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Editor's Note



As we present this special edition of National Times, we bring together stories that reflect the spirit of our times—rooted in tradition, yet shaped by rapid global change. At the heart of this issue lies the celebration of Baisakhi and Sikh Sirjana Diwas 2026, a powerful reminder of faith, identity, and unity that transcends borders from India to Canada. It is a moment that not only honors history but also reaffirms timeless values of equality, courage, and selfless service in today's complex world.

Alongside this celebration, we explore some of the most pressing issues shaping our societies. Canada's evolving immigration policies raise important questions about opportunity and uncertainty for thousands of aspiring newcomers. The rising cost of living, both in Canada and India, highlights the everyday realities faced by families striving for stability in an increasingly expensive world. These are not just economic concerns—they are human stories of resilience, adaptation, and hope.



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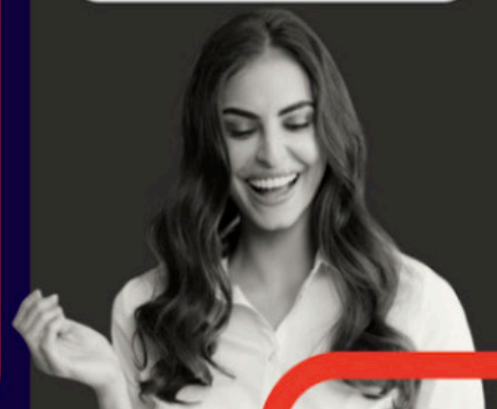
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Baisakhi & Sikh Sirjana Diwas 2026: From India to Canada, A Powerful Celebration of Faith, Identity, and Global Unity

Rajeev Sharma | National Times

The festival of Baisakhi, also observed as Sikh Sirjana Diwas, stands as one of the most significant occasions in the Sikh calendar blending spirituality, history, and cultural pride. In 2026, this sacred celebration is being marked with immense devotion across India and Canada, reflecting the strength, unity, and global presence of the Sikh community.

The origins of this historic day trace back to 1699, when Guru Gobind Singh founded the Khalsa at Anandpur Sahib. Through the initiation of the Panj Pyare, Guru Gobind Singh established a fearless and disciplined community rooted in equality, justice, and unwavering faith. This defining moment not only shaped Sikh identity but also laid the foundation for a society committed to standing against oppression and protecting human dignity. In India, particularly in Punjab, Baisakhi is celebrated with profound devotion and vibrant cultural expression. Thousands of devotees gather at the sacred Golden Temple to offer prayers, listen to kirtans, and



participate in holy rituals. Gurdwaras across the country organize Akhand Path, Nagar Kirtans, and langar services, where people from all backgrounds sit together and share meals symbolizing equality and unity. At the same time, the festival marks the harvest season, bringing joy to farmers who celebrate with traditional dances like bhangra and giddha, reflecting prosperity and gratitude.

In Canada, where a vibrant Sikh diaspora continues to flourish, Baisakhi has evolved into one of the largest multicultural celebrations. Cities such as Surrey and Vancouver host grand Vaisakhi parades that attract hundreds of thousands of participants each year. The Surrey Vaisakhi Parade, among the largest in the world, showcases Nagar Kirtans, free langar for all visitors, Gatka performances, and cultural displays. These celebrations bring together people from diverse communities, reinforcing the values of inclusivity,

harmony, and shared humanity.

At its core, Baisakhi and Sikh Sirjana Diwas represent timeless values that extend far beyond celebration. The creation of the Khalsa emphasized the principle of equality that all human beings are one, regardless of caste, status, or background. This message remains deeply relevant in today's world, where the call for justice and inclusivity continues to grow stronger.

The spirit of seva (selfless service) remains one of the most powerful pillars of this festival. From langars feeding thousands to volunteers organizing large-scale community events, Baisakhi reflects the Sikh commitment to serving humanity without expectation of reward. This principle has transcended religious boundaries, becoming a global symbol of compassion and humanitarian action.

Equally important is the value of courage and fearlessness. The Khalsa was created to defend



truth and protect the oppressed, inspiring individuals to stand against injustice and act with integrity in their daily lives. This legacy continues to guide Sikh communities worldwide, especially in times of social and global challenges.

Baisakhi also strengthens the spirit of unity and community bonding. Whether in India or Canada, the festival brings together people across cultures, faiths, and backgrounds, fostering mutual respect and social harmony. It serves as a reminder that diversity, when embraced, becomes a source of strength.

