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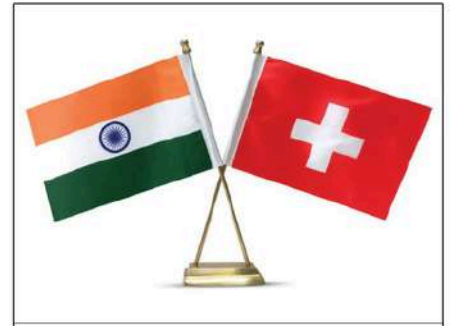


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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Melwyn Williams

HOPE FOR BETTER LIVES FOR THOSE AROUND YOU

There are a few things you should know about the ever-changing world around you. Think about what you can do to make it a better place for us to live.

Dear readers,

We are pleased to present the June edition of The WFY, a special issue that explores the global election landscape and its extensive consequences. In the current month, with the ever-changing political landscape and the rise of new leaders, we take a deep dive into the complex dynamics that are shaping democracies across the globe.

Claudia Sheinbaum has made history by becoming the first woman to be elected president of Mexico, securing an impressive 58% of the vote. Her victory in a competition that included two female candidates represents a notable advancement for gender equality in the realm of politics. In light of Mexico's recent political shift, we delve into the significance of Sheinbaum's presidency and its implications for the country's trajectory.

In India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has secured a third term, although his party has lost its parliamentary majority. This development raises important questions about the future of India's political landscape and the obstacles that Modi will encounter as he continues to lead. In New Delhi, temperatures have soared to a record-breaking 126 degrees Fahrenheit, causing a severe heatwave that is putting immense pressure on the city's resources.

South Africa experienced a significant shift, as the African National Congress (ANC) received less than 50% of the vote for the first time since the end of apartheid. This significant event indicates a possible change in the country's political landscape, influenced by widespread joblessness, escalating crime rates, and a deteriorating infrastructure. In this analysis, we will explore the far-reaching implications of the election and its impact on South Africa's future governance.

In the United States, the political landscape continues to be filled with uncertainty and upheaval. Arizona Republican lawmakers have recently proposed a ballot measure that aims to address the contentious issue of immigration by criminalising unlawful border crossings. This move highlights the ongoing debate surrounding this complex topic. In a recent statement, President Biden raised the possibility that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's ongoing conflict with Hamas could have political motivations. On a global scale, Biden's efforts to secure a truce have far-reaching geopolitical consequences.

The United Kingdom is abuzz with anticipation as the upcoming elections draw near. Both parties are fiercely battling for power, and we are closely examining every aspect. The future hangs in the balance, with no clear indication of what lies ahead. Our comprehensive reporting offers a deep dive into the individuals and possible outcomes that may influence the future of Britain.

In addition to politics, we acknowledge remarkable accomplishments in various other domains. The prestigious 2023 UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award has recognised Indian peacekeeper Major Radhika Sen for her outstanding service in the Congo. Her recognition as a leader and role model highlights the significance of gender representation in peacekeeping missions.

In the face of ongoing climate change, we aim to shed light on the pressing concerns that are affecting our environment. The climate crisis is causing widespread impacts, including mass displacement and significant societal changes, with scorching temperatures in India and devastating floods in Brazil. It is crucial to analyse the intricate connection between environmental challenges and political and social structures, which calls for immediate and thorough responses.

Our regular health and lifestyle features provide valuable insights into coping with extreme heat, exploring innovative electric vehicle developments, and examining the changing landscape of the global fruit industry in the face of climate disruptions. Amidst rising orange juice prices and a decline in production, we delve into possible alternatives and the outlook for this essential beverage.

This edition of The WFY emphasises our world's undeniable interconnectedness. The interconnection between political decisions, environmental changes, and social movements is undeniable, as they collectively influence the lives of billions of people. As we navigate through these intricate terrains, our dedication lies in delivering comprehensive analysis and fostering meaningful discussions.

We appreciate your patronage as we navigate through a rapidly changing world.

Best regards,

Namaste

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



Revealing The Indian Election 2024: All You Need To Know



By Melwyn Williams

A complete guide to the 2024 Indian general election

The people of India have given their verdict and decided who'll be in Parliament representing them.

If the NDA forms the government, Narendra Modi, with his third consecutive term as Prime Minister, will become the second PM in the history of independent India, following Nehru.

According to the results, it appears that Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party is projected to secure the highest number of parliamentary seats, although it falls short of an absolute majority. It is probable that forming a government will require the support of smaller parties in its coalition. The B.J.P. faced an unexpected setback, leaving many surprised by the outcome.

The Indian National Congress, the main opposition, has exceeded expectations with its performance. Following substantial losses in the previous two elections, many perceived the party as significantly weakened. The Congress and its allies expanded their lead over Modi by focusing on key issues such as unemployment, social justice, and the prime minister's connections with India's billionaires.

The Election Commission of India has announced the results for 542 out of the 543 Lok Sabha constituencies. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has emerged victorious in 240 seats, while the Congress has secured 99 seats.

The outcome for the Beed constituency in Maharashtra is still pending, with NCP candidate Bajrang Manohar Sonwane currently in the lead over the BJP's Pankaja Munde. In the Lok Sabha, there are a total of 543 members. However, the counting process was conducted for only 542 seats, as the BJP's Surat candidate, Mukesh Dalal, was elected without any opposition.

Based on the recently announced results, it appears that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to secure a third consecutive term in office, as the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has obtained a majority in the Lok Sabha. This outcome comes despite significant setbacks in three key Hindi heartland states, following a fiercely contested election that was widely seen as a test of Modi's popularity.

The BJP, with candidates running under the banner of Modi, secured victory in 240 seats, which falls short of the 272 majority mark required for government formation.

To achieve a majority, the BJP will need the support of allies within the party-led NDA. This outcome is a significant departure from the party's previous electoral successes in 2019 and 2014, where it won 303 and 282 seats, respectively, enabling it to have a majority on its own. The NDA, with the backing of important allies such as N Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Nitish Kumar's JD (U), who secured 16 and 12 seats in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, respectively, along with other alliance partners, managed to surpass the required majority.

In the recent elections, the Congress, a prominent member of the opposition INDIA bloc, managed to secure 99 seats, a significant increase from the 52 seats it won in 2019. This impressive performance by the Congress has notably impacted the BJP's position in Rajasthan and Haryana. The Samajwadi Party played a crucial role in boosting the morale of the INDIA bloc in Uttar Pradesh by securing 37 seats. Meanwhile, the Trinamool Congress (TMC), a significant member of the opposition alliance, surpassed its 2019 performance by winning 29 seats in West Bengal. In the previous Lok Sabha elections, the BJP secured 18 seats, but this time around, their tally has decreased to 12 seats.

The election results fell short of the resounding victory anticipated by the BJP-led NDA and predicted by the exit polls.

The world's largest democratic exercise saw the meticulous counting of a staggering 640 million votes. This monumental task spanned a period of seven phases, commencing on April 19 and concluding on June 1.

Let us have a detailed look into the mechanism or system.

Electoral System

- **Constitutional Requirement:** Lok Sabha elections every five years (Article 83).
- **Voting Method:** 543 MPs elected via first-past-the-post from single-member constituencies.
- **104th Amendment:** Abolished two seats reserved for Anglo-Indians.
- **Voter Eligibility:** Indian citizens, 18+, registered, with a valid voter ID. Convicts and foreign citizens are banned. No postal or online absentee voting; must vote in person.
- **2024 Election:** 968 million eligible voters (up by 150 million from 2019). Unique polling stations include remote locations and relief camps.
- **Supreme Court Ruling:** Rejected the Congress Party's petition to replace electronic voting machines with paper ballots.



- Logistics include 5.5 million electronic voting machines, over one million polling stations, 15 million election workers, and security personnel.
- Special Provisions: Home voting for the disabled and elderly (85+); extended voting hours in Telangana.

Planning

- Key Processes: Monitor campaign expenditure, prevent illicit goods circulation, and ensure adherence to the Model Code of Conduct.
- Campaign End: We take measures to maintain order and prevent disruptions; campaigns end 48 hours before voting.
- Polling Day: Strict rules to prevent undue influence and ensure a smooth and secure process.
- Security Measures: Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are sealed and stored securely.
- Voter Assistance: Booth officers assist voters.

Welfare

- BJP's Focus: Delivering government schemes and ensuring last-mile delivery to bolster electoral support.
- Key Strategies: Direct cash transfers and provision of essentials (toilets, cooking gas, houses, bank accounts).
- Implementation: Over 300 federal welfare schemes since 2014, with more than 34 trillion rupees (\$400bn) spent, benefiting over 900 million people.
- Major Initiatives: Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (housing), the world's largest cash transfer program for farmers, free cooking gas, electricity, and piped water schemes.
- Promotion: Marketed as personal guarantees from Prime Minister Modi, targeting low-income households.
- Impact: Welfare policies credited with attracting voter support, especially among women, by increasing access to essential services.

Welfare

- High Unemployment: India has a 45-year high unemployment rate, particularly among youth. In 2022, youth unemployment was 23.2%, and national unemployment was around 7%. In 2023, 42.3% of graduates were unemployed.
- Election Issue: Unemployment is a key issue in election campaigns. The opposition (INDIA bloc) criticizes the BJP's handling of the economy, highlighting rising unemployment and inflation.
- INDIA Bloc Promises: The Congress-led bloc's youth manifesto includes filling three million government job vacancies and introducing the "Right to Apprenticeship," which guarantees one year of employment and ₹100,000 salary for diploma and degree holders up to age 25. This scheme has faced criticism for potentially prioritizing hiring over merit and skill.
- BJP's Counter: The BJP emphasizes India's global prominence and new social security programs for the poor, like free food grains and health insurance. Prime Minister Modi highlights business-friendly policies, claiming initiatives like Startup India and infrastructure projects have created jobs in the informal economy. He disputes opposition figures, asserting unemployment has decreased in recent years.

Sectarianism

- Ram Mandir Pamphlet: BJP distributed pamphlets for the Ram Mandir Inauguration to connect with families nationwide.

- Hindutva Movement: The consecration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya marked a new era of Hindu nationalism, driven by the Hindutva movement.
- Political Fulfillment: Prime Minister Modi fulfilled a long-standing BJP pledge by reconstructing the Ram Mandir, appealing to the Hindu population.
- Support Base: Modi and the BJP's Hindu nationalist ideology has garnered substantial support from the Hindu community.
- Bollywood Influence: Bollywood has produced films supporting BJP policies and Hindu nationalist themes.
- BJP Acknowledgement: BJP spokesperson Mmhoneumo Kikon acknowledged threats related to sectarianism, but stated that the party is working to address them.
- Opposition Controversy: The Congress Party and its leaders declined the Ram Mandir consecration ceremony invitation, criticizing it as a politicized BJP-RSS event.

Electoral Bonds

- Supreme Court Ruling: On 15 February 2024, the Supreme Court declared the Electoral Bond system unconstitutional, citing donor influence over policymaking.
- Record Disclosure: By 18 March, the State Bank of India (SBI) was ordered to provide all electoral bond records to the Election Commission, rejecting industry pleas to keep donor identities secret.
- Major Donors: Leading donors include Vedanta Limited, Bharti Airtel, RPSG Group, and Essel Mining, with the BJP receiving nearly half of all donations.
- Donation Totals :
 - BJP: Rs 6,060.5 crore
 - TMC: Rs 1,609.5 crore
 - Congress: Rs 1,421.8 crore
 - BRS: Rs 1,214.7 crore
 - BJD: Rs 775.5 crore
- Top buyers:
 - Santiago Martin (Future Gaming and Hotel Services): Rs 13.68 billion
 - MEIL (Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Limited): Over Rs 12 billion
- Opposition Criticism: Electoral Bonds labeled a "scam" and "extortion racket" by opposition politicians.
- BJP Defense : Spokesperson Syed Zafar Islam claimed the bonds were gained "on merit".
- Concerns: Observers noted potential bribery or government extortion, as data revealed companies donated around the time they received major government contracts, with many top donors under investigation by government agencies.

Bharatiya Janata Party

- National Executive Meeting: Held on 16-17 January 2023, reaffirming faith in Prime Minister Modi and extending BJP national president J. P. Nadda's tenure.
- Modi's Strategy: Modi urged party workers to reach out to all sections of society, including marginalized and minority communities, "without electoral considerations".
- Election Slogans :
 - "Modi Ki Guarantee": Introduced after the 2023 Legislative Assembly elections.
 - "Abki Baar 400 Paar": Aiming to surpass 400 out of 543 Lok Sabha seats.
- Political Rallies: Multiple rallies held with national leadership including Modi, Nadda, and Amit Shah.
- Campaign Rhetoric:
 - Yogi Adityanath framed the election as a battle between "devotees of Ram" and "anti-Ram forces".
 - Modi accused the opposition of planning to destroy the Ram Mandir temple and prioritizing Muslim access to national wealth.
- Controversies :
 - Modi's remarks led to complaints and demands for arrest and campaign suspension.

- BJP's Instagram video showing Rahul Gandhi with the symbol of the All-India Muslim League was taken down after backlash.
- Complaints filed against Modi for violating the Model Code of Conduct and instigating communal hatred.

Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance

- Joint Rally in Patna: Held on 3 March 2024, featuring Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Tejashwi Yadav, Akhilesh Yadav, and senior Left leaders Sitaram Yechury and D. Raja. Kharge criticized Nitish Kumar for frequent alliance changes and BJP for unfulfilled job promises and neglecting the poor.
- Mumbai Rally: Joint rally at Shivaji Park on 17 March, attended by Rahul Gandhi, Uddhav Thackeray, Sharad Pawar, Tejashwi Yadav, and M. K. Stalin. Gandhi launched Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra due to rising inflation and unemployment.
- Protest Rally in Delhi: Held on 31 March at Ramlila Maidan after the arrest of Arvind Kejriwal in the alleged Delhi liquor scam. Opposition leaders condemned the arrest as politically motivated and framed the election as "democracy vs dictatorship".

Indian National Congress

- Campaign Launch: Launched from Nagpur on 28 December 2023, marking the 138th Congress Foundation Day. Over 1 million people were expected to attend, energizing party cadres for the 2024 general election.
- Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra: Launched on 14 January, starting in Thoubal, Manipur, and ending in Mumbai on 16 March 2024. Covered 6,713 kilometers across 14 states.
- Rahul Gandhi's Warning: Gandhi warned of potential unrest if BJP wins the 2024 elections and changes the Constitution during an address at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan

Crowdfunding

- Campaign Launch: Congress initiated a crowdfunding campaign called "Donate for Desh" ahead of the general elections. Digital version launched on 18 December 2023, with a dedicated website. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's Tilak Swaraj Fund (1920-21). Physical collection via door-to-door drives launched on 28 December.
- Initial Response: Received ₹1.45 crore (US\$180,000) on the first day, with top donor states being Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Karnataka.
- End of 2023: Accumulated around ₹9 crore (US\$1.1 million), with 30% of funds from Telangana and Maharashtra alone.
- Rebranding: Rebranded to "Donate for Nyay" on 28 January, aligning with Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra. Collected 4 crores in 4 days during the ensuing campaign.

Funding Issues

- Allegations by Congress: On 16 February 2024, the Congress Party alleged that the Income Tax Department (IT) froze bank accounts containing 2.1 billion rupees (\$25.3 million) due to an ongoing legal dispute. Tax authorities imposed a 2.1-billion rupee lien on 13 February, seizing 1.1 billion rupees (\$14 million).
- Impact on Campaign: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi stated that the restrictions hindered the party's campaigning efforts, accusing Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah of conducting criminal actions against the party.
- Response by BJP: BJP denied the accusations, with Sonia Gandhi alleging the tax issues are part of systematic efforts to cripple the party. An appeal is pending in the Supreme Court.



- IT Department's Response: Official sources from the IT Department stated that they recovered ₹135 crore from Congress for breaking tax exemption laws for political parties, refuting claims of freezing bank accounts. Congress received notices on 29 March to pay ₹1,823.08 crore (\$228 million).
- Congress Counterclaim: Congress accused BJP of "tax terrorism" and serious violations of income-tax laws, demanding a ₹4,617.58 crore (\$578 million) demand from BJP for such violations.

Communist Party of India (Marxist)

Started their election campaign in Kerala after announcing 15 candidates in the state.

Rashtriya Janata Dal

Jan Vishwas Yatra: Launched on 20 February 2024 from Muzaffarpur in Bihar by RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav. Covered 33 districts, with Yadav criticizing BJP as "a dustbin" for other parties.

Aam Aadmi Party

- Investigations: Authorities investigated opposition state officials like Arvind Kejriwal (AAP) for alleged corruption in liquor license allocation and Hemant Soren (Jharkhand CM) for facilitating illegal land sale. Enforcement Directorate is also probing four non-BJP chief ministers.
- Kejriwal's Arrest: Arrested on 21 March over liquor license scam charges, sparking clashes and accusations of political conspiracy by AAP leaders. Kejriwal accused a "scared dictator" of undermining democracy.
- BJP Tactics : BJP allegedly uses Enforcement Directorate raids to target critical opposition leaders. Many opposition leaders facing corruption charges have joined BJP, with inquiries closed or frozen post-joining.
- Congress Comparison: Congress likened the trend to a "washing machine" in campaign videos.

Shiv Sena

Electoral Symbol Dispute: Supreme Court barred Shiv Sena (UBT) faction from using party's historic bow-and-arrow symbol in elections, awarding it to the Balasahebchichi Shiv Sena wing which joined NDA. UBT faction adopted a torch as its electoral symbol.

MANIFESTO

Bharatiya Janata Party

- 'GYAN' Formula: Consisting of Garib (poor), Yuva (youth), Annadata (farmers), and Nari (women).
- Public Recommendations Campaign: Gathering public suggestions for the party's manifesto titled 'Modi ki guarantee'.
- Key Pledges:
 - Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam: Ensuring women's representation in legislatures.
 - Lakhpati Didi: Empowering 30 million rural women to become "Lakhpati Didis".
 - Free Ration: Providing 800 million citizens with free rations for five years.
 - MSP Increase: Periodic increase in Minimum Support Price for crops.
 - PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana: Providing annual financial support of 6,000 rupees.
 - Free Electricity: Free power for low-income homes under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.
 - PM Housing Scheme: Building 30 million houses with priority for people with disabilities.

- Youth Initiatives: Enacting laws against question paper leaks, expanding startup ecosystem, increasing job prospects in manufacturing and tourism.
- Infrastructure for Truck Drivers: Constructing modern facilities on national highways.
- One Nation, One Election: Simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and state assemblies.
- Uniform Civil Code: Implementation of Uniform Civil Code (UCC).
- Free Ayushman for Senior Citizens: Providing free healthcare up to Rs 5 Lakhs under Ayushman Bharat Yojana.
- Economic Goals: Targeting GDP of US\$5 trillion by 2025 and \$10 trillion by 2032.
- UN Security Council: Seeking permanent membership in the UN Security Council.
- Counterterrorism Measures: Initiatives to eliminate global terror and terror funding.
- Space Exploration: Establishing a permanent Bharatiya Antariksha Station and sending a man to the moon.
- Left-Wing Extremism: Fighting extremism through growth and varied approaches.

Indian National Congress

- Group-Specific Promises:
 - Youth: Formal employment for under 25 graduate students, filling of government job vacancies, startup fund, transparency in job recruitment, social security for gig workers.
 - Women: Financial assistance to poor women, job recruitments, increased government contributions, legal assistance, hostels for working women.
 - Farmers: Legal guarantee on MSP, loan waivers, favorable import-export policies, GST removal, prompt payments.
 - Labourers: Universal healthcare, increased minimum wage, urban employment guarantee, insurance for informal workers.
- Caste Census: Comprehensive census, legislation to eliminate reservation cap, protection of tribal forest rights.
- Wealth Redistribution: Pledge to redistribute wealth based on census data of wealthiest citizens.
- Nyay Patra (Justice Paper) :
 - Recognition of civil unions for LGBTQIA+ couples.
 - Implementation of Rajasthan Model for universal healthcare.
 - Ban on effluent dumping, increase in forest cover.
 - Establishment of community and multi-sport centers.
 - Government medical colleges-hospitals in all districts.
 - Scrapping of Agnipath Scheme, waiving student education loans.
 - Inclusivity in parliamentary agenda discussion, personal freedoms protection.
 - Decriminalization of defamation, establishment of National Judicial Commission.
 - Elimination of "Angel tax" and exploitative tax schemes for startups.
 - Creation of Constitutional Court and Court of Appeal in Supreme Court.

