

May 2024

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# WELCOME TO THE MAY EDITION OF A BETTER WFY!

By Melwyn Williams

## Hello May!

### From the Editor's Desk!

#### *Hello, esteemed readers.*

Welcome to the May edition of The WFY, an international magazine that proudly celebrates the diverse and dynamic Indian Diaspora around the world. We immerse ourselves in a dynamic blend of current events and the strength of our community as we explore the captivating content within these pages.

In a fast-paced world filled with ever-evolving trends, it is essential to remain knowledgeable and actively involved. In this edition, we explore the intricate web of global events and delve into the significant impact of the Indian community in shaping history. Prepare yourself for an enthralling mix of information, motivation, and heartwarming tales.

Our cover story celebrates an iconic figure in Indian cinema, delving into the enchanting qualities that have solidified his status as a legendary performer. The cover story beautifully captures the lasting impact of this cultural icon on both the silver screen and the hearts of millions.

Stepping away from the world of entertainment, we delve into the complex world of global politics. Selvan Durairaj delves into the ramifications of the UK's deportation plan for undocumented migrants, serving as a poignant reminder of the significance of empathy when navigating intricate global issues. Meanwhile, another article takes us across the oceans to investigate the influence of Indian elections on the Bay Area, uncovering unexpected connections that span continents.

Within the realm of human interests and social pursuits, our esteemed WFY Bureau India presents a collection of truly remarkable stories that challenge conventional notions of age and surpass expectations. Explore the inspiring stories of individuals who regain control of their lives while remaining determined in "Age No Bar" by WFY BUREAU India.

Experience the groundbreaking journey of Meena, the trailblazing Sarpanch of Vyara, and honour the remarkable resilience of an exceptionally powerful woman by Naisa Varghese. These stories are truly inspiring, encouraging us to overcome obstacles and support each other.

Next up, we have Dr. Amit Kant Singh and Dr. Anamika Singh shedding light on the crucial aspects of sleep hygiene, putting health and wellness in the spotlight. Discover the inspiring story of a man from the UK who rediscovers hope and regains the ability to walk, showcasing the remarkable resilience of the human body. Discover the incredible benefits of Indian spices that can truly enhance your overall well-being, brought to you by WFY BUREAU India.

In the Lifestyle section, indulge in the vibrant hues of California's breathtaking superbloom, beautifully captured by WFY Bureau USA. Discover the vibrant celebration of Asian Heritage Month in North America, thoughtfully curated by Tushar Unadkat. For all the fashion enthusiasts out there, Ridhima Kapoor is here to present you with some essential fashion tips that will not only enhance your appearance but also boost your confidence.

Our featured section is filled with an abundance of captivating cultural wonders. Step into Sudha KK's poetry world, where she takes us on a journey through her friend's bookshelf, revealing a treasure trove of literary masterpieces that transcend borders. ESCAPADE, a captivating creation by Rema Pisharody, reveals the sheer delight of impromptu escapades that bring us closer to the essence of existence. Sarmistha encourages readers to appreciate the beauty of patience in her literary piece, "The Glory of Wait." In a captivating tale, Kavya Patel guides us through the enchanting world of Cannes, where the extraordinary journey of Kerala nurses unfolds, leaving an unforgettable impression on the picturesque French Riviera.

As a masterful storyteller, Arijita beautifully captures the essence of a tranquil mountain getaway, immersing readers in a world of serenity and wonder.

As we delve into this captivating journey, it is impossible to underestimate the significant impact of the Indian Diaspora in academia, economy, technology, and sport. In this edition, we delve into Germany's growing affinity for Indian students, investigating the impact of the Indian Diaspora on the economy. We also explore the West's increasing reliance on the East for financial services, while showcasing the groundbreaking work of our global community of scientists.

Finally, we pay tribute to the remarkable Indian-origin chess player, Anish Giri, who captivates us with his brilliant strategy, unwavering determination, and remarkable resilience in the game.

Dear readers, in this edition, we passionately urge for a sense of unity and peace. It is our duty as leaders to set a positive example, unite people, and foster a welcoming environment that respects and appreciates everyone's voice. Let us, as visionary leaders, embrace the wisdom of our ancestors and pave the way for a future filled with unity, inspiration, and prosperity for all of humanity.

Stay involved, show empathy, and let's work together to lead the way.

Experience a delightful and enlightening journey as you explore the May edition of The WFY!

Best regards,

Namaste

-MELWYN WILLIAMS  
Editor-in-Chief,  
The WFY Magazine



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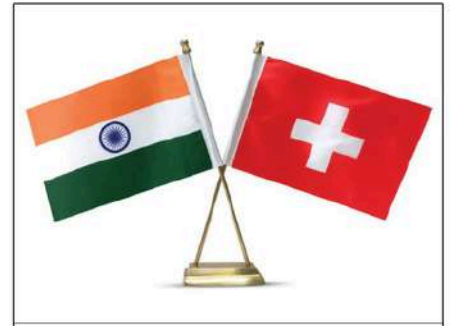


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# Here Is The Greatest Showman Of Indian Cinema.



By Melwyn Williams

With the massive triumph of *Andaz* and *Barsaat*, Kapoor quickly rose to become one of the top male stars of his era, alongside Dilip Kumar and Dev Anand. The following year, he further established his status as a star by delivering successful performances in *Sargam* and *Dastan*, starring alongside

The greatest showman of Indian cinema was not only an exceptional actor and director but also a true legend. His immense contribution and unparalleled legacy can still be felt in Bollywood today and will likely be cherished for generations to come.

Raj Kapoor's popularity extends beyond the former Soviet bloc countries, solidifying his place in history due to his notable and sometimes controversial work. Ranbir Raj Kapoor, often hailed as the "greatest showman of Hindi cinema," may appear as an anomaly to modern moviegoers.

An acclaimed figure in the world of cinema, Kapoor stood out among his peers and gained international recognition, particularly in the former Soviet bloc countries. He challenged conventional industry norms and carved a unique trajectory for himself. Let us look into the remarkable journey of the Padma Bhushan awardee.

## An Introduction to the World of Hindi Cinema

Known for his striking blue eyes, Raj was considered the favoured member of the Kapoor family. As a young teenager, he made the bold decision to leave his education behind in order to pursue a career as an assistant producer in a studio.

In 1935, Kapoor made his first appearance at the age of 10 in Debaki Bose's *Inquilab*. After some time, he became a part of his father's company, Prithvi Theatre, taking on roles as both an actor and a backstage manager.

Kapoor starred in multiple films before achieving success with a prominent role in the 1947 film *Neel Kamal*, in which he acted alongside Madhubala.

He achieved a remarkable feat by becoming the youngest director of his time and establishing his own production company, R.K. Films, in 1948. By the age of 21, he had already made his directorial debut and showcased his acting skills in his first major film, *Aag*. His success solidified his reputation as a formidable presence. It also motivated him to create *Barsaat*, which became one of the most successful films of the decade.

Mehboob Khan's romantic drama *Andaz*, starring Dilip Kumar and Nargis, was a massive success at the box office. Following *Andaz*'s massive success, he went on to direct and produce *Barsaat*. The film surpassed its predecessor and became a massive blockbuster, breaking the record of the film *Kismet*, which was previously the highest grossing film of all time.

Rehana and the renowned actress Suraiya, respectively. His directorial debut, *Awara* (1951), a film widely acclaimed for its captivating story and innovative approach to the subject matter, marked the pinnacle of his career. The film became a sensation not only in India but also across the Arab world and the former USSR, thanks to Kapoor's exceptional performance and its captivating music.

The song 'Awara Hoon' continues to resonate in China, Russia, Turkey, and other Asian countries, capturing the hearts of listeners even today.



Kapoor's films were incredibly popular in the USSR, leading to a peak in Hindi cinema's popularity. Nimai Ghosh's *Chinnamul* was the inaugural film to hit the screens, but it was Kapoor's Chaplinesque performances that truly resonated with the viewers.

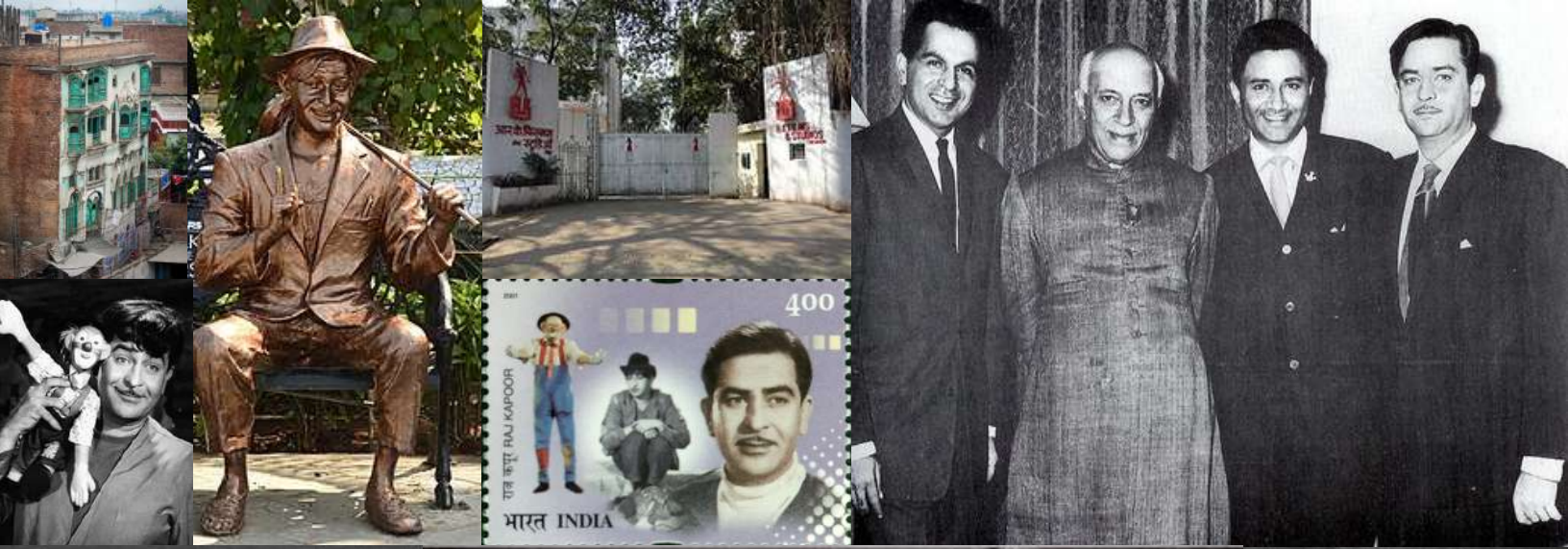
Throughout his body of work, Kapoor emerged as a beacon of hope for the audience. His comical walk and goofy smile brought to life innocent do-gooders and hopelessly romantic characters, whether it was in *Shree 420* (1955), *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* (1960), or any of the other films he directed or acted in. Two of his directorial ventures are considered significant achievements in Hindi cinema. In *Mera Naam Joker* (1970), Kapoor took a bold approach to storytelling, resulting in a film that spanned over four hours, with two intervals included. In *Bobby* (1973), which served as a launchpad for his son Rishi Kapoor, Kapoor established a timeless



Many people consider the 1940s and 1960s to be the golden age of Hindi cinema. It's no coincidence that Raj Kapoor, a man of immense talent, left an indelible mark on that era through his acting and producing skills. He has directed some of the most iconic Bollywood films and showcased beloved Hindi songs.

Raj Kapoor is widely recognised as a legendary figure in Indian cinema, earning him the title of The Greatest Showman in the eyes of the Indian media. Experts in film history and avid movie enthusiasts often refer to him as the Indian cinema's equivalent of Charlie Chaplin. This is because he frequently played a character resembling a tramp who, despite facing challenges, remained optimistic and true to his values.





formula for love stories that remains popular to this day.

### The Allure of His Films

Some of his other directorial ventures were perceived as a unique blend of progressiveness and commercial appeal, thanks to his portrayal of romance and sensuality.

From Vyjayanthimala seducing her husband in Sangam to a saree-clad Mandakini dancing about a waterfall in Ram Teri Ganga Maili, Kapoor fearlessly captured the allure of his female leads. Critics accused him of concealing a hidden agenda behind his ostensibly progressive stance on sex and nudity, implying that his genuine intent was merely to amuse and thrill his audience.

Nevertheless, Kapoor's films, even though they had a clear element of spectacle, always fearlessly portrayed the realities of society.

### What Makes Raj Kapoor Such An Iconic Actor In India?

Raj Kapoor is widely regarded as an iconic actor in India due to his immense contributions to the Indian film industry. He had a versatile career in the Hindi film industry, also known as Bollywood, where he excelled as an actor, director, and producer.

Raj Kapoor was an incredibly accomplished actor, starring in a multitude of films throughout his illustrious career. He had a reputation for his effortless portrayal of complex characters, showcasing a natural acting style. He brought forth a range of fresh trends and techniques in Indian cinema, such as the art of close-ups and the fusion of Western-style music and dance into Indian films.

Raj Kapoor's accomplishments extended beyond his acting career, as he achieved great success as a film producer and director. He established his production company, RK Films, which produced a multitude of highly acclaimed films during that time. He is known for his iconic films such as "Awaara," "Shree 420," and "Mera Naam Joker."

One movie that didn't fare well at the box office was Mera Naam Joker (1970). This movie held a special place in his heart. However, certain films are ahead of their time. Today, people widely regard it as a timeless film that has garnered immense respect and adoration over the years. Everyone was in awe of what was a genuinely amazing performance.

It is said that Raj Kapoor thought about being a music director before he decided to become an actor. Maybe that's why Raj Kapoor-directed films are known for featuring some of the most exceptional compositions, lyrics, and Hindi songs. Music directors and singing legends have frequently shared stories about Raj Kapoor's unwavering dedication to perfecting songs and lyrics. He had a keen eye for selecting singers for his films, too.

He has a collection of popular songs, such as Pyaar Hua Ikraar Hua from Shree420, Ek Din Bik Jayega Mati Ke Mol from Dharam Karam, Ae Bhai Zara Dekh Ke Chalo from Mera Naam Joker, Ramaiya Vastavaiya from Shree420, and Dost Dost Na Raha from Sangam.

Mukesh performed the majority of the songs, while Manna Dey contributed to a few of them. He found Mukesh's voice incredibly moving, and it became Raj Kapoor's voice in movies. Discover an exclusive compilation of Raj Kapoor songs on Saregama Carvaan Premium.

One of the standout moments was the spontaneous road songs or cheerful street songs

that he brought to the movies. A few examples include the songs "Awaraz Hoon" from the 1951 film "Awaraz," "Mera Joota Hai Japani," and "Dil ka Haal Sune Dil Wala" from the 1955 film "Shree 420." These classic tunes became an instant sensation. Everyone adored and sang the songs, transforming the kind-hearted wanderer into a heartthrob.

### Personal Life

Raj Kapoor's birthplace was the grand Kapoor Haveli, a magnificent house in the Qissa Khwani Bazaar neighbourhood of Peshawar, British India. He was born into a prestigious Punjabi Hindu family, specifically the Kapoor clan, who were part of the Dhari Ghar Khatri community. His parents were Ramsarni Devi Kapoor and Prithviraj Kapoor.

The Kapoor family hails from Samundri, a town in the Lyallpur District of Punjab Province, British India. He was the oldest of six children in the family. He came from a prestigious lineage, with notable ancestors including Dewan Basheshwarnath Kapoor, Dewan Keshavmal Kapoor, and Dewan Murli Mal Kapoor. His illustrious heritage placed him firmly within the renowned Kapoor family. He had two brothers, Shammi Kapoor and Shashi Kapoor, who were well-known actors. He had a sister named Urmila Sial, too. Two additional siblings passed away in infancy. The Kapoor family eventually relocated from Peshawar, North-West Frontier Province, to Bombay, Bombay Presidency, for both their residence and education.