A defining feature of Sikh identity in 2026 is its youth. Second- and third-generation Sikhs, particularly in Canada, are successfully balancing heritage with modern aspirations. As entrepreneurs, policymakers, journalists, and innovators, they are shaping the future while staying deeply connected to their roots. Their growing involvement in community service, cultural preservation, and leadership reflects a renewed commitment to Sikh values in a globalized world. Today, the principle of seva has evolved into a global humanitarian force. From disaster relief efforts to large-scale langar initiatives during crises, Sikh organizations have earned worldwide recognition for their immediate and unconditional support. Whether responding to wildfires in Canada or humanitarian challenges elsewhere, Sikh volunteers continue to lead with compassion and action.

From the sacred atmosphere of

Amritsar to the vibrant streets of Surrey, Baisakhi and Sikh Sirjana Diwas stand as powerful symbols of faith, identity, and global unity. The festival reminds the world that the principles of the Khalsa truth, equality, courage, and service are not confined to one community but are universal values capable of uniting humanity.



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Immigration Reforms in Canada 2026: Opportunities or Uncertainty?

Arvind.A | National Times

Canada's immigration system, long regarded as one of the most open, inclusive, and well-structured in the world, is undergoing a significant transformation in 2026. For decades, the country has built its global reputation on welcoming newcomers and offering clear pathways to permanent residency and citizenship.

However, shifting domestic realities, including rising housing costs, increasing pressure on infrastructure, and growing demands on healthcare and public services, have prompted the federal government to rethink its approach. The focus is now moving toward a more controlled, balanced, and strategic system that aligns immigration levels more closely with Canada's capacity to support newcomers effectively. While the country continues to admit a substantial number of permanent residents each year, new policies are placing tighter limits on temporary residents, particularly international students and foreign workers. This shift is having a noticeable impact on



immigrant communities, especially those from India, who have historically represented one of the largest and most influential groups entering Canada.

For international students, these reforms represent a major turning point. Over the past decade, Canada has emerged as a top destination for Indian students seeking high-quality education, global exposure, and long-term settlement opportunities. The combination of reputable institutions, post-graduation work permits, and pathways to permanent residency

made Canada especially attractive. However, recent policy changes, such as caps on study permits and stricter regulations for designated learning institutions, signal a move toward a more selective and quality-driven system. Authorities are increasingly prioritizing programs that align with Canada's labor market needs, including healthcare, information technology, engineering, and skilled trades. As a result, students are now required to be more strategic in their choices, ensuring that their field of study enhances their long-term



employability. While opportunities still exist for highly qualified and well-prepared candidates, the environment has become significantly more competitive. There is also heightened scrutiny on both applicants and institutions, aimed at maintaining academic standards and preventing misuse of the system.


The situation for foreign workers reflects a similarly complex and evolving reality. On one hand, Canada continues to face persistent labor shortages in key sectors such as healthcare, construction, agriculture, and technology. To address these gaps, the government is actively inviting skilled professionals through targeted immigration programs and express entry streams. On the other hand, there is a clear tightening of policies related to low-wage positions. Employers are being encouraged, and in some cases required, to prioritize hiring domestic workers before seeking international labor. This has led to stricter rules under programs like the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, making it more challenging for certain categories of workers to enter or remain in the country. Additionally, many temporary workers are experiencing uncertainty as their work permits near expiration. The once widely understood pathway from international student to work permit holder to permanent resident is no longer as straightforward or guaranteed as it once seemed. Instead, individuals must now navigate a more competitive and less predictable system, often requiring higher qualifications, stronger work experience, and better alignment with priority sectors.

Families navigating the immigration system are also encountering a mix of opportunities and challenges. On the positive side, certain initiatives, such as extended stay options for parents and grandparents, offer greater flexibility and support for family reunification. Despite these changes, the relationship between India and Canada remains strong and deeply interconnected.

Indian students, skilled professionals, and entrepreneurs continue to view Canada as a land of opportunity, drawn by its economic prospects, multicultural society, and high quality of life. At the same time, Canadian universities, colleges, and employers continue to rely heavily on Indian talent to sustain growth and innovation. What is changing, however, is the scale and structure of this relationship. Recent trends suggest a gradual moderation in the number of incoming students and temporary workers, reflecting both tighter immigration policies and shifting global conditions. Rather than rapid and large-scale expansion, the relationship is evolving toward a more targeted, skills-focused, and sustainable model of engagement.