Observers

- BJP invited foreign diplomats and 25 overseas political parties to observe their electoral campaign.
- Notable invitees included UK's Conservative and Labour parties, Germany's CDU and SPD, and Bangladesh's Awami League.
- Initiative named "Know BJP" aimed at external outreach and familiarization with the election process.
- BJP president J. P. Nadda held meetings with envoys from 13 countries as part of the program.

Voting Summary

- Phase 1 (19 April 2024):

- Re-polling in 11 polling stations of Inner Manipur on 22 April due to violence.
- Re-polling in eight polling stations in Arunachal Pradesh on 24 April due to violence and EVM damage.

- Phase 2 (26 April 2024):

- Re-polling for a polling station in Chamarajanagar on 29 April due to violence and EVM damage.
- Re-polling for six polling stations in Outer Manipur on 30 April due to violence, EVM damage, and forced voting.
- Re-polling for a polling station in Ajmer on 2 May due to misplaced voters' register.

- Phase 3 (7 May 2024):

- Voter turnout reached 65.68%.
- 24 crore citizens eligible to vote.

- Phase 4 (13 May 2024):

- 96 constituencies voted.

- Phase 5 (20 May 2024):

- 49 constituencies voted.

- Phase 6 (25 May 2024):

- 58 constituencies voted.

- Phase 7 (1 June 2024):

- 57 constituencies voted.
- Repolling in one booth each in Barasat and Mathurapur constituencies of West Bengal on 3 June due to violence.

Incidents during Voting Phases

Phase 1:

- Violence in Thamanpokpi, Manipur.
- Clashes between BJP and TMC workers in West Bengal.
- Death of a CPRF personnel in Cooch Behar, West Bengal.
- Death of a CPRF personnel in Chhattisgarh.
- Clashes between VCK and BJP cadres in Tamil Nadu.

Phase 2:

- Eight voters died of heat stroke in Kerala.
- Attack on CPRF personnel in Manipur.
- Gunfight between unidentified groups in Manipur.
- Incidents of EVM vandalism and voter intimidation in Manipur.

Phase 6:

- Detention of Mehbooba Mufti's party workers in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Blocking of BJP candidate Agnimitra Paul's car in West Bengal.

Phase 7:

- Mob looting election material in West Bengal.
- Clashes between BJP and TMC supporters in West Bengal.
- Deaths of election workers due to heat stroke in Uttar Pradesh.
- Election-related deaths reported in Bihar.

Misinformation:

- Circulation of manipulated video of Home Minister Amit Shah.
- Viral deepfake videos of Bollywood actors Aamir Khan and Ranveer Singh.
- Arrest of Arun Reddy for producing a doctored video of Amit Shah's speech.
- Report by OpenAI implicating the Israeli firm STOIC in generating biased comments related to Indian politics.

It's unfortunate to see instances of violence, manipulation, and misinformation surrounding the election process. Such incidents undermine the integrity of the democratic process and highlight



FINAL TALLY	
Party	Won
Bharatiya Janata Party - BJP	240
Indian National Congress - INC	99
Samajwadi Party - SP	37
All India Trinamool Congress - AITC	29
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam - DMK	22
Telugu Desam - TDP	16
Janata Dal (United) - JD(U)	12
Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackrey) - SHSUBT	9
Nationalist Congress Party – Sharadchandra Pawar - NCPSP	8
Shiv Sena - SHS	7
Lok Janshakti Party(Ram Vilas) - LJPRV	5
Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party - YSRCP	4
Rashtriya Janata Dal - RJD	4
Communist Party of India (Marxist) - CPI(M)	4
Indian Union Muslim League - IUML	3
Aam Aadmi Party - AAP	3
Jharkhand Mukti Morcha - JMM	3
Janasena Party - JnP	2
Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (Liberation) - CPI(ML)(L)	2
Janata Dal (Secular) - JD(S)	2
Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi - VCK	2
Communist Party of India - CPI	2
Rashtriya Lok Dal - RLD	2
Jammu & Kashmir National Conference - JKN	2
United People's Party, Liberal - UPPL	1
Asom Gana Parishad - AGP	1
Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) - HAMS	1
Kerala Congress - KEC	1
Revolutionary Socialist Party - RSP	1
Nationalist Congress Party - NCP	1
Voice of the People Party - VOTPP	1
Zoram People's Movement - ZPM	1
Shiromani Akali Dal - SAD	1
Rashtriya Loktantrik Party - RLTP	1
Bharat Adivasi Party - BHRTADVSIP	1
Sikkim Krantikari Morcha - SKM	1
Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam - MDMK	1
Aazad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) - ASPKR	1
Apna Dal (Soneylal) - ADAL	1
AJSU Party - AJSUP	1
All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen - AIMIM	1
Independent - IND	7
Total	543



the importance of responsible behavior from all parties involved. In conclusion, the 2024 general elections in India have been marred by incidents of violence, voter intimidation, and misinformation. From clashes between political party workers to tragic deaths due to heat stroke, these events underscore the challenges facing India's democratic process. Moreover, the spread of manipulated videos and the involvement of external entities in generating biased comments online further highlight the need for vigilance in safeguarding the integrity of elections.

Despite these challenges, it's imperative that authorities, political parties, and citizens remain committed to upholding the principles of democracy and ensuring a fair and transparent electoral process.

The election result reportedly surprised Prime Minister Modi, as the BJP fell short of its ambitious goal of securing 400 seats. Contrary to pre-poll predictions, the INDIA bloc surpassed expectations and achieved significant victories in key states like Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and West Bengal.

Narendra Modi hailed the NDA's lead as a significant milestone in India's history, while Congress Party president Mallikarjun Kharge characterised the election as a setback for Modi and a triumph for democracy and the people. During a speech to his supporters on June 4, Modi confidently declared that the NDA would once again secure victory and form a third consecutive government.

-MELWYN WILLIAMS



Modi To Be PM: Third Term Now With NDA Support

By Manoj K Sharma

The BJP secured 240 seats in the Lok Sabha Elections, securing Modi's third term as PM with the support of the NDA.

INDIA Bloc Makes Significant Gains in Uttar Pradesh, Securing 37 Seats Against the BJP



The final count for the Lok Sabha 2024 elections has concluded, with the Election Commission of India announcing the results for all constituencies.

The BJP, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, emerged victorious in 240 out of 543 seats, while the Congress secured 99 seats. Despite the Lok Sabha having 543 members, the uncontested election of the BJP's Surat candidate, Mukesh Dalal, led to the counting of 542 seats.

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which has secured a majority, will support Prime Minister Narendra Modi in leading the government for a third consecutive term. Despite falling short of the 272-majority mark, the BJP will rely on NDA allies to form the government. The election results did not deliver the overwhelming victory anticipated by the BJP-led NDA or predicted by the exit polls.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde will attend the NDA meeting in Delhi today, with Kumar departing at 10:45 a.m. and Shinde at 11 a.m. The Narendra Modi-led government will hold a Cabinet meeting at 11:30 a.m. to dissolve the current government and form a new one.

In Delhi, the BJP won all seven Lok Sabha seats for the third consecutive time, defeating the AAP-Congress alliance. BJP candidates Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, Praveen Khandelwal, Bansuri Swaraj, Harsh Malhotra, Manoj Tiwari, Kamaljeet Sehrawat, and Yogender Chandoliya won with significant margins.

In Uttar Pradesh, the BJP faced a substantial challenge from the INDIA bloc, led by the Samajwadi Party, which won 37 seats. This reduced the BJP's count to 35 from 62 seats in 2019.

The All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) secured 29 seats, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) secured 22 seats, and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) secured 16 seats.

Rahul Gandhi won the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat for the second consecutive time with a margin of over 3.64 lakh votes against the CPI's Annie Raja. Gandhi also won from Rae Bareilly, but he has not yet decided which constituency he will represent in the Lok Sabha.

Prime Minister Modi remarked that the BJP-led NDA's third successive government is a victory for the vision of "Viksit Bharat" and the strong faith of the people in India's Constitution. He noted that this is the first time since 1962 that a government that has completed two full terms has won a third consecutive term.

Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader, thanked the people of Wayanad and Rae Bareilly for their support, stating that they have saved the Constitution and democracy in the country.

In a press conference, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge stated, **"The election results announced today... I will say... this is the public's result and the public's and democracy's victory. We had been saying that this battle is between the public and Modi."**

Rajesh Sharma, a shopkeeper from Varanasi, expressed his views: **"The results are clear. People have once again shown their trust in Modi ji. We believe he will continue to work for the development of our nation and improve the lives of the common man."**

Ayesha Khan, a teacher from Lucknow, shared her concerns: **"While the BJP has won, we hope they will address the issues faced by minorities and work towards an inclusive India. Our expectations are high for better communal harmony and economic opportunities."**

Harpreet Singh, a farmer from Punjab, remarked: **"This election has been crucial for all of us. We look forward to seeing more support for farmers and improvements in agricultural policies. The government must focus on rural development and fair prices for our produce."**

Mary D'Souza, a social worker from Goa, stated: **"The results reflect the people's mandate. We expect the government to uphold secular values and ensure equal rights for all communities. There is a need for continued focus on education and healthcare."**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation from the BJP headquarters, expressing gratitude to the people of India for their participation in the democratic process. He highlighted the BJP's success in regions where the party had previously struggled, showcasing the growing reach and acceptance of their policies. In BJP-ruled states, Modi assured voters that the central government would continue to support their development and other key initiatives to propel India forward.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also congratulated the Election Commission of India for successfully conducting the elections. He praised their efforts in managing such a large-scale event, with over 1 crore (10 million) workers in place, ensuring that the democratic process ran smoothly and efficiently.

- MANOJ K SHARMA





Exact Polls Trounce Exit Polls Bringing in NDA government with Crutches

By Prof. Ujjwal K Chowdhury

Results: Exit versus Exact Polls

The final results of the Indian elections are as follows:

NDA (BJP led Alliance): 293 (with BJP 240)

INDIA (Congress led Alliance): 232 (with Congress 99)

Others: 18

Total: 543

Contrast this with the fantasy exit polls India had this time around

Exit polls for the results of Indian general elections 2024 of the mainstream leading television channels and survey agencies are as follows:

- *India Today- Axis My India -361-401*
- *News 24-Today's Chanakya -400*
- *ABP News-C Voter - 353-383*
- *Republic Bharat- P Marq -359*
- *India News- D-Dyanamics -371*
- *Republic Bharat- Matrize- 353-368*
- *Dainik Bhaskar- 281-350*
- *News Nation -342-378*
- *TV 9 Bharatvarsh- Polstrat -342*
- *Times Now-ETG - 358*
- *India TV- CNX -362-392*
- *Jan Ki Baat - 362-392*

#ExitPollPlus

These are seats given to **BJP** led **NDA** all of which are much above the requisite 272 to form the government at the centre.

There is one lone voice of difference with a completely alternative numbers as follows:

DB Live-Elect Lime Figures (Desh Bandhu Live: popular YouTube Channel): INDIA: 260-295; NDA: 215-245; Others: 28-48

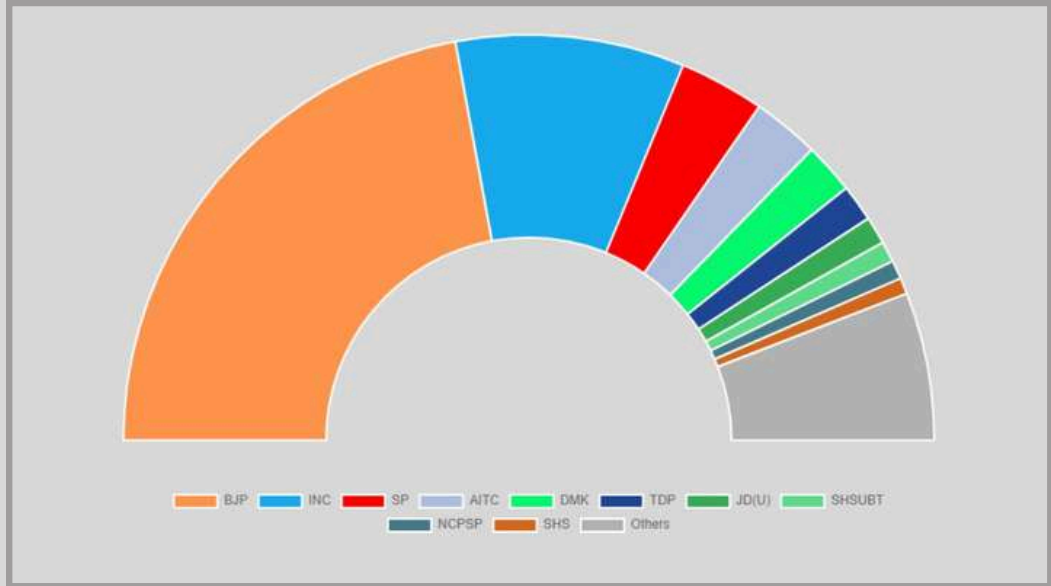
Just this exit poll predicted a win for Congress led INDIA and BJP led NDA much below 272.

What's Next?

All depends upon what the two allies of BJP ask for: Nitish Kumar of JDU and Chandrababu Naidu of Telegu Desam Party. One is Bihar CM and the other is slated to be the CM of Telengana after his thumping victory there. The opposition INDIA alliance may also have offers for these two though however, the dominant thought is to have Modi government come with two political crutches and fumble or fall on its own.

Why These Results?

These results are significant because BJP has not got a simple majority of 272 for the first time under Narendra Modi's stewardship, and because the opposition group has managed to muster up a reasonable number to be a strong voice inside the Lok Sabha. And this has happened in spite of unprecedented expenses in the elections by the world's richest and largest political party, BJP, and in spite of two opposition Chief Ministers being in jail, main opposition party (Congress) having its accounts frozen, government probe agencies like CBI, ED etc let loose on many opposition parties and leaders, and dividing two opposition parties



(Shiv Sena and NCP) in Maharashtra from the middle (both faring poorly in the election though, this time).

What Explains These Results?

Firstly, there was no overarching issue like the India Against Corruption movement and Achhey Din promise as in 2014 or Pulwama attack and the much-touted surgical strikes as in 2019. Even in spite of Pulwama and aggressive nationalism in public mind, NDA managed to get 353 seats (with 303 of BJP alone). While except Modi image there is no overarching reason for the ruling NDA in this election, the Opposition had caste-based census, legally binding Minimum Support Price of crops to farmers, among others as their common issues. In contrast, the talks on Mangalsutra, Congress to take away your buffaloes, Muslims as infiltrators, Modi being divine, or the world did not know Mahatma Gandhi before Richard Attenborough's film on him: all of these by Modi himself actually brought down his image and sheen sharply.

Secondly, BJP in 2019 had 37.7% vote-share, and with allies it went up to 42%. Congress had 19.66%, Samajwadi Party: 2.55%, Trinamool Congress: 4.1%, AAP: 0.9%, DMK: 2.3%, RJD: 2.1%. They are all in INDIA alliance, apart from the original segments of NCP and Shiv Sena, and also the Left, all together had close to 4.5%. The total of these is around 38%. Finally, even with a sweeping issue like the Pulwama, the vote share of the two alliances were 42% against 38%. Several NDA alliance partners have left (like Akalis), many have got divided (like Shiv Sena), and many partners have joined erstwhile Congress led UPA to become INDIA alliance of today. There was not even a semblance of a united fight by the opposition in 2019, while this time in 2024, a resolute and united opposition fought in all major states of India.

Uttar Pradesh:

The biggest upset for ruling BJP was in UP, with Ayodhya candidate, Maneka Gandhi, several union

ministers etc biting the proverbial dust. The united electoral battle of Samajwadi Party and Congress has been showing immense potential in the last two months. Four times their rallies had to be cancelled due to much larger audiences than the available space. The differences between Modi-Shah and Yogi Adityanath are all very well known, and Yogi was muted this time in campaign. UP sealed the fate of BJP and denied it a simple majority in the Lok Sabha.

Maharashtra:

All the by-elections to Maharashtra Assembly that had happened after the break of Shiv Sena and NCP have been won by those opposed to NDA. The Mumbai electoral mood was so much against Eknath Shinde led break-away section and BJP for forcing the Uddhav Thackeray government to resign, that till this day, BMC does not have its elected body for more than two years and 24 municipalities in the state are without any elected representatives. The anger in Maharashtra is palpable, and the results prove that people emphatically denounced the forced fall of Uddhav Thackeray's government by splitting its party, and also the split of NCP, since both splinter groups, parts of NDA, have been majorly rejected by the voters. Maharashtra has hugely backed Congress-Thackeray-Pawar combine. A change in state government is expected soon.

Farmers' Movements:

The farmers' movements for withdrawal of 3 farm bills and for MSP, that erupted after 2019, have seen more than 700 die, thousands arrested, and people in Haryana, Punjab and Western UP by and largely disillusioned with the ruling dispensation. AAP sweeping the Punjab assembly polls and winning in Chandigarh municipality are some evidences of this disillusionment. NDA washed out in Punjab, near wash-out in Western UP, and much reduced in Haryana are all primarily due to



farmers' discontent and disapproval of extreme high-handedness.

West Bengal:

BJP performed very well in West Bengal in 2019, winning in 18 constituencies, coming close second after TMC with 22. That led to their call for more than 200 seats in Bengal Assembly polls in 2021, which actually came out to be 77, of which many have resigned since then and loads of workers coming back to TMC. All by-elections and panchayat elections since then show that TMC has maintained its vote share and winning spree, and BJP declining, while the Left showing good revival. In 2019, it was actually 12% of Left vote that had gone to BJP as it was seen as a rising force against TMC. Now, in 2024, the Left-Congress combine as gone out full hog to muster up as much as anti-TMC votes as possible. In no way there could have been an anti-TMC consolidation behind BJP this time in Bengal. That TMC government has given financial largesse to the women of Bengal through Kanyashree, Lakshmir Bhandar etc, coupled with a total consolidation of Muslims behind TMC, ensured that TMC rules the roost in Bengal.

South India:

The exit polls give out of the way high seats to BJP in Kerala (where BJP has never won one nor come close), Tamil Nadu (where BJP has not won any as well), Telengana (where recently Congress state government has come to power with a strong majority), and in Karnataka (where recently BJP had a thrashing defeat with less than half Assembly seats than those of Congress). BJP has opened its account in Kerala with one seat, won none in TN, and has done reasonably well in Karnataka though. It is only in Andhra Pradesh that NDA alliance has done well due to an expected good show of Telegu Desam Party. Today, the next government is dependent on TDP for its survival and policies.

BJP's Successes:

BJP has remarkably succeeded in Odisha due to anti-incumbency of Biju Janata Dal government there ruling for 4 terms, the outgoing Chief Minister's total dependence on bureaucrat turned politician, a Tamil gentleman named Pandian, and due to the huge media and money push by BJP sensing a win. BJP has succeeded in Madhya Pradesh with 26 out of 26 seats fresh from a mega win in the state polls. Gujarat had been success barring one seat and Chattisgarh barring two seats. NDA has succeeded remarkably in Bihar too, astonishingly, as this in spite of a huge campaign by Tejaswi Yadav led RJD-Congress combine. JDU of Bihar is the other ally that BJP is now dependent on for the survival of the government. The Himalayan success of BJP in Himachal, Uttarakhand and the Northeast ensured it a decent total.

The Middle Class Growing Disenchantment:

With joblessness hitting half a century high, inflation being on a continuous high range since the pandemic, fuel price hike and rupee price free fall being there for the entire tenure of last five years of this government, no income tax relief to middle class, no real One Rank One Pension scheme or Old Pension scheme given to government employees, the middle class in urban India is no more in the adulatory mood as in 2019 in the backdrop of Pulwama attack.

Arithmetic of numbers (seats, percentage of votes, share of allies' performances), chemistry among allies, spirit on ground: nothing showed a total sweep of BJP (unless of course if the elections or the counting are rigged or at least compromised in selected seats). The results reflect these factors. A few states and 25 seats with low margins have given BJP led NDA a third chance, but the last word on the Indian government formation and its functioning has not been spoken yet.

- PROF. UJJWAL K CHOWDHURY

The author is a university professor of media and communication studies.