He shares a familial connection with actor Trilok Kapoor, who happens to be his father, Prithviraj Kapoor's younger brother. His father's sister's son was actor Subbiraj, making him his first cousin.

It's interesting to note that his father's cousin happens to be Surinder Kapoor, a well-known film producer. Surinder Kapoor's children have also made a name for themselves in the film industry: Boney Kapoor as a producer, and Anil Kapoor and Sanjay Kapoor as actors.

His father had some talented relatives in the acting industry, including Kamal Kapoor, Ravindra Kapoor, and Nandkishore Kapoor. It is worth mentioning that Kamal Kapoor's grandson happens to be filmmaker Goldie Behl. There is a fascinating connection within his family. His first maternal cousin, Juggal Kishore Mehra, was a singer. Coincidentally, Juggal Kishore Mehra's step-granddaughter, Salma Agha, later pursued a career in acting and singing.

As Prithviraj travelled from one city to another in the 1930s, his family also had to relocate. Raj Kapoor has had the opportunity to attend a variety of prestigious schools throughout his academic journey. These include Colonel Brown Cambridge School in Dehradun, St. Xavier's Collegiate School in Calcutta, and Campion School in Bombay.

On May 12, 1946, Raj Kapoor and Krishna Malhotra tied the knot. Krishna was one of nine siblings, and after getting married, several of them pursued careers in the Hindi film industry. Her brothers, Rajendra Nath, Prem Nath, and Narendra Nath, went on to pursue acting careers, while her sister Uma is married to actor Prem Chopra.

Raj and Krishna Kapoor had a beautiful family of five children. Among their children were three talented sons, namely Randhir Kapoor, Rishi Kapoor, and Rajiv Kapoor. They were blessed with two beautiful daughters, Ritu Nanda and Rima Jain. Randhir is happily married to former actress Babita, and he is the proud father of actresses Karisma Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor. Rishi Kapoor's widow is the well-known actress Neetu Singh, and they have two children together: a daughter named Riddhima Kapoor and a son who is also an actor, Ranbir Kapoor.

Industrialist Rajan Nanda, a prominent family associated with the Escorts group, married Raj Kapoor's eldest daughter, Ritu Nanda. They have two

children: a daughter named Nitasha Nanda and a son named Nikhil Nanda. Nikhil is married to Shweta, the daughter of renowned actors Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan. Raj Kapoor's younger daughter, Rima Jain, is married to investment banker Manoj Jain and has two sons, Armaan Jain and Aadar Jain.

All members of Kapoor's immediate and extended family have found success in the Hindi film industry. His granddaughters Karisma Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor, along with his grandson Ranbir Kapoor, have become prominent figures in the Bollywood industry. Another grandson, Nikhil Nanda, has made a name for himself as a successful industrialist. In 2023, Agastya Nanda, the son of Nikhil, made his acting debut with The Archies.

Kapoor maintained a discreet romantic relationship with the esteemed actress Nargis Dutt throughout the 1940s and 1950s, despite his marital status. However, neither of them ever acknowledged this connection in the public eye. The couple appeared in several films together, such as Awaraz and Shree 420. After the completion of Chori Chori, Nargis made the decision to end her relationship with Raj, as she chose to prioritise her commitment to her husband and children. She then went on to marry Sunil Dutt, whom she had developed a deep affection for while working together on the set of Mother India (1957). In 2017, Rishi, his second son, revealed his father's affair in his autobiography, Khullam Khulla.

On October 1, 2018, Krishna Raj Kapoor passed away. Rajan Nanda, the spouse of Ritu Nanda, passed away on August 5, 2018. In January 2020, Ritu Nanda passed away. In April 2020, Rishi, Kapoor's second son, tragically passed away, three months after his sister. In February 2021, Rajiv, Kapoor's third and youngest son, passed away.

He developed romantic relationships with several of his co-stars, including Padmini and Vyjayanthimala, throughout his lengthy career.

He has also given rise to a prestigious film dynasty in Mumbai, with stars spanning multiple generations, the most recent addition being Ranbir Kapoor. The Kapoor family is widely recognised as the epitome of Bollywood royalty.

Throughout the 1980s and beyond, Kapoor experienced the challenges of asthma, which unfortunately became more severe as he grew older.

He has an impressive collection of awards, including 11 Filmfare Awards, 3 National Awards, and being a two-time nominee for the Palme d'Or grand prize at the Cannes Film Festival. Additionally, in 1971 he received the Padma Bhushan, and in 1987 he received the Dadasaheb Phalke Award.

He unexpectedly collapsed on stage during the 1987 ceremony, where he was receiving India's highest film award, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, and required immediate hospitalisation.

His passing occurred on June 2, 1988. His enduring legacy, filled with both acclaim and controversy, continues to captivate. Raj Kapoor's contributions to the Indian film industry have had a long-lasting impact on Indian cinema. His extraordinary talent, creativity, and unwavering commitment to his art continue to make him highly esteemed as one of the most exceptional actors and filmmakers in Indian history.

**He has had a greater influence on Bollywood films than anyone else, and his legacy will endure for years to come.**

-MELWYN WILLIAMS





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By Selvan Durairaj

# UK Impact Now: The Deportation Plan For Illegal Migrants



**What will be the impact of the deportation plan on Indian illegal migrants in the UK?**

The plan to relocate some migrants to Rwanda received parliamentary approval early Tuesday, marking a significant step forward for British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. He declared that the deportation flights would commence in July.

## What is the current plan for deportations in Rwanda?

Under a five-year agreement, the UK is planning to relocate certain asylum seekers to Rwanda for the processing of their claims. It will only apply to individuals who arrive in the UK without proper authorization after January 1, 2022. If their efforts succeed, they might qualify for refugee status and receive permission to stay. Alternatively, they have the option to seek asylum in another "safe third country" or apply to settle in Rwanda based on different criteria. Under this arrangement, there would be no possibility for any asylum seeker to apply to return to the UK.

## What is the plan for deporting migrants from Rwanda in Britain?

Rishi Sunak, the British Prime Minister, announced that he will send back asylum seekers to Rwanda within 10 to 12 weeks. This decision comes after parliament passed long-awaited legislation to streamline the deportation process for those who enter Britain without permission. In November of last year, the Supreme Court ruled the policy unlawful. However, Sunak insists that the new law supersedes any legal concerns and will effectively fulfil his promise to prevent individuals from arriving via small boats across the Channel.

Here are some important details regarding the plan and the migration issue:

## What factors contribute to Britain's ongoing immigration debate?

The decision to leave the European Union in 2016 was heavily influenced by the desire to regain control over Britain's borders and put an end to the free movement of people into the country. Recent polls indicate that it continues to be a significant concern for voters. The official figures reveal that the annual net migration to Britain in 2022 reached a record high of 745,000. In response, Sunak has outlined a range of measures aimed at reducing legal migration by 300,000. In addition, he has made a commitment to prevent individuals from undertaking the perilous voyage spanning approximately 20 miles across the Channel in small boats. Last year, over 29,000 individuals made their way here, following the previous year's record of 45,775 migrants arriving in 2022. In the current year, there has been a significant increase in the number of people detected, reaching a total of 6,265. This represents a nearly 25% rise compared to the corresponding period in 2023.

## What is Britain's strategy for Rwanda?

The former Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, agreed to the scheme in April 2022. It involves sending individuals who entered Britain illegally after January 1, 2022, to Rwanda, which is approximately 4,000 miles away. Nevertheless, the inaugural deportation flight in June 2022 faced opposition from European judges. The Supreme

Court has upheld a ruling that declares the scheme unlawful because it could potentially harm migrants by sending them back to their home countries or other nations where they might face mistreatment. Although there have been no deportations, Britain has already provided Rwanda with over 200 million pounds. The cost of resettling around 300 refugees could exceed 600 million pounds. Currently, there is a potential for around 50,000 individuals to be relocated there, although it is still uncertain how many people Rwanda has the capacity to accommodate.

## What makes the Rwanda policy such a crucial matter for Sunak?

Upon assuming the role of prime minister in late 2022, Sunak swiftly identified his commitment to "stop the boats" as one of his foremost objectives. Britain's annual expenditure on processing asylum applications exceeds 3 billion pounds, while the daily cost of accommodating migrants awaiting a decision in hotels and other accommodations amounts to approximately 8 million pounds. The latest figures indicate that there are still over 80,000 asylum applications awaiting decision.

## What does Sunak's "Safety of Rwanda" law entail?

In response to the concerns raised by the Supreme Court, Sunak has reached an agreement with Rwanda to establish a new treaty. This treaty aims to guarantee the direct return of asylum seekers deported to Rwanda to Britain, rather than sending them to any other country. The government has expressed concerns about the compatibility of his proposed bill with the European Convention on Human Rights. However, the bill asserts that Rwanda is a safe country. Ministers have sole authority to determine compliance with any injunction from the European Court of Human Rights, disregarding certain sections of Britain's Human Rights Act. Nevertheless, the law has faced extensive backlash, with criticism coming from various quarters, including members of Sunak's own Conservative Party and the United Nations human rights chief.

## Will the deportation flights from Rwanda be allowed to proceed?

In a recent announcement, Sunak revealed that the government has made preparations to transport migrants to Rwanda. To achieve this, the government has secured commercial charter planes, put an airfield on standby, and trained staff. The first flight is scheduled to depart within the next 10-12 weeks. However, there are some members of Sunak's party who believe that the new law falls short in its efforts to limit the ability of asylum seekers to appeal against their deportation. The legislation implies that British courts will not have the authority to assess the safety of Rwanda. However, individual cases may still need to be examined based on very specific criteria. The ECHR has made changes to its rules regarding injunctions, now reserving them for "exceptional circumstances." This means that the court could potentially issue orders to block deportation flights once again. The president has emphasised that Britain is legally obligated to adhere to its rulings. "I will always prioritise our national security over membership in a foreign court," stated Sunak on Monday, emphasising the importance of securing our borders."

According to unions, government staff would need to change parliament's civil service code to disregard ECHR rulings when instructed by ministers. Otherwise, they caution that they may pursue legal recourse.

## How does Britain's standing compare to that of other nations?

Several European countries, including Germany, have implemented stricter border controls in response to immigration concerns. Additionally, European lawmakers have recently approved a revised migration system aimed at reducing unwanted immigration. In addition to that, Denmark has signed a similar agreement with Rwanda, although they have not yet relocated any migrants there. Meanwhile, Italy has revealed its intentions to construct reception centres in Albania. Israel terminated a comparable agreement with Rwanda after a period of five years, as the Israeli Supreme Court ruled it illegal due to Rwanda's failure to fulfil the promised assurances.

## What is the rationale behind the UK's decision to deport asylum seekers?

The government asserts that the plan will discourage individuals from trying to reach the UK by small boats across the English Channel. Sunak has indicated plans for "multiple flights a month through the summer and beyond," but he has not revealed the exact number of people on these flights. According to reports, the government has made necessary preparations, including expanding detention spaces to 2,200 and assigning 200 dedicated caseworkers to speed up processing. In addition, the report mentioned that there are 25 courtrooms and 150 judges available to handle legal cases related to the plan.

## What impact will the Rwanda plan have on Indians?

In 2023, the number of Indians seeking asylum in the UK exceeded 5,000 for the first time. In the post-pandemic era, Afghanistan emerged as the country with the highest number of applications, with nearly 9,300 individuals seeking refuge. Iran followed closely behind with 7,397 applications, while Pakistan and India also had significant numbers with 5,273 and 5,253 applications, respectively. These figures are based on data from the UK Home Office for the month of March. In 2023, over 1,000 individuals from India embarked on a perilous journey across the English Channel, braving the treacherous waters in inflatable small boats. Their motivation? They are seeking job opportunities and asylum in the United Kingdom. In the past year, a total of 1,192 Indian migrants undertook a dangerous journey in their quest to reach the UK. India ranked ninth, with a significant number of individuals from Afghanistan (5,545 people), Iran (3,562), and Turkey (3,060 people) successfully crossing into the UK. A report has highlighted a notable increase in the proportion of young Indian migrants who entered the UK illegally in 2023. According to the report, individuals between the ages of 18 and 29 accounted for nearly 60 percent of the total number of illegal Indian migrants.

- SELVAN DURAIRAJ



# Indian Elections Now: Effects On The Bay Area



By Melwyn Williams

## *The Bay Area Is Already Feeling The Effects Of The Indian Election 2024*

The election season in India commenced on April 19, showcasing the country's vibrant democracy. Over the course of 44 days, voters will exercise their democratic rights by casting their ballots, with the eagerly anticipated results set to be unveiled on June 4. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** wants to hold onto power in India's Parliament, but the opposition parties are determined to overthrow the BJP's ten-year rule.

The Indian election is a major event that impacts a substantial portion of the world's population. Discussions about this election have likely been ongoing among Indians and Indian Americans in the Bay Area for a considerable period. It seems that the WhatsApp family group chats are getting a boost of energy with the addition of videos featuring passionate TV pundits. Maybe your aunt and uncle are trying to engage you in conversations about policies.

### **Are you curious about India's elections' inner workings and the stakes involved?**

Continue reading to understand the significance of this election for India and the unique role the diaspora plays.

1. *Can you explain how the election process works?*
2. *Why is this significant?*
3. *What are the current topics of discussion?*
4. *What impact does the election have on the Indian and Indian American communities in the United States?*
5. *I currently reside in the United States, but I was born and raised in India. Can voters cast their votes from locations outside of India?*

### **What is the process for the upcoming 2024 election in India?**

Unlike the United States, India takes a different approach to its elections, spreading them out over several weeks to make sure that voting is convenient for its large population.

The upcoming general election is expected to last for a duration of six weeks, starting on April 19 and concluding with the announcement of results on June 4. Voters will choose 543 members to serve a five-year term in the lower house of Parliament.

There will be voting at more than a million polling stations throughout the seven phases of the elections. Each phase will span only one day, during which a multitude of constituencies from various states will exercise their right to vote. The staggered polling system enables the government to strategically mobilise a significant number of troops to ensure security and facilitate the smooth movement of election officials and voting machines.

In India, the electoral system follows a first-past-the-post multiparty approach, where the candidate who secures the highest number of votes wins the election. To secure a majority, a party or coalition must surpass the threshold of 272 seats.

In India's upcoming 2024 election, it is crucial to identify the key stakeholder groups that hold significant influence. Understanding the major players in this political landscape is critical to comprehending the dynamics at play. Examining the various stakeholders involved can provide valuable insights into the potential outcomes and impacts of this highly anticipated electoral event.

The Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party and the Rahul Gandhi-led Indian National Congress dominate Parliament. The opposition bloc includes several other noteworthy regional parties. A coalition of opposition parties, known as the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), has come together with the aim of preventing Modi from securing a third consecutive election victory. In most constituencies, the alliance has presented only one primary candidate. Ideological divisions and personality clashes have marred the political landscape, resulting in the absence of a selected candidate for the prime minister position. According to multiple surveys, it appears that Modi is on track to secure a victory by a significant margin, especially after his recent inauguration of a Hindu temple in Ayodhya. His party has long promised to

advance Hindu nationalism, and now this move has fulfilled that promise.

If Modi secures another victory, it will further strengthen his position as one of the nation's most revered and influential leaders. Following a resounding victory in 2019, the BJP secured an overwhelming majority by winning 303 parliamentary seats. Only 52 seats were won by the Congress party.

