trailer of the film features a tale of chaos, confusion and heartbreak between three friends, Kunal (Shahid Kapoor), Diya (Rashmika Mandanna) and Ally (Kriti Sanon).






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## IPL 2026

# The 77% Solution: How Rajat Patidar Solved the IPL's Hardest Equation

*Some captains inherit dynasties. Rajat Patidar inherited 18 years of baggage and turned it into a winning formula*



ARCHAN MEHTA

As Royal Challengers Bengaluru prepare for a second consecutive IPL final, the spotlight naturally drifts towards Virat Kohli's enduring brilliance, Tim David's finishing power, or Bhuvneshwar Kumar's control with the ball. Yet the defining story of this RCB revival belongs to a soft-spoken batter from Indore who has quietly reshaped both himself and the franchise. Patidar's rise from an unsold player in the 2022 auction to the captain of the IPL's most consistent team is not simply a tale of resilience; it is a story of technical evolution, leadership maturity and structural transformation.

Patidar's cricket journey began far from the glamour of the IPL. Raised in a financially secure family in Indore, cricket was a choice rather than an economic necessity. Interestingly, he started out as an off-spinner before former India batter Amay Khurasiya identified qualities that would define his future: exceptional hand-eye coordination, balance at the crease and a naturally fluent bat swing. The decision to convert him into a batter proved to be a turning point, not only for Patidar but also for Madhya Pradesh cricket.

Domestic cricket became the foundation of his growth. Across a first-class career worth more than 5,400 runs at an average approaching 46, Patidar developed a rare versatility. He could grind attacks down over long innings, evidenced by a double century against Punjab without a single six, while also possessing the ability to shift



Perhaps the most worrying aspect is the uncertain future of India's younger batters like Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Tilak Varma (ANI file photo)

gears dramatically, highlighted by his 68-ball Ranji Trophy hundred against Haryana. By the time he led Madhya Pradesh to its historic Ranji Trophy triumph in 2022, he had already built a game sophisticated enough for the highest level.

Ironically, his IPL breakthrough arrived only after rejection. His first season with RCB in 2021 yielded just 71 runs and resulted in his release. Worse followed when he went unsold in the 2022 mega auction. For many players, that would have been the end of the road. Instead, fate intervened when an injury to Luvnith Sisodia opened a replacement slot at RCB. Patidar, reportedly preparing for his wedding, accepted the late call-up and altered the trajectory of his career.

The response was immediate. His unbeaten 112 against Lucknow Super Giants in the 2022 Eliminator remains one of the most iconic playoff innings in IPL history, making him the first uncapped player to score a century in the

knockouts. Yet the next challenge arrived quickly. An Achilles injury ruled him out of the entire 2023 season and threatened to halt his momentum. Rehabilitation, however, became another chapter of growth. He returned stronger in 2024, and by 2025 RCB had handed him one of the most scrutinised jobs in franchise cricket: captaincy.

When RCB handed Patidar the captaincy in 2025, replacing high-profile leaders like Virat Kohli and Faf du Plessis, skepticism was inevitable. But Patidar's strength lay in clarity rather than celebrity. Working closely with Andy Flower, Mo Bobat and Dinesh Karthik, he built a collaborative culture that ended RCB's 18-year title drought. Simultaneously, his batting evolved into a formidable weapon, producing 486 runs at a strike rate of nearly 197 this season, highlighted by a stunning 93\* off 33 balls against Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 1.

That innings against GT also symbolised RCB's larger transfor-

mation. For years, the franchise revolved around individual brilliance. Today, it thrives on structure. Kohli remains central, but he is no longer carrying the weight alone. The batting has depth, the bowling has discipline and the leadership has stability. Patidar has become the bridge between RCB's emotional past and its methodical present.

His record reflects that shift. With 21 wins in 31 matches, Patidar's 77 percent win rate is the highest among IPL captains with more than one season in charge. More importantly, he has turned RCB from perennial entertainers into serial contenders.

The remarkable part isn't that Rajat Patidar changed RCB. It's that he did it so quietly that the rest of the IPL only noticed after the blueprint was already complete.