Focus India Elections 2024: Social Media Is The Kingmaker

By Manoj K Sharma



Congress Surges Ahead on Social Media, Outshines BJP in Lok Sabha Campaign. 613 Million YouTube Views and Robust Instagram Growth Highlight Congress's Digital Dominance on Key Issues

In the Indian Lok Sabha elections, social media has emerged as a crucial battleground for political parties to connect with voters. According to Supriya Shrinete, Congress garnered 613 million views on YouTube during the campaign, a stark contrast to BJP's 150 million views, showcasing a fourfold difference. This substantial difference indicates a stronger connection between the Congress's message and the public, with issues like inflation and unemployment resonating more with the audience.

Shrinete underlined the party's comprehension of popular opinion, saying, "We have data that shows what people wanted to listen to and who they wanted to listen to." This declaration highlights the party's emphasis on tying its message to the interests of the voters, an approach that appears to have been successful in the digital arena.

The information gathered between March 16 and May 30 paints a vivid picture of Congress's hegemony on social media. BJP's average of 26,945 likes on Instagram was greatly outperformed by Congress's average of 122,000 likes. In a similar vein, Congress had an average of 2,500–3,000 likes on Twitter, whereas BJP's average was closer to 260–300 likes. Facebook data also showed that Congress was ahead of BJP, with an average of 1,200–1,500 likes as opposed to 150–250 for BJP. Facebook's reach increased from 50 million in March to 105 million in May, suggesting that people are becoming more interested in the content published by Congress.

Congress's Twitter impressions increased from 117 million in March to 128 million in May, demonstrating the party's steady rise in social media presence. Significant growth in YouTube views was also observed, rising from 80 million in March to 233 million in May. This indicates a strong upward trend in audience engagement. Congress's following on Instagram increased from 78 million in March to 154 million in May, demonstrating a steady rise in viewer engagement and a robust online presence. These numbers point to a dramatic change in the social media landscape, with Congress successfully using digital channels to spread its message and interact with citizens.

Twitter Growth

On X (formerly Twitter), all parties have seen steady growth. From March 1 to May 31, the BJP added 3.9 lakh followers, bringing its total to 2.1 crore. Congress followed closely, adding 3.1 lakh followers, increasing its total to 1.05 crore. Meanwhile, AAP, although smaller in comparison, added over 15,000 followers, bringing its total to 65 lakh. This consistent growth across all parties highlights the importance of X as a platform for political engagement and communication.

YouTube: The New TV for Parties

YouTube has emerged as a crucial platform for political parties, serving as a direct channel to broadcast messages and engage with voters. Interestingly, the data shows that higher subscriber bases are correlated with slower growth in new user additions and video views.



During the analyzed period, AAP led the pack by adding 15 lakh new subscribers and garnering nearly 90 crore video views. This surge brought AAP's total subscriber count to 68 lakh. Congress followed, adding over 10 lakh new subscribers and achieving 65.6 crore video views, raising its subscriber base to 50 lakh. The BJP, despite having the highest overall presence, added 3.6 lakh new subscribers and garnered 28 crore views, bringing its total subscriber count to 59 lakh. This pattern suggests that AAP's content strategy might be more effective in engaging and attracting new viewers compared to its counterparts.

Instagram: The Gen Z Hub

Instagram has become the go-to platform for political parties aiming to connect with first-time voters and younger demographics. Between March and May, Congress emerged as the dominant force on Instagram, adding 26 lakh new followers, more than double the combined total of BJP and AAP. This growth spurt increased Congress's follower base to 59 lakh.

AAP came in second, adding 7 lakh new followers, bringing its total to 17 lakh. BJP, although the most followed Indian political party on Instagram, gained 5.4 lakh new followers, raising its total to 79 lakh. This rapid growth for Congress on Instagram underscores its appeal to younger voters and its effective use of the platform for engagement.

It's worth noting that, according to an earlier India Today analysis, Instagram received the largest share of online ad spending on Meta platforms by both BJP and Congress between December 2023 and March 2024. This investment appears to be paying off, particularly for Congress.

Leaders' Online Presence

Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains the most followed Indian leader across all social media platforms, significantly outpacing both Rahul Gandhi and Arvind Kejriwal. However, in the past three months, Rahul Gandhi has outpaced Modi in gaining new followers on Instagram and YouTube, although Modi maintains his lead on X.

On Instagram, Rahul Gandhi gained 26 lakh new followers, Modi added 20 lakh, and Arvind Kejriwal added 5.3 lakh. Currently, Modi is followed by 8.9 crore Instagram users, Gandhi by 86 lakh, and Kejriwal by 24 lakh.

Similarly, on YouTube, Gandhi's channel attracted 26 lakh new subscribers, compared to Modi's 16 lakh. Modi's YouTube channel has a substantial lead with 2.3 crore subscribers, while Gandhi's has 65 lakh.

On X, Modi continued to expand his dominance, adding 23 lakh new followers, compared to Gandhi's 6.8 lakh and Kejriwal's 1.1 lakh. Modi is followed by 9.8 crore users on X, while Gandhi has 2.5 crore followers.

These numbers reflect not only the reach and influence of these leaders but also the growing importance of social media as a battleground for political engagement and voter connection. As social media continues to evolve, its role in shaping political landscapes and election outcomes in India will only become more significant.

- MANOJ K SHARMA



Trump And The Elections In USA Simplified: Know It All

By WFFY Bureau USA

Donald Trump, the former US president, made history by becoming the first ex-president to face a criminal conviction.

This significant development marks a turning point in American politics and raises questions about the accountability of those in positions of power. The conviction sends a strong message about the importance of upholding the rule of law and serves as a reminder that no one is above it. The outcome of this trial will undoubtedly have far-reaching implications for the future of American democracy.

The Trump Hush Money Trial: In a historic turn of events, the recent verdict has marked a significant milestone for Trump, as he becomes the first former US president to face criminal conviction. However, it is important to note that this conviction does not hinder his ability to actively campaign for another term.

A New York jury rendered a historic verdict, finding Donald Trump guilty on all charges in his hush money case, thereby making him the first former US president to face criminal conviction. This development comes just months before a crucial election that could potentially pave the way for his return to the White House.

In a stunning verdict, the jury unanimously found him guilty on all 34 counts of falsifying business records. These records were allegedly manipulated in an attempt to conceal a payment that was intended to silence the well-known porn star, Stormy Daniels. The maximum sentence for each count could be four years in prison, but probation is more likely.

In a surprising turn of events, the 77-year-old Republican has been released without bail, marking a historic moment in a country where presidents are often hailed as the most powerful individuals on the planet.

Despite potential legal consequences, Trump remains undeterred in his pursuit to challenge President Joe Biden's position in the upcoming November election. He expressed immediate defiance.

Trump told the press, "I consider myself to be a person of utmost innocence," expressing his confidence that the electorate would render the final judgement. The defendant strongly criticised the trial, describing it as biased and deeply disappointing.

In a recent statement, the Biden campaign emphasised the significance of the trial, highlighting the message that no individual is exempt from the law.

The source emphasised that Trump's level of threat to our democracy has reached an unprecedented level.

The sentencing for Judge Juan Merchan's case has been scheduled for July 11, just four days prior to the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, where Trump is expected to officially secure the party's nomination.

The foreman swiftly announced the 12-member jury's unanimous decision after more than 11 hours of deliberation over two days.

Merchan expressed gratitude to the jurors for successfully accomplishing what he described as a challenging and demanding responsibility.

Their identities had been closely guarded throughout the proceedings, a practice typically reserved for cases involving individuals with ties to organised crime or other dangerous defendants.

Allegations of conspiring to overturn the results of the 2020 election, which Biden won, are currently facing both federal and state charges against Trump. Additionally, he is facing accusations of hoarding secret documents after his departure from the White House.

However, we don't expect the trials for these more serious alleged crimes to start until after the presidential election.

Donald Trump has been found guilty of a felony.

There is still a possibility for him to run for president. **Is it possible for a convicted individual to run for the presidency?** According to the US Constitution, there are only three requirements that presidential candidates must meet.

They are required to:

- To be eligible, one must be a natural-born citizen.
- To meet the requirements, one must be at least 35 years old and have been a resident of the
- United States for a minimum of 14 years.

Trump fulfils all three criteria. According to the 14th Amendment, there is an additional criterion that prohibits individuals who have previously taken an oath of office and engaged in insurrection from holding a US officer position. In a recent ruling, the US Supreme Court made it clear that Congress must pass a specific law in order to enforce this prohibition. It is unlikely that this will happen soon.

The Republican National Convention in Milwaukee will take place just four days before Trump's sentencing on July 11. There is a slim possibility, albeit improbable for a first-time offender, that Trump could face a prison sentence. According to Anthony Guglielmi, chief of communications for the Secret Service, former President Trump will continue to receive lifetime Secret Service protection regardless of his location. It's important to remember that previous attempts to launch presidential campaigns from prison cells ultimately failed.

The Supreme Court upheld his conviction in that case, finding him guilty not only for opposing the draft but also for actively encouraging others to defy it. Then-Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes made the decision to keep Debs in jail a few months before his influential stance on free



speech, which greatly shaped our perception of the First Amendment today.

Despite the repeal of the Sedition Act, Debs remained incarcerated. Former President Woodrow Wilson declined to grant a pardon. In 1921, Warren G. Harding, who succeeded Wilson and was a rival of Debs, commuted Debs' sentence.

Now let's address a more challenging question: Can a convicted felon exercise their right to vote?

Whether or not Trump will be able to vote in Florida's November election depends on two things: whether he receives a prison sentence, and whether he completes serving that sentence before the election takes place.

Every state has the authority to establish its own set of regulations. Vermont and Maine have policies in place that allow individuals convicted of felonies to exercise their right to vote even while serving time in prison. Several states are making progress in granting voting rights to felons on parole.

In a surprising move, former President Trump has officially become a resident of Florida. This decision comes after Florida voters showed strong support in 2018 for a referendum that aimed to restore voting rights to convicted felons. Republican lawmakers, who hold the majority in government, initially delayed the state's reenfranchisement process. Eventually, they made it a requirement for felons to fully settle all fines and fees related to their sentence in order to qualify.

Should the judge decide to impose a prison sentence on Trump, it is highly improbable that Trump would run out of time to appeal his conviction before Election Day. Should one of the two federal criminal cases against Trump result in a conviction before Election Day, the situation would certainly change.

Many post-incarceration felons in Florida face additional challenges, although these particular issues do not pertain to Trump. First and foremost, there is currently no centralised repository of information regarding the mandatory fees. Confusion has arisen, preventing numerous individuals from exercising their right to vote.

The alleged election conspiracy

The court found Donald Trump guilty of manipulating business records to reimburse his attorney, Michael Cohen, for a \$130,000 payment to Stormy Daniels shortly before the 2016 election. At that time, Daniels' allegation of a sexual encounter with Trump had the potential to seriously damage his campaign against Hillary Clinton.

In the trial, the adult performer, known as Stephanie Clifford, provided extensive testimony to the court, recounting in explicit detail her alleged sexual encounter with Donald Trump in 2006. Prosecutors presented a compelling case, arguing that the payment of hush money and the subsequent efforts to conceal it were not isolated incidents but rather part of a larger scheme aimed at keeping voters in the dark about Trump's actions. In a significant turn of events, Cohen, once a trusted aide who had betrayed his former

boss, hailed the verdict as a crucial moment for holding individuals accountable and upholding the principles of justice.

Despite allegations, Trump has maintained his denial of any sexual encounter with Stormy Daniels. However, it is worth noting that he did not testify in his own defence. The lawyers maintained that all payments made to the performer were completely within the bounds of the law.

Engaging in political activities at the courthouse

The ongoing trial has significantly disrupted Trump's campaign to unseat Biden. Nevertheless, he capitalised on media attention throughout. Following the announcement of the verdict, Trump's campaign wasted no time in releasing a fundraising appeal with the attention-grabbing title, "I am a political prisoner!" In addition, he revealed his intention to deliver a public statement to members of the press on Friday morning.

While it may not have a significant impact on overall voting patterns, it could potentially make a difference in certain states that hold crucial swing votes. In highly contested races, the outcome can easily swing from one side to the other.

The Republican, known for his bold business ventures, experienced a remarkable rise to power when he won the 2016 election and became the nation's highest-ranking official. Given that this is his first offence, it is likely that he will receive probation. **Although the process could potentially take several months to finalise, an appeal is highly likely.**

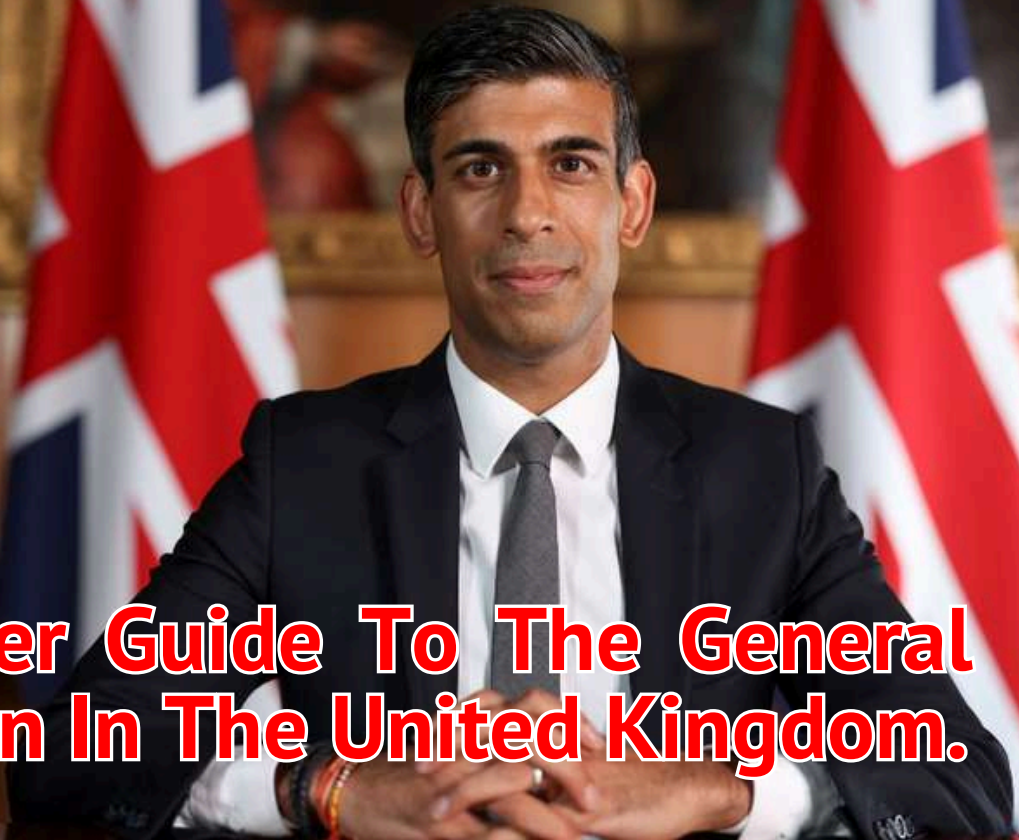
If he were to win the presidency, he would not have the power to grant himself a pardon. The state of New York, not the federal government, initiated the case, leaving the governor solely responsible for proving his innocence.

What consequences does Trump now face following his conviction?

The potential consequences for each of the 34 counts range from up to four years in prison to the possibility of probation without any incarceration. The final decision lies in the hands of Justice Juan M. Merchan.

- WFY BUREAU USA





A Better Guide To The General Election In The United Kingdom.



By Selvan Durairaj

What is the significance of this election?

The upcoming general election on July 4 is a crucial turning point for Britain, marking the end of a 14-year reign by the Conservative Party in government. In December 2019, Boris Johnson secured a resounding victory for the Conservatives in the most recent parliamentary election. His charismatic leadership and commitment to fulfilling the Brexit mandate, following the 2016 referendum, played a significant role in his triumph.

Significant changes have occurred since that time. July will mark a crucial moment for voters as they pass judgement on a tumultuous five-year period of governance. The coronavirus pandemic, the troubled implementation of Brexit, the controversial "Partygate" scandal involving Mr. Johnson's rule-breaking during lockdowns, and the disastrous six-week tenure of Prime Minister Liz Truss have marked this period.

The Parliament is in London. Each of the country's 650 constituencies will have voters select a candidate to represent them in Parliament. According to recent polls, it appears that the centre-left Labour Party is poised to regain power, marking a significant shift in British politics after more than ten years in opposition.

What is the voting process in Britain?

England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales comprise the United Kingdom. 650 constituencies further divide these countries. Each constituency's voters choose a candidate to represent them in Parliament, with the political party that secures the most seats typically taking the reins of the next government. The party's leader also assumes the role of prime minister. In order to achieve an overall majority, a political party must obtain a minimum of 326 seats. If the leading party fails to secure a majority, we commonly refer to the result as a "hung parliament." In such a scenario, the

party may attempt to establish a coalition government by collaborating with other political parties. In 2010, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats came together to establish Britain's inaugural coalition government since World War II. Then, in 2017, the Conservatives formed an alliance with Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party.

What are the key concerns?

According to recent polls, the state of Britain's economy has emerged as the primary concern for most voters. This follows a cost-of-living crisis and a period of record inflation, with rates peaking at 11.1 percent in 2022. Only recently has inflation started to gradually return to target levels.

The National Health Service, a state-funded health care system that offers free care nationwide, remains a top priority. Prime Minister David Cameron initiated a decade of fiscal austerity after the 2009 global financial crisis, leaving Britain's public services severely underfunded and grappling with chronic staff shortages. The waiting lists for N.H.S. treatment were already increasing prior to the pandemic and have since surged even higher, causing significant public discontent.

Immigration ranks as the third-most important issue for many voters, although its significance varies significantly depending on party affiliation. A recent YouGov poll revealed that only 20 percent of Labour voters ranked immigration as their top national concern. In contrast, a significant majority of 65 percent of Conservatives expressed that it was one of their most pressing issues.

The candidates and their chances of winning?

In Britain, the two dominant political parties are the Conservatives, headed by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, and the Labour Party, led by Keir Starmer, who has a background as a former public prosecutor and human rights lawyer. Labour has consistently held a significant lead in the polls for over 18 months, while the Conservatives have faced a string of defeats in

parliamentary special elections as well as mayoral and local council elections. Despite the usual narrowing of polls in the final weeks of an election campaign, experts are sceptical that the Conservatives can secure a majority without a near-miraculous outcome.

The Scottish National Party emerged as the dominant political force in Scotland in 2015, surpassing the Labour Party in popularity. However, a funding scandal and Nicola Sturgeon's departure as first minister have weakened the party's support over the past year. Recent polls indicate that there is a potential for Labour to make substantial gains in Scotland during this election, which could potentially pave the way for Mr. Starmer to assume the role of prime minister.

In recent months, the Reform Party, co-founded by Nigel Farage, a prominent advocate of Brexit, has experienced a surge in popularity, according to the polls. There is concern among Conservative Party officials that the party's focus on anti-immigration could attract supporters away from their own candidates. However, the Tories would have viewed Mr. Farage's decision not to run as a candidate as a positive development.

In early May, the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party experienced significant gains in local elections, making them noteworthy players alongside the other parties. However, the electoral system in Britain poses a challenge for smaller parties looking to secure seats in a parliamentary election, despite their shared goal of increasing their representation in July.

Update on the announcement date for the results

The exit polls reveal their results shortly after the polls close at 10 p.m. on July 4. We conduct these polls by surveying thousands of voters after they have completed their voting.



Exit polls can sometimes prove to be unreliable, as demonstrated by the 1992 and 2015 elections in Britain. Despite predicting a hung Parliament, the Conservative Party ultimately emerged victorious with a majority. However, in recent years, these polls have gained a reputation for their reliability in the country. They are widely regarded as providing an accurate early indication of the public's voting preferences.

We expect to announce results from a few individual constituencies starting at around 11 p.m., with a steady flow of results throughout the early hours of the next morning. Typically, by approximately 7 a.m., the final outcome becomes evident, although there may be a delay in announcing results for certain rural constituencies.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has also proposed the implementation of national service for 18-year-olds.

The British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, made an appearance at a Conservative Party rally on May 22, following his announcement of a general election. He said that if the Conservative Party emerges victorious in the upcoming national election on July 4, they plan to implement mandatory national service for 18-year-olds. This service would involve either military or community participation.

According to Sunak, young adults have the option to either dedicate one weekend per month to volunteering for a year or seize one of the 30,000 available spots to serve in the armed forces for a year. In a recent development, the announcement came after Keir Starmer, the leader of the Labour Party, expressed his support for granting voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds.