The broader debate surrounding Canada's immigration reforms centers on a critical question, are these changes ultimately creating better opportunities or increasing uncertainty for aspiring immigrants. Supporters argue that a more controlled and strategic system will lead to improved outcomes, ensuring that newcomers are better integrated into the workforce and society. By prioritizing skilled workers and aligning immigration with economic



needs, the government aims to create a more sustainable model that benefits both immigrants and the country as a whole. Critics, however, point out that reduced intake levels, increased competition, and stricter eligibility criteria may limit access for many deserving candidates. For individuals who once saw Canada as a predictable and accessible pathway to a better future, the new system can feel more uncertain and difficult to navigate. Looking ahead, it is clear that Canada's immigration system is entering a new phase, one defined by careful planning, targeted selection, and long-term sustainability. The



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Rising Cost of Living: Canada vs India – A Reality Check

Rajeev Sharma | National Times

The rising cost of living has emerged as one of the defining economic challenges of 2026, impacting households across the globe. In both Canada and India, families are increasingly feeling the strain of higher expenses, even as incomes struggle to keep pace with inflation. Despite the vast economic differences between the two nations, a common reality is unfolding, middle-class households and immigrants are being forced to rethink their financial priorities, consumption patterns, and long-term lifestyles. What was once considered a stable and predictable standard of living is now being reshaped by economic uncertainty and rising day-to-day costs.

In Canada, inflation may appear to be stabilizing on paper, but the real-life impact on households remains significant and deeply felt. Essential expenses such as groceries, rent, insurance, and utilities continue to rise steadily, placing immense pressure on family budgets. Food prices, in particular, have seen a noticeable and sustained increase over the past few years, making everyday necessities more expensive and forcing families to make difficult choices. Housing remains the most critical concern, with high rents and elevated home prices pushing affordability further out of reach for many individuals and families. As



a result, middle-class households are delaying homeownership, while newcomers often rely on shared accommodations or move to suburban and even rural areas in search of more affordable living options. Additionally, rising interest rates have made mortgages more expensive, further discouraging first-time buyers from entering the market.

In India, the situation presents a different economic dynamic but ultimately leads to similar

financial pressures. While overall inflation levels may be comparatively moderate, the rising cost of housing, education, healthcare, and transportation is putting increasing strain on urban households. In major metropolitan cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore, property prices and rents continue to climb at a rapid pace, often outpacing income growth. For many middle-class families, owning a home is no longer an immediate goal but

rather a long-term aspiration that requires years of planning and saving. The shift toward nuclear family structures has further increased per-person expenses, reducing the financial cushioning that joint families once provided. Moreover, private education and healthcare costs are rising significantly, forcing families to allocate a larger portion of their income toward essential services. For immigrants, particularly those moving from India to Canada, the contrast between expectations and reality can be especially striking. Canada offers higher earning potential, improved infrastructure, and better public services, but the cost of living, especially during the initial settlement period, can be overwhelming. Newcomers often face challenges such as securing stable and well-paying employment, building credit history, adapting to a new financial system, and managing high expenses related to housing, childcare, transportation, and insurance. This adjustment period requires careful financial planning, disciplined spending, and, in many cases, multiple income sources within a single household to maintain stability. Many immigrants also experience a temporary decline in their standard of living as they transition into the Canadian economy.

At the same time, families in India are also adapting to rapidly changing economic conditions. Rising living costs are encouraging

more disciplined spending habits, increased financial awareness, and a stronger focus on savings and investment planning. Many households are exploring additional income streams, such as freelance work, small businesses, or remote employment opportunities. Others are choosing to relocate to smaller cities or tier-two urban centers where living expenses are relatively lower and quality of life can be more manageable. While India still offers a lower cost of daily living compared to Canada, the gap is gradually narrowing due to rapid urbanization, increasing consumer demand, and evolving lifestyle expectations influenced

by globalization.

Ultimately, the comparison between Canada and India highlights a shared global challenge that transcends borders. Economic growth and development have created new opportunities, but they have also introduced complex financial pressures for the middle class. Whether in a developed nation like Canada or an emerging economy like India, the rising cost of living is fundamentally reshaping how families live, spend, save, and plan for the future. In this evolving economic landscape, financial awareness, adaptability, and long-term resilience are no longer optional, they are essential for navigating