### **What does this mean for India?**

As Prime Minister Modi, known for his Hindu nationalist views, prepares to face off against a diverse INDIA coalition that is making determined efforts to close the gap, the upcoming general election in India has generated significant excitement. In 2014, Modi, then 73 years old, ascended to power by highlighting his dedication to economic progress and presenting himself as a reformer with a strong resolve to combat corruption. Ever since, he has skillfully intertwined religion and politics, gaining widespread support from the Hindu majority in the nation. During Prime Minister Modi's tenure, India has seen remarkable growth on the global stage. During his time in office, he has faced a range of allegations and challenges, including rising unemployment rates, incidents of violence against minority groups, particularly Muslims and Christians, limited opportunities for expressing dissent, and the need to uphold free media. Many Indian residents in the Bay Area share a common concern. Mahadevan Nair, an entrepreneur based in Sunnyvale, believes that the outcome of the vote carries great importance for the future of India. Nair expressed concern about India's potential shift to an autocratic regime under Modi's leadership.

Arunima, a fellow at Stanford, expressed similar sentiments. "This is a critical juncture for India." The upcoming elections are of great significance. She stated her conviction that the choices made will have a profound impact on the future of India.



**What are the key issues at stake in the Indian election?**

India's commitment to democracy has been unwavering, as demonstrated through its free elections, impartial judiciary, vibrant media, robust opposition, and smooth transfers of power. Some argue that Modi's 10-year tenure has gradually eroded certain credentials, making the upcoming elections a crucial test of the nation's democratic principles. Many watchdogs now frequently classify India as a "hybrid regime" because it balances between being a full democracy and a full autocracy. The upcoming polls will serve as a crucial test for Modi, a charismatic leader whose tenure has witnessed a surge in targeted acts against certain religious communities, most notably Muslims. He has been the subject of criticism for allegedly favouring Hindu interests, with concerns raised about the potential impact on the country's secular foundation. There seems to be a repetition of zeros in the provided text. During Modi's tenure, the media landscape has undergone significant changes, characterised by a decline in autonomy and a decrease in dissenting opinions. Modi has consistently emerged victorious in a multitude of crucial court cases. The concentration of executive power has strained India's federalism. Top opposition leaders have been facing corruption cases, despite their repeated denials, according to federal agencies. India's economy is experiencing rapid growth, making it a noteworthy factor to take into account. India's emergence on the global stage has solidified its status as a major player, providing a counterweight to China's growing dominance. Despite India's remarkable growth, the Modi government has encountered difficulties in generating adequate employment opportunities for the youth. In an effort to secure voter support, they have resorted to implementing welfare initiatives like free food and housing. The U.N.'s most recent Asia-Pacific Human Development Report identified India as one of the countries grappling with notable disparities in income and wealth.

**For Indian communities in California, the outcome of the country's election holds great importance.**

Numerous South and East Bay neighbourhoods are home to a large number of Indian immigrants, showcasing the rich cultural diversity that characterizes the Bay Area. India has seen a significant rise in its immigrant population, making it the largest group in Santa Clara and Alameda, the two largest counties in the region. In addition, the Bay Area has become a magnet for a multitude of accomplished individuals of Indian heritage who have made significant strides in their respective domains. Notable individuals in this group include Sundar Pichai, the CEO of Alphabet; Shantanu Narayen, the CEO of Adobe; and Vice President Kamala Harris, who hails from Oakland. Indian and Indian American organizers have had a long-lasting impact on the history of the Bay Area.

**Investigating the Influence of South Asian Activism in the Bay Area**

Indians who live overseas wield considerable economic power in India. In 2020, Indian residents in the United States made an impressive contribution of \$125 billion to India through remittances, representing around 3.3% of the Indian GDP. Arunima saw the birth in the Bay Area of conflicting Indian narratives. "The Indian diaspora exhibits a similar level of fragmentation as the population within India," she said. She suggests that people's perceptions of India can differ depending on the sources of information they rely on. She claims that individuals' interpretation of information differs based on their consumption of mainstream media or reliance on non-mainstream digital outlets.

Revathi Nathan, a resident of the Bay Area for the past eight years, voiced her admiration for Modi. In a confident statement, she proudly proclaimed, "I personally identify as a member of the queer community and as a person of colour." There is a perception that the LGBTQ community has painted the BJP in a negative light, suggesting that the party is unsupportive of their cause. In 2018, she provided an explanation regarding the BJP government's decision to abolish Article 377, a law that previously criminalised consensual homosexual acts. In 2013, the Indian National Congress Party reinstated Article 377. She mentioned her intention to go back to India in order to vote, but she's unsure if she'll be able to make it happen.

**I am an Indian national who currently resides in the United States. Is there still eligibility for me to vote in the election?**

Non-resident Indians living in the United States for work or education, without citizenship in any other nation, can register to vote by providing the address on their Indian passport. However, it is important for individuals to personally visit their assigned polling station in India to cast their votes. Unfortunately, voting by mail or remotely from a different location is not available.

- MELWYN WILLIAMS



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# Age No Bar: Reclaim Your Life Without Losing Focus

By WFY Bureau India

*5 times The 'Best Parliamentarian' has achieved a remarkable feat by clearing the SSC examination at the age of 58, overcoming a significant regret in his life.*

**Shrirang Barne**, the two-time Member of Parliament from Pune's Maval, has an impressive track record; he has received the Sansad Ratna (Best Parliamentarian) award five times and the Maha Sansad Ratna once. However, he regrets that his 2014 and 2019 affidavits stated his educational qualification as "10th class fail." That is no longer the case.

In his affidavit, the 60-year-old Shiv Sena MP, who has filed his nomination for the Maval seat for the third consecutive time, proudly stated that he has recently achieved an SSC pass.

In 1980, he took the SSC examination, but unfortunately, he did not pass the science subject. Despite achieving success in politics, the lingering memory of his 10th class exam failure has remained a constant source of distress throughout the years. He took the exam in 2022 and successfully passed.

In 2022, he chose not to publicise this accomplishment, unlike his approach with the Sansad Ratna Awards. With patience and precision, he bided his time until the perfect moment arrived—the moment when he could unveil his third affidavit for the upcoming general elections.

During his early years, Barne assisted his father in agricultural work. In 1997, he decided to pursue a career in politics, inspired by his older brother Hiran Barne, and successfully became a corporator in Pimpri Chinchwad. With over 15 years of experience in the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC), he established himself as a prominent figure before Shiv Sena recognised him and gave him the opportunity to compete at the national level. In 2014, he successfully ran for the Lok Sabha from the Maval constituency, marking his debut in national politics. He emerged victorious once again in 2019, defeating Parth, the elder son of deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar.

However, his close friends revealed that despite his political achievements, the tenth unsuccessful tag seemed to weigh on him. During his time in Delhi as a Member of Parliament, Barne came to understand the significance of education. Uday Awate, a close associate of Barne, would consistently admit that the setback at SSC in 1980 continued to trouble him, despite receiving numerous accolades as the best parliamentarian.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and the limitations on movement, Barne dedicated himself to studying in order to successfully pass his SSC exam.

His passion for reading enabled him to effortlessly comprehend various subjects, even at the age of 58. He avidly consumed books during the lockdown period, and shortly after its conclusion, he sat for the examination and successfully passed it in 2022.

- WFY BUREAU INDIA





# Better Lives: Meena Is The First Female Sarpanch Of Vyara.

By WFY Bureau India

*Meena Behen, the trailblazing woman who is breaking barriers as the first female Sarpanch of Vyara, Gujarat. She is an inspiration to many, leading an all-woman Panchayat Board with her remarkable journey.*

Historically, women holding positions of power was not a common occurrence. In today's world, women are taking charge and demonstrating strength in various fields. We must also recognise the contributions of the women who have paved the way for young girls to dream big. Among the many names on the list, Meena Behen stands out. Meena has made history by becoming the first woman sarpanch of her village, Vyara, in Gujarat.

We also celebrate National Panchayati Raj Day on April 24. The 73rd Amendment, which granted constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions, marked a significant milestone on this day in 1992. Take a closer look at Meena's remarkable journey, as she shattered barriers long before they were even acknowledged.

## Sarpanch Meena Behen from Vyara, Gujarat

Meena's appointment to the Panachat marked a significant milestone for her village, as she became the first woman sarpanch from her community. Vyara now has its own Panchayati Board, marking a significant milestone after 65 years. Meena leads the Panchayat Board, making it an all-women team, adding to the list of significant achievements.

Meena comes from an era when women faced significant challenges in advancing due to patriarchal society. There was a time when women were completely silenced in the presence of men. In an era when women faced significant challenges in expressing their views, Meena emerged as a trailblazer, setting the stage for future generations.

During a previous interview, Meena expressed her disappointment at the fact that many women also criticised and belittled us. However, it seems that this is a constant presence that has motivated us to keep going and strive for improvement each time.

Women play a subordinate role in society. Numerous Vyara villagers expressed their belief that they could never be leaders.

## Discovering the Impact of Meena Behen's Actions in Her Village

Meena and her pals attribute their capacity for leadership to the self-help group (SHG) that World Vision India helped to form. The interactions and activities arranged by World Vision India have had an enormous effect on us, fostering a sense of assurance and empowering us to become leaders in our community. "The world beyond our homes remained a mystery, unexplored and unfamiliar.

As an all-woman panchayat board, we have made it easier for women and children to bring their issues to light. "Women are more comfortable sharing their problems with us now."

Furthermore, they constructed a road to enhance the villagers' accessibility. It was beneficial to establish a connection with the outside world. In the past, pregnant women faced challenges when it came to accessing an ambulance during emergencies.

The all-women Panchayat board also worked diligently to raise awareness about important government schemes. Meena and her group of friends, as well as other women leaders, have been working tirelessly to improve society's welfare. Their focus is on areas such as housing, infrastructure, and more.

Meena, along with other women, plays a crucial role in empowering themselves and others, serving as catalysts for positive transformation within the panchayat system.

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Meena, along with other women, plays a crucial role in empowering themselves and others, serving as catalysts for positive transformation within the panchayat system.

- WFY BUREAU INDIA



# Who Need Arms To Drive? An Unusually Strong Woman



By Naisa V Melwyn

*At the threshold of my medical career: lessons learnt from a great doctor.*

Jilumol Mariet Thomas exemplifies boundless passion and unwavering determination. A 32-year-old woman from Kerala has achieved a remarkable feat by becoming the first Asian woman without arms to obtain a driving license. Jilumol skillfully uses her feet to propel herself forward, thus accelerating her life's pace. After a six-year wait, she finally received her license in 2023. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan personally presented the license to her in Palakkad.

Thomas was born without arms due to a congenital disorder. Driven by her unwavering courage and determination, she accomplished the feat of driving herself. She collaborated with the State Commission for Persons with Disabilities and a private company in Kochi to modify her car for handicapped accessibility.

Jilumol Mariet According to reports, Thomas had always harboured a strong desire to drive a car, particularly after the tragic loss of her parents. This longing stemmed from her desire to gain independence. She acquired her driving abilities at Mariya Driving School in Vaduthala before proceeding to the Thodupuzha RTO in the Idukki district to obtain her licence. Following the rejection of her application by RTO officials, she firmly decided to take her case to the Kerala High Court.

Following the court's intervention, Thomas underwent a test and proceeded to drive the modified car in the presence of MVD officials. Despite her repeated attempts, the authorities once again denied her request for a driving license. Eventually, she reached out to the State Commission for Persons with Disabilities. The commission cited Vikram Agnihotri from Indore as an example, making him the first armless man in India to obtain a driving license.

After much effort, she was able to obtain the license this year. Thomas expressed his satisfaction with obtaining his license, stating that it has allowed him to overcome his greatest challenge: mobility. Her unwavering commitment to obtaining the license, regardless of the obstacles she faced over the years, serves as a source of inspiration for countless individuals.

- NAISA VARGHESE MELWYN

By WFY Bureau USA







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# Quality Life: The Most Essential Guide To Sleep Hygiene

By Dr. Anamika Singh  
&  
Dr. Amit Kant Singh



## The Essential Guide to Sleep Hygiene: Restoring Your Nightly Recharge

Proper sleep hygiene involves adopting habits and practices that promote consistent, restful sleep. As a cornerstone of health and well-being, sleep is as vital as regular exercise and a balanced diet. Poor sleep hygiene can disrupt sleeping patterns, leading to insomnia and other sleep disorders. Conversely, good sleep hygiene can help you drift off to sleep faster, stay asleep longer, and enjoy better-quality rest.

### Why Does Sleep Hygiene Matter?

Sleep is a critical biological process that affects your physical health, cognitive performance, and emotional regulation. Your body repairs itself; your brain consolidates memories; and your energy reserves replenish during sleep. Without adequate sleep, you're at higher risk for chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and depression.

### Elements of Good Sleep Hygiene

- **Consistency:** Stick to a regular sleep schedule, even on weekends. This can assist in regulating your body's natural rhythm, making it easier for you to fall asleep and wake up.
- **Environment:** Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, and cool to create an ideal sleeping environment.
- **Pre-Sleep Routine:** Create a calming pre-sleep routine to indicate to your body that it's time to relax and prepare for rest. This could include reading, taking a warm bath, or meditative exercises.
- **Comfort:** Invest in a comfortable mattress and pillows. Your bed's quality can have a significant impact on your sleep quality.
- **Electronics:** At least an hour before bed, avoid screens. Phones, tablets, and computers emit blue light that can disrupt your circadian rhythm, potentially leading to serious illnesses in the future.
- **Diet:** Be mindful of your eating habits. It's best to steer clear of heavy or large meals a few hours before going to bed. Caffeine and alcohol can also interfere with sleep.

### The Impact of Sleep Hygiene on Daily Life

Improving sleep hygiene can have a profound impact on your daily life. Better sleep can lead to improved concentration, productivity, and overall mood. It can also strengthen your immune system, enhance athletic performance, and boost your ability to interact socially.

### Conclusion

Incorporating good sleep hygiene into your lifestyle is a commitment to your health and quality of life. By prioritizing sleep, you're not just investing in rest; rather, you're enhancing the quality of your life.



- DR. ANAMIKA SINGH



- DR. AMIT KANT SINGH



# The Promising Story Of The UK Man Who Walks Again

By WFY Bureau UK

**Donations of blood plasma enable a man to get back his capacity to walk.**

Now, a man who underwent a procedure he called nothing short of miraculous and recovered astonishingly from paralysis is pushing for more blood plasma donations.

Gary Khan, an Alcester resident, being treated for a unique immune system condition with periodic doses of a medication made from substances.

The 56-year-old artist recently shared his excitement for plasma treatments in an interview, stating that they significantly improve the lives of almost 17,000 patients in England each year.

**He likened it to the flick of a trip lever.**

A passionate cyclist, Mr. Khan became unwell in 2020 and reported joint pain and pins and pains. His health eventually deteriorated to the point where he could no longer stand.

When the unusual condition known as chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy (CIDP) is identified, the immune system misinterprets the nervous system and attacks it.

In spite of efforts to alleviate the condition using steroid and plasma exchange therapies, Mr. Khan's condition has resulted in increasing weakness and compromised sensory function in his arms and legs.

"I had no ability to walk down the stairs, carry out basic brushing and flossing, or even cook my food," he said. "During 2021, I found myself in a state of total hopelessness, struggling to move."

After just five days, the dosage of immunoglobulins advised by a professor at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham seemed to be quite beneficial.

Even though the condition had significantly worsened, Mr. Khan claimed that all of a sudden he could stand up on his own two legs. Immunoglobulin, a drug composed of donor-derived antibodies, comes from plasma. The immune system is stabilised in large part by these antibodies.

The yellow liquid known as plasma, which is an essential part of blood, is responsible for carrying antibodies throughout the body. There are specific donation centres in Twickenham, Reading, and Birmingham that are outfitted with equipment that efficiently separate haemoglobins and red blood cells while protecting plasma.