Opinion polls currently show the Conservative Party, under Sunak's leadership, lagging behind Labour by a significant margin. Despite the prime minister's unexpected decision to call for an election last Wednesday, there has been little shift in their fortunes, according to the polls.

Today, Britain finds itself confronted with a future that is fraught with increased peril and deepening divisions. It is undeniable that our democratic values are facing significant challenges. In a statement, Sunak announced the introduction of a bold new model of national service for 18-year-olds.

The Conservative Party has stated that the funding for the proposal will come from measures aimed at tackling tax avoidance and evasion.

Additionally, they plan to redirect funds from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which was originally established to address regional economic inequality.

Labour politicians criticised the announcement.

Andy Burnham, mayor of Greater Manchester, emphasised the importance of young people exercising their right to vote for change on July 4. During an interview with broadcasters, Interior Minister James Cleverly confirmed that individuals who choose to skip mandatory service will not face criminal sanctions. However, he emphasised that there will still be a requirement for people to participate, although he did not elaborate on the specifics. In response to a question from the BBC about the potential conflict between the Conservative Party's liberal tradition and the requirement for adults to volunteer, cleverly stated that people are often compelled to do things against their will.

He pointed out, for example, the implementation of compulsory education or training for teenagers up to the age of 18.

- SELVAN DURAIRAJ



The Elections In Mexico Simplified: Know It All

By WFY Bureau USA



Claudia Sheinbaum has made history as she becomes the first woman to lead Mexico.

According to the quick count results, it appears that the country's presidency will see the historic election of the first woman and Jewish individual, who happens to be an environmental scientist.

Claudia Sheinbaum, an environmental scientist and former head of government in Mexico City, emerged as the clear winner in her country's elections, achieving a resounding victory that carries significant historical significance. Not only has she shattered the glass ceiling by becoming the first woman to hold the presidency, but she has also made history as the first Jewish person to assume this esteemed position in Mexico.

According to the quick count, Sheinbaum, 61, emerged as the winner with what electoral authorities are calling the largest vote in the country's history. This election saw the highest voter turnout and the most contested votes.

The vote's close was truly remarkable, as two women went head-to-head in a historic moment to lead one of the largest countries in the hemisphere. An unprecedented move will see a Jewish leader take the helm of one of the most populous countries with a predominantly Catholic population.

Sheinbaum, a self-proclaimed leftist, ran her campaign with a pledge to uphold the principles and policies of her mentor and current Mexican president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. This stance resonated with his party's supporters while also sparking apprehension among his critics. Many observers viewed the election as a crucial test of his leadership, with Sheinbaum's win widely regarded as a strong endorsement of López Obrador and his political party.

López Obrador has completely transformed Mexico's political landscape. Over the course of his six-year term, a significant number of Mexicans were able to lift themselves out of poverty, while the minimum wage experienced a noteworthy doubling. However, criticism of his inability to curb cartel violence, detrimental effects on the national health system, and consistent erosion of democratic institutions has met his presidency with intense division.

Despite this, López Obrador continues to enjoy widespread popularity, which has greatly benefited his chosen successor. In spite of the numerous

obstacles confronting the nation, the opposition was unsuccessful in convincing Mexicans that their candidate was a superior choice.

Sheinbaum emerged as the clear victor, securing a commanding lead with a minimum of 58 percent of the vote, as per the initial results. These results revealed a substantial gap of at least 29 points between her and her nearest rival, Xóchitl Gálvez, a prominent businesswoman and former senator who ran as part of an opposition coalition.

During her speech, Sheinbaum made a promise to serve the entire Mexican population, emphasising her party's dedication and expressing her joy at becoming the first woman to hold the highest office in the country.

She expressed her gratitude for this historic opportunity in her statement. She emphasised that she would be the first Mexican president in the Republic's 200-year history. **"On multiple occasions, I have emphasised that I do not come alone. We come together, accompanied by our esteemed heroes who fought for our nation, our ancestors, our mothers, our daughters, and our granddaughters."**

According to Sheinbaum, she received calls from Gálvez and the candidate who secured third place, Jorge Álvarez Máynez, to extend their congratulations on her victory. Following Sheinbaum's address, Gálvez addressed her supporters, expressing disappointment with the outcome of the quick count and describing the trends as irreversible. She mentioned having recently spoken with Sheinbaum.

During a pre-vote interview, Gálvez expressed her belief that there is a significant anti-system vote against López Obrador, which she believes could potentially boost her chances of winning. It was clear that she left many Mexicans with the perception that the parties backing her were closely tied to a system that is widely seen as ineffective and corrupt, further reinforcing the negative image of the political class.

Political analysts in the region criticise Xóchitl Gálvez for not bringing about the change she promised, perceiving her competitors as representatives of the establishment. A significant number of Mexicans appeared to support maintaining the progress that López Obrador initiated.

Claudia Sheinbaum, the recently elected president of Mexico

As Mexico's new president takes office, many are curious about her approach: will she break away from Andrés Manuel López Obrador's policies or prioritise solidifying his legacy?

Claudia Sheinbaum has an extensive list of accomplishments, including: an impressive background, including a Ph.D. in energy engineering; experience on a United Nations panel of climate scientists awarded a Nobel Peace Prize; and governance over a major capital city.

On Sunday, she made history by becoming the first female president of Mexico. Ms. Sheinbaum, 61, secured a significant victory in a historic election on Sunday, where two women vied for the highest office in the nation. This groundbreaking contest challenged the prevailing culture of machismo and pervasive violence against women that has long plagued the country.

"As the first female president of Mexico, I am poised to create history," she declared, marking a significant milestone in the 200-year-old republic. "I want to emphasise that I never come alone, as I have mentioned before." As we gathered, accompanied by the remarkable women who shaped our nation, our forebears, our matriarchs, our daughters, and our granddaughters were all present.

With the presidency now in her grasp, Ms. Sheinbaum faces the challenge of emerging from the shadow of her predecessor and longtime mentor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the outgoing president.

In an interview, she emphasised that she and Mr. López Obrador have distinct personalities. One individual has chosen to invest in projects that raise environmental concerns, while the other is a climate scientist. However, Ms. Sheinbaum has primarily garnered support from voters by pledging to solidify her legacy, endorsing initiatives such as her significant investment in the national oil company, and proposing undemocratic alterations to the constitution.

Many Mexicans are questioning whether Ms. Sheinbaum can truly be an independent leader, given her alliance with others. **Will she merely serve as a pawn in his game?** "I've been hearing this idea from a number of columnists that I lack a personality," Ms. Sheinbaum expressed her frustration to reporters earlier this year. "President Andrés Manuel López Obrador guides me." She maintains her commitment to governing independently from Mr. López Obrador and emphasises her distinct set of priorities. However, straying too far from his agenda could pose significant risks.



These are five key points to consider regarding the newly elected president of Mexico, which shed light on whether she will deviate from Mr. López Obrador's policies or focus on solidifying his legacy.

Sheinbaum will encounter numerous challenges.

Describing herself as "obsessive" and "disciplined," Ms. Sheinbaum is a former ballet dancer. However, according to analysts, discipline alone may not be sufficient.

As president, she is already facing a multitude of challenges. The state-owned oil company is struggling with a heavy debt burden, while migration through the country has reached unprecedented levels. Additionally, the country continues to grapple with the persistent issue of cartel violence.

In her statement, she expressed her commitment to maintaining Mr. López Obrador's approach of tackling the root causes of violence rather than engaging in direct conflict with criminal organisations. Additionally, she emphasised her intention to reduce levels of impunity and strengthen the National Guard.

In an interview with The New York Times, she expressed her readiness to collaborate with the eventual winner of the upcoming U.S. presidential election. In her public statements, she has echoed Mr. López Obrador's focus on addressing the underlying causes of migration.

She expressed her intentions to overhaul the nation's migration authority during a recent debate, amidst a glimmer of possible transformation. This agency has frequently faced allegations of corruption.

Many perceive her as being reserved, perhaps even aloof.

The Times conducted interviews with a diverse group of individuals, totaling twenty-four, who have had professional or personal connections with Ms. Sheinbaum. In addition to attending her campaign events, we thoroughly examined her writings and media appearances. Our team had the opportunity to interview her twice, once in 2020 and again this year.

It is evident that Ms. Sheinbaum, whose name is pronounced SHANE-balm, has always preferred to work diligently behind the scenes rather than promote herself or her accomplishments.

She is known to be quite private about her personal life, including her Jewish heritage, which stems from her grandparents who escaped Europe as immigrants, according to colleagues. During interviews, she emphasises the collaborative effort behind the Nobel Prize she received alongside a group of climate researchers.

She has gained a reputation as a formidable leader, known for her assertiveness and ability to evoke both fear and admiration among her staff. However, when it comes to her public demeanour, she maintains such a composed and distant attitude that it borders on being aloof.

Mr. López Obrador, who has built his party into a formidable force through the strength of his personality, has described her professorial demeanour as a potential challenge in the political landscape.

According to Carlos Heredia, a political analyst from Mexico, she is in need of his assistance. "According to critics, she lacks charisma, popularity, and political stamina, leading her to rely on borrowing these qualities from López Obrador."

Some in Mexico may view a woman who lacks excitement as the ideal counterbalance to a man who has plunged the nation into political chaos.

For quite some time, she has made it a priority to maintain Mr. López Obrador's satisfaction.

The candidate's political journey began when Mr. López Obrador assumed office as mayor of Mexico City in 2000 and extended an invitation for a meeting at a local diner. According to her recollection, Mr. López Obrador expressed his desire to decrease pollution. "Are you familiar with the process?"

When asked, Ms. Sheinbaum, an experienced writer of over a dozen reports on energy use and carbon emissions, readily agreed. She was appointed as the environment minister. According to multiple individuals who collaborated with her, she appeared to be extremely eager to please her boss during meetings.

Mr. Heredia, who collaborated with her in city government during Mr. López Obrador's tenure, consistently repeated the phrase "The mayor said to." Mr. Heredia asserted, "We do not function as a cabinet that provides ideas." "We are a collective of individuals dedicated to carrying out his decisions."

Over the years, Ms. Sheinbaum maintained a delicate balance between her academic pursuits and political involvement while maintaining a strong connection with Mr. López Obrador. In 2014, he approached her with an offer to run for mayor of Tlalpan, a borough of Mexico City, under his newly founded Morena party. With his assistance, she emerged victorious. She has gained a reputation for being a boss who sets high expectations.

In 2018, Mr. López Obrador emerged victorious in a resounding victory, securing the presidency, while Ms. Sheinbaum assumed the role of Mexico City's mayor. She became known as a demanding boss.

"When attending her meetings, people don't just say, 'I'm working on it,'" stated Soledad Aragón, a former member of Ms. Sheinbaum's cabinet. According to Ms. Aragón, her mere presence commanded attention as soon as she entered a room.

According to Ms. Aragón, the mayor has an impressive ability to recall specific numbers from meetings that took place weeks ago. She describes the mayor as "brilliant" and "demanding," particularly when it comes to her own performance. Ms. Aragón believes that this approach has yielded positive outcomes.

Five officials who have worked closely with Ms. Sheinbaum revealed that she occasionally displayed a quick temper and would openly express her frustration by raising her voice towards her subordinates, even in front of a large audience. When asked for a response, Ms. Sheinbaum's spokesperson chose not to provide a comment regarding the accusation. According to her supporters, certain individuals simply had a negative response to a woman assuming a position

of authority. "In her government, there were instances where individuals felt offended or upset due to her assertive communication style," stated Marta Lamas, a prominent feminist activist who has maintained a close relationship with Ms. Sheinbaum and her team. "However, cultural differences come into play when considering that if a man were to yell, it may not be perceived as a problem."

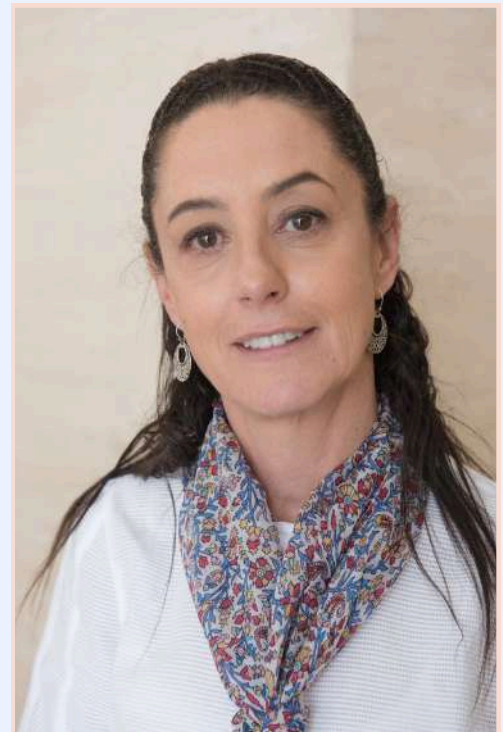
"She's tough," Ms. Aragón said, acknowledging the critical tone in which people often describe her. "Do we really want a leader who lacks assertiveness to govern the city?"

She wholeheartedly supports Mr. López Obrador's vision.

Over the years, Ms. Sheinbaum has made efforts to clarify the alignment between her and Mr. López Obrador while maintaining her individuality. According to her, the answer is quite straightforward: she truly has faith in him.

In 2022, a radio host posed a direct question to her, prompted by a female listener: "Why do you not opt to be a woman who governs based on her own ideas?" She inquired, using Mr. López Obrador's nickname, why the person didn't choose to leave AMLO's circus. "Why use repetitive language and recycled arguments?"

Without a moment's hesitation, Ms. Sheinbaum made her decision. "**When individuals share similar thoughts, it's not a matter of imitation but rather a convergence of ideas,**" she explained. **One cannot ignore their own beliefs.**



- WFY BUREAU USA



The Elections In South Africa Simplified: Know It All

By WFY Bureau Africa



South African voters have chosen to reject the party that played a pivotal role in ending the era of apartheid. This decision represents a significant shift in the country's political landscape. The outcome of the election reflects a growing dissatisfaction among voters with the party that once symbolised hope and liberation. It is clear that the electorate is seeking change and a new direction for the nation. The rejection of the party that freed them from apartheid is a powerful statement by the South African voters, signalling their desire for a fresh start and a departure from the past.

In a historic turn of events, the African National Congress has experienced a significant decline in its national vote share, falling below the 50 percent mark for the first time in three decades. This outcome has undoubtedly set the nation on a new and uncertain path.

In a significant turn of events, the African National Congress has seen its political dominance in South Africa come to an end. The latest election results, with nearly all votes counted, reveal that the party has secured only around 40 percent of the vote. This marks the first time in three decades, since overthrowing Africa's last, white-led government that the ANC has failed to secure an absolute majority.

Despite South Africans grappling with some of the highest unemployment rates globally, along with electricity and water shortages and widespread crime, the governing party managed to outperform its rivals. However, its share of the vote fell significantly from the nearly 58 percent it secured in the previous election in 2019.

Africa's oldest liberation movement has experienced a significant decline, leading to uncertainty and uncharted territory for one of the continent's most stable countries and its largest economy.

The party, known for its association with Nelson Mandela, will now face the challenge of forming a government within a two-week timeframe. This task involves collaborating with rival parties that have criticised its integrity and pledged to never join forces with it. **"I am genuinely surprised," expressed Maropene Ramokgopa, a prominent figure within the African National Congress (A.N.C.). "This experience has brought to our attention that there is something we have overlooked."**

Cyril Ramaphosa, the president of South Africa and leader of the A.N.C., is currently facing a significant challenge to his goal of securing a

second term in office. He will need to tap into his renowned negotiating skills, which played a crucial role in ending apartheid, and unite his deeply divided party, which is expected to have differing opinions on potential alliances.

We anticipate that critics will hold Mr. Ramaphosa responsible for this significant decline and may attempt to replace him, potentially with his deputy, Paul Mashatile. In the past, the party experienced its largest decline in votes between two elections in 2019, with a decrease of 4.7 percent.

"I am surprised by the deterioration of the situation under Ramaphosa's leadership," commented Khulu Mbatha, a long-standing member of the A.N.C. who has been vocal about the party's lack of decisive action against corruption.

Jacob Zuma, the archenemy and predecessor of President Cyril Ramaphosa, played a significant role in the collapse of the African National Congress (A.N.C.).

In a significant development, Mr. Zuma played a key role in the recent establishment of uMkhonto weSizwe, also known as M.K., a political party named after the A.N.C.'s armed wing that fought against apartheid. A remarkable turn of events saw the party secure nearly 15 percent of the vote, a feat rarely achieved by a new political party in a national election. It diverted significant votes away from the A.N.C. and other political parties.

In a surprising turn of events, Mr. Zuma, a controversial figure known for his involvement in various scandals, cast doubt on the legitimacy of the election results. He asserted that his party secured a two-thirds majority despite the overwhelming outcome, claiming manipulation of the results. According to party officials, they have submitted evidence to the electoral commission. However, Mr. Zuma, who continues to lead the party despite his ineligibility for Parliament, chose not to disclose that evidence to the public. He cautioned the commission, urging them to refrain from certifying the election results on Sunday as originally planned.

"No one is allowed to announce tomorrow," he stated during a press conference held at the Johannesburg headquarters, where election officials were disclosing the results. If such an event were to occur, it would undoubtedly elicit a strong reaction from individuals. It is critical that the person in charge is attentive to our message. It is advisable to avoid unnecessary conflicts and confrontations.

Jacob Zuma, the former president of South Africa and leader of the uMkhonto weSizwe party, made an appearance at the Electoral Commission centre in

Johannesburg. During his visit, he made allegations that the election results were rigged without providing any public evidence to support his claims.

Representatives from approximately twenty other small parties joined Mr. Zuma, alleging irregularities in the election. Together, they called for the postponement of the official results announcement.

Mr. Zuma's recent actions have raised concerns about the potential political challenges he may pose to the A.N.C. In the absence of an absolute majority, the A.N.C. is no longer able to personally select the country's president, as the 400-member National Assembly is responsible for the election. In the national election, a total of 52 parties participated, each vying for seats in the Assembly. The proportion of votes each party receives determines the allocation of seats.

Given the significant margin needed to achieve a 50 percent majority, it is expected that the A.N.C. will attempt to form alliances with larger parties, despite the contentious exchanges they had during the campaign.

This situation has completely disrupted South Africa's political landscape, putting the A.N.C. at a critical turning point. The party's potential coalition partners span a wide range of ideologies, and depending on whom it decides to partner with, it risks alienating different segments of its base.

One of the key questions that arises is whether the A.N.C. will welcome or distance itself from Mr. Zuma, who stepped down as president in 2018 amidst allegations of corruption.

The leaders of the A.N.C. may be hesitant to fulfil one of Mr. Zuma's key requests for a coalition agreement. Duduzile Zuma, daughter of the former president, expressed her father's party's refusal to form a coalition with "the A.N.C. of Ramaphosa." Meanwhile, the Democratic Alliance, which garnered almost 22 percent of the vote, remains a potential ally for the A.N.C. Certain A.N.C. members have accused the Democratic Alliance of advocating policies that could potentially return the country to the apartheid era. Many see the partnership between the two parties as a seamless match, given the Democratic Alliance's market-based perspective on the economy, which closely aligns with Mr. Ramaphosa's.

- WFY BUREAU AFRICA



BHARTIYA KALAKAAR SANGH

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Varicose Veins, Cure And Care: Know It All Now



By Dr. Neerav Bansal

Understanding Varicose Veins: Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment Options

Varicose veins are enlarged, twisted veins that often appear blue or dark purple and are commonly found in the legs and feet. While they may not always cause medical problems, they can be uncomfortable and sometimes lead to more serious complications, such as spontaneous painless bleeding and more difficult-to-treat veninuous ulcers.

What Causes Varicose Veins?

Varicose veins occur when the vein's valves weaken or become damaged. Veins are responsible for carrying blood back to the heart, and when these valves fail to function properly, blood can pool in the veins, causing them to swell and become varicose.

Several factors increase the risk of developing varicose veins, including:

- **Genetics:** A family history of varicose veins increases the likelihood of developing them.
- **Age:** The risk of varicose veins increases with age, as vein valves tend to weaken over time.
- **Gender:** Women are more likely to develop varicose veins than men, particularly during pregnancy, due to increased blood volume and hormonal changes.
- **Prolonged standing or sitting:** Jobs or lifestyles that involve long periods of standing or sitting can contribute to the development of varicose veins.