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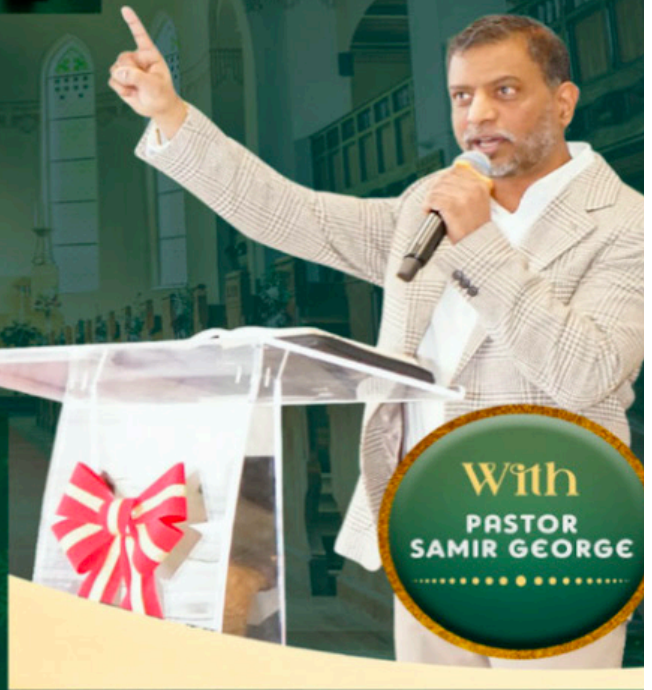
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Youth & Mental Health: The Silent Crisis

Himani Sharma | National Times

In 2026, mental health has emerged as one of the most urgent yet under-discussed challenges facing young people across the globe. In both India and Canada, youth are navigating a complex world shaped by academic pressure, economic uncertainty, digital overload, and shifting social expectations. While awareness around mental health is gradually increasing, a silent crisis continues to unfold one that often remains hidden behind societal stigma and lack of access to proper support systems.

In Canada, the scenario is different in context but similar in impact. While mental health awareness is more openly discussed, young people face their own set of challenges, including social isolation, financial stress, and the pressures of independence. International students and immigrant youth, particularly from India, often experience an added layer of emotional strain as they adapt to a new culture, academic system, and social environment. The gap between expectations and reality, combined with homesickness and financial burdens, can significantly affect their mental well-being.

Dr. Sachdeva highlights that immigrant youth often carry a “dual pressure” balancing cultural expectations from their families while trying to fit into a new societal framework. This can lead to internal conflict, anxiety, and isolation. She stresses the importance of culturally sensitive therapy, where individuals

feel understood not just clinically, but also socially and culturally. “Mental health support must go beyond language; it must reflect lived experiences,” she explains. Dr. Sachdeva advocates for early intervention, encouraging schools and communities to introduce emotional education, mindfulness practices, and open dialogue from a young age. She also underlines the role of families in creating safe environments where young people feel heard without judgment. Governments, educational institutions, families, and communities must work together to create safe spaces where young

people feel supported. Expanding access to affordable and culturally aware counseling services, especially for immigrant communities, is essential. Equally important is fostering empathy, communication, and understanding within families and social circles.

Ultimately, the mental health of youth is not just a personal issue it is a societal responsibility.

As Dr. Sachdeva aptly points out, investing in youth mental well-being today is an investment in a healthier, more resilient future. Addressing this silent crisis with compassion, awareness, and action is not just



Climate Change & Extreme Weather: A Shared Crisis in a Divided World

Rajeev Sharma | National Times

In 2026, climate change has firmly established itself as one of the most critical global challenges, affecting every region of the world. From India to Canada, and across Europe, Africa, and the Americas, extreme weather events are intensifying in both frequency and severity. Heatwaves, floods, wildfires, and droughts are no longer isolated incidents they are part of a growing global pattern that reflects a warming planet.

The primary causes of climate change are deeply rooted in human activity. Since the Industrial Revolution, the widespread use of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and gas has significantly increased greenhouse gas emissions. These gases trap heat in the atmosphere, leading to rising global temperatures. Deforestation, rapid urbanization, and industrial pollution have further reduced the Earth's natural ability to regulate climate, accelerating environmental degradation. The effects of these changes are visible across the globe. In India, rising temperatures and unpredictable monsoons are disrupting agriculture and threatening food security. In Canada, increasingly severe wildfires are damaging ecosystems and affecting air quality. Europe has experienced



record-breaking heatwaves, while the United States and Caribbean regions are facing stronger hurricanes. In Africa, prolonged droughts are creating water and food shortages, and in polar regions, melting ice is contributing to rising sea levels that threaten coastal communities worldwide.