**Immunoglobulins are produced by the material, strengthening and boosting the immune system.**

According to NHS Blood and Transplant, medications obtained from plasma play a vital role in the treatment of more than 50 immunological illnesses. The charity has, meanwhile, highlighted the critical need for thousands more contributions.

Before being sick, Mr. Khan claims he had no idea about plasma donations. On the other hand, he thanked the donors for their kindness and sacrifice.

"After receiving rehabilitation, I am happy to share that I have started having fewer issues," he said.

"People's lives are being significantly improved by blood plasma, and in some circumstances, their lives are even saved. But there is a shortage of this priceless resource compared to the demand."

**"I appreciate people who unconditionally donate without any personal stake."**

- WFY BUREAU UK



# Better Health: Indian Spices You Need To Know

By WFY Bureau India

*Discover the Health Benefits of 4 Traditional Indian Spices: Haldi, Ajwain, and More*

Indian cuisine is famous for its diverse spice combinations, which not only add unique flavours to each dish but also offer numerous health benefits recognised by traditional Indian medicine. Indian cuisine is a delightful fusion of flavours, with spices playing a crucial role in creating its distinct taste, enticing aroma, and irresistible appeal. From the fiery kick of chilli peppers to the fragrant allure of cinnamon, these spices work their magic to elevate every dish.

**India has a rich history of incorporating a diverse range of spices into its culinary creations.**

Today's modern world often overlooks the medicinal benefits of taste, a value Ayurveda and holistic living have valued for centuries. We share insights into the benefits that these spices bring to our overall well-being.

**Salt:** A vital ingredient in cooking and a key player in food preservation, salt (primarily sodium chloride) is essential for life. It is particularly important for preserving evergreen food items found in every Indian household, such as achar, also known as pickles. It really lets the flavours of the other ingredients take centre stage. When it comes to our health, salt plays a crucial role in maintaining our blood pressure and blood volume, as well as aiding in nerve conduction. Furthermore, adding iodine to salt facilitates smooth thyroid gland function.

Consuming too much salt, on the other hand, can lead to high blood pressure and an increased risk of heart disease.

We create Khada Masala, an aromatic Indian spice mixture, by lightly toasting and grinding essential ingredients such as green and black cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, star anise, nutmeg, black pepper, cumin, and coriander seeds, among others. Roasting these spices releases their aromatic oils, which then become ground or added to dishes.

Spices in the Khada Masala offer a range of health benefits. **Cinnamon**, for example, is known for its anti-inflammatory properties and its ability to regulate blood sugar levels. It can also improve insulin sensitivity, which is particularly beneficial for managing PCOS-like symptoms. **Clove**, on the other hand, is believed to have anti-cancer properties and is great for maintaining oral hygiene.

Lastly, **nutmeg** is known for its ability to promote restful sleep.

**Turmeric (Curcumin):** Turmeric is known for its active compound curcumin, which has gained popularity for its anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antibacterial properties. We often use it in 'turmeric lattes' as well as our traditional cough and cold remedy, 'haldi doodh'. Every Indian household regularly uses this common ingredient in their cooking. It not only adds flavour to dishes but also provides various health benefits.

Curcumin is known for its anti-inflammatory properties, which may help lower the risk of heart disease. Additionally, extensive research has explored its potential for preventing and treating Alzheimer's disease and cancer. Interestingly, curcumin has a rather low bioavailability. **But here's a tip: consuming it with black pepper, which contains piperine, can greatly improve its absorption.**



Ajwain is known for its ability to improve digestion, thanks to a powerful phenolic compound called thymol that helps boost digestive enzymes. When boiled in water to make herbal tea, it can enhance digestion, alleviate acidity, and greatly reduce bloating, which is particularly beneficial after pregnancy.

## INDIAN SPICES For You

The skillful use of a broad range of Indian spices and aromatics is a crucial component of traditional Indian recipes that distinguish them from other cuisines. Cardamom, cumin, clove, turmeric, coriander, cinnamon, and fenugreek are the seven essential spices in Indian cuisine, while many more are frequently used in the wide variety of traditional Indian recipes. Different Indian cuisine varieties use herbs and spices in distinctive ways that set them apart from other parts of the nation. While some spices, like black pepper, nutmeg, garlic, and ginger, are commonly known in the West, Indian food gets its unique flavour from the carefully blended blends of local spices.

### Typical Indian spices include:

- **Turmeric:** Known for its earthy undertone and warm, spicy aromas, this spice has a beautiful golden hue.
- **Ginger:** earthy citrus undertones with a warm, spicy, and sweet taste.
- **Garlic:** a powerful scent with notes of sulphur and a pungent spiciness similar to onions. Occasionally chopped or combined into a paste. Garlic cloves can also be cooked over a fire.
- **Cumin:** a fragrant, earthy, and toasty relative of parsley that can be used whole or crushed. Extensively used in spice blends in Indian cuisine.
- **Cardamom:** Often used in Indian cuisine, both black and green cardamom have a powerful scent. Black cardamom smells smokey and has a mint-like cooling effect.
- **Saffron:** red filaments from the *Crocus sativus* flower, accompanied with grassy or hay-like notes and a hint of metallic honey. Gives off a vibrant yellow colour.
- **Coriander:** adds a nutty, citrusy, or acidic flavour that is occasionally thought to taste like dish soap. Many famous Indian cuisines frequently include fresh coriander as a garnish. Known by another name, cilantro is utilised in Indian cooking, both the fresh leaves and the dried seeds.
- **Garam Masala:** a popular ground spice mixture used in Indian cuisines, with regional variations in the ingredients. Includes common Indian spices such as coriander, cumin, cardamom, cloves, black pepper, cinnamon, and nutmeg. It gives traditional Indian meals a hint of sweetness, warmth, and flowery undertones.

- **Asafoetida:** from the tap root of perennial herbs in the celery family, a strong, sticky substance released. Improves the savoury flavours of vegetarian meals and aids in achieving a harmonious flavour balance in well-known Indian recipes like Rogan josh.
- **Fenugreek:** this versatile herb, spice, and vegetable has a strong taste reminiscent of maple syrup and is used in many Indian dishes.
- **Tej Patta:** sometimes referred to as Indian bay leaves, they have a potent perfume that is similar to clove and cinnamon.
- **Fennel:** with a strong anise scent akin to licorice, it is utilised in a variety of Indian dishes, from Kashmiri to Bengali. Used as a breath refresher occasionally.
- **Star Anise:** this spice has a strong anise aroma and is used to make traditional Indian dishes like biryani and masala chai.
- **Mace/Nutmeg:** strong flavour and warm, slightly sweet scent. Similar in flavour, but with a more subtle undertone, is mace, which is derived from the reddish covering of nutmeg seeds.
- **Clove:** a very fragrant member of the evergreen family that is frequently used to flavour curries, marinades, and sweets. It is commonly combined with other warm spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, and star anise.
- **Carrom,** sometimes called ajwain, is a very fragrant herb with a perfume akin to thyme, as well as earthy, minty overtones and bitter notes reminiscent of oregano and anise.
- **Mustard Seed:** this aromatic, strong-flavoured spice is frequently added to Indian pickles and spicy seafood recipes.
- **Indian Sea Chilies:** these can be added to curries, pickles, and chutneys to increase their heat content. They can be used whole, dried, or ground into a powder
- **Curry Leaves:** commonly used in South and West Indian cuisine, these leaves have a strong, bitter taste akin to asafoetida, with hints of lemongrass and citrus leaves.
- **Mint:** a fragrant plant with a cooling effect that is utilised in Indian cuisine and beverages.

*Now try and grab some of these spices and add them to your kitchen collections to spice up your health!*

- WFY BUREAU INDIA



## Is California hoping for a superbloom this year?

Vibrant carpets of yellow, orange, and gold flowers now adorn Southern California's vast deserts, the stunning bluffs of the Bay Area, and even the surroundings of Los Angeles International Airport. Still, whether these blooms meet the criteria for a "superbloom" remains a lingering question. There is no clear-cut definition for the term, and the blooms this year have not been as vibrant or plentiful as the ones that covered parts of California last spring after heavy rains ended the drought, even though the state received sufficient winter rains this year too.

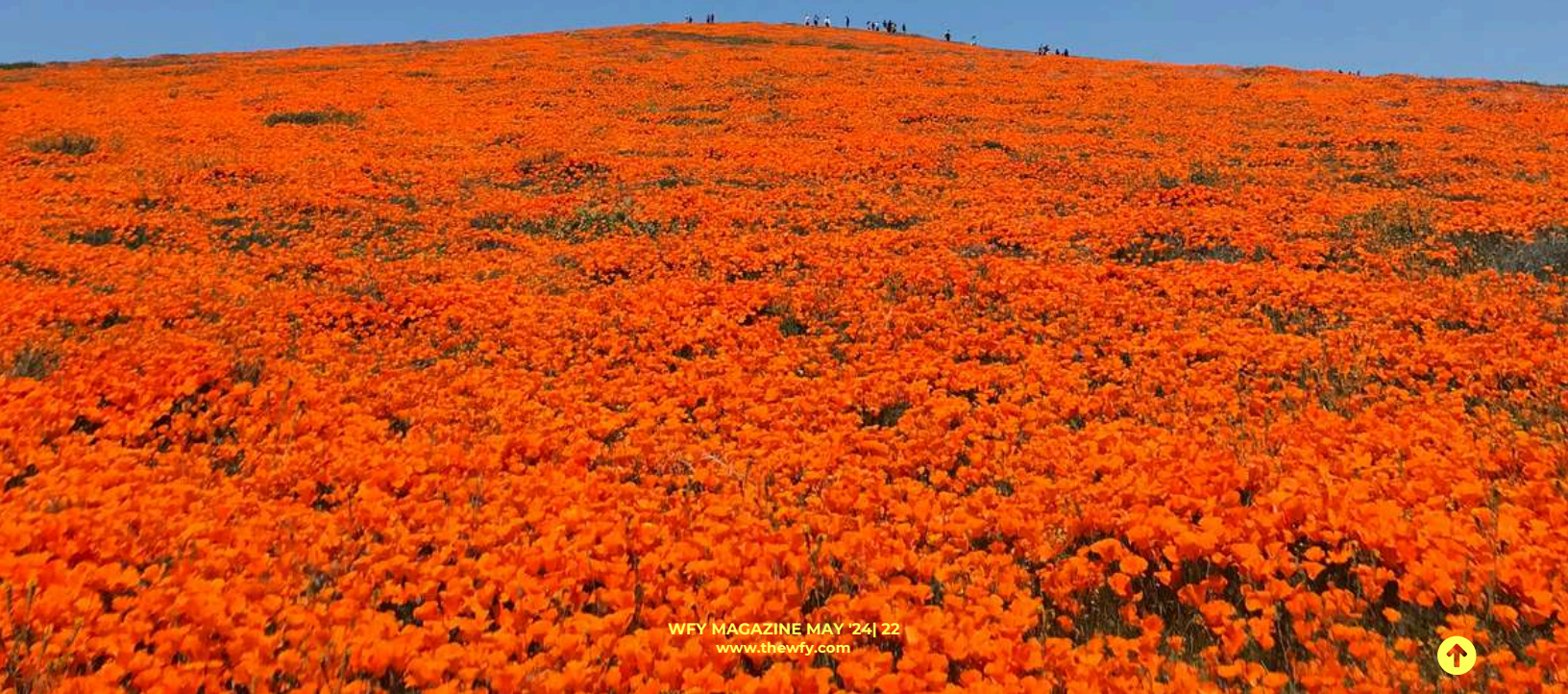
## What can we expect from California this spring?

Following periods of heavy rainfall, vibrant blooms can emerge during the spring, drawing large crowds of tourists to California and other regions in the Southwest who come to admire the blossoming landscapes and take stunning photographs. There is no consensus among scientists regarding the exact definition of a superbloom. Certain regions in California and Arizona experience a remarkable phenomenon where barren deserts suddenly burst into vibrant fields of wildflowers. This breathtaking transformation occurs when dormant seeds in the soil awaken and bloom simultaneously. Experts have noted that this year's blooms in places like California's Death Valley do not meet the criteria for a superbloom. This assessment is primarily due to the lack of a wide variety of flowers. This year's wildflower display, although still beautiful, is not as expansive or concentrated as in previous years. According to some experts, determining whether this year's blooms qualify as a superbloom is subjective and depends on individual perception.

As we bid farewell to April, we eagerly anticipate the arrival of May and the vibrant blossoms it brings. In high-elevation places, spring wildflowers can continue to blossom later into the spring, even though April is typically the peak month for them. Superblooms are typically found in low-elevation desert regions, with their occurrence being more influenced by geography rather than the time of year. As temperatures soar in the desert, the delicate flowers can rapidly wither away. The long-lasting impact of climate change on wildflowers is a matter of great significance, with potential consequences spanning decades or even centuries. This is due to the fact that seeds have the ability to remain dormant in the soil for extended periods of time. This year's bloom is the result of Southern California experiencing heavy rain last summer and higher than average winter temperatures.

# California's Hope For A Full Superbloom This Year

By WFY Bureau USA





# ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

## Celebrating Asian Heritage Month in North America



By Tushar Unadkat

Every May, North America embraces the vibrant tapestry of Asian cultures, histories, and contributions through Asian Heritage Month. This annual observance serves as a platform to recognize and celebrate the diverse communities that have enriched the fabric of society across the continent. Among these, South Asian communities play a significant role, contributing to the cultural landscape and the socioeconomic and political spheres.

### Origins and Initiators

Asian Heritage Month traces its roots back to the United States, which began as Asian Pacific American Heritage Week in 1978. The initiative originated from the efforts of congressional staffers Jeanie Jew and Ruby Moy, who worked with Representative Frank Horton to introduce a resolution to proclaim the first ten days of May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Week. Horton chose this period to coincide with two significant milestones in Asian American history: the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to the United States on May 7, 1843, and the completion of the transcontinental railroad by predominantly Chinese immigrant laborers on May 10, 1869.

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed a bill passed by Congress to expand Asian Pacific American Heritage Week to a month-long celebration, officially designating May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. This decision aimed to provide a more extended period for recognizing the contributions and achievements of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and to raise awareness about their diverse cultures and experiences.

Similarly, in Canada, Asian Heritage Month was established to recognize and celebrate the contributions of Asian Canadians to the country's social, economic, and cultural development. Senator Vivienne Poy spearheaded the initiative by proposing a motion in the Senate in 2001 to designate May as Asian Heritage Month in Canada officially. The motion received unanimous approval, making Canada the first country to recognize Asian Heritage Month nationwide formally.

### Demographic Insights

South Asians, comprising individuals from countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan, constitute one of the fastest-growing ethnic groups in North America. According to recent census data, their population has remarkably increased over the past few decades. In the United States alone, the South Asian population surpassed 5.4 million, with Indian Americans being the largest subgroup.

In Canada, South Asians also form a substantial portion of the population, contributing significantly to the country's multicultural identity. As of the latest census data, the South Asian population in Canada exceeds 2.7 million, representing a diverse array of cultures, languages, and traditions. Cities like Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary boast vibrant South Asian communities, enriching the cultural landscape with their festivals, cuisine, and art.

### Cultural Celebrations:

Asian Heritage Month provides a platform for South Asian communities in Canada to showcase their rich cultural heritage through various events and activities. These celebrations often include:

- **Cultural Festivals:** Throughout the month, cities across Canada host vibrant cultural festivals that feature traditional music, dance performances, art exhibitions, and culinary delights from South Asia. These events serve as a gathering point for the community and offer an opportunity for people of all backgrounds to immerse themselves in South Asian culture.
- **Educational Workshops:** Many organizations arrange workshops and seminars during Asian Heritage Month to educate the public about the history, traditions, and contributions of South Asian communities. These sessions foster cross-cultural understanding and promote dialogue on issues relevant to the South Asian diaspora.
- **Film Screenings:** Film festivals showcasing South Asian cinema have become a popular feature of Asian Heritage Month in Canada. These screenings highlight the diversity of storytelling and filmmaking styles across the region, offering audiences a glimpse into the rich cinematic heritage of South Asia.