*Archan Mehta is a writer dedicated to telling compelling stories about athletes, teams, and the world of cricket*

# A case for the invisible assist — Why Cricket Needs an ‘Assist’ Column

*Cricket doesn't lack appreciation for fielding; it lacks the language to preserve it. An assist column would honour the invisible hand that shapes the game's most defining moments*

NILESH D. MEHTA

In sport, memory lives in numbers and often dominates discussions across eras. Scorecards eventually become history, though for many fans, they are much more.

Ardent baseball fans treat scorecards as precious collectibles, while cricket enthusiasts can swear by a legendary “ton” or a definitive “five-fer” in a specific Test match. Yet, truth often slips through the gaps, much like a cover drive imperiously threaded between point and mid-off.

Baseball offers a clinical verdict: a batter is retired, and the scorecard records the outcome with total indifference. It matters little whether a fielder hauls in the ball at full stretch in right field or if it settles comfortably into a waiting glove in centre. The act is completed, the moment fades, and the numbers move on—offering no room for the artistry of the effort.

## A LESSON FROM THE HARDWOOD

Basketball has always had an answer to this conundrum. For the Los Angeles Lakers, whenever Earvin “Magic” Johnson threaded a pass to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the finish was only half the act. The assist carried weight, etched into the record books as a vital statistic.

In basketball, the creator and the completer share the spotlight, ensuring that fans and history books alike acknowledge the setup as much as the score.

Brothers of destruction: Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar formed one of the deadliest combinations in NBA, leading the attack for Los Angeles Lakers.

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE GAME

Statisticians in cricket seemingly had a different idea. Perhaps pioneers like Bill Frindall, B.B. Mama, Anandji Dossa, and Sudhir Vaidya never anticipated the acrobatic artistry of a Suryakumar Yadav at the Kensington Oval in 2024 or a Shreyas Iyer in 2026.

Cricket commentary celebrates the late swing and the diving stop; it applauds fielding brilliance with roars and endless replays. Yet, when the dust settles, the record often ignores this evolving dimension of the game. During a telecast, we are now accustomed to wagon wheels, Manhattan charts, and “the worm”—visual aids that add spice to an already well-made biryani—but the scorecard remains stubbornly static.



Shreyas Iyer did not really take the catch of Hardik Pandya, but he played the most significant role in the dismissal | Photo Credit: PTI

## THE WANKHEDE MIRACLE

A recent night at the Wankhede Stadium during the 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL) season provided a jarring reminder of this oversight.

In the 24th match between the Punjab Kings and Mumbai Indians, the ball sailed toward the boundary in the 18th over. Shreyas Iyer produced a moment of pure theatre.

Stationed at long-on, he sprinted to his left, launched himself into the air, and plucked the ball from the sky. Mid-flight, as gravity pulled him toward the rope, instinct took over. He flicked the ball back into play just as he crossed the boundary, where Xavier Bartlett completed the relay. Hardik Pandya was sent on his way, and the stadium erupted.

Ask anyone who “took” that catch, and the name they say will be Iyer. Yet, look at the scorecard, and Iyer’s name is nowhere to be found. In the history books, he doesn’t even receive an asterisk for this breathtaking fusion of athleticism, awareness, and timing.

Similarly, when a catch bursts from the grasp of a diving first-slip fielder and is safely completed by a teammate at second slip, the scorecard credits only the finisher, leaving the initial effort, often the defining act, without even a mention.

## A CALL FOR CHANGE

The typical line on a scorecard reads: “c Fielder b Bowler.” Even if a substitute or an “Impact Player” takes the catch, their name is recognised. But in a relay situation, the player who does the heavy lifting—the “creator”—is erased from the official narrative.

Cricket has evolved in almost every other dimension. Technology provides mountains of data for batters, bowlers, and coaches, yet we lack the statistical language to preserve teamwork in motion. The boundary relay catch is the purest example of a collaborative effort; without the first player, the second does not exist.

Imagine a child twenty years from now speaking about their father’s legendary catch. They pull up the scorecard to prove it, only to find a name that isn’t his. What do they point to? The video might survive in fragments, but the numbers—sport’s most trusted storytellers—will remain silent.

Cricket doesn’t lack appreciation for fielding; it lacks the language to preserve it. An assist column wouldn’t just change a statistic; it would honour the invisible hand that shapes the game’s most defining moments. In a sport that prides itself on detail, this is one detail that has waited long enough to be seen. (Courtesy: Sportsstar)



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