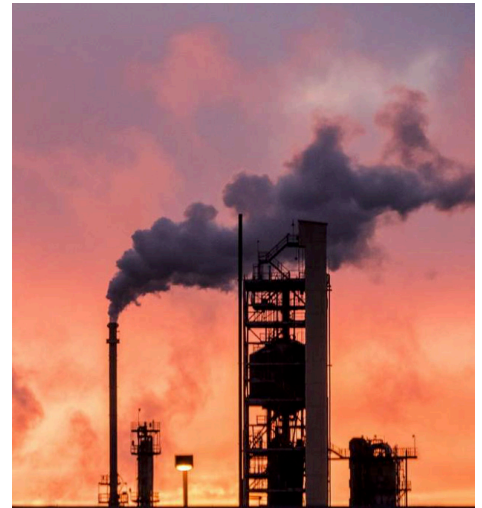
Economically, countries are facing massive losses due to disasters and recovery efforts. Socially, millions of people are being displaced, leading to climate migration and increased pressure on urban centers. Health risks are also rising, with heat-related


illnesses, respiratory problems, and the spread of diseases becoming more common. Biodiversity is declining as ecosystems struggle to adapt to rapid environmental changes. An important and often overlooked factor is the impact of war and geopolitical tensions on the environment. Conflicts lead to deforestation, pollution, and destruction of ecosystems. Military operations generate significant carbon emissions, while bombings and industrial damage release toxic substances into the air and water. These effects indirectly




contribute to climate change and worsen environmental conditions. Regarding tensions involving the United States, Iran, and Israel, it is important to clarify the facts. While geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East can contribute to environmental damage such as air pollution from explosions, oil fires, and infrastructure destruction there is currently no direct scientific evidence that any specific conflict or potential war between these nations is altering global weather systems on its own. Weather patterns are influenced by large-scale climatic processes, not individual conflicts. However, wars can indirectly worsen climate change by increasing emissions, damaging ecosystems, and diverting global attention and resources away from climate action. Historically, environmental damage during conflicts is not new. Events like oil well fires during past Middle Eastern conflicts released massive amounts of smoke and pollutants into the atmosphere, causing regional environmental harm. Today, climate change and conflict are increasingly interconnected. Resource scarcity, such as water and arable land, is becoming a source of tension in many regions. Extreme weather events are forcing migration, which can lead to social and political instability. This creates a cycle where climate stress can contribute to conflict, and conflict, in turn, worsens environmental degradation. Despite the challenges, there is a growing global effort to address climate change. Countries are investing in renewable energy, sustainable development, and climate resilience strategies. Communities are adapting through innovation and collective action.

However, experts agree that stronger international cooperation is essential to effectively tackle this crisis. Ultimately, climate change is a shared global responsibility. Its causes are rooted in human actions, its effects are being felt worldwide, and its solutions require unity across nations. In a world often divided by conflict, the climate crisis serves as a powerful reminder that humanity's future is interconnected and that protecting the planet must remain a common goal.







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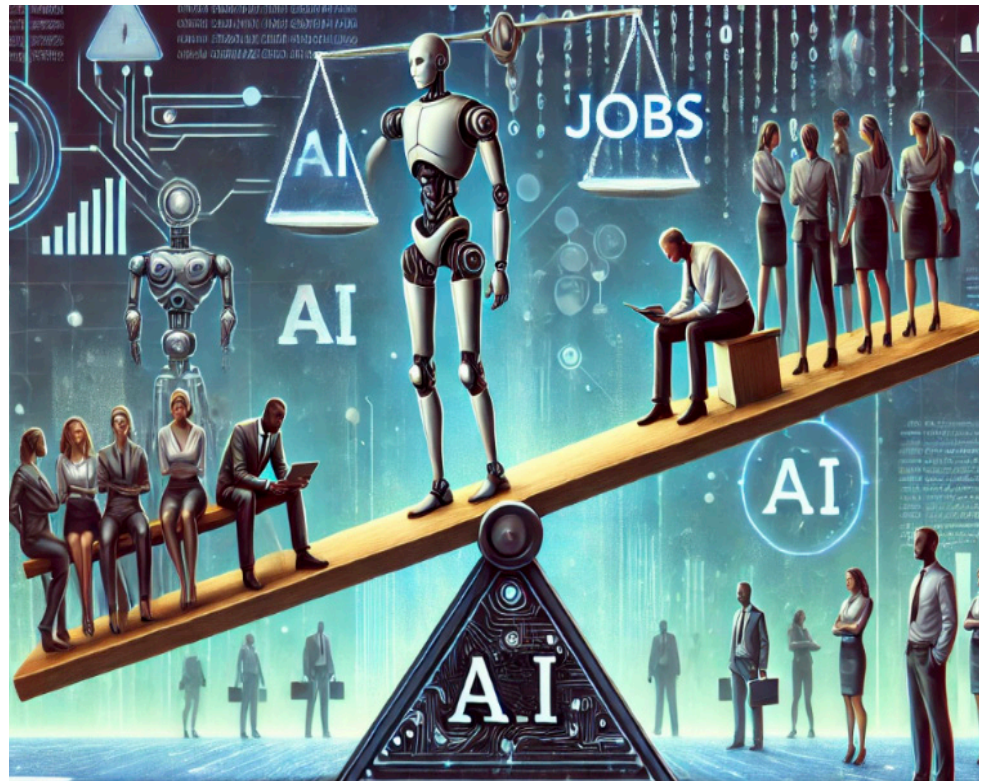
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AI and Jobs: Threat or Transformation?