Symptoms of Varicose Veins:

- **Visible veins:** Large, twisted veins that are visible beneath the skin, often appearing dark blue or purple.
- **Very thin,** spider-like, bluish-purple veins.
- **Aching or heaviness:** Discomfort or pain in the legs, especially after standing or sitting for extended periods.
- **Swelling:** Swelling in the legs and ankles, particularly at the end of the day.
- **Skin changes:** Skin may become discoloured (dark reddish-coloured or blackeish), dry, or itchy around varicose veins, and in severe cases, ulcers may develop.

Treatment Options:

Treatment for varicose veins depends on the severity and presence of symptoms. Common treatment options include:

- **Compression stockings:** These special stockings apply pressure to the legs, helping to improve blood flow and reduce swelling and discomfort.
- **Lifestyle changes:** Regular exercise, avoiding prolonged periods of sitting or standing, and elevating the legs when resting can help alleviate symptoms.
- **Sclerotherapy:** A procedure in which a solution is injected into the varicose veins, causing them to collapse and fade over time.
- **Endovenous laser treatment (EVLT):** A minimally invasive procedure that uses laser energy to seal off varicose veins, rerouting blood flow to healthier veins.
- **Glue therapy:** latest addition to the minimally invasive approach to Varicose veins. The biggest advantage is that no anesthesia is required.

In severe cases, surgical procedures such as vein ligation may be necessary to remove or close off the affected veins.

Conclusion

Varicose veins are a common condition that can cause discomfort and affect quality of life, but effective treatment options are available. If you're experiencing symptoms of varicose veins, consult with a healthcare professional to discuss the best course of action for managing your condition. With proper care and treatment, you can alleviate symptoms and reduce the risk of complications associated with varicose veins.

- DR. NEERAV BANSAL

Dr Neerav Bansal is a Senior consultant and Director of Cardiac and Vascular surgery at the ACCORD Super speciality hospital , Faridabad. He is an acclaimed surgeon with over 20 years of experience in various open heart surgeries , Aortic Surgeries , Peripheral Vascular surgeries and Endovascular procedures





The Truth About Better Sleeping Habits: A Series

By WFY Bureau

Part I

Not getting enough sleep? Lack of sleep can lead to neurological conditions

Many of us are guilty of experiencing sleep deprivation, a common problem that affects our well-being. Many of us have found that the work culture has caused us to prioritise sleep less. After a while, the effects of prolonged sleep deprivation become apparent, both in terms of physical and mental well-being. On the flip side, it can also leave one susceptible to the development of certain neurological disorders. Getting enough sleep is essential for our cognitive health and overall well-being. During sleep, our brains are constantly involved in important activities. Sleep plays a crucial role in consolidating memories. While we're in the depths of slumber, our brains diligently work to sort and make sense of the vast amount of information we've absorbed during the day. This crucial process helps us solidify and improve our capacity to remember new things. Getting enough sleep is crucial for enhancing our decision-making abilities and problem-solving skills.

Insufficient or excessive sleep can have a serious impact on our cognitive abilities. Getting less than 7 hours of sleep on a consistent basis can have a negative impact on a person's ability to focus and concentrate. This can hinder their learning process as they grapple with retaining and processing new information effectively. In addition, insufficient sleep can have a detrimental effect on mood and emotional control, which can further impede cognitive function.

The effects of inadequate sleep on your health are significant.

1. Alzheimer's: It is a devastating neurodegenerative condition associated with disturbed sleep patterns and chronic sleep deprivation. Getting enough sleep is crucial for the brain to effectively remove harmful waste products, like beta-amyloid. Insufficient or disrupted sleep can lead to the accumulation of toxins, which may potentially raise the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

2. Insomnia: Insomnia can have a significant impact on the glymphatic system's waste clearance process, resulting in the accumulation of harmful proteins such as beta-amyloid. This accumulation may potentially raise the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Additionally, it can lead to cognitive impairment, mood disturbances, and decreased attention.

3. Sleep Apnea: Sleep apnea can cause frequent breathing interruptions while sleeping, resulting in a decrease in the brain's oxygen supply. These factors can lead to cognitive impairments, difficulties with memory, and a higher likelihood of developing cardiovascular problems.

4. Narcolepsy: A condition that disrupts the brain's ability to control sleep-wake cycles, resulting in an overwhelming need for sleep during the day. These factors can have a negative impact on cognitive function, memory, and concentration.

The importance of a good night's sleep is paramount.

Getting a proper night's rest is essential for the brain to function at its best. While we're catching some sleep, the glymphatic system does an amazing job of getting rid of those pesky toxins and waste that build up in our brains while we're awake. Ensuring proper waste clearance is crucial for maintaining optimal brain health and cognitive function. In addition, sleep has a significant impact on memory consolidation, learning improvement, and emotional regulation. Melatonin, the sleep hormone, is crucial for maintaining healthy sleep-wake cycles. Our brain's pineal gland produces melatonin in response to darkness.

If you're looking to naturally boost your melatonin levels, there are a few habits and practices you can incorporate into your routine. It's important to be mindful of your exposure to blue light from electronic devices, particularly in the evening, as it can disrupt melatonin production. Instead, try incorporating a soothing bedtime routine into your evenings,

like reading a book or practicing meditation. These activities can help signal to your body that it's time to relax and prepare for sleep. Getting some sunlight during the day can also help with melatonin secretion and improve your sleep quality. *Wishing you a restful night and good health!*

- WFY BUREAU



This Is The Guide To Better Mental Health

Part I

Health is incredibly important for our mental well-being, impacting every aspect of our lives, from our work environments to our relationships and overall social well-being. Mental health is just as important as physical health. It's not something separate, but an integral part of overall well-being. Every individual's mental health deserves attention and care. Understanding mental health involves exploring our emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

It has a profound impact on our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. Understanding how our minds work can have a profound impact on how we navigate stress, build relationships, and prioritise our well-being. It's crucial to prioritise mental health at every stage of life, starting from childhood and adolescence all the way through adulthood. A multitude of factors, including nutrition, movement, sunlight, relationships, and social, political, and economic structures, shape our lives.

The significance of prioritising mental health

- **Workplaces are an essential part of our lives.** They are where we spend a significant amount of our time, collaborating with colleagues and working towards our goals. Whether it's a bustling office, a cosy coffee shop, or a remote setup, workplaces shape our experiences and contribute to our professional growth. They When it comes to physical health, mental health, or workplace culture, making health a priority can foster a supportive environment that values employees and inspires them to excel.
- **Relationships:** Maintaining good health is critical in order to prioritise our overall well-being. This not only enables us to handle relationships effectively but also promotes open and effective communication.
- **Taking care of your overall well-being is crucial.** Engaging in a variety of physical activities and maintaining regular health check-ups can greatly decrease the likelihood of developing chronic illnesses such as high blood pressure, autoimmune diseases, and gastrointestinal problems.

Understanding Mental Health

Understanding mental health involves exploring our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It has a profound impact on our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. Understanding how our minds work can have a profound impact on how we navigate stress, build relationships, and prioritise our well-being. It's crucial to prioritise mental health at every stage of life, starting from childhood and adolescence all the way through adulthood.

Recognising the importance of mental health for overall well-being is crucial.

Both mental and physical health play vital roles in maintaining overall well-being. Take note that depression can significantly raise the likelihood of developing various chronic physical health issues, such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. In the same vein, having chronic conditions can heighten the vulnerability to mental illness.

Is it possible for mental health to change over time?

It's critical to keep in mind that an individual's mental well-being can fluctuate over time due to a variety of factors. Overwhelming demands that



By WFY Bureau

exceed an individual's available resources and coping abilities can significantly impact their mental well-being. Take a moment to consider the impact of working long hours, caring for a relative, or facing economic hardship on one's mental health.

Are mental illnesses quite prevalent in our society?

Mental illnesses are incredibly prevalent in society.

- It's quite staggering to think that over 20% of adults in the US are living with a mental illness.
- It's alarming to know that more than 20% of young people between the ages of 13 and 18 have experienced a severe and disabling mental illness.
- It's quite astonishing that approximately 1 in 25 adults in the United States grapple with a serious mental illness. Conditions like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression have a significant impact on their lives.

Investigating the causes of mental illness

Mental illness does not have a single cause. Various factors can contribute to the risk of developing a mental illness.

- Childhood experiences that are difficult and painful, such as trauma or a history of abuse (such as child abuse, sexual assault, witnessing violence, etc.).
- Sharing personal stories about living with ongoing medical conditions, such as traumatic brain injury, cancer, or diabetes
- Factors of a biological nature or imbalances in brain chemistry
- Substance abuse
- Experiencing emotions of solitude or seclusion

Mental illnesses and disorders can manifest in various ways and may even coexist simultaneously. It's interesting to note that mental illnesses can manifest suddenly or occur in episodes. It's interesting to note that mental illness can have distinct periods of onset and remission. Some mental illnesses can persist for a significant period of time. **Did you know that there are over 200 different types of mental illness?**

Dealing with Stress

It seems that a lot of people are currently dealing with difficult situations that can cause a great deal of stress and overwhelm. **Discovering effective stress management strategies can have a positive impact on your own well-being, as well as that of your loved ones and those in your community.**

Stress can lead to the following:

- Experiencing a range of emotions such as fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration.
- Fluctuations in appetite, energy levels, cravings, and passions.
- Finding it difficult to focus and make choices.
- Struggling with nightmares or sleep issues.
- Experiencing physical reactions like headaches, body pains, stomach problems, or skin rashes.
- Exacerbation of long-term health issues and mental well-being.

- There has been a concerning rise in the consumption of alcohol and illicit substances such as heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine, as well as the improper use of prescription drugs like opioids.

Tips for Managing Stress in a Healthy Way

- **Discover effective strategies for coping with stress, anxiety, grief, or worry:** It's important to give yourself a break from news stories, even the ones you see on social media. While staying updated is crucial, the constant barrage of news about negative events can be quite distressing. It might be beneficial to restrict your news consumption to a few designated times throughout the day and take a break from the constant presence of screens on your phone, TV, and computer.
- **Prioritise your physical well-being.** Maintaining good physical health can have a positive impact on your emotional well-being. Discover effective strategies to enhance your overall well-being:
- **Embrace a nutritious diet.** It's important to include a variety of fruits and vegetables, lean protein, whole grains, and low-fat or no-fat dairy in your diet. Avoid consuming foods that are high in unhealthy fats, salt, and added sugars. Check out these helpful tips for maintaining a healthy diet.
- **Make sure to prioritise getting enough sleep.** Establishing a consistent sleep schedule can significantly improve your sleep quality. It is crucial for adults to get a minimum of 7 hours of sleep each night.
- **It's important to prioritise physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour.** Engaging in any form of physical activity, no matter how small, can make a significant difference. Begin with a modest amount of time and gradually increase it to 2 ½ hours per week. Breaking it into smaller amounts, like 20 to 30 minutes a day, can be quite effective.
- **It's important to be mindful of your alcohol consumption.** When consuming alcoholic beverages, choose to abstain from alcohol or practice moderation. When it comes to moderation, it's important to keep in mind that men should limit themselves to two drinks or less per day, while women should aim for one drink or less. Learn more about drinking less and being your best.
- **It is important to avoid using illegal drugs or prescription drugs in any way that deviates from their prescribed use.** It's important to avoid using someone else's prescription medication. Getting help with substance use treatment is critical for starting the recovery journey. It's important to steer clear of smoking, vaping, and any other tobacco products. It is absolutely possible for individuals to successfully quit smoking and never look back.
- **It's important to stay on top of your health** by keeping up with regular appointments, tests, screenings, and vaccinations.
- **Take a moment to relax and recharge.** Remember to take deep breaths, stretch, or engage in a calming meditation. Explore different activities that bring you joy.
- **Engage and build connections with like-minded individuals.** Engage in open conversations with individuals you have confidence in, discussing your worries and expressing your emotions. Engage with your local community or religious groups.

- WFY BUREAU



India Is Now Under The Grip Of Severe Heatwaves

By WFY Bureau India

A strong heatwave is suffocating parts of northern and central India; Delhi has recorded a tentative record high of 52.3 °C (126.1 °F). It would be the highest ever recorded in India, if confirmed.

More than 37 locations across the country recorded temperatures above 45°C this week. The heat-related sickness warnings have resulted in at least three deaths. The authorities have warned those caught wasting water that they will face fines as the city grapples with shortages and reduced supplies in some regions.

200 teams would be sent in, according to Water Minister Atishi, to take tough measures against individuals who wash their cars with hosepipes and allow their tanks to overflow. "It's been unbearably hot for the past few days, and it's getting much worse as the days go by," Delhi resident Manish stated. Many have also mentioned that the heat made it impossible to even eat properly. They remarked, "We have experienced heat before, but it feels unbearable this time." "It is hard to stand outside at all." Because people resort to air conditioning, ceiling fans, and coolers to beat the heat, the city's power usage has reached an all-time high.

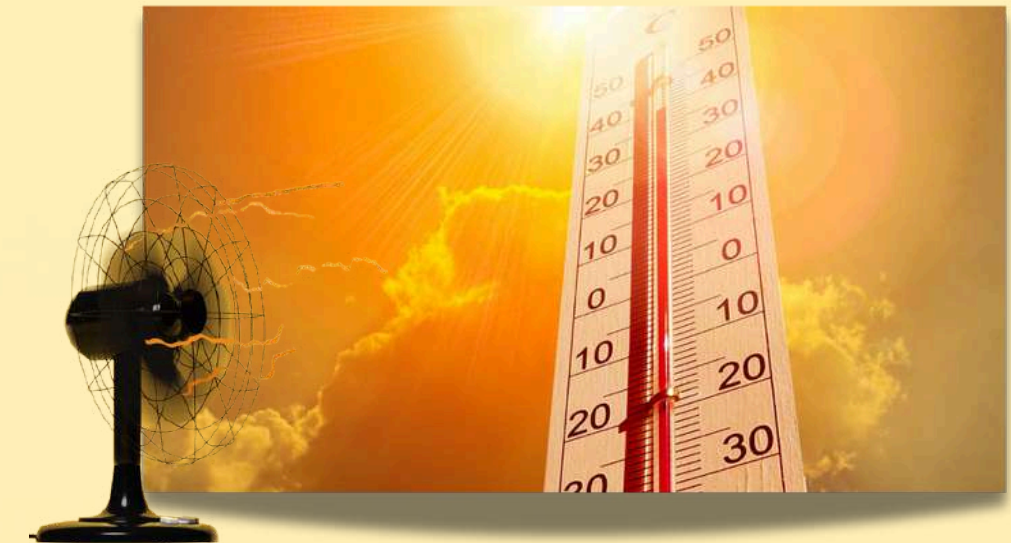
A consumer court judge suspended the proceedings because it was too hot to hold court without air conditioning. Delhi is among the areas in northwest India for which red advisories have been issued, indicating a very high risk of heat-related illnesses and strokes. According to medical professionals in Delhi, there has been an increase in medical consultations during the heatwave.

The high temperatures mostly affected the elderly, those with pre-existing medical conditions, the poorest, and migrant labourers who work on construction sites and other areas. The lieutenant governor of Delhi has ordered the provision of water and three hours of paid time off for construction site labourers. Additionally, he has requested that drinking water pots be available at bus stops. According to Kuldeep Srivastava, regional head of IMD, scorching winds from the state of Rajasthan are the reason for Delhi's soaring temperatures. Churu, a Rajasthan city, and Sirsa, a northern Haryana state, have also recorded temperatures exceeding 50 degrees Celsius. On Tuesday, the city of Jaipur in Rajasthan reported three deaths from heat stroke. A number of school children in the eastern state of Bihar's town of Sheikhpura were taken to the hospital after passing out from the heat, according to local media. In Jammu and Kashmir, the heat is fueling several forest fires.

Heat Waves

A heat wave is an extended period of exceptionally hot weather, typically lasting two or more days. The temperatures must be higher than the area's historical averages in order to qualify as a heat wave.

In the twenty-first century, climate change will cause global temperatures to rise, as well as an increase in the frequency and severity of heatwaves. High temperatures have the potential to harm people's health and cause more deaths. Long-term exposure to high daytime and nocturnal temperatures puts the body under cumulative physiological stress, exacerbating the world's leading causes of death, such as diabetes mellitus, kidney illness, and respiratory and cardiovascular disorders. Heatwaves can have a severe short-term effect on large populations,



frequently result in public health emergencies, increase mortality, and have cascading socioeconomic effects (e.g., reduced labour productivity and job capacity).

In addition, they may result in a reduction in the ability to provide health services since heatwaves sometimes coincide with power outages that affect transportation, water infrastructure, and medical facilities.

In India, heat waves usually last from March through June, and in certain extreme circumstances, they can last until July. On average, the northern regions of the country experience five to six heat wave episodes per year. A single incident can affect a large population, endure for weeks, and happen one after the other. Extreme heat waves impacted Bihar, Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh & Delhi, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, West Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat in 2016.

What are the criteria to declare a heat wave in India?

When a station's maximum temperature reaches at least 40 °C in plains regions or at least 30 °C in hilly regions, we declare a heat wave.

- The deviation from the normal heat wave is between 4.50°C and 6.40°C. In severe Heat Wave it is >6.40°C
- Based on the actual maximum temperature, the deviation from normal is greater than ≥45°C and >47°C degrees Celsius.
- A heat wave occurs when the actual maximum temperature surpasses If two stations in a meteorological subdivision reach the preceding conditions for at least two days in a row and declare a severe heat wave on the second day, the actual maximum temperature must be at least 47 °C.

What is the heat wave criterion for India's coastal stations?

Declaring a heat wave is possible if the actual highest temperature exceeds 37.0 °C and the maximum temperature deviates by 4.50 °C or more from the norm. The heat wave over India reaches its peak in May.

Heat waves and Wellness

The timing, severity, and length of a temperature event, the degree of acclimatisation, and the degree to which the local population, institutions, and infrastructure can adjust to the current environment all influence the extent and kind of health effects associated with heat. The exact temperature at which something is considered dangerous depends on a number of elements, including wind, humidity, human acclimatisation, and local heat readiness. With certain

public health initiatives, the detrimental effects of heat on health are foreseeable and mainly avoidable. Prolonged exposure to high temperatures affects all humans physiologically, exacerbating pre-existing illnesses and leading to premature death and disability.

The primary impacts of heat on health are as follows:

- Exposure to hotter than usual weather causes rapid increases in heat gain, which compromises the body's ability to regulate temperature. This can lead to a series of disorders, including heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heatstroke, and hyperthermia.
- Heat-related deaths and hospital admissions can happen very quickly (on the same day) or slowly (over several days), which might hasten the passing of illness in the already fragile. This is especially true in the early stages of heatwaves. Higher rates of disease and mortality are associated with even minor variations in the seasonal average temperature. Extreme temperature variations can exacerbate long-term health issues, such as diabetes-related disorders and diseases of the heart, lungs, and brain.
- Heat also has important secondary health effects. Heat can have an impact on human behaviour, disease spread, health service provision, air quality, and the importance of social infrastructure such as energy, transportation, and water.

Use these useful suggestions to stay safe during a heat wave.

- Go gentle on yourself. Avoid doing heavy lifting and move more slowly.
- Wear appropriate clothing. Put on airy, pastel-coloured apparel.
- Steer clear of meat and high-protein foods. Consuming them can increase your body's heat output.
- Sip plenty of water. Unless you have a medical condition that changes with fluid intake, it's a good idea to stay as hydrated as possible.
- Look for a cool area to hang out. Do you not own a personal air conditioner? Go to a public facility (such as a library) that has one, or find a friend who does.
- Steer clear of too much sunlight. Your body has a tougher time cooling down after a sunburn.
- Drive carefully at all times. Automobiles heat up quite quickly. When parked, never leave your windows closed, and exercise caution around hot metal objects, such as seatbelt buckles, both inside and outside the vehicle.

- WFY BUREAU INDIA



By WFY Bureau

Does a single mango really cost a staggering Rs 12,000? Unveiling the Intriguing Tale of India's Most Expensive Mango Varieties

As the mango season reaches its peak in India, we present a compilation of unique and highly sought-after varieties that are known for their rarity, high price, and exceptional flavour. In the sweltering Indian summers, a refreshing and delectable saviour emerges: the mango. With its juicy, tangy, and sweet flavours, it provides much-needed relief. The tropical delight can be found hanging from trees, with branches bending under the weight of the plump, sun-kissed fruit.