- **Community Outreach:** Asian Heritage Month also allows South Asian organizations to engage in community outreach initiatives. From volunteer drives to charity events, these activities aim to give back to society while promoting unity and solidarity within the community.

- **Recognition of Achievements:** Asian Heritage Month provides a platform to celebrate the achievements and contributions of South Asian individuals in various fields, including arts, sciences, business, politics, and sports. Through awards ceremonies and recognition events, outstanding community members are honored for their excellence and leadership.

### Looking Forward

As Asian Heritage Month continues to gain momentum, it is essential to recognize the importance of fostering inclusivity and representation within South Asian communities and beyond. By celebrating diversity and embracing cultural exchange, we can build stronger, more interconnected societies that celebrate the rich tapestry of human experience.

In conclusion, Asian Heritage Month serves as a reminder of the invaluable contributions of South Asian communities to the cultural mosaic of North America. Through vibrant celebrations and meaningful initiatives, this annual observance brings people together to honor the past, celebrate the present, and pave the way for a more inclusive future.

- TUSHAR UNADKAT





By Ridhima Kapoor

# The Most Important Fashion Tips For A Better Appearance

Apparel goes beyond mere appearance; it serves as a reflection of our identity. The clothes we choose to wear can speak volumes about our personalities, values, and emotions. Every outfit we wear speaks volumes about our personal style and the image we want to project.

**Consider opting for either a miniskirt or revealing neckline, but avoid combining the two.**



When selecting your ensemble, it's crucial to strike a delicate balance between being trendy and suitable, particularly when it comes to skirts and tops. It's important to keep in mind that choosing either a miniskirt or showing cleavage can create a bold or risqué impression, but doing both at the same time might be a bit too much. Opting for a mini skirt can bring a playful and stylish touch to your outfit, allowing you to flaunt your legs and exude youthful energy. However, when paired with a revealing top that exposes cleavage, it can give your overall look a more suitable vibe for a night out at a club or a very casual gathering. To maintain an elegant and stylish look, it's important to emphasise a single aspect of your outfit. You can choose to showcase your legs with a miniskirt or draw attention to your neckline with a more modest top.

**You'll achieve a flawless combination of elegance and fashion-forwardness by following this approach.**

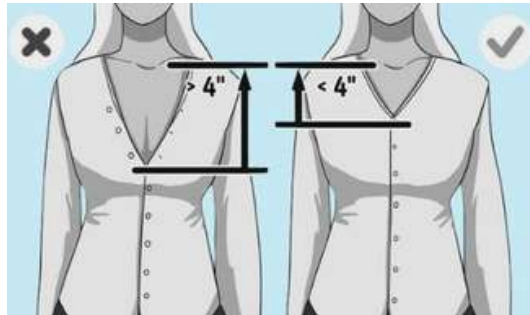
**Keep the prints in your outfit balanced and subtle.**



When it comes to incorporating prints into your outfit, striking the perfect balance is crucial. Ensure that your ensemble does not become overwhelmed by an excessive number of prints all at once. Instead, opt for coordination by selecting two prints that complement each other. Consider prints in the same colour or prints of varying sizes that harmonise well together. Through this approach, you have the opportunity to explore various patterns while ensuring an aesthetically pleasing look. You can create a sophisticated contrast by matching prints in the same color, and you can achieve a well-rounded style by combining prints of different sizes in complementary hues. Following

this guideline allows you to effortlessly rock prints with a touch of sophistication and flair.

**Ensure your neckline is modest.**



When it comes to your office attire, it's important to pay attention to the neckline of your shirt to maintain a professional appearance. It's important to steer clear of office shirts that have excessively deep plunging necklines, usually more than 4 inches from your collarbone. Following this guideline will help you maintain a professional appearance in a workplace setting. A neckline that is too revealing can be distracting and may not convey the professionalism and respect required in a work environment. Striking a balance between showcasing your unique style and adhering to workplace dress codes is crucial.

**Make sure that the sleeveless blouses you select provide shoulder coverage.**



When you're working in a professional office, it's crucial to dress in a manner that reflects your professionalism. When it comes to sleeveless blouses, ensuring that they adequately cover your shoulders is essential. Opting for more conservative styles is typically more appropriate for a formal workplace. By following this guideline, you can maintain a polished appearance and demonstrate your respect for the work environment.

**Having multiple accessories in one outfit can be overwhelming and create a busy look.**

I have doubts about both of these: On the left, they complement each other perfectly, so consider adding matching earrings. On the right, the colours are not an exact match, so you can either choose an item with a contrasting colour or opt for a neutral colour.

Adding accessories can enhance the appeal of your outfit, especially if your clothes have a more simplistic design. Nevertheless, it's essential to uphold a sense of equilibrium. It's best to keep your jewellery selection minimal, sticking to no more than two pieces at a time. This is usually sufficient to add some visual appeal to your outfit, particularly if the pieces go well together. For example, combining different accessories can enhance your outfit and give it a cohesive and polished appearance.



**Consider incorporating nude pumps into your ensemble.**

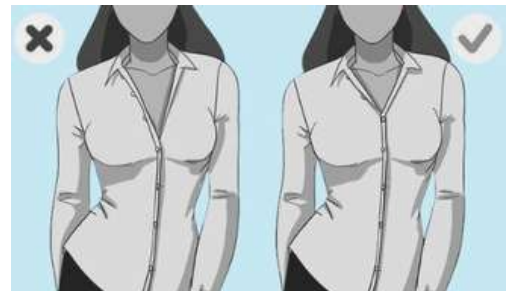
Here's a cool trick we learned from Angelina Jolie's red carpet appearances: Consider incorporating nude shoes into your outfit. It's a smart technique because nude shoes have the ability to create the illusion of longer legs by seamlessly blending with your skin tone. Furthermore, you can wear the incredibly versatile nude colour for any occasion, be it a party or a work event. In contrast to vibrant or dark-coloured shoes, nude pairs effortlessly enhance any ensemble.

**Ensure that there is no visible gap between your cardigan and jeans.**



Make sure there is no exposed skin visible between your cardigan and jeans. It's crucial to uphold a well-put-together and polished appearance. For a more polished look, you might want to try layering a top underneath your cardigan. By following this simple step, you can achieve a more refined and cohesive look, ensuring that you always appear well-put-together.

**Maintain a sophisticated look by only unbuttoning a maximum of two buttons.**





When selecting your shirts and blouses, it's crucial to find the perfect harmony between fashion and suitability. It's always best to keep it classy and avoid unbuttoning more than two buttons. This advice goes beyond just fashion; it's also about embracing modesty and upholding a sense of decorum. It's important to consider whether unbuttoning too many buttons is appropriate, as it may not be suitable for every occasion. It's crucial to strike a perfect balance between comfort and appropriateness to ensure your outfit is suitable for the occasion.

**Pay meticulous attention to every tiny detail, from the tights you choose to wear.**

Here's a clever trick we've noticed Meghan Markle using: she has a knack for matching the colour of her tights with her outfit. Her look exudes a seamless and polished appearance, effortlessly bringing everything together. This small adjustment can elevate your ensemble and provide you with the opportunity to experiment with distinctive fashion concepts that may have escaped your attention previously.

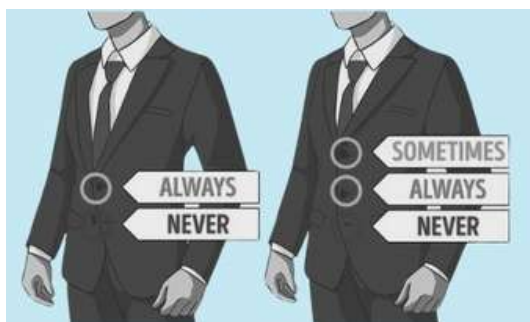
**If you're going for a shirt without a jacket, there's no need to add a tie.**



Mastering the art of dressing involves knowing when to incorporate certain clothing pieces and when to opt for a more relaxed look. For example, if you're sporting a shirt without a jacket, it's usually not essential to wear a tie. This choice embodies a more relaxed and effortless style, and incorporating a tie could potentially create a sense of formality that doesn't quite align with the overall look.

**Always remember to fasten the middle button while leaving the bottom button unfastened.**

When it comes to fastening your jacket, there are some crucial guidelines to adhere to in order to achieve a polished and fashionable appearance. Firstly, it's important to always remember to fasten the middle button. This serves as the anchor for your jacket, ensuring a snug fit that enhances your overall look. It's an essential principle that forms the basis for a stylish ensemble. Now, in terms of the upper button, there is some flexibility. You have the option to button it up based on your mood or the desired look for the day. But remember, it's important to never use the bottom button. This is a fundamental principle in men's fashion. Leaving the bottom button undone not only ensures your freedom of movement but also maintains a sleek and polished appearance for your jacket. It's all about achieving a stylish and refined appearance from head to toe.



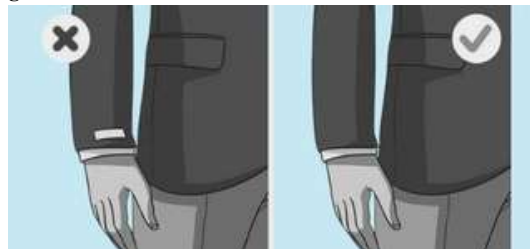
fashion. Leaving the bottom button undone not only ensures your freedom of movement but also maintains a sleek and polished appearance for your jacket. It's all about achieving a stylish and refined appearance from head to toe.

**When it comes to socks, it's important to ensure they provide sufficient coverage for your legs, particularly when seated.**



Selecting the appropriate length of socks may not appear significant, but it holds great importance for your overall look. Choose socks that fully cover your legs, even when seated. This is more than just about staying warm or comfortable; it's also about appearing stylish and well-coordinated. Having exposed skin between your trousers and shoes can really throw off the entire outfit. By selecting the appropriate sock length, you demonstrate a keen attention to detail and a desire to exude a polished and fashionable appearance.

**If you happen to spot any tags protruding from your garments, it's advisable to trim them off.**



Removing clothing tags may appear insignificant, but it can greatly enhance your overall appearance. These tags, although they provide useful information about size or care instructions, can occasionally detract from the sleek appearance of your outfit. By devoting attention to removing them, you're guaranteeing a more refined and sophisticated look in general. However, there are practical benefits to removing clothing tags, rather than just focusing on appearance. Eliminating potential irritation or discomfort from rough labels rubbing against your skin, especially in form-fitting garments, ensures a more comfortable experience. By organising those tags, you're not only enhancing your look but also ensuring your comfort all day long.

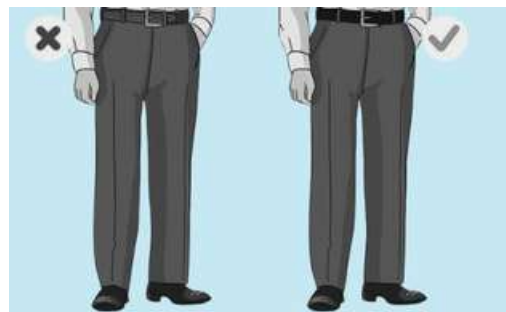
**When you choose to tuck in your shirt, it's always a great idea to complement your look with a stylish belt.**

Opting to tuck in your shirt often suggests a desire for a polished and put-together look, whether it's for a professional setting or a refined yet relaxed outfit. Besides tucking your shirt properly, remember to wear a belt. Wearing a belt is not only a matter of fashion but also serves a practical purpose. Ensuring a secure fit, these trousers will stay in place all day, providing you with maximum comfort. Moreover, incorporating



a belt into your ensemble can elevate its overall appearance, exuding a sense of sophistication and polish. Remember to grab your belt when tucking in your shirt!

**Ensure that your belt and shoes are colour-coordinated.**



Coordinating your belt with your shoes is a timeless style tip that can elevate your outfit. It's all about crafting a seamless aesthetic from head to toe. Coordinating the colour of your belt and shoes can elevate your look with a touch of sophistication and polish. Additionally, it demonstrates your keen attention to detail and your commitment to presenting yourself in the most stylish manner. So, the next time you're putting together an outfit, keep in mind the importance of matching your belt with your shoes to add a touch of elegance.

**Ensuring the perfect length of a tie is crucial for achieving a polished appearance.**



Ensuring the tie is the perfect length is essential for a polished look. Strive for your tie's tip to gracefully reach your waist, with a subtle crossing over it. By carefully considering the proportions, your tie will complement your body and enhance your overall look with a touch of sophistication. In addition, it adds to a polished and sophisticated appearance, suggesting that you have paid attention to the small details. Deciding what to wear goes beyond just appearances; it also has the power to influence our inner emotions. When we carefully select our clothes, it's as if we're showcasing a unique aspect of ourselves to the world. Your choice of outfits can reveal a great deal about your personality.

- RIDHIMA KAPOOR





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FROM THE KITCHENS OF INDIA

# CHETTINAD MUTTON KUZHAMBU (KARAIKUDI MUTTON CURRY)

The Chettinad region of Tamil Nadu is well-known for its non-vegetarian meals. Chicken curry, mutton curry, fish curry, adirasam, and many other dishes are famous in Tamil cuisine. The hotness (spiciness), diversity of spices, and freshly ground spices for non-vegetarian foods are what make Chettinad cuisine so famous.



# Chettinad Mutton kuzhambu (Karaikudi mutton curry)

The spicy, hot, and aromatic Chettinad mutton curry, also known as kuzhambu or chettinad mutton curry, is flavoured with unique and aromatic spices such as dagad phool (kal pasi or black stone flower), nutmeg and mace (jaiphal and javitri), staranise, and shallots (sambar onions), which are essential for this dish. You won't be able to taste chettinad mutton if you cut corners with the components.

The unique spices used in the recipe give the chettinad mutton kuzhambu/curry a fragrant and unique flavour and taste. The ideal accompaniments for the chettinad mutton curry are parotta, roti, idli, dosa, idiyappam, or just plain rice.

- **Setup time: 20 minutes**
- **50 minutes for cooking**
- **Cuisine: Chettinad**
- **Serves four to five**

## Ingredients:

- 600 gms of mutton

## To grind and roast the masala

- Six tiny cloves
- Six little green cardamoms
- One-inch cinnamon stick
- Star anise: 1
- 1 tablespoon of dagad phool, or black stone flower
- Mace (Javitri): One blossom
- One tiny piece of nutmeg (jaiphal), about 1/4th tsp
- 2. Tbsp of coriander seeds
- Cumin seeds: 1 teaspoon
- One teaspoon of black pepper seeds
- Tsp of fennel seeds
- 4 tbsp fresh coconut

## For mutton that is simmering

- 14. One tablespoon of oil
- 15. One large onion, 160 grammes;
- 16. Two medium-sized tomatoes, 190 grammes
- 17. 4 teaspoons of ginger and garlic paste
- 18. 1 tablespoon of chilli powder
- 19. 2 tablespoons of coriander powder
- 20. 1 teaspoon of cumin powder
- 21. 1 tsp of turmeric powder
- 22. Three cups of water

## Curry or Gravy

- 23. 1/4 cup of oil
- 24. Two bay leaves; 25. Fennel seeds (saunf) – half a teaspoon
- 26. At least 20 curry leaves
- 27. 100g of shallots
- 28. Four green chillis (slit)
- 29. Half a cup of water
- 30. One-fourth cup chopped cilantro

## The Method:

- Finely chop the onions and shallots and set aside.
- Combine all the ingredients listed under "For roast and grind masala" and roast them on a low flame, without using any oil, until they start to smell and turn a light brown colour. Finally, add the fresh coconut, roast it gently, and turn it off. Once it has cooled, powder it finely.