Balwinder Singh | National Times

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a concept of the future it is the defining force of the present. From corporate offices to manufacturing floors, AI is rapidly transforming how work is performed, decisions are made, and industries evolve. In 2026, the global conversation has shifted from whether AI will impact jobs to how deeply it will reshape careers. For countries like India and Canada, this transformation presents both opportunities and uncertainties, especially for young professionals entering an increasingly competitive job market. One of the biggest concerns surrounding AI is job displacement. Automation is already replacing repetitive and routine tasks across sectors such as customer service, data entry, and manufacturing. Many fear that machines will gradually take over human roles, leaving fewer opportunities for traditional employment. Entry-level positions often the starting point for young professionals are particularly vulnerable. In addition, industries such as healthcare, education, and finance are integrating AI to improve efficiency and decision-making. For young professionals, this shift means that adaptability and continuous learning are becoming essential career skills. Those who can combine technical knowledge with human-centric skills such as communication, creativity, and emotional intelligence will be better positioned to succeed. Adding another perspective, financial and corporate expert Balwinder Singh highlights that AI



is also transforming business models. “Organizations are becoming more data-driven. Decision-making is faster, and efficiency has improved, but it also demands a workforce that understands technology and can work alongside it,” he notes. He further stresses that professionals who upskill in AI-related tools and digital platforms will have a clear advantage in the evolving job market. In India, while the IT sector is rapidly embracing AI, many workers in traditional industries may struggle to adapt. In Canada, although infrastructure and training programs are more accessible, immigrants and newcomers often face barriers such as credential recognition and lack of local experience, making it harder to enter AI-driven industries. Experts recommend focusing on lifelong learning, acquiring digital skills, and staying updated with industry trends.

Online courses, certifications, and practical experience in AI-related fields can significantly enhance employability. Equally important is the ability to think critically, solve complex problems, and collaborate effectively skills that machines cannot easily replicate. The future of work is not about humans versus machines, but humans working with machines. AI is a tool powerful, transformative, and inevitable. The real question is how individuals, organizations, and governments choose to respond. With the right policies, education systems, and mindset, AI can become a catalyst for innovation and growth rather than a source of fear. As the world navigates this technological shift, one thing remains certain: the careers of tomorrow will look very different from those of today. For the next generation, success will depend not just on what they know, but on how quickly they can learn, adapt, and evolve in an AI-driven world.



Women Leadership in 2026: Global Powerhouses Redefining the Future

Manisha Bhalla | Senior Journalist

In 2026, women are leading a historic global shift, taking charge as heads of governments, policymakers, and changemakers across continents. From India to Canada and across the world, women are not only breaking long standing barriers but also redefining leadership with strength, vision, and inclusivity. Their growing presence at the highest levels of power reflects a transformative era where leadership is no longer defined by tradition or gender, but by competence, resilience, and a clear sense of purpose.

Across the globe, several influential female leaders have set remarkable examples. Leaders such as Jacinda Ardern, Giorgia Meloni, Sheikh Hasina, and Katrín Jakobsdóttir have demonstrated how women can effectively guide nations through periods of uncertainty and change. Their leadership has often been characterized by empathy, strong communication, and decisive action, proving that a people centered approach can coexist with firm governance. These leaders have not only managed crises but have also laid the groundwork for sustainable development, social welfare, and inclusive growth.