Ah, the nostalgia of those long-gone days when mangoes reigned supreme as the quintessential summer delight. With excitement, we would hurry to the market, holding a handful of rupees, and meticulously choose the most succulent and flavorful mangoes. Transporting them back to their homes felt as if I were cradling a fragment of pure radiance. As we filled a large pot with cool water, we carefully submerged the mangoes, observing their buoyant movements with fascination. The wait seemed to stretch on forever. Finally, the moment arrived when we peeled the mango and savoured its delectable sweetness, inducing a state of pure bliss. With over a thousand different types of mangoes cultivated worldwide, it's possible that only a select few will have the opportunity to taste them all. Nevertheless, we have compiled a list of the world's most expensive mangoes, which are far from ordinary.

Sindhri Mango is a popular variety of mango



Hailing from the Sindh region of Pakistan, these mangoes have gained widespread popularity for their unmistakably sweet and aromatic flavour. The mangoes, highly adored in both India and Pakistan, boast a generous size and feature a vibrant, velvety yellow skin. These fruits, known for their distinctive taste, are highly regarded by many. The fertile soil and warm climate of Sindh are widely believed to contribute to their exceptional flavour. According to an article in India Today, the price of a Sindhri mango can reach as high as **Rs 3,000 per piece**.

Kohitur Mango



Expensive Mango Varieties Of India: Know It All Now



Renowned for their unique colour and texture, Kohitur mangoes are a rare find. According to an article in **Condé Nast Traveller**, it is said that the mango in question was specifically developed for Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah in the 18th century. The task of creating new mango varieties for the nawabs was entrusted to a horticulturist named Hakim Ada Mohammadi. This mango is exclusively available to royal families. It is believed to be a hybrid of the now-extinct Kalopahar and another undocumented variety. Grown in the heart of West Bengal, the variety is extensively cultivated in Murshidabad. With prices ranging from **Rs 3,000 to a staggering Rs 12,000 per piece**, it is considered quite valuable.

Alphonso Mango is a popular variety of mango



Alphonso mangoes, a popular choice among many, are primarily cultivated in the coastal areas of Ratnagiri, Devgad, and the Konkan region in western India. Additionally, these crops are cultivated in the Valsad and Navsari districts of South Gujarat. In 2023, Alphonso mangoes emerged as the top-selling fruit on Zepto. Known for its title as the "king of mangoes," this variety boasts a striking golden-orange skin that gives a glimpse of the succulent, fibre-free flesh it holds within. In April 2023, Zepto, an instant delivery app, saw a staggering Rs 25 crore worth of mangoes ordered by Indians. Among the various varieties available, Alphonso emerged as a clear favourite among the customers. During the peak season, the price of the variant can reach as high as **Rs 1,500 per kg**.

Noorjahan Mango

A single Noorjahan mango has the potential to reach an impressive length of one foot. We are pleased to introduce Noorjahan, another exquisite addition to our already extensive range of mango varieties. The mango lives up to its regal name with a taste that is truly fit for a king. According to reports, this particular variety is believed to have made its way to India from Afghanistan, passing through Gujarat. A **CNN Traveller** report states that the Mughals played a significant role in the development of various mango varieties throughout history. The Noorjahan mango, in



particular, is associated with the Mughal queen because of its descriptor, "mallika-e-aam," or queen of mangoes. Mangoes have the potential to reach impressive weights of **3.5 kg** and can grow to a remarkable foot-long size. It is highly sought after by mango enthusiasts, but its limited availability makes it a rare delicacy exclusively enjoyed in Gujarat. The price can reach up to **Rs. 1,000 per piece**, depending on factors such as size and season.

Miyazaki Mango



Originating from Japan, this mango is renowned as the most expensive mango in the world, with a price tag of up to **Rs 3 lakh/kg** in international markets. Mangoes from Miyazaki Prefecture, Japan, are renowned for their vibrant red skin and exquisite, luscious taste. The Miyazaki mango is commonly cultivated in Japan. Only a select group of farmers in India, specifically from certain regions of West Bengal, have successfully cultivated this particular variety. The premium mango variety took centre stage at the mango festival in Siliguri, captivating attendees in 2023. The mangoes are carefully cultivated in controlled environments to guarantee the highest possible quality. **Renowned for their impressive dimensions, captivating fragrance, and unparalleled sweetness, these specimens have gained quite a reputation.**

- WFY BUREAU INDIA





By Tushar Unadkat

Origins and Evolution of Pride Month in Toronto

Pride Month in Toronto is a vibrant and significant celebration, reflecting the city's commitment to diversity and inclusion. The origins of Pride Month date back to the early 1980s; inspired by the Stonewall Riots of 1969 in New York City, widely considered the catalyst for the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement, Toronto's LGBTQ+ community began organizing small marches and demonstrations to advocate for their rights and visibility. The first official Pride celebration in Toronto occurred in 1981, following a pivotal event called the "Operation Soap" bathhouse raids. This police raid on four gay bathhouses led to widespread protests and galvanized the local LGBTQ+ community, culminating in the establishment of Pride Toronto.

Over the decades, Pride Toronto has grown into one of the largest Pride celebrations in the world, attracting people from all walks of life. The month of June features a series of events, including the renowned Pride Parade, the Dyke March, the Trans March, and numerous cultural and educational activities that celebrate LGBTQ+ culture and history.

Legalization of Same-Sex Marriage in Canada

Canada has been at the forefront of LGBTQ+ rights, with significant milestones in its journey towards equality. The path to legalizing same-sex marriage began in the late 20th century. It culminated on July 20, 2005, when Canada became the fourth country to legalize same-sex marriage nationwide. This landmark legislation followed years of advocacy and several court rulings that progressively expanded the rights of same-sex couples.

LGBTQ+ Population in Canada

The LGBTQ+ community in Canada is diverse and widespread. While precise numbers are challenging to determine due to privacy and identification issues, Statistics Canada estimates that approximately 1 million Canadians identify as LGBTQ+. This number reflects the inclusive nature of the community, encompassing a range of sexual orientations and gender identities.

Attendance and Significance of the Pride Parade

Toronto's Pride Parade is a major highlight of Pride Month, drawing crowds from across the country and worldwide. The parade attracts over a million attendees yearly, including participants and spectators. This massive turnout underscores the importance of Pride as a celebration of identity, a protest for ongoing struggles, and a demonstration of solidarity. Pride Month holds immense significance in the mainstream. It serves

as a powerful reminder of the progress made in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights while highlighting the ongoing challenges that the community faces. Pride Month fosters a sense of belonging, educates the public about LGBTQ+ issues, and promotes a culture of acceptance and equality.

Prominent LGBTQ+ Leaders in Canada

Canada boasts several influential LGBTQ+ leaders who have made significant contributions to the fight for equality and inclusion:

- Svend Robinson:** The first openly gay member of Parliament in Canada, Svend Robinson has been a tireless advocate for LGBTQ+ rights since he came out in 1988. His activism has been crucial in advancing LGBTQ+ issues within Canadian politics.
- Glen Murray:** As the first openly gay mayor of a major North American city (Winnipeg) and later as a Member of the Provincial Parliament in Ontario, Glen Murray has been a prominent figure in promoting LGBTQ+ rights and urban sustainability.
- El-Farouk Khaki:** A human rights lawyer and advocate for LGBTQ+ Muslims, El-Farouk Khaki co-founded the Toronto Unity Mosque and has been instrumental in creating inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals within religious communities.

Pride Celebrations in India: A Parallel

In contrast to Canada, the LGBTQ+ movement in India has had a different trajectory, marked by significant legal and social milestones. Homosexuality was decriminalized in India relatively recently, on September 6, 2018, when the Supreme Court of India struck down Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which criminalized consensual same-sex relations.

Pride celebrations in India, like in Toronto, are vibrant and growing. Major cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Chennai host annual Pride marches that attract thousands of participants. These events are crucial in raising awareness about LGBTQ+ rights and challenging societal norms. Despite these advances, the LGBTQ+ community in India still faces considerable social stigma and discrimination. Cultural attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals are gradually changing, but acceptance is not as widespread as in Canada. Legal recognition of same-sex marriages and other rights remains a significant hurdle.

Prominent LGBTQ+ Leaders in India

India is home to several notable LGBTQ+ activists who have been instrumental in advancing the rights and visibility of the community:

- Anjali Gopalan:** Founder of the Naz Foundation, Anjali Gopalan has pioneered the fight against HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ+ rights in India. Her work has been crucial in challenging Section 377 and advocating for marginalized communities.

Rainbow Revolutions: Pride Month in Toronto and the Changing Face of India

- Harish Iyer:** An outspoken LGBTQ+ rights activist, Harish Iyer has been involved in numerous campaigns to support the community, including initiatives against sexual abuse and discrimination. His visibility in the media has helped bring LGBTQ+ issues into the mainstream.
- Manvendra Singh Gohil:** The first openly gay royal in India, Manvendra Singh Gohil has used his platform to advocate for LGBTQ+ rights and HIV/AIDS awareness. His openness about his sexuality has challenged traditional norms and inspired many.

Comparing and Contrasting Pride in Canada and India

Both Canada and India celebrate Pride enthusiastically, but the context and reception of these celebrations differ significantly due to cultural, legal, and social factors. Canada widely embraces Pride as a mainstream event with substantial corporate sponsorship and governmental support. In contrast, Pride events in India are often grassroots initiatives that face resistance from conservative segments of society.

However, both countries share commonalities in the spirit of Pride:

- A commitment to equality
- The celebration of diversity
- The ongoing struggle for full acceptance and rights for the LGBTQ+ community

The evolution of Pride in both countries illustrates the global nature of the LGBTQ+ rights movement and the universal desire for freedom and equality.

Interesting Facts About Pride

- Corporate Support:** In Toronto, numerous corporations, including central banks and tech companies, actively participate in and sponsor Pride events, reflecting their commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Political Impact:** Pride celebrations have influenced policy and legislation in both Canada and India, driving progress in LGBTQ+ rights.
- Cultural Influence:** Pride has significantly impacted popular culture, with increased representation of LGBTQ+ individuals in media, arts, and entertainment in both countries.
- Intersectionality:** Pride events highlight the intersectionality of various identities, addressing issues related to race, gender, and socioeconomic status within the LGBTQ+ community.

Conclusion

Pride Month in Toronto and the parallel celebrations in India underscore the global significance of the LGBTQ+ rights movement. While the journeys and challenges differ, acceptance, equality, and Pride in one's identity remain central to both. Pride serves as a beacon of hope and a reminder of the progress and work that still lies ahead as both countries continue to evolve.

- TUSHAR UNADKAT



A Much Better Guide To The Sarees Of India

By Ridhima Kapoor



The saree is one of the most beautiful traditional garments in the world. Indian women wear them in a variety of ways. Let us look at the various popular Indian sarees.

1. Mysore Silk, hailing from the beautiful district of Mysore in Karnataka, is a delightful variety of mulberry silk. Karnataka boasts an impressive 9,000 metric tonnes of mulberry silk production. This accounts for a significant 45% of the country's total mulberry silk production. Following the decline of the Vijayanagara Empire, the silk industry in the Mysore region experienced a downturn. However, around 1780–1790 AD, Tipu Sultan reignited the growth of the silk industry in the Kingdom of Mysore. Afterwards, it faced the challenges of a worldwide economic downturn and had to contend with the arrival of imported silk and rayon. In the second half of the 20th century, there was a revival, and the Mysore State emerged as the leading producer of multivoltine silk in India.



resulting in beautiful border lines and intricate designs. It is thought to have originated during the Buddhist era and is still worn by Malayalis, the people of Kerala. In traditional dances like Kaikottikali or Thiruvathirakkali, women performers elegantly don kasavu sarees and traditional red blouses. When it comes to the price of a "kasavu set" or "kasavu settu," which includes the mundu and veshti, it all depends on the width of the gold borders. When it comes to borders, the width can vary greatly, ranging from less than 3/4" to a generous 6" or even more.

3. The Kanchipuram Silk Sari, which originated in the beautiful Kanchipuram region of Tamil Nadu, India, is a true masterpiece of craftsmanship. Many women in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh choose to wear these saris for bridal and special occasions. Experts craft the saris from the finest mulberry silk thread. Kanchipuram saris use the finest mulberry silk, while Zari is from South India. In the world of saris, a fascinating technique allows one to weave the mundhi, or the hanging end, in a different shade. This involves a careful process of weaving it separately and then skillfully joining it to the rest of the sari. A Kanchipuram silk sari meticulously weaves the body and border as separate pieces, then skillfully interlocks them together.



4. Banarasi silk (UP): Varanasi, a historic city known as Benares (Banaras), crafts Banarasi saris. These saris are truly exquisite, representing the epitome of Indian craftsmanship. With their intricate gold and silver brocade, luxurious silk, and lavish embroidery, they are a true testament to the artistry and opulence of Indian fashion. This type of sari is known for its unique features, such as the detailed floral and foliate patterns, the kalga and bel motifs, and the jhallar border with its string of upright leaves. Ralph Fitch (1583–1591) portrays Banaras as a bustling hub of the cotton textile industry. Banaras brocade and Zari textiles have a rich history dating back to the 19th century. It is believed that silk brocade weaving in Banaras began in the seventeenth century, with silk weavers from Gujarat arriving during the 1603 famine. Over the next two centuries, the craft flourished, reaching its peak of excellence in the 18th and 19th centuries.



2. Kasavu silk (Kerala): In Kerala's handloom industry, the art of Kasavu is a cherished tradition. This technique involves the meticulous weaving of delicate gold or silver threads into silk and cotton fabrics, creating exquisite border lines and intricate designs. Creating the original kasavu involved the meticulous craftsmanship of weaving delicate golden or silver threads onto cotton or silk fabrics,



5. Tussar Silk: The larvae of various species of silkworms produce Tassar silk, also known as Tussar silk. These silkworms belong to the moth genus *Antheraea* and include species such as *A. assamensis*, *A. paphia*, *A. pernyi*, *A. roylei*, and *A. yamamai*. In the wild forests of South Asia, you can find these silkworms happily munching on the leaves of trees like *Terminalia* species and *Shorea robusta*. They also enjoy feasting on other food plants, such as jamun and oak. The cocoons are dried carefully under the warm rays of the sun to eliminate the silkworms. Another method involves allowing the silkworms to exit their cocoons, soaking them in boiling water to soften the silk, and then reeling the fibres.



6. The Chanderi Sari, hailing from Chanderi, Madhya Pradesh, India, is a traditional Koli sari. During the 11th century, the significance of the trade locations in Malwa, Medwa, central India, and south Gujarat grew exponentially.



Did you know that the Chanderi sari tradition has a rich history dating back to the 13th century? It all started around 1350, when the talented Koli weavers began crafting these exquisite saris. These saris are truly exquisite, representing the epitome of Indian craftsmanship. They are renowned for their intricate gold and silver brocade or zari work, luxurious silk fabric, and lavish embroidery.

7. Pochampally Sarees: Pochampally, located in Telangana, is famous for its exquisite Pochampally sarees. Bhoodan Pochampally crafts these beautiful sarees in the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district of Telangana State, India. Pochampally village predominantly carries out weaving today, with an impressive number of over five thousand looms dedicated to producing this exquisite textile.



Here's some information for you: UNESCO recognised this incredible site and included it in the tentative list of world heritage sites, as it is part of India's iconic saree weaving clusters. People commonly refer to these beautiful silk thread kerchiefs as "Teli Rumals." It's a beautiful blend of cotton, silk, and sico—a luxurious combination of silk and cotton. These materials' various textures and qualities create a truly unique and exquisite fabric. The colours are increasingly derived from natural sources and their combinations. Pochampally, a cluster of 80 villages, is home to traditional looms that have been weaving patterns and designs for centuries. Today, the Silk City has become a thriving hub for over 10,000 weaving families residing in 100 villages.



8. Ghatchola Saree (Rajasthani):

The Ghatchola saree, also known as Garchola and Gharcholu, is a traditional garment from Gujarat. It showcases large checks crafted from silk and zari threads, woven on cotton or silk fabric. This technique adds vibrant colours to the fabric using the bandhani or tie-and-dye method. Delicate golden motifs of peacocks, lotus flowers, human figures, and intricate floral designs adorn the checkered patterns. This saree adds a touch of beauty and elegance to any wedding or ritual, making it a truly memorable and enchanting event. It's interesting to note that the in-laws have assumed the role of taking care of the bride. Many North Indian states still continue this tradition, with

some local variations. The fabric is divided into rows of white tie-dyed squares or woven bands with zari motifs. It typically takes around 10–12 days to complete the weaving process for a double-check pattern.

9. The Nauvari Saree, from Maharashtra, is a traditional sari-draping style that closely resembles the Maharashtrian dhoti. The term "nauvari" signifies a length of nine yards. Women from various backgrounds have embraced this attire, demonstrating its true significance. Religious and cultural occasions do not limit this garment's use. Throughout history, women have bravely fought in wars and toiled on farmlands while donning this attire. The traditional Marathi style involves wearing this sari without a petticoat.



When it comes to draping saris, there are various styles that are popular among different castes. However, the method of draping can vary based on the region and topography. As an illustration, Brahmin women have their own unique way of wearing it (referred to as brahmni on the other side), while Aagri people from the Raigad district opt for a knee-length style known as 'adwa patal'. Similarly, the kunbi, or farmer women, of the Raigad district and certain parts of

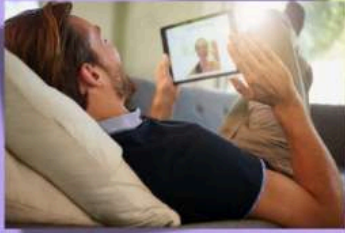
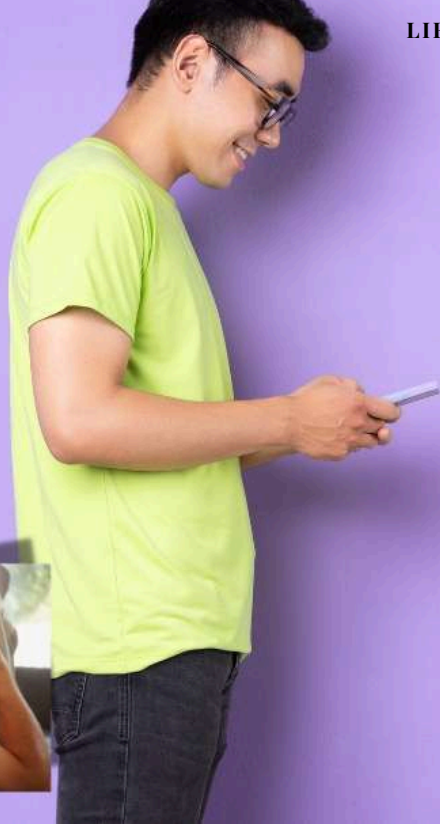
Ratnagiri wear a slightly modified version called "uprati," consisting of nine yards.

10. Bandhani Saree (Gujarat): The Bandhani saree from Gujarat is a stunning example of tie-dye textile art. Skilled artisans craft this saree, embellishing it with intricate designs created by plucking the cloth with their fingernails. The result is a beautiful and unique figurative pattern. The Indus Valley civilisation practiced dyeing techniques as early as 4000 B.C., providing the earliest evidence of Bandhani. There are different names for the final products, such as Khombi, Ghar Chola, Patori, and Chandrokhani. Bandhani, a truly exquisite art form, requires immense skill and precision. This technique creates beautiful patterns on fabric by tightly tying it with a thread at different points. The result is a range of unique designs, such as Chandrakala, Bavan Baug, Shikari, and more, depending on how the cloth is tied. Yellow, red, blue, green, and black are among the vibrant array of colours used in Bandhana. Tradition has passed down the cultural significance of each colour.



- RIDHIMA KAPOOR





In A Long-distance Relationship? A Test Of Endurance And Love

By Kulmohan Kaur



My husband and I are adjusting to the difficulties of a long-distance relationship after 27 years of marriage. This predicament stems from his father's condition, which necessitates him to stay in our hometown while I'm based in Mumbai for work. This separation has tested and strengthened our relationship, revealing both its benefits and its challenges.

Circumstances Leading to Separation

My spouse must stay in our hometown in order to take care of his ailing father. At the same time, I am unable to relocate due to my professional obligations in Mumbai. In our nearly thirty years of marriage, we had never experienced physical separation, but this has caused it now.