## Cooking Mutton

- Place all the materials listed under "boiling mutton ingredients" into a pressure cooker. When the mutton is cooked, or until four to five whistles sound, add the water, shut the lid, and pressurise. After ten minutes of resting, remove the lid. Set it away. Makes a simple curry using meat.

## Preparing the Curry/Kuzhambhu

- First, fill a frying pot with oil. Once it's hot, add the complete spices, including bay leaves, fennel seeds, and curry leaves. Give it a little period of spluttering. When the shallots are tender and golden in colour, add them and sauté.
- Add green chillies and sauté for two minutes. Next, add the roasted ground powder and roast it alongside the onion mixture on medium to low heat for two to three minutes, being careful not to burn the spices. After adding 1/2 cup of water, simmer for 3 minutes.
- Only add the cooked mutton liquid—not the meat—and boil for ten minutes, or until a curry-like consistency forms.
- Mix thoroughly after adding the mutton chunks and any leftover liquid. Simmer for five minutes. The spices are cooked to perfection and the mutton kuzambhu begins to release oil.
- Stir well after adding the chopped coriander leaves. Reduce the heat and cover and simmer for 12 to 15 minutes. Turn off.
- After letting it rest for ten minutes or so, the mutton curry (karaikudi/chettinadu) is ready.
- Serve idli, dosa, or idiyappam alongside this fiery, spicy chettinad mutton kalumbu.

## Tips

- You can adjust the amount of chillies or chilli powder to your preference.
- After adding the coconut paste to the roasted spices, you can add poppy seeds (kus-kus).
- Add water to the curry or kuzhambu as needed to achieve the desired consistency. The consistency of the sauce in this chettinad mutton kuzhambu is more curry-like, making it suitable for eating with dosa, idli, or parotta.
- My curry thickened as it cooled, so I added a cup of water to adjust the consistency.
- You may use the same ingredients to create with veggies or chicken.

- WIFE BUREAU



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# ESCAPADE

Travelling a distant earth is safe  
 When wounds are unhealed  
 Behind the satin curtains  
 When clearly seen the shadows  
 Conspiring with swords and arrows,  
 Real or unreal? not known,  
 Not certain then its' best  
 To pull that hillside view and run  
 Into a noiseless valley of solitude  
 It hurts more, perhaps  
 However it is much safe an earth  
 To meditate in caves of the savants  
 To silence the pain  
 Yes, a few seasons in series  
 Let down the branches of hope  
 In edge to edge, leaf to leaf,  
 Yet there flowers all around  
 Of spring and music of windchimes  
 Fate that has tossed in depth  
 The castle of verse as in like a proverb  
 What is left around and within?  
 A few alphabets,  
 An ice mountain, a few droplets of rain  
 And a torned satin dream!  
 There no escape even in escapades  
 There follows the stoic challenges  
 Of wounded heart and splintered mind  
 Etwined in hidden tenacious crust  
 Secretly a million soldiers fight a war  
 Deep within to overpower  
 The otherwise gentle kind soul..  
 Covered in mist down the valley of earth

There this distinct modest call arises  
 From the cambers of conscience  
 To escape from all the annoying battles  
 A voice deep down calms a while  
 Destiny not always guards all escapades  
 Not even heals a tiny moment of sorrow  
 Eventually life mends a path of survival  
 To take the line of fate as it is,  
 To rejoice in one sanctuary  
 Of turmoil and peace....

- REMA PISHARODY



By Rema Pisharody



# My Friend's Book Shelf



By Sudha K K

'Peer o! peer how do you do?'  
Nudged the hard title page  
'Nothing new my little kiddo'  
Shrugged his pal like a sag

Looking crisp like just-baked cookie  
Smiling titles as colourful and silky,  
Smelling the same as the pulp of a tree  
Whiling away their days just free

Adorning the polished rose wood shelf  
Yearning the touch of a hand for self...  
Awaiting the intangible pampering of eyes.,  
Awing at arachnids' webs on the sides.

'Gosh' came a sigh from me at that sight...  
Posh do they look, yet something not right,  
Wish I could hear what they had to say...  
Mashed within, with endless tales' array!

Untouched, by hands or smelt by none,  
Silent, serene exchanges undone...  
Novelty of novels never explored...  
Narratives umpteen, never exposed...

Hey dear, read me leave me not behind...,  
Day or night I follow you behind...  
Time and again, it's with me you unwind  
Cried the book in my hand, as if to remind...

Marked, scratched, bracketed, 'n' dog-eared...  
Folded, book-marked, bulky 'n' withered.  
You made me thus..., I was never bothered.  
Cried as ever..., with angry face, tailored

Smiled at me like a pacified kid...  
Said 'You deserve me'... like a final bid,  
Looking at me and the rose wood shelf  
Said 'They deserve you' Grinning himself.

- SUDHA K K



# The Glory of Wait



By Sarmistha Dey

**I still couldn't quit. Yes, I am talking about waiting.**

**All the greed, violence, anger, pride, selfishness left from this heart one by one with the touch of love.**

**But the wait still hasn't left me. I left everything for love**

**But Still waiting**

**I still live in the deepest part of the heart, many people say, waiting is the expression of the purest love.**

**Everyone can love, but not everyone can wait for beloved**

**Is it really so?**

**I don't know**

**maybe**

**But I owe a lot to waiting**

**Waiting for beloved taught me to be as simple as a bird. Taught to be as restless as a child; taught to be as vast as the sky; As Soft as a flower, taught to be beautiful. Learned to be as deep as the blue waters of ocean; Taught to be transparent like nature. I have learned to be as intense as the magical silence of the golden evening.**

**Finally, the anticipation has brought me to the enchanting eternity of poetry. Enduring the wait in my heart every moment is indeed challenging. However, each day, each moment, I embrace it with delight over and over again. Oh, the wait! You are exquisitely agonizingly beautiful!**

**- SARMISTHA DEY**





# From Cannes With Love: The Story Of The Kerala Nurses'

By Kavya Patel



**India's Palme d'Or curse is broken in Cannes by the story of Kerala nurses.**

A heartbreakingly long absence from the Palme d'Or competition for Indian cinema had to end with the story of two nurses from Kerala. The protagonists of Mumbai-born filmmaker Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light*, Prabha and Anu, have made India's comeback to the Cannes film festival's renowned competition section, which has been frequented for decades by industry greats like Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen.

The latest Indian film to vie for the top award at Cannes was *Swaham* (My Own), directed by Malayalam filmmaker Shaji N. Karun in 1994. Shaji and Kapadia are both former students of the Pune-based Film and Television Institute of India (FTII). The principal roles of the nurses in the Hindi and Malayalam language production *All We Imagine As Light* are portrayed by two Malayalam actors, Kani Kusruti and Divya Prabha.

The latest Indian film to be nominated for the Palme d'Or, the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival, in thirty years is Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light*.

Thirty years ago, when *Swaham* was chosen for the Cannes competition, world cinema icons Krzysztof Kieslowski (Poland), Abbas Kiarostami (Iran) (*Through the Olive Trees*), and Zhang Yimou (China) were seated alongside Karun at the top table. That year, American newcomer Quentin Tarantino's first feature film, *Pulp Fiction*, took home the Palme d'Or.

This year's Cannes festival, which runs from May 14-25, will feature cinematic heavyweights like French director Jacques Audiard, Italian director Paolo Sorrentino, Chinese director Jia Zhangke, American director Francis Ford Coppola, Canadian director David Cronenberg, Italian director Paolo Sorrentino, and another American legend, Paul Schrader, competing for the Palme d'Or. Kapadia will be competing against them. Previous Cannes Grand Prize winners include Audiard and Coppola.

*Swaham*, directed by Malayalam filmmaker Shaji N. Karun, was the final Indian film to compete in the coveted Cannes competition section in 1994.

The competition segment and other categories, such as *Un Certain Regard* for New Voices in World Cinema, which this year features Indian-origin filmmaker Sandhya Suri's debut feature film, *Santosh*, were officially revealed in Paris on April 11.

To date, no Indian film has taken home the Palme d'Or, with Satyajit Ray's 1956 film *Pather Panchali* being the only exception. It is still regarded by the film industry as a grave mistake. Rather, the competition section's *Pather Panchali* took home the Cannes Best Human Document prize.

Karun, who wore traditional clothing to present *Swaham* on the red carpet thirty years ago, was one of the first people in the Indian cinema business to congratulate Kapadia on making history.

Thirty years ago, Shaji N. Karun (middle) attended the global premiere of *Swaham* in Cannes. Karun believes Payal Kapadia, a young director based in Mumbai, is absorbing a higher quality of cinematic philosophy that gives her works a unique sense of aesthetics and visual language. "Indian cinema should take Payal Kapadia's lead in the future," Karun says.

Karun, who served as head of jury for the 2020 Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) and gave her short film *And What Is The Summer Saying* the Most Innovative and Experimental Film prize, says of Palal, "Payal has the rare ability to recognise the disappearing light and sound in front of her to make cinema enlightening." "Payal's gender interpretations in her works allow them to stand out in Indian cinema," continues Karun, whose 1989 first film *Piravi* earned him a Camera d'Or Mention at Cannes.

According to Karun, "We immediately corrected a mistake in Payal's film submission to MIFF and presented the award because a work of art deserves respect over an error on paper." He remembers carrying Sukhwant Singh Dadha, his fellow FTII batchmate, and a bulky steel box filled with *Swaham*'s reels to the Santa Cruz, Mumbai, customs office in 1994.

*And What is the Summer Saying*, which made its debut at the 2018 Berlin Film Festival, went on to win the Special Jury Prize at the world's most prestigious documentary film festival, the International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam.

Cannes is no stranger to Kapadia. *Afternoon Clouds*, a short film directed by Kapadia, was chosen by the Cannes festival in 2017 as the inaugural FTII student film for their film school competition, which is now called *La Cinef*. The director's experience living with her nonagenarian grandmother, who needed a nurse day and night for care, served as the inspiration for *Afternoon Clouds*, the narrative of two Kerala nurses working at a Mumbai hospital, and *All We Imagine As Light*.

In 2017, Payal Kapadia's short film *Afternoon Clouds* became the first Indian film to be chosen for the Cannes film festival's international competition for film schools.

The renowned artist Kapadia, whose 2017 painting is titled *All We Imagine as Light*, is the daughter of renowned artist Nalini Malani. In 2020, at the height of the coronavirus pandemic, Kapadia made history by being the first Indian to be accepted into the Cannes festival's Cinefondation Residence programme, which assists young directors from all over the world pursuing their first or second feature films. Her online proposal was titled "All We Imagine As Light."

Past participants in the Cannes Cinefondation Residence programme included the renowned Romanian director Corneliu Porumboiu, the Hungarian László Nemes, who won the 2016 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film for *Son of Saul*, and the Lebanese actor-director Nadine Labaki, who is nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar in 2019 for *Capernaum*.

In *All We Imagine As Light*, two Kerala nurses named Prabha (Kani Kusruti) and Anu (Divya Prabha), who work in a Mumbai nursing home, share a poignant tale about the delicate gender and cultural politics of the nation. Prabha's life is thrown into chaos when her estranged spouse gives her an unexpected present. Her younger flatmate Anu looks

for a spot to have an intimate moment with her boyfriend in the interim. The two nurses are forced to abandon the guidelines that have guided their life up to this point in favour of a day vacation to a seaside town.

The Hubert Bals Bright Futures Fund for script and project development, worth 9000 euros (about 800,000 rupees), was awarded to Kapadia's proposal in 2019 by the Rotterdam International Film Festival. Kapadia began writing *All We Imagine As Light* in 2017, but she didn't finish it until late 2018 when she participated in the PJLF Three Rivers writing residency in Rome.

The British director Andrea Arnold's *Cow*, the American director Todd Haynes (*The Velvet Underground*), and the American Oliver Stone (*JFK Revisited: Through the Looking Glass*) fought it out for the Golden Eye Award for Best Documentary in 2021. *Bird*, the latest film from Andrea Arnold, is vying for the Palme d'Or; if it wins an Indian film festival, Kapadia will be motivated to bring the picture home for the first time ever.



Payal Kapadia

*All We Imagine As Light*

By Payal Kapadia

- KAVYA PATEL





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# A SOJOURN AMIDST THE MOUNTAINS

By- Arijita Mukherjee Chakraborty

We often prefer to escape to the mountains as a break from our mundane city life. My husband and I have a deep fascination with the mighty Kanchenjunga, the world's third-highest mountain, standing at a massive 28,169 feet in a section of the Himalayas in the border region between Nepal and Sikkim. What an eternal beauty it is! We can best view the elusive Kanchenjunga from the quaint little town of Pelling in West Sikkim, making it one of our favourite holiday destinations.

We recently took a trip to Pelling, which was very short because it was our baby boy's first ever trip to Sikkim. We wanted to keep it short, as we weren't sure how he would react to the high altitude and change of weather. This was a follow-up trip from the one we took in December 2020, which was longer and where we explored Pelling and the nearby attractions.

This time around, though, we decided to keep our plans flexible. We could spend the two days simply in the hotel gazing at Kanchenjunga and not do any sightseeing if the baby did not feel up to it. Even that felt like a wonderfully relaxing vacation.

We started our trip from the Kolkata airport, boarding a flight to Bagdogra. Just the day before, we received the somewhat disturbing news that a landslide had forced the closure of the main highway from Bagdogra to Pelling, necessitating the longer route through Darjeeling. Anyway, we told ourselves, these events are common in the mountains, and one must adapt accordingly.



My baby boy refused to fall asleep before take-off. This caused a bit of worry, as everyone, including a co-passenger, told us we simply must put the baby to sleep before taking off and make sure his nap continues until the plane lands. This is the only way to avoid hassles during the flight, they said.

Once we were airborne, as expected, my baby started fussing. He wanted to explore his surroundings and not remain confined to our assigned seats. While we tried several techniques to pacify him, nothing seemed to work. I gave in, turning off the seatbelt sign and taking him for a stroll.



And this led to the most delightful encounters! Several co-passengers offered to take him in their arms, play with him, and soothe him! At first, I was apprehensive about my baby boy's reaction, but I was pleasantly surprised when he appeared to feel most at ease in their arms. He warmed up to people he'd just met with natural ease. As he played in the arms of kind strangers, I watched and clicked pictures with sheer joy, realising that these genuine human connections, often forged instantly, are indeed special and could potentially solve many of today's problems. Social media dominates a world where people often complain of loneliness and constantly compare themselves with their peers, so it made me happy to see human connections taking precedence.

We landed in Bagdogra on time and started our journey to Pelling via the meandering mountain roads. Stopping for breakfast and lunch on the way, we finally managed to reach Pelling around 6 p.m. Having started our journey that day at 5 a.m., we were exhausted. My baby was, luckily, in high spirits. He had spent pretty much the entire day napping on his father's lap! Despite our exhaustion, the little one remained incredibly enthusiastic and eager to play! We indulged him, taking turns, just when we received some bad news. The weather had apparently not been cooperative for the last week, and our old friend, Mt. Kanchenjunga, decided to stay hidden. My husband was quite disappointed. Being a photography enthusiast, he had managed to bring his fancy DSLR camera along (ignoring my protests that it would be inconvenient to carry the heavy camera with our baby) and was hoping to get some classic snaps of sunlight touching the mountain. However, the forecast did not seem encouraging.