Globally, iconic figures such as Angela Merkel and Kamala Harris have set powerful benchmarks for leadership. Their journeys, marked by determination and perseverance,



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have inspired millions of women and young girls to aspire toward positions of influence. They represent a shift in societal attitudes, where women in power are increasingly recognized not as exceptions, but as essential contributors to progress. Beyond politics, women



entrepreneurs, social activists, and community leaders are making equally profound contributions. Across industries, women are launching innovative businesses, leading technological advancements, and creating employment opportunities. In the social sector, they are addressing critical global challenges such as access to education, healthcare equity, poverty alleviation, and social justice. Their leadership extends far beyond titles and positions. It is deeply rooted in impact, purpose, and the ability to drive meaningful change at both local and global levels. Education and digital empowerment have also played a crucial role in this transformation. With greater access to education and technology, women are equipping themselves with the skills and knowledge needed to lead in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. Social media and global networks have amplified women's voices, allowing them to advocate for their rights, share their stories, and build supportive communities that

transcend borders. Despite this progress, challenges remain. Gender bias, unequal opportunities, and societal expectations still create obstacles for many women around the world. However, the resilience and determination displayed by women leaders continue to challenge these barriers, paving the way for future generations. Governments, organizations, and societies are gradually recognizing the importance of gender balanced leadership, leading to policies and initiatives that promote equality and inclusion. Women's leadership in 2026 represents more than just progress. It symbolizes a global transformation. As more women step into leadership roles across nations and sectors, they are reshaping governance, strengthening economies, and fostering more inclusive and equitable societies.

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Delhi Wale Guruji”: A Timeless Spiritual Legacy Inspiring Millions Across the Globe

Rajeev Sharma | National Times

The spiritual legacy of loving Nirmal Singh Maharaj, widely known as “Delhi Wale Guruji,” continues to inspire millions of devotees across India and around the world. Even years after his passing in 2007, Guruji remains a deeply revered figure, with followers considering him a divine incarnation of Lord Shiva. His teachings, rooted in simplicity, faith, and gratitude, have created a lasting spiritual movement that transcends borders and generations. The focal point of Guruji’s spiritual legacy is the renowned Bada Mandir, located in the Bhatti Mines area of Mehrauli. This sacred place has become a major pilgrimage destination, attracting

thousands of devotees every week who come seeking peace, healing, and blessings. The temple is known for its serene environment and the tradition of langar, a community meal that reflects Guruji’s teachings of equality, service, and compassion. Many visitors describe a deep sense of calm and spiritual energy within the premises. Guruji’s teachings centered on simplicity and gratitude, with the phrase “Shukrana Guruji” becoming a powerful expression of faith among devotees. This expression symbolizes thankfulness in every situation, reinforcing the belief that divine grace is always present. Followers often share personal experiences of healing and transformation, attributing these moments to Guruji’s blessings and continued spiritual



presence in their lives. Over the years, Guruji’s influence has grown into a global movement, with devotees in countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and beyond organizing spiritual gatherings and visiting Bada Mandir regularly.

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Hindu New Year 2083 & Hanuman Jayanti Celebrated with Devotion and Joy

Gurpreet Singh | National Times

A vibrant and spiritually uplifting event was organized by the Devi Hindu Women Association to celebrate Hindu New Year 2083 and Hanuman Jayanti. The occasion marked not only the beginning of a new year in the Hindu calendar but also a day of deep spiritual significance dedicated to Lord Hanuman, symbolizing strength, devotion, and faith. The event brought together members of the community in a joyful and devotional atmosphere, creating a meaningful celebration that blended tradition, culture, and togetherness.

The event was beautifully planned and executed by Shailley Saraswat, Nishtha Saraswat, Shilpi, along with their dedicated and hardworking team. Their efforts were reflected in every detail, from the decorations to the seamless coordination of activities. The venue was thoughtfully arranged with vibrant colors and traditional elements, creating a serene and welcoming environment for all attendees. Their commitment ensured that every guest felt comfortable, engaged, and part of the celebration.

The spiritual segment formed the heart of the event. Devotees participated in soulful bhajans that filled the space with positivity and devotion. The collective recitation of the Hanuman Chalisa created a powerful and unifying experience, bringing everyone together in prayer and reflection. The chanting of Hanuman Stuti further enhanced the



atmosphere, allowing attendees to connect spiritually and find a sense of peace and calm. These moments offered not only religious significance but also emotional connection and unity among participants. One of the highlights of the celebration was the enthusiastic participation of children. Young performers showcased their talents through cultural dances, devotional songs, and short performances inspired by traditional stories. Their energy and confidence brought a lively spirit to the event, making it enjoyable for people of all ages. It also highlighted the importance of passing cultural values and traditions on to the younger generation in an engaging and meaningful way.

In addition to the spiritual and cultural programs, the event featured a variety of stalls that attracted great interest. There were displays of traditional suits and sarees, reflecting rich cultural heritage and craftsmanship. Food stalls offered a range of delicious items, giving

attendees the opportunity to enjoy festive flavors. The presence of financial advisory services added a practical aspect to the gathering, providing helpful information and guidance to community members. This combination of offerings made the event well rounded and appealing to a wide audience.