Positive Aspects

Despite the challenges, a few benefits have emerged from our circumstances:

- 1. Improved Communication:** Our chats have become more purposeful and meaningful while we've been apart. We listen to each other more intently and discuss important issues more frequently.
- 2. Rekindled Appreciation:** Our time together is now much more treasured. We are grateful and happy to see each other, which makes our time together quite valuable.
- 3. Personal Development:** Our time apart has helped each of us to advance personally. Our pursuit of personal interests and introspection has enhanced our relationship.

Challenges of Long-Distance

Long-distance relationships also face significant obstacles:

- 1. Loneliness:** The lack of a physical companion can exacerbate feelings of loneliness, particularly during trying times or momentous occasions in life.
- 2. Miscommunication:** It is simpler to misinterpret one another when there is no face-to-face conversation. To prevent communication breakdowns, we must exercise extreme caution and patience.
- 3. Physical Separation:** One of the biggest challenges is not being able to share everyday activities and physical proximity.

Despite these difficulties, our separation has eventually improved our bond. The trust and dedication we have developed over the years have greatly aided our ability to successfully traverse this challenging time. Our relationship has grown even closer as we work hard to stay in touch and help one another.

In summary, our circumstances include my husband's need to take care of his father, as well as my work in Mumbai. While these circumstances have led to our separation, they have also provided opportunities for personal growth and strengthened relationships. Our marriage is resilient and flexible because it can balance personal growth and mutual commitment with times of isolation and togetherness. As we continue to face this difficulty, the insights we gain will strengthen our relationship even more.

- KULMOHAN KAUR





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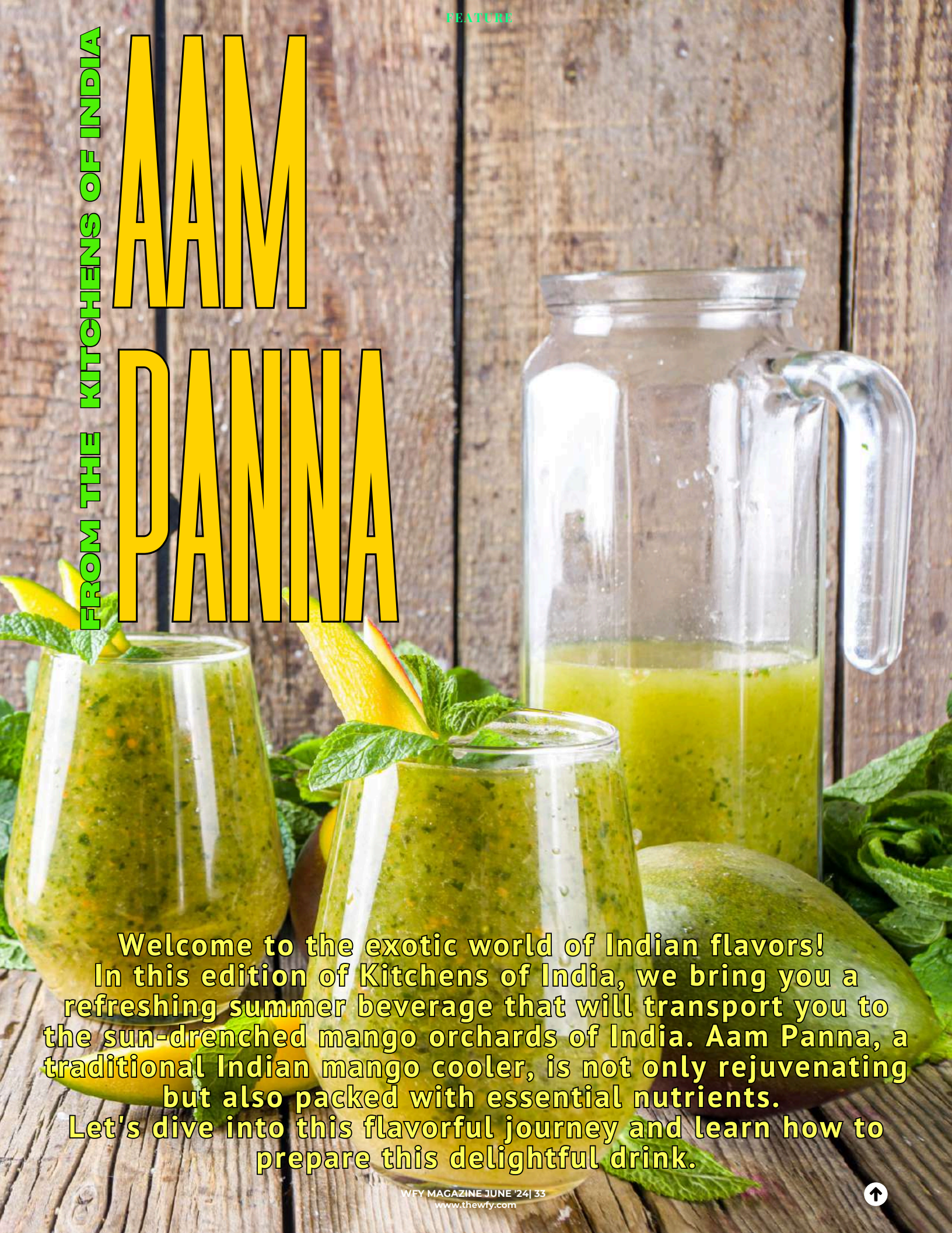
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FROM THE KITCHENS OF INDIA

AAM PANNA



Welcome to the exotic world of Indian flavors! In this edition of Kitchens of India, we bring you a refreshing summer beverage that will transport you to the sun-drenched mango orchards of India. Aam Panna, a traditional Indian mango cooler, is not only rejuvenating but also packed with essential nutrients. Let's dive into this flavorful journey and learn how to prepare this delightful drink.

Aam Panna: The Authentic Indian Mango Cooler

Ingredients:

- 2 large, ripe mangoes
- 1/4 cup fresh mint leaves
- 1 teaspoon roasted cumin powder
- 1/2 teaspoon black salt
- 1/4 cup sugar (adjust as per your taste)
- Crushed ice cubes
- Chilled water
- Fresh mint sprigs, for garnish
- Lemon wedges, for garnish

Instructions:

1. Start by peeling the mangoes and extracting the juicy pulp. Place the pulp in a blender and blend until smooth and creamy.
2. Take the fresh mint leaves and roughly tear them before adding them to the blender. Blend once again until the mint is incorporated into the mango puree.
3. Next, add roasted cumin powder, black salt, and sugar to the blender. Blend all the ingredients together until well combined and the sugar has dissolved completely.
4. Set a fine-mesh strainer over a pitcher and pour the mango mixture into it. Use a spoon to press the pulp and extract all the liquid.
5. Now, take a glass and fill it halfway with crushed ice cubes. Pour the mango mixture over the ice until the glass is three-quarters full.
6. Slowly add chilled water into the glass, stirring gently to mix it well with the mango puree. Adjust the water quantity according to your desired consistency.
7. Garnish the Aam Panna with a sprig of fresh mint leaves and a lemon wedge.
8. Repeat the process for the remaining glasses and serve the Aam Panna chilled.

Tips

- You can adjust the sweetness of Aam Panna by adding more or less sugar, depending on your preference.
- For a tangy twist, you can squeeze a little lemon juice into the drink.
- To enhance the flavor, you can also add a pinch of black pepper powder or a dash of chaat masala.

Aam Panna is a timeless Indian summer cooler that perfectly captures the essence of ripe mangoes and the cooling freshness of mint. This delightful drink is not only a thirst quencher but also beneficial for digestion. **So, beat the summer heat with this refreshing Aam Panna and savour the flavours of India in every sip. Cheers!**

- WIFE BUREAU



GROWING UP

The child in me is all grown
 The fearless one in me is silent
 As if there nothing to fight for
 The swing that moves upwards and back
 Empty, there no child, no grown ups sit
 Life has emptied a wish to play as in childhood,
 To go behind sparrows and butterflies
 There this loud profound stillness
 A canvas of colours
 Seasons change along
 There but no change inside
 Of a thought or a question mark
 On all the unanswered riddles
 Shapeless a cloud moves above
 Nameless shadows dance
 From the silenced elements
 Growing up from the slumber
 A task that mattered
 Sometimes it is better to wrap
 Life's thematic memories
 In a less bright gift paper
 Hide it away in alphabets
 Of unknown language
 Mist the script of earth at times
 To hide even a memory..
 Growing up begins
 When emotions are skillfully covered
 When happiness and sorrows level in egalite,
 A diamond peak where mind and heart rejoice
 May be, after years of turmoil
 What matters more is peace
 Not a crown..



- REMA PISHARODY



Strawberry Vendor

"Strawberry strawberry.."

She calls out in the valley
 Making it as much lively as lovely
 Dextrous fingers nimbly picking
 Berries and arraying in bowls with lining
 Making them look like bouquets of flowers
 Inviting ardent berry lovers

Glowing sun growing to scorching height
 Brewing her sweat drops under her hat
 Revellers pass by without a glance
 Still a few do give her a chance

Picking twice at vehement bargain
 Saving a few bucks barring her gain
 Baskets of untouched berries remain
 Dusk is left with some dîmes for grains

Drops of sweats are washed by tears
 As she's back to the terrain of dears
 A grand kid sulks seeing no candies
 Daughter in law's stony face turns demanding
 Cojoling son patting her hand tiny
 Sets her day along similar such many
 Dawn comes again calling her dearly
 And she starts again "berry berry" loudly...



- SUDHA K K



BEAUTY

Beauty is-

The quality that gives pleasure to the sight, but
The aesthetic approach based on the sight ,
The sight finds the beatitude by its vision ,and
The vision is entirely on one's own thoughts.!

Beauty is-

A word which can be interpreted in many ways,
A thing of beauty can be joy or sorrow,
A polemic term which can be disputed, and
A discrete outlook by different individuals.

Beauty is-

The ethnic conception which define a race,
The enigma of mind set is a belief of the past ,
The age old ornamental set of norms and
The privileges which beauty claims cannot be denied.!

Beauty is-

The deadliest sword which wounded many hearts
Emperors fought among to win a beauty,
The mirage which brought down many kingdoms and
The racist element divided many.

Beauty is-

A long story from ancient civilizations
The ornate mummies returned from pyramids
Hailing the beauty of Cleopatra..!
The scale which measures beauty differ
Let the inhibitions fall as you sing an elegy
{funeral song}
As,the beauty of death is beyond beautiful.!



- BRIJI K T



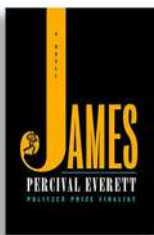


Find The Best New Books Of The Year

By Kavya Patel

These are the best books of the year (so far).

These nonfiction and novels have captured our attention and refuse to let go. As we approach 2024's midpoint, The Book World has already covered a wide range of books. I found some of those titles to be quite impressive. There are some that are excellent. It is likely that certain things will come to mind when we release our end-of-year, best-of lists. If you're looking for some ideas on what to read next, be sure to check out our book recommendation page.



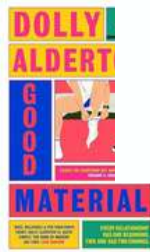
James, written by Percival Everett

This retelling of "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" takes a new perspective by making Jim the narrator, the enslaved man who joins Huck on their journey down the Mississippi River. Through Jim's unique language and unexpected revelations, we discover a remarkably

resourceful, clever, and influential character that we hadn't fully appreciated before.

Good Material is a book written by Dolly Alderton.

Alderton's novel captures the essence of a 35-year-old navigating the complexities of a breakup, offering a refreshing take on the romantic comedy genre. With its sharp dialogue, authentic relationship dynamics, and amusing meet-cutes and misunderstandings, the book breaks free from tired gender stereotypes and the predictable marriage plot.



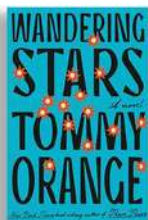
Martyr!, a collection of poetry by Kaveh Akbar

A young Iranian American aspiring poet and recovering addict reflects on the loss of his parents while contemplating his own mortality in Akbar's extraordinary debut novel. A sense of death permeates the book, yet it brims with vitality—from the captivating

elegance of its prose to the vibrant cast of characters and the unexpected turns of its storyline.

The Hunter, written by Tana French

For fans of Tana French, each of the thriller writer's captivating books is a highly anticipated event. In this installment, following the events of "The Searcher," we find Cal Hooper, a former Chicago cop, still residing in the quaint Irish village of Ardnakelty. Despite his outsider status, he remains entangled in the murky underbelly of the seemingly idyllic community, where both apparent and hidden crimes lurk beneath the surface.



Wandering Stars, written by Tommy Orange

This follow-up to Orange's debut, "There There," delves into the story of a young survivor of a 19th-century massacre of Native Americans. It explores not only his own harsh fate but also the experiences of his descendants. In its second half, the novel takes a turn, immersing readers in 21st-century Oakland as it delves into the lives of the family in the wake of a tragic shooting.

Rita Bullwinkel's Headshot is a captivating work of literature that will captivate readers. This novel takes place at a women's boxing tournament in Reno, Nev. It revolves around eight contestants and the intense physical and emotional battles they bring to the ring. According to our critic, this story leaves a lasting impact, hitting you like a powerful blow to the shoulder.



Beautyland, written by Marie-Helene Bertino

Set in 1970s Philadelphia, this captivating story follows the journey of an extraordinary alien girl who arrives on Earth before her birth. She establishes communication with other life forms through the unique medium of fax and embarks on a mission to gather crucial information about our planet's habitability.



This novel is a delightful blend of humour and heartbreak as it takes readers on a journey with a young girl and her single mother, who both demonstrate incredible resilience.

Salman Rushdie's thought-provoking book Knife:

Meditations After an Attempted Murder explores the aftermath of a harrowing event. Rushdie's writing style captivates readers and invites them to reflect on the complexities of life. This book is a must-read for those seeking a profound and introspective experience.

In his latest memoir, Rushdie provides a captivating account of the assassination attempt he endured in 2022 while speaking about the protection of writers worldwide. With his candid and straightforward writing style, he immerses readers in the gripping events that unfold. The assailant displayed an intense and relentless level of energy. In addition, he possessed a knife. Rushdie suffered an eye injury, but he has made a remarkable recovery, which he attributes to the exceptional medical care he received and the unwavering support of his wife, whom he fondly acknowledges in this tribute.

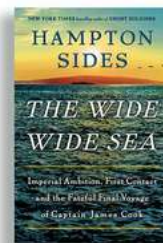


Jonathan Blitzer's Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here is a thought-provoking exploration of the complex relationship between the United States and Central America, shedding light on the factors that have contributed to the current crisis. Blitzer's insightful analysis offers a fresh perspective on the issue, making it a must-read for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of this pressing matter. This compelling and

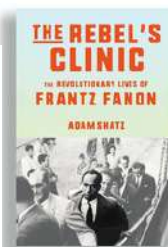
fast-paced examination of Latin American politics and immigration presents a compelling argument for the direct impact of U.S. foreign policy in Central America on the present migrant crisis.

The Wide Wide Sea by Hampton Sides

is a captivating exploration of Captain James Cook's final voyage, delving into the themes of imperial ambition and first contact. Sides skillfully weaves together historical accounts and personal narratives to create a compelling narrative that keeps readers engaged from start to finish. With meticulous research and vivid storytelling, Sides brings to life the challenges and triumphs of Cook's journey, offering a thought-provoking examination of the impact of exploration and colonialism. Whether you're a history enthusiast or simply looking for a riveting read, *The Wide Wide Sea* is sure to leave a lasting impression.



After embarking on his third Pacific voyage, it seems that the renowned British explorer James Cook may have started to show signs of wear and tear. The scientific objectives of his initial two expeditions had taken a turn in a more ominous direction. Our reviewer found that historian Hampton Sides goes beyond simply retelling an adventure tale. In addition, he aims to present it from a modern perspective. 'The Wide Wide Sea' is a perfect addition to a genre that encompasses books like David Grann's 'The Wager' and Candice Millard's 'River of the Gods.' These books reframe famous expeditions, once portrayed as thrilling adventures, within the tragic history of colonialism.

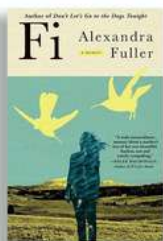


Adam Shatz's book, The Rebel's Clinic:

The Revolutionary Lives of Frantz Fanon provides a captivating exploration of Frantz Fanon's life and ideas. Shatz's book delves deep into the revolutionary spirit that defined Fanon's existence, providing readers with a thought-provoking and insightful journey. With meticulous research and engaging prose, Shatz brings Fanon's story to life, shedding light on his influential role in the fight against colonialism and his lasting impact on postcolonial thought. This is a must-read for anyone interested in the life of this remarkable figure. This captivating biography delves into the life of Frantz Fanon, the black psychiatrist, writer, and revolutionary. His reputation as a passionate advocate often overshadows a lesser-known aspect of his persona—his role as a compassionate doctor who operated a clandestine clinic for Algerian rebels.

Alexandra Fuller wrote Fi: A Memoir.

Fuller's fifth memoir delves into the heartbreaking tragedy of her 21-year-old son's untimely passing. Fuller's elegant and honest account is truly devastating, making it unsuitable for those easily affected. However, it also manages to leave the reader with a profound sense of having known a remarkable and vibrant young man.



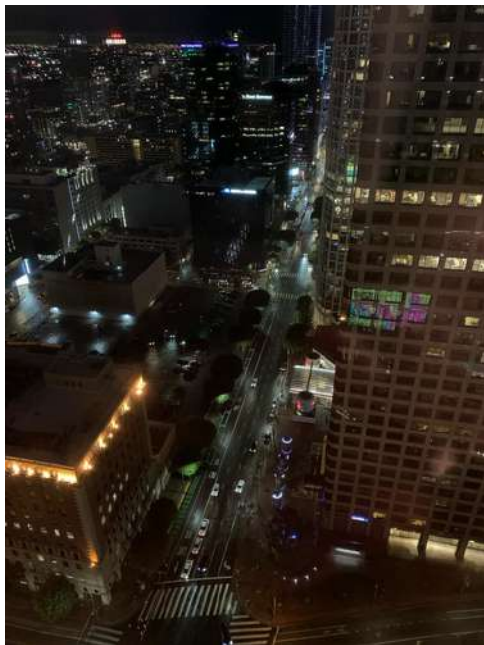
- KAVYA PATEL



LA LA LAND: THE CITY OF STARS

By Arijita Mukherjee Chakraborty

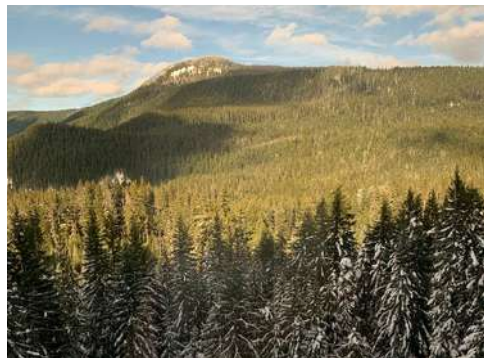
“City of stars, are you shining just for me? City of stars, there’s so much that I can’t see. Who knows? Is this the start of something wonderful and new?”



It was in November 2019, around the Thanksgiving break, that we took a trip to Los Angeles. We had visited San Francisco quite a few times already, but it would be my first time in LA. For my husband, who had already visited the city during one of his conferences, was equally excited for his second visit.



We stayed in Intercontinental, located in Downtown LA. When we checked in, it was the day before Thanksgiving and drizzling. While we were tired from our trip, the beautiful city lights captured our attention. The rain-soaked city was bathed in neon lights, giving a certain cinematic vibe, as expected from the city which is home to Hollywood.



We took to bed early and woke up refreshed the next morning. It was the day of Thanksgiving and hence many stores were closed. That did not bother us, as we were interested in exploring the city, and not too much into shopping. For our lunch, we visited the Original Pantry café, if my readers are ever in LA, I highly recommend checking this place out. They are an old joint, known for being open 24/7, and serving delicious meals at all hours. Our lunch menu included Thanksgiving classics such as roasted turkey, mashed potatoes and beans, bread, cranberry sauce and the staple pumpkin pie. Once full, we set out exploring. The busy streets were deserted, as it was the Thanksgiving holiday, and we spent the day in various parks, admiring the beautiful skyline. Gazing at the LA skyline, we were reminded of our favourite Chicago, it seems that all big cities, be it Chicago, Mumbai or LA, have certain features of the skyline that are quite similar.