At 5:30 a.m. the following morning, we awoke to the most spectacular sight. The beautiful Kanchenjunga looks radiant in the early morning sun! How lucky we are, we thought. Grabbing our baby, who was still asleep, and our camera, we made our way downstairs. We had chosen to stay at a hotel with excellent views of the Kanchenjunga (weather permitting, of course). Several other guests were down there already, all marvelling at nature's grace and beauty. Family members were forcibly waking up the still-asleep guests to catch a glimpse of the snow-laden beauty! After all, who knew how long the Kanchenjunga would be visible? And sure enough, around 7 a.m., the clouds started coming in again and obscured the mountain from view. It appears that nature rewards early risers!



We packed our day with sightseeing activities. However, our plan was flexible. If our baby became cranky, we would come back to the hotel and spend the day relaxing.

Our first stop was Pemayangtse Monastery, one of the oldest and premier monasteries in Sikkim. When we last visited Pelling in December 2020, COVID protocols had the monastery closed to external visitors.

This time, we really wanted to visit the historical place. What a serene atmosphere! The calm and peaceful monastery made us truly forget our woes and anxieties and immerse ourselves in the moment. Our baby, fortunately, also kept quiet and did not make any noise, much to our relief. Maybe the calmness in the air also soothed him.

Next, we made our way to Khecheopalri Lake, believed to be a sacred, wish-fulfilling lake. We also visited in December 2020. On our way, we passed the Rimbi Orange Garden. Here, a dilemma confronted us. The trail involved hiking down the hillside to the Rimbi river bed and walking around the orange garden. Several tourists were concerned about how we would manage with a small baby. Maybe we should not venture all the way down, I told my husband. However, he disagreed, determined to try everything before abandoning it. He believed he could walk down while carrying our son. And thus, we made our way down. With great care and grace, we descended and encountered the vibrant Rimbi River! The small stalls were selling delicious fresh orange juice, the staple "Pahari" Maggi, and steamed momos. Tired and hungry from our hike, we munched on while the kind Sikkimese lady at the stall attended to our son, who was quite entertained by her Nepali lullabies!



Next stop: Khecheopalri Lake. We took a walk amidst the greenery and offered our prayers in the adjoining temple. However, we were really disappointed to find that the lake had shrunk in width and access was now restricted. This was in stark contrast to our earlier visit to the lake in December 2020, when we could approach the lake and feed the fish as well. All of that is forbidden now. This was indeed a sad reminder of climate change, global warming, and the adverse effects it has on nature's precious resources.



By this time, we were hungry again (the fresh mountain air helps digest the food really quickly), and we were quite amazed to find a restaurant serving authentic Italian pizza!!! Indeed, this was an unexpected discovery, particularly in the remote area of Pelling! We made our way there and placed our orders. The backside of the menu card featured



their interesting origin story. The pizzeria's owner initially owned a homestay, where he once welcomed an Italian pizza chef. He became friendly with his guest, and the chef, who was also an architect, built the wood-fired oven for him so he could start his own pizzeria. Initially, he had difficulty establishing his business as he did not find any partners to work with. But as fate would have it, a girl from the city (our server) came to stay at his homestay. She had apparently always wanted to stay in the mountains and wished to start her life afresh. Thus, she volunteered to run the pizzeria with him! Now they're in a relationship and run the pizzeria together! If my readers ever happen to visit Pelling, make sure to visit Khecheopalri Lake and Latop's Pizzeria!

A bit exhausted from our daylong travels, we headed into the car again and started for our last stop: Kanchenjunga Falls. This pristine waterfall, which reportedly originates high up in the icy glaciers of Mt. Kanchenjunga, was not very popular until the 1990s. Of course, it is one of the most coveted tourist stops, and rightly so.



We had also visited the Singshore Bridge, a suspension bridge offering breathtaking views of the surroundings. It is about an hour's drive from Pelling. There's also the Rabdentse Ruins, which feature the historical ruins of the ancient palace and offer beautiful views of Mt. Kanchenjunga on a clear day.

If you are planning a trip to Pelling, you can either take the train to New Jalpaiguri (NJP) or a flight to Bagdogra (as we did this time). The journey from NJP/Bagdogra to Pelling takes about 6 hours, with a couple of stops along the way. Plan to spend at least 2 full days in the quaint mountain town, which offers enough time to visit the local points of interest and enjoy the beautiful Mt. Kanchenjunga. March and April are good times to visit when the weather is not too cold.

**We hope to plan our next trip soon!**



- ARIJITA MUKHERJEE CHAKRABORTY



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# WILDLIFE TODAY

WORLD WIDE MAGAZINE





# THE TRUTH ABOUT GERMANY'S NEWFOUND LOVE FOR INDIAN STUDENTS

By WFY Bureau Germany

**Germany is looking at Indian students as a potential solution to its pressing labour shortage.**

Germany is currently grappling with a pressing labour shortage and is considering Indian students as potential candidates to address this issue and prevent its industries from being severely impacted. A new law in Germany has increased the work time for international students, with Indians being the largest group affected by this change.

Germany's Federal Statistical Office reports that there are approximately 43,000 Indian students currently enrolled in German universities. The number of Indian students in Germany for the winter semester of 2022–23 increased by 26%.

Germany, often regarded as Europe's economic powerhouse, has experienced two decades of consistent growth. However, its economic performance is currently showing signs of decline. The ongoing labour issues have impacted everything.

Germany is facing a significant economic challenge in its economy, as highlighted by German Economy Minister Robert Habeck. He revealed that there are approximately 700,000 job vacancies across various sectors in the country. This is concerning, especially considering that Germany's economic growth potential has declined from around 2% in the 1980s to a mere 0.7%. Addressing this issue quickly could potentially reduce the growth potential to 0.5%.

Official estimates predict that as Germany's society continues to age, it will face a shortage of seven million skilled workers by 2035.

In order to strengthen its industries, Germany is currently seeking to attract international students, with a particular focus on Indian students. Germany has recently made a change to the work hours of international students. Germany has recently implemented the Skilled Immigration Act, which has extended the permitted working hours for international students to 20 hours per week.

The state's goal is to not only attract skilled individuals, but also cultivate a pipeline of talent for the workforce by providing opportunities to international students. Two Indian students were eager to work while studying in Germany. "Having the appropriate skills and certification can greatly improve one's quality of life, especially when accompanied by a satisfactory salary." "There are also options for permanent residency," mentioned Namit, an Indian student residing in Germany. A student named Mohammad Danish, hailing from India, highlighted the high demand for tech and programming positions in Germany, surpassing other industries. Danish, a 25-year-old Danish student, is currently pursuing a degree in mechatronics and robotics in Germany. Skilled labour shortages are a pressing issue in the hospitality, healthcare, IT, and engineering sectors.

**Germany Has Expressed An Interest In Attracting Indian Students To Its Industries.**

With a staggering 43,000 students, India boasts the highest number of international students in Germany. Ensuring that the German labor market remains appealing to Indian students after they complete their education is critical to bridging Germany's growing skilled worker shortage. The majority of Indian students studying at German universities are pursuing engineering degrees, which aligns well with the needs of the European country. Germany's engineering products have gained worldwide recognition. Indian students in Germany are highly sought after for their enrollment in IT and engineering courses, making them a crucial demographic for the labour market and addressing the shortage of skilled workers. According to Joseph, a 27-year-old PhD student from Kerala, the prospect of uninterrupted work after completing his studies seemed quite promising. Nevertheless, he emphasised the urgency of addressing the situation on the pitch. Germany is currently experiencing a significant labor shortage, and it is turning to international students for assistance. This presents a great opportunity for Indians who are seeking post-work experience and the chance to obtain permanent residency in a European country.

**- WFY BUREAU GERMANY**



# THE INDIAN DIASPORA'S IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY: KNOW IT ALL NOW



By Sunita Krishnan

## *The remarkable financial influence of the Indian diaspora*

Local economies are benefiting billions of dollars from the migration of well-off Indians who are relocating abroad.

Later this month, Kalyani Nair will throw a Vishu celebration at her family's residence in a posh Berlin area. The 34-year-old has carefully budgeted about €200 (£171; \$218) to cover the costs of the Indian food and sweets she expects to offer to her guests in advance of the Hindu festival of colours on March 25. She'll buy the Vishu food online in order to save money, and she'll dress proudly in the traditional clothing she bought when she last visited Palaghat, her hometown.

With a fat budget, Dr. Nair, a microbiologist, and her spouse, a software worker, like to celebrate traditional festivities like Vishu. The pair, who enjoy taking travels every three months and purchasing pricey airfares for their yearly trips back to India, prioritises buying organic foods in their weekly grocery shop and lives in a double-income family with a young daughter and a baby on the way.

"I transferred my investments from India to Germany, so now all my savings are here, and I find it fulfilling to invest money in various stock profiles and exchange-traded funds (ETFs)," says of Nair. We plan to finish the house purchase procedure before the end of the year. We are currently in the process. Our money will be greatly diminished, but it's also a long-term investment in our future. All in all, I feel more stable and secure financially now that I'm in Germany.

This method was created to simulate the effects of reusing deep-frying oil. Rats fed diets containing warmed oils showed increased oxidative stress and inflammation in their liver tissues when compared to their peers on alternative diet regimens.

A growing number of Indians, including Dr. Nair, have moved to Germany in recent years. This tendency has been encouraged by more relaxed visa regulations for highly trained workers. A considerable proportion of intelligent and skilled Indians are finding work in profitable fields like maths, science, technology, and engineering. The largest economy in Europe pays its full-time employees a median monthly compensation of €4,974 (£4,253; \$5,416), making Indians the highest-earning immigrants.

Amritanshu Pandey and Dr. Kalyani Nair moved their investments from India to Germany, where they are presently buying a home.

One of the most important aspects of the greatest diaspora community ever documented is the tale of Indians in Germany. About 18 million Indians have made the decision to live abroad, with the majority of them residing in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and other regions of Asia, such as Singapore and Malaysia, according to the UN. According to experts, during this expansion, Indians have had a major influence on the world economy, going beyond the borders of their own nation.

According to K. K. Iyer, a professor of economics at Cambridge University in the UK, "the impact is significant."

The growing number of Indians living abroad are making a variety of local and foreign investments, savings, and spending patterns. The Reserve Bank of India reports that between April 2022 and March 2023, the bank accounts of non-resident Indians (NRIs) residing in the nation received a sizeable sum of \$7.99 billion (£6.27 billion). The amount received in the preceding fiscal year, which was £3.23bn (£2.54), is more than double this amount.

"These thirty somethings have a lengthy career ahead of them and are highly sought after by huge organisations due to their ambitions and objectives," says Kanika Dey. "Migrants prioritise investments in housing and education for their children, particularly individuals from Kerala in South India residing in the Gulf, as well as IT professionals and academics in the UK," says

Iyer. Bielefeld University sociology professor Kanika Dey claims that by acquiring real estate, Indians in Germany are changing economic trends. This is not how things have always been done in Germany, where purchasing a home is uncommon.

In addition, a large number of Indians living in Germany are investing in mutual funds, stocks, and Bitcoin. The spike in remittance payments to India is one important factor fueling this enormous capital flight. These payouts hit a record-breaking \$125 billion (£98.2 billion) in 2023; this was a significant rise over the roughly \$100 billion (£78.5 billion) that was paid out the year before. Iyer claims that these numbers can be underestimated and only give a partial picture of the whole economic impact.

"It's not only about remittances," he says, "but also about the economic impact of people entering and leaving the country." They come back, establish a business, mentor people, and then leave again. The diaspora community has significantly impacted many businesses, including the Indian IT sector and the pharmaceutical industry in particular.

With the largest economy in the world by GDP, the United States, is home to the highest-earning ethnic minority group: Indians. According to Pew Research Centre data from 2021, out of a population of about 4.4 million, people of Indian descent who were born outside of the US had an average yearly income of \$120,000 (£94,230). Taken as a whole, South Asians make up a sizeable 29% of the Asian buying power in the US, translating into an astonishing \$381 billion (£299 billion) in economic influence. Indian expatriates are contributing significantly to local economies through their purchases.

They are excited to use their money to make purchases. Data from DLF Ltd., a premium real estate company situated in New Delhi, shows that a sizeable amount comes from real estate investments. Between April and September 2023, 20% of all residences sold by DLF were purchased by NRIs; this represents an increase from 15% during the



previous fiscal year. Globally, there is a notable inclination for real estate, particularly in the UK, Singapore, and the Gulf area.

Nair finds resonance in the strategic savings and investment decisions made by this diaspora, which also support capital growth and retention. "In India, it is common for individuals to consider their financial options once they complete their education and secure employment." "So, the next logical step would be to establish a savings plan," she says.

In India, about 25% of NRIs choose low-risk investing opportunities. Retirement planning is given top priority by 18% of NRIs in Canada when it comes to their long-term investment strategy and Indian portfolios. This tendency is followed by 16% in the UK and 12% in Singapore. "They're certainly making smart financial decisions, just like a savvy investor in the United States," Iyer concurs.

Experts predict that the economic influence of the Indian diaspora will continue to be felt globally in a world where technology and interconnection are quickly evolving, subject to political and visa laws.

The Indian diaspora has the potential to expand and become a major economic force. Iyer says, "I think it will be interesting to see how the diaspora channels their investments back home and participates in joint ventures." "India's economic policy going forward will play a significant role in shaping the future, and currently, it leans towards a liberal approach, which is likely to foster further inspiration."

"These new migrants have the opportunity to freely navigate between various countries due to the implementation of open market policies." "So, if they're in Germany today, they could potentially be in the US or Canada tomorrow, as these countries also provide similar citizenship frameworks," Dutta clarifies. "They are individuals in their thirties with a long career ahead of them, driven by ambition and a desire for success." Due of their significant contributions and the demand for their work worldwide, many corporations are keen to hire them. "I think these highly compensated, highly trained individuals will keep contributing significantly to the economy.

## THE INDIAN DIASPORA'S IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY: KNOW IT ALL NOW

- SUNITA KRISHNAN







# The West Now Turns To The East For Financial Services.

As Western financial services firms turn to the East in search of talented individuals, India has a great opportunity.

By **Ridhima Kapoor**

With technology taking a prominent role, outsourcing remains a practical and strategic choice for financial services businesses looking to save costs. Companies have accelerated their outsourcing programmes, driven by banking, asset management, and, more recently, private equity and private credit, and expect these programmes to become more intricate and demanding.

In a world where data plays a crucial role, it's no wonder that the practice of expanding teams through resource augmentation has become increasingly popular. During the pandemic, this approach gained traction as businesses began to recognise the benefits of remote teams, allowing them to work from any location. During the pandemic, companies providing strategic resource augmentation services played a crucial role in supporting the financial services market.

**Strategic resource augmentation is the path to success.**

The challenges in finding and hiring talented individuals have contributed to the significant expansion of knowledge process outsourcing (KPO). Especially during the pandemic, HR departments that were slow to react missed out on the chance to take advantage of remote hiring possibilities.

Furthermore, numerous Western economies, encompassing regions in North America and Western Europe, are grappling with the challenges posed by an ageing population, low birth rates, and a diminishing working-age population. These are warning signs of additional difficulties that may arise in the coming years.

On the other hand, India has a great chance to solidify its position as a preferred talent hub and a global economic powerhouse, thanks to its demographic dividend and vast talent pool.

**India has the potential to attract top talent.**

Graduates in many Western countries no longer see financial services as a highly profitable job or a long-term career option. The idea of pursuing a career in investment banking or asset management has lost its allure in comparison to the thrill of working for a start-up or a renowned company like Google. India may be experiencing a similar trend, but its extensive educational system, which prioritizes academic achievement and the growth of its graduate population, helps to moderate the extent of the change in preferences. In the past academic year, a staggering number of students successfully finished their studies at various levels of education. People still highly regard investment banking and financial practices as reliable career paths.