It fostered a sense of unity, belonging, and cultural pride among attendees. Conversations, shared experiences, and moments of joy made the event more than just a celebration, turning it into a meaningful community gathering.

Events like these play an important role in preserving traditions while strengthening connections within the community, especially for those living away from their homeland. By celebrating festivals such as Hindu New Year and Hanuman Jayanti with such dedication, the community continues to keep its cultural identity alive and meaningful for future generations.



Shaping Light, Defining Luxury: How MET Blinds is Transforming Modern Living Spaces Across Alberta

Himani Sharma | National Times

In today's world of evolving interiors and smart living, window coverings are no longer just functional necessities they are defining elements of style, comfort, and privacy. Standing at the forefront of this transformation is MET Blinds, a brand that has steadily built a reputation for excellence across Calgary, Red Deer, and Lethbridge by combining craftsmanship, innovation, and customer centric service.

At the heart of MET Blinds' philosophy lies a simple yet powerful promise: privacy guaranteed, without compromising on style. Whether it's a contemporary urban home, a luxury condominium, or a commercial space, the company delivers tailor-made solutions designed to complement individual tastes and architectural uniqueness. With custom shapes and sizes, each product is built-to-order, ensuring a perfect fit and a seamless finish that elevates any environment.

What truly distinguishes MET Blinds in a competitive market is its commitment to quality and precision. From exquisite fabrics that enhance aesthetics to durable hardware built for longevity, every detail reflects meticulous attention and superior standards. The com-

pany's in-house manufacturing process not only ensures consistency but also allows for flexibility and faster delivery—an essential advantage for modern homeowners and designers alike.

Customer experience remains a cornerstone of the brand. MET Blinds offers free consultations, empowering clients with expert advice to make informed design choices. This personalized approach is complemented by free, accurate estimates, ensuring complete transparency from the very beginning. The journey from concept to completion is designed to be smooth, efficient, and stress-free.

In an era driven by technology, MET Blinds is also embracing the future with smart control solutions. Homeowners can now integrate their blinds with automated systems, enabling effortless control over lighting and privacy at the touch of a button. This blend of innovation and convenience reflects the company's forward-thinking approach to modern living.

Efficiency is another hallmark of MET Blinds' service. With professional installation completed within just 8 to 10 days, the brand delivers not only quality but also speed without compromise. Backed by a comprehensive 10 year warranty, customers are assured of durability and long-term reliability. Beyond installation, the company's ded-

icated after-sales support ensures continued care, reinforcing trust and customer satisfaction.

As MET Blinds continues to expand its footprint across Alberta, it is not just selling window coverings it is redefining how people experience their living and working spaces. By combining elegance, innovation, and reliability, the brand is setting new benchmarks in the industry.

In a market where detail matters and personalization is key, MET Blinds stands as a symbol of refined living where every shade tells a story of comfort, style, and enduring quality.

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From Gold Vaults to Global Markets: Canada's Bold Financial Shift

Arvind A. | National Times

Canada once maintained significant gold reserves as a cornerstone of its national wealth, with these assets carefully managed by the Bank of Canada. For decades, gold was widely regarded as one of the most reliable stores of value, offering protection against inflation, currency fluctuations, and global financial uncertainty. Like many advanced economies, Canada relied on its gold reserves to reinforce confidence in its monetary system and provide a safeguard during periods of economic instability.

During the 20th century, gold played a particularly important role in global finance, especially under systems such as the gold standard, where currencies were directly or indirectly linked to gold. Although Canada eventually moved away from this system, gold remained a symbolic and practical reserve asset for many years. It represented financial security and acted as a hedge against unpredictable global economic shifts

However, as global financial systems evolved, Canada began to gradually reduce its reliance on gold. This shift was not sudden but occurred over several decades, reflecting changing economic philosophies and a growing emphasis on diversification. By 2016, Canada had sold nearly all of its official gold reserves, making it one of the very few major economies in the world with virtually no gold holdings at its central bank. This decision marked a significant turning point and a clear departure from traditional reserve management strategies.

The move away from gold was rooted in a modern financial approach that prioritizes liquidity, efficiency, and flexibility. Instead of holding

physical gold, which can be costly to store and difficult to trade quickly, Canada now relies on a diversified portfolio of financial assets. These include foreign currencies, highly rated government bonds, and other liquid instruments that can be easily accessed or converted in global markets. This strategy allows the country to respond

more effectively to economic changes and financial crises