The next day, we set out for Hollywood Boulevard! Catching a view of the illustrious Hollywood hill and walking on the Hollywood Walk of Fame! We both posed for some pictures and had a fun time. Many cabs were offering to take us on a tour of actors’ houses, which we found to be quite amusing. We politely turned them down. This made me wonder how obsessed we can be with celebrities sometimes, after all they are also regular human beings and deserve some peace and privacy in their houses.



Next on the list was Santa Monica beach! This famous beach has featured in many Hollywood movies and is a LA tourist staple. We reached in the early evening and found the Pacific Ocean to be quite aggressive!! Maybe the ocean was in a playful mood. We did not venture into the water, instead admired the mighty ocean from a distance. Every beach I’ve ever visited has filled me with immense joy. As we enjoyed the sunset, we quietly pondered about all the sunsets we’ve seen on different beaches. Every sunset is a promise that a new day is around the corner, where new opportunities await us, and we face new challenges in the pursuit of our dreams.



At this point, we were quite hungry. Our lunch was a super healthy pizza in one of the cafes on Hollywood Boulevard. So we decided, it was time for early dinner. Here, we were in for a sweet, rather delicious surprise. We discovered this amazing little diner, based on the theme for Forrest Gump. This restaurant had a unique way in which you could call waiters. There was a card on each table, with a red coloured side saying “Stop, Forrest Stop”, and the backside of the same card, being blue coloured said “Run, Forrest Run”! So when you set the card to the red part, the waiters would stop at your table, and obviously, when set to the blue part, waiters would walk (not run literally!) past your table. This was really amusing, and the food at the diner was incredible. As we enjoyed our dinner, we gazed outside at the beach as evening fell upon the city outside. It was our last night in the city, as we were returning the next day by train.



There was some special reason as to why we chose to return by train. A month back, we had taken the Amtrak from Portland to San Francisco, and had a delightful experience. We had booked what is described as a “Superliner Roomette”, which consists of two seats during the day transforming into upper and lower-level beds at night. We wanted to repeat the experience and book a slightly booker Bedroom this time. That’s exactly what we did. The Bedroom had twice the space of a Roomette, a sofa and chair which transformed into beds at night, and also its own sink, washroom and shower facilities. Complimentary meals were also included in the booking.



Both me and my husband enjoy traveling by the train. Of course, often we are running short on time, and especially now, traveling with an infant, booking a flight does seem to be the more convenient option. But we both feel, traveling by train really lets you enjoy every moment of the journey itself. And probably an apt reminder of the fact that life is all about enjoying the journeys as much as possible, and not just rush to the destination. Thus, it's no surprise that we were looking forward to our return journey quite as much as the trip itself.

We boarded our train in the morning and were quite impressed by the arrangements. There was a spacious seat, which doubled up as an upper-level bed, there was also a private washroom, shower facilities and a sink. The support staff in the train were polite and helpful as well. They came in asking about when we would like to have lunch, and we confirmed our timings. We freshened up, and then it was time to enjoy the view. The train passes by the Pacific coast, so we got beautiful views of the ocean.

At lunch time, we made our way to the dining car, and Amtrak has an unique system where they encourage you to share a table with some co-passengers. My husband and I shared the table with an older American couple, and the delicious food was accompanied by delightful conversations. I felt deep admiration for this system, truly our world today has become dominated by technology where people are on their phone whole day. In such a culture, encouraging conversations between strangers traveling together on the train really is a wonderful initiative.

We woke up next morning to breathtaking views of Mount Shasta. Our train, it seemed was passing through a winter wonderland. Pristine snow covered the trees outside, and it was a sight for sore eyes indeed. The last time we saw so much snow was in Chicago, the winters are famous for heavy snowfall. But in Hillsboro, we missed the snow. We excitedly clicked pictures and videos of the view outside. Finally, after a long but happy journey, we reached our destination, Portland Union station.

When I look back on this trip, I can just close my eyes, and visualize the Hollywood walk of fame, Santa Monica beach, the Forrest Gump themed diner and of course, the astounding beauty of Mt. Shasta. We hope to take our baby boy to LA someday soon, ideally when he turns a little older, so he will be able to appreciate the city and its innate charm.

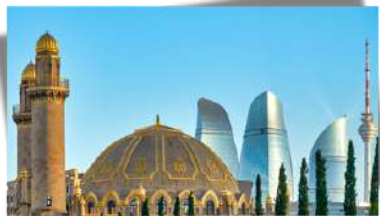
Till then, the fond memories of the “City of stars” remain alive in my mind.

- ARIJITA MUKHERJEE CHAKRABORTY



AZERBAIJAN: AUTUMN OF 2018 – A REMINISCENCE

By Sudha Mukhopadhyay



In the autumn of 2018, my husband and I went on a vacation to Azerbaijan. We were living in Saudi Arabia those days, so distance-wise, the travel time to Azerbaijan was short and sweet. We had booked our trip through a travel agent. It was exclusively just for us, as we did not want to be a part of any large group.

Azerbaijan, which is a former Soviet republic is bounded by the Caspian Sea and Caucasus Mountains. The country is considered an upper-middle income nation possessing a high level of economic development and literacy. The people there are very friendly and helpful.

We were received at the airport at Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, by the travel staff and were taken to a hotel that would be our home for the next few days. The accommodation was awesome, we were super happy to be staying there. Next morning the driver and an English speaking guide came to pick us up for the sight seeing tour. The day started off with a tour of Baku.

Baku has many historical and beautiful sight seeing spots. Our first halt was the beautiful and mesmerising Baku Boulevard. Baku Boulevard is a popular promenade that was established in the year 1909 along the seafront of Baku. The Boulevard was established to connect the oilfields in Bibi Heybet as part of the urban development projects by Municipal Horticultural Commission. It makes a wonderful walk, presenting the natural and man-made beauty at its best, with an amusement park, yacht club, musical fountain and various statues and monuments, all along the Caspian sea front. It is a feast to the eyes.



We then went to the Icheri Sheher. It is one of the most popular places in Baku, having been included in the UNESCO World heritage list in the year 2000. It is undoubtedly the jewel of the history and culture of Azerbaijan.

Sometimes called the Old Town or the Inner City, Icheri Sheher is a unique historical ensemble right in the center of Baku, at the heart of the city. Ancient Baku was founded where Icheri Sheher is today, which used to be right on the shores of the Caspian Sea. The buildings are built out of limestone, cut locally and polished to a smooth surface, so most of the buildings share the same colors, and the roads are narrow and winding,

making Icheri Sheher feel a bit like a maze. A walking tour within this inner city makes a wonderful experience.

Icheri Sheher



The Shirvanshah's Palace: It is located in the Inner City, Icheri Sheher, and, together with the Maiden Tower, forms an ensemble of historic monuments inscribed under the UNESCO. One of the masterpieces of the medieval architecture of the ancient city, the Palace ensemble consists of 9 buildings: the Palace, the Divankhane (Court –House), the Dervish's Mausoleum, the Eastern Gate (Portal), the Palace mosque, the Key-Qubad mosque, the Palace Burial-Vault, the Hamam (bath-house) and the ovdan (storage lake). What a beautiful palace indeed.

The Shirvanshah's Palace



The Maiden Tower: As we were walking towards the Maiden Tower, our guide narrated the legendary tale, according to which, the king forced his daughter to marry a man she doesn't love. She then escapes by asking her father to first build a tower for

her and then commits suicide by jumping from the top of it. This tale has been the subject of many Azerbaijani poems and plays. It is an ancient tower that shows the presence of Zoroastrians, Arabs, Persians, Shirvanis, Ottomans, and Russians.

Later on, a visit to the Palace of Happiness (Mukhtarov street) was a happy one too. This spectacular building was originally called Mukhtarov Palace, named after its owners, but later known as the Palace of Happiness. The story goes that the Azerbaijani oil baron Murtuza Mukhtarov had it

erected for his beloved wife, Lisa, after one of their frequent jaunts to Europe. While abroad, she fell in love with a French Gothic residence, allegedly gasping, "How happy the tenants of this building must be". Her doting husband silently took note and arranged for a replica to be built in their home city of Baku. Within nine months it was realized and Mukhtarov unveiled it to Lisa – surprise!

Palace of Happiness



We then went to the National Art Museum of Azerbaijan. We were told that it is the biggest art museum of Azerbaijan. The museum's total collection includes over 15,000 artworks. There are over 3,000 items in 60 rooms on permanent display. About 12,000 items are kept in storage. The museum changes the exhibits periodically so that more of these artworks can be displayed temporarily.

National Art Museum



How can one miss the Azerbaijan Carpet Museum? The new building of the museum was constructed in the shape of rolled carpet. How amazing is that. The museum displays Azerbaijani carpets and rugs, with historical and modern weaving techniques and materials. It has the largest collection of Azerbaijani carpets in the world. At the time of establishing, it was the only museum that was dedicated to the art of carpet weaving. The main purpose of the creation of the museum was to store, research, and demonstrate unique examples of the carpet weaving art, which are the Azerbaijan's national heritage.

Azerbaijan Carpet Museum

The spectacular Heydar Mosque that we visited, is named after President Heydar Aliyev. Inaugurated in the year 2014, the mosque is spread over an area of 12000 square meters. The facade of the building is decorated with some special stones that are based on the style of Shirvan Absheron architecture.





Heydar Mosque

The famous Flame Towers: At night, Baku changes its looks completely, especially with the illuminated glow. The Flame Towers in Baku



happen to be a trio of skyscrapers with the tallest tower being 182 meters high. The flame shaped towers symbolize the element of fire.

The Flame Towers



We then went to the Icheri Sheher. It is one of the most popular places in Baku, having been included in the UNESCO World heritage list in the year 2000. It is undoubtedly the jewel of the history and culture of Azerbaijan.



The Fountain Square

The beautiful Fountain Square – This Fountain Square is a public square that is located in downtown Baku. It is called fountain square because of the presence of dozens of fountains which were constructed in the course of Soviet rule. It is a square where one can relax, enjoy the greenery, and soak in the gurgling sound of the fountains and the inexplicable peace and tranquility.

The Nizami Street



Nizami Street is one of the largest pedestrian and shopping streets in downtown Baku which is named after classical Persian Poet Nizami Ganjavi. The street had found its way from 1864 during the town planning project. Running from downtown in the west to the east, you will get to enjoy some of the charming age old buildings as well as heritage monuments. It is a good place to shop for souvenirs. It is also home to some embassies of Germany, Norway, Austria, and Netherlands in Azerbaijan.

The Ateshghah Fire Temple



Based on Iranian and Indian inscriptions, the temple was used as a Hindu, Sikh, and Zoroastrian place of worship. “Atash” is the Persian word for fire. The pentagonal complex, which has a courtyard surrounded by cells for monks and a tetrapillar-altar in the middle, was built during the 17th and 18th centuries. It was abandoned in the late 19th century, probably due to the dwindling of the Indian population in the area. The natural eternal flame went out in 1969, after nearly a century of usage of petroleum and gas in the area, but is now lit by gas piped from the nearby city.

There is a Ganesh idol in the temple which is worshipped even today. The Baku Ateshghah was a pilgrimage and philosophical centre of Zoroastrians from Northwestern Indian subcontinent, who were involved in trade with the Caspian area via the famous “Grand Trunk Road”. The four holy elements of their belief were: ateshi (fire), badi (air), abi (water), and heki (earth). After our city tour of Baku, spread over a few happy days, we travelled to Qabala which is one of the most ancient cities of Azerbaijan. Also known as Gabala, it was historically located in the middle of the 2,500-year-old Silk Road, and was mentioned by Pliny the Younger as “Kabalaka”, by Greek geographer Ptolemy as “Khabala”, by Arabic historians Ahmad innm Yahya al-Baladhuri “Khazar”.

It is a beautiful city which bursts with all the vibrant orange, red, brown colours of autumn foliage. Also the city is rich with chestnut and hazelnut trees.

Qabala is a tourist destination due to the combination of its spring climate, mountainous landscape, and diverse fauna. There are many world-class hotels and resorts for tourists. Natural climatic conditions of the region create opportunities for the development of both summer and winter tourism in the region. It is considered the hidden paradise of Azerbaijan, and truly so.



The district has rich cuisine as other Azerbaijani regions. Popular local dishes include Qabala plov (rice), Dolma with nuts, types of chigirtma (chicken chigirtma, eggplant chigirtma, plov chigirtma, etc.). I must say that we found the Dolma especially very delicious. It is a must try dish, simple yet filled with flavours and taste. As a matter of fact, and without any exaggeration, we loved everything that we had to eat/drink. Azerbaijan food is simply awesome. It is a country that enjoys abundance of fruits. I found Pomegranates particularly of very high quality, they were red, juicy and sweet as honey.

And how can i not mention Kompot, it is a very common drink in Azerbaijan as well as in many former Soviet countries. As a drink it is a non-alcoholic sweet beverage that may be served hot or cold. It is made by cooking fruits such as strawberries, apricots, peaches, apples, raspberries, rhubarb, plums, or sour cherries in a large volume of water, often together with sugar or raisins as additional sweeteners. Sometimes different spices such as vanilla or cinnamon are added for additional flavour. When it is had in winter, the kompot is usually served hot.

We returned from Azerbaijan as very happy tourists. It was a full package of great stay, beautiful historical places to see, delicious, lip smacking food and juices to consume and above all the weather.... the great autumn bursting with green, yellow, orange trees and the nature laying a beautiful carpet of brown and yellow leaves on the ground that would make a crunchy sound while walking. It had been an amazing holiday through history, beauty and cultural riches.



The season of Autumn in Azerbaijan



- SUDHA MUKHOPADHYAY

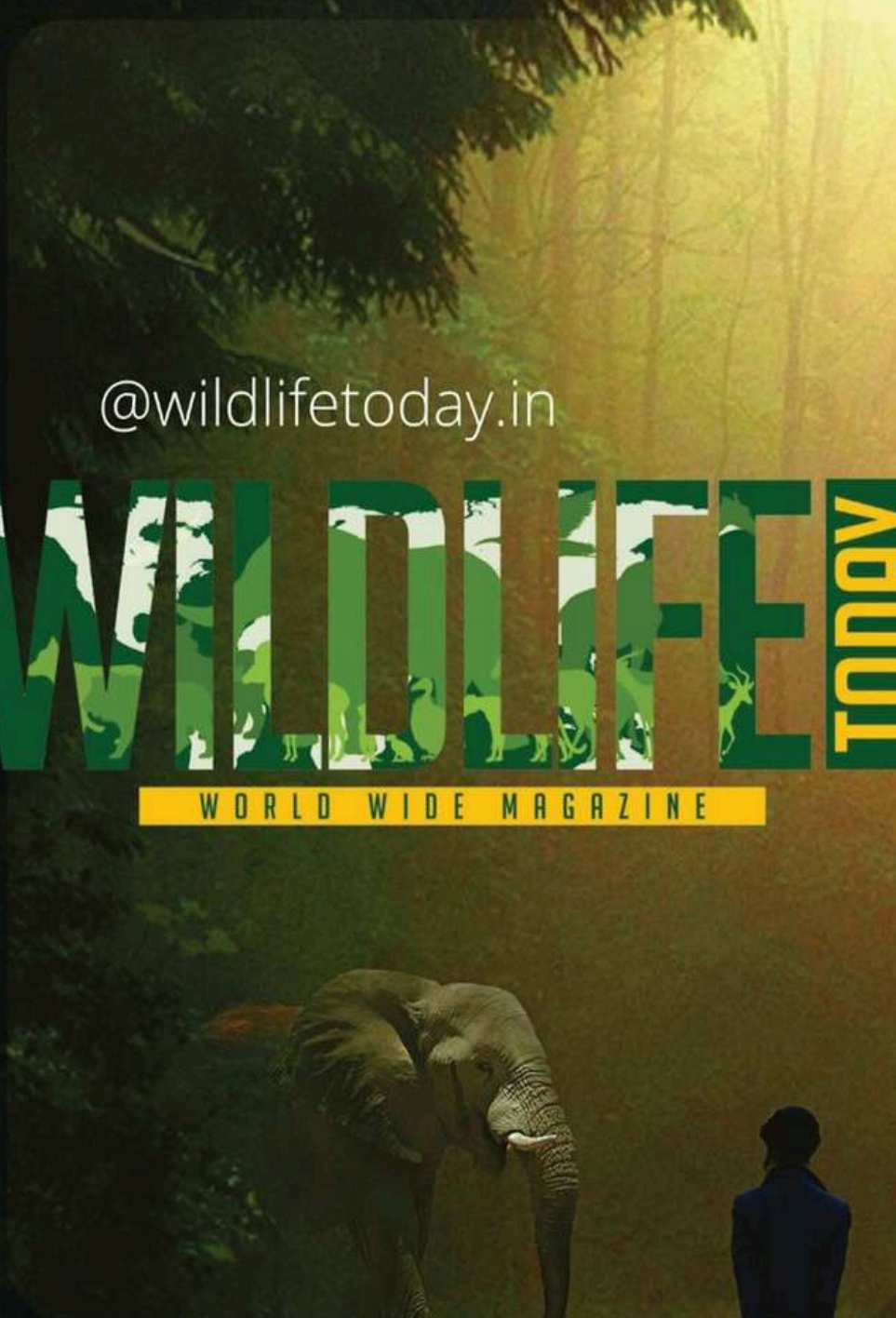
(Source: Personal travel experience and Google for historical / cultural facts / and a few pics)



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Surprisingly Life Has Never Been Easy For Monank Patel



By Saji Chacko

Life has never been easy for Monank Patel. The 31-year-old Indian-born captain of the US cricket team for the forthcoming World T20 Cup has been a fighter. He will depend on these traits in his new role as captain of the US team in the T20 World Cup, which started off in the US on June 2.

For Monank, who represented his state, Gujarat, as an under-19 cricketer and is now donning and captaining the US team, life has come full circle. Ever since he was a youngster, he had dreamt of being the captain of a team.

I have always dreamed of leading a team. I am someone who takes responsibility and wants to take onus for everything. Even during my younger days, when I used to skip school, I relished the idea of being the captain.

When asked how it felt to captain a greenhorn like the US in a star-studded field that includes defending champions England, Australia, and India, Monank said that soaking up pressure was something that he always relished. "For me, the bigger the stage, the bigger the challenge. I must admit, we are up against the best teams in the world. However, as hosts, we can't afford to disappoint our fans. We will give our best," he promises.

Monank also said that while growing up, he admired tough sportspeople—especially the likes of former Australian captain and all-rounder Steve Waugh. No doubt he was a good batsman, but what appealed to me about him was his fighting qualities," he said.

After all, Monank had to fight his way to become a cricket player. Monank excelled in his studies, and his parents strongly supported his aspiration to become a doctor. However, the allure of cricket captivated Monank, and he relentlessly fought to convince his parents to allow him to pursue cricket. "That was the first major battle that I won, which made me confident about my fighting abilities," he said.

He started representing Gujarat in the under-16 and under-19 national teams, and his major goal was to don the Team India colours. At this stage, life presented Monank with an entirely new challenge, as his father decided to emigrate to the US with his family in 2016.

"The decision to migrate permanently to the US proved to be a big stumbling block to my cricketering career. I was all set to shift to Mumbai and train under Pravin Amre when my father made this surprising decision to shift to the US. We had discussed it in our household before, but its suddenness caught me off guard, he added.

Despite shifting to a new country where cricket was little known and followed, Monank's grit and determination ensured that he would have to bend backwards in order to pursue his cricket career. He would end up criss-crossing the US in order to become a professional cricketer. "There were times when I would drive down more than 400 km to get a couple of matches under my belt," Monank said.

Hard work always pays off. Soon, Monank established his credentials in US cricket by becoming one of the most consistent scorers. He was the leading scorer for the US in the 2018–2019 World T20 Americas qualifiers.

He made history in October 2018, becoming the first ever American player to score an international century. Thereafter, he went from strength to strength, scoring heavily in all his matches before earning the right to captain the US in the T20 World Cup.

- SAJI CHACKO



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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.

Our Vision

Make this world a better place by spreading the spirit of Indianism.

Our Focus

Let's celebrate the spirit of Indianism and rediscover our roots by rekindling the relationships.

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

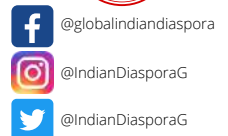
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