**Due to retention challenges, India's prospects look favourable.**

Over the past few years, there has been a significant transformation in the KPO industry, driven by the remarkable expansion of the private equity and credit markets. Regardless of their location, employers understand the importance of maintaining consistent work hours for all employees and respect their need to adhere to their designated schedules without asking them to work overtime. Operating with a global presence and a diverse team across various time zones, we can ensure uninterrupted service delivery by strategically leveraging resources and implementing a follow-the-sun model.

**Transforming the financial services industry into an enticing destination**

To succeed in this ever-changing landscape, organisations must prioritise their employees by providing ample opportunities to develop new skills in various areas of financial services. In addition, implementing a comprehensive technology enablement programme will be essential for enhancing efficiency for financial analysts and clients alike. Developing a market offering of various types of digital dashboards, alerts, and other managed solutions presents a great opportunity. The progress of artificial intelligence (AI) and large language models (LLMs) is happening at an

impressive pace. These technologies provide an additional opportunity for data analysts and consultants to better understand client needs and offer more extensive customisation. Enhancing the efficiency of LLM models will contribute to improved responses and ultimately benefit the client's data science and data insights programs. It will also help them create solutions that optimise the use of AI to extract valuable insights from unstructured data.

**Maintaining India's talent advantage**

Despite the ever-changing nature of financial markets, some aspects of financial services have remained relatively unchanged over the past two decades. Change is constant in the fast-paced world of technology, and it is happening at an unprecedented rate. With the advent of technology and the integration of AI, we can expect a range of new possibilities and hurdles. These advancements will bring about increased data, which may lead to potential biases in the outcomes. However, they will also introduce

additional safeguards and measures to ensure accuracy and compliance. In the coming years, it is crucial for the staff to enhance their technological skills. In the coming years, hiring strategies will require adjustments. Recruiters must evaluate the benefits of a new wave of employees who are adept at utilizing cutting-edge technologies.

For India, the future lies in maintaining its competitive edge. With the ever-changing nature of global markets, it is crucial for India to consistently nurture its pool of skilled individuals. India should prioritise and invest in improving its education system without undermining the talent in other outsourcing destinations or Western economies.

Simultaneously, it needs to preserve its advantages—the resilience of its political system and its image as a secure, highly educated country with a relatively young workforce and a strong fertility rate—to fully unleash its economic potential.

**- RIDHIMA KAPOOR**



# New: Protons And The Wondrous Mystery Of Quarks



By WFY Bureau UK

**Nuclear theorists have developed a high-resolution map of quark distributions within protons. Thanks to the use of advanced computational models, this map helps distinguish the roles of up and down quarks in proton properties.**

A team of nuclear theorists from various institutions, including the U.S. Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory, Argonne National Laboratory, Temple University, Adam Mickiewicz University of Poland, and the University of Bonn in Germany, has utilised supercomputers to forecast the spatial distributions of charges, momentum, and other characteristics of "up" and "down" quarks within protons. A recent publication in the esteemed journal Physical Review D has shed light on significant disparities in the properties of up and down quarks.

This study represents a groundbreaking achievement in the field, as it utilises a novel theoretical framework to generate a detailed and precise map of quarks within a proton. The findings reveal an intriguing asymmetry between the distribution and spatial extent of the up quark compared to the down quark. These disparities suggest that up and down quarks could potentially have varying impacts on the essential characteristics and composition of the proton, such as its internal energy and spin.

These calculations play a crucial role in analysing data from nuclear physics experiments, shedding light on the distribution of quarks and gluons within the proton and how they contribute to its overall properties.

The DOE Office of Science funds the Continuous Electron Beam Accelerator Facility (CEBAF), a user facility at the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility, which is currently conducting experiments of this nature. Future plans for the Electron-Ion Collider (EIC) at Brookhaven Lab include the implementation of higher-resolution versions. During these experiments, scientists observed that high-energy electrons release virtual particles of light, which interact with protons and alter their momentum without causing them to disintegrate. We can gain valuable insights into the quarks and gluons that make up the proton's core by examining how these scatterings affect its momentum. It's akin to using an x-ray imaging technique to uncover the fundamental building blocks of matter.

## A Fresh Perspective On Generalised Parton Distribution (GPD)

Through scatterings, scientists can gain access to the Generalised Parton Distribution (GPD) of the proton, as partons refer to the combined group of quarks and gluons. Imagine the proton as a

container filled with tiny quarks and gluons. The GPD provides insights into the distribution of energy, momentum, and other properties of these particles within the container. It's similar to watching particles move when the container shakes. Think of it as a map that shows the probability of finding a marble with a certain energy momentum at a specific location within the bag. Understanding the distribution of these quark and gluon characteristics is critical for scientists to gain insights into the proton's intricate mechanisms. This valuable knowledge could potentially pave the way for innovative applications.

In order to acquire a comprehensive map, the scientists at the RIKEN BNL Research Centre (RBRC) had to meticulously examine numerous scattering interactions, encompassing a wide range of momentum change values for the proton.

Shohini Bhattacharya, a physicist in Brookhaven Lab's nuclear theory group and the RIKEN BNL Research Centre (RBRC), has developed a new formalism that provides access to the distribution of quarks and gluons within a proton. In their analysis, the group employed a method that allowed them to make predictions about the spatial distributions of charges, momentum, and various other properties of "up" and "down" quarks within protons.

The researchers recently developed a novel theoretical approach to efficiently simulate the multiple momentum changes of the proton. Physical Review D published the findings.

In the past, theorists generally believed that the proton's change in momentum was evenly distributed between its state before and after the scattering of light. The simplification resulted in a less precise portrayal of reality, as well as increasing the computational cost of the simulations.

Bhattacharya explained that in order to obtain a detailed proton map, it was necessary to run separate simulations for each momentum change value of the proton. This significantly increased the computational burden. In addition, she mentioned that the new approach allows for an examination of the impact of momentum transfer solely on the outgoing proton, specifically in the final state. This approach offers a viewpoint that closely mirrors the actual process. In a groundbreaking development, the new theoretical approach allows for the modelling of multiple momentum transfer values in a single simulation, which is extremely important.

## Exploring the Potential of the Lattice

Quantum chromodynamics (QCD) is the theory that lays out the calculations for quarks and their interactions. Solving these equations becomes a challenging task due to the numerous variables involved. Brookhaven Lab first developed the technique known as lattice QCD to address this challenge. Physicists use a method where they position the quarks on a discretized 4D spacetime lattice. We can visualize this lattice as a 3D grid, with quarks at the nodes. The fourth dimension

represents the dynamic changes in quark arrangements over time. Supercomputers meticulously analyse QCD equations by exhaustively exploring every possible interaction between quarks, taking into account the intricate interplay of numerous variables.

Researchers at the Argonne National Laboratory have developed a new method for modelling the interactions between photons and protons. This breakthrough allows us to use lattice QCD to simulate a greater number of momentum transfers, resulting in higher-resolution imaging that is about 10 times faster than previous methods. The equations of QCD have distinct variables for up and down quarks, allowing scientists to obtain separate images of each quark type and calculate their individual GPDs.

## Examining The Outcomes And Potential Consequences

The team not only mapped out the energy-momentum distributions of the up and down quarks, but they also examined their charge distributions within protons. The team also examined the momentum and charge distributions of quarks in polarised protons, which align the protons' spins in a specific direction. This study aimed to understand the contribution of the inner building blocks to the proton's spin. Proton spin plays a crucial role in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), enabling doctors to visualise internal structures in our bodies without invasive procedures. The origin of this property, which stems from the proton's internal components, remains a mystery.

The researchers discovered that the distribution of the momenta of the down quarks within a polarised proton is noticeably asymmetric and distorted in comparison to that of the up quarks. These findings reveal that the distinct spatial distributions of up and down quarks within a proton contribute to the proton's spin in different ways. Understanding the spatial distribution of momentum provides insights into the angular momentum of quarks inside the proton. The scientists' calculations indicate that up-and-down quarks cannot account for more than 70% of the proton's total spin. It suggests that the gluons must also make a significant contribution. The distribution of the proton's spin among its constituent quarks and gluons provides valuable insights into its internal structure. Scientists can gain valuable insights by understanding the forces that act within the atomic nucleus, scientists are able to gain valuable insights.

Recent experimental findings from the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC) at Brookhaven Lab provide support for the notion of a substantial contribution of gluons to spin. At the future EIC, we will thoroughly examine and analyze this question. Scientists will use the new theoretical predictions to gather crucial information for comparison with the experiments and to aid in interpreting their data. **Experts emphasised the importance of combining theory and experiment to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the proton.**

- WFY BUREAU UK



# Now, 75 Fantastic Indian Diaspora Scientists Will Return To India.



By WFY Bureau Canada

**Under a new fellowship scheme, 75 Indian diaspora scientists, mostly from the United States and Canada, will return to India. This brain-gain initiative aims to bring back talented individuals who have acquired expertise abroad, contributing to India's scientific development.**

The Indian government launched a new fellowship scheme, Vaibhav, in February and March to address the issue of brain drain by encouraging approximately 75 Indian diaspora scientists to return to India within the next three years. The Indian government has allocated a substantial investment of approximately Rs 80 crore to support scientists in various science and technology projects.

In April of this year, Indian institutions will welcome a group of 22 fellows. As part of a broader effort to harness the knowledge of Indian-origin scientists residing overseas, these individuals are contributing to the advancement of research in crucial fields.

The fellowship welcomes applicants from a wide range of disciplines within Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine (STEMM). Artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and data science have emerged as the most captivating fields. Many of the applicants are scientists hailing from the United States and Canada, eager to embark on projects focused on AI and machine learning within Indian institutes.

The Vaibhav scheme requires scientists to spend one to two months annually in India for a maximum of three years. The Vaibhav scheme will award each recipient a grant of Rs 4 lakh per year (\$4,800). The parent institutes will cover their international travel to India once a year, and participants will receive furnished accommodation for two months, Rs 1 lakh per year for research expenses in India, and domestic travel within the country.

The Department of Science and Technology (DST), according to Dr. Charu Agarwal, received approximately 302 proposals during the first call last year. 22 of the numerous proposals have made it to the shortlist, and award letters will shortly notify the recipients of the awards. Dr. Agarwal stated, "We expect the selected fellows to join their respective Indian institutes after April."

Furthermore, the programme provides financial assistance of up to Rs 5 lakh per year to the institutions that will host the fellows for a three-year period. Scientists typically spend two months in India each year, while the hosting institutes are responsible for completing the projects within a three-year timeframe. They must also maintain online communication with the fellows for the rest of the year.

Returning scientists have shown a keen interest in the emerging fields of AI and ML. During the selection process, the host institute carefully reviews research proposals submitted for potential collaboration with fellows. The institutes distribute the released funds to their fellows.

Dr. Agarwal highlighted the advantages of the initiative, emphasising the positive outcomes for Indian scientists and those who are coming back from overseas. Indian scientists living abroad have the opportunity to work together with local researchers, exchange their knowledge and skills, and establish connections within the research community, all while making valuable contributions to their home country.

The fellowship is in line with the government's scientific missions, including the National Quantum Mission, the National Supercomputing Mission, and the Deep Ocean Mission. We encourage scientists from the diaspora to participate in projects aligned with these missions, aiming to bolster them and cultivate the necessary talent for the future.

The ministry intends to select up to 75 scientists from various countries around the world, taking into account their research proposals that have the potential to benefit Indian researchers. The initial call yielded a total of 302 proposals. We selected 22 proposals from this group, which encompassed a diverse range of 18 different verticals. We made the second call in January and scheduled the application review for after March 15

Applicants from various countries, such as the US, Sweden, Norway, Australia, Singapore, Japan, and the UK, participated in the process. Most of the applicants were scientists from the US and Canada who were interested in collaborating with institutes in India.

The proposals underwent evaluation by an Expert Review Committee consisting of members from various ministries, such as earth sciences, new and renewable energy, health, electronics, and IT. After careful consideration, a committee narrowed down the proposals. The fellowship was available to individuals not currently residing in India, including non-resident Indians (NRIs), persons of Indian origin (POIs), and overseas citizens of India (OCIs) currently employed abroad.

The Indian government's Vaibhav fellowship scheme is a noteworthy initiative that aims to harness the knowledge and skills of Indian-origin scientists currently based overseas. It creates an atmosphere of collaboration for research, which can result in significant advancements in diverse scientific and technological domains. This benefits not only Indian institutions but also the global scientific community.

The Vaibhav fellowship scheme represents a significant initiative by the Indian government to cultivate a research culture that promotes innovation and development. This effort aims to not only advance India's scientific and technological progress but also make a positive impact on the global stage. India's efforts on such initiatives are further solidifying its status as a centre for scientific excellence and innovation.

- WFY BUREAU CANADA





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# The Greatest Indian Origin Chess Player In The World



By Saji Chacko

Anish Giri is one of the premier chess players in the world right now. The 29-year-old Dutchman of semi-Indian origin has beaten all the leading lights, including five-time world champion Magnus Carlsen and reigning world champion Ding Liren (China). He has been a Top Ten player for close to six years.

What is more interesting is that Anish's grandparents are Indian (father Sanjay is an Indian of Nepali origin), while his mother Olga is Russian. Even though Anish has not visited India much, his love and regard for the Indian players are phenomenal.

Anish, who had a very close bond and friendship with Vidit Gujrathi, who hails from Nasik, is one of India's top chess teens, and the duo share a very healthy relationship.

"I and Vidit are more or less the same age, and we started playing a lot of junior tournaments together. For some reason, we hit off well and formed quite a good bond. For some time, we started to travel together, and the bonding increased to a great extent. We are still the best of friends," said Anish.

Anish, who was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, has been at the forefront of Dutch chess for nearly a decade now. Sanjay, his father, worked in the health sector in Russia, where he met Olga, his future wife.

Anish has had a big connection with India's best-ever chess player and three-time world champion, Viswanathan Anand. He has been Anand's second training partner for nearly two years. That experience, which he gained while working with Anand, is something that Anish will treasure for his lifetime.





"I will cherish forever the time I spent with Anand. Everything about him is so methodical and precise, and I was very impressed by the manner in which he approaches the game. It's like clockwork precision—something that was not my part of the game then," he said.



Another aspect of Anand's game that greatly appealed to Giri was the Indian's lightning speed. "Anand does not seem to think about his movements. He makes his moves at lightning speed. That comes from someone who has such a huge and wide knowledge of the game," said Giri.

He also said that Anand was very perfect when it came to maintaining notes about his different opponents. He has noted down the strengths and weaknesses of each and every one of his opponents. That is something of an arduous and herculean task, but it also speaks volumes about the kind of organised player Visy is," said Anish.



Giri, who spent the initial 12 years of his life in Russia before moving on to the Netherlands, was candid about learning the basics of the game in Russia. "Russia was a superpower in chess for a long time, and the competition at the junior level there is phenomenal. There is no denying the fact that the competition at the junior level in Russia is very strong. One has to be really good to break into the top echelons of the Russian junior ranks. I feel the toughness of the Russian junior system has played a big role in making me the chess player that I am today," he said.

Surprisingly, for all his connections with Indian players, Anish has only been to India once. He admits that if and when he gets the time, he would love to travel to the country and have first-hand experience with India and Indians.



"My knowledge of India is not much; it is all based on what I have heard from my Indian chess friends on the world circuit." I had the opportunity to compete in India on two occasions. However, I had to withdraw at the last minute. I will soon come over and spend time travelling the length and breadth of the country," he said

- SAJI CHACKO



Connecting Dots

Connecting Roots



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To empower the diaspora to be a force for good through a global platform to collaborate, build community engagement and catalyse social change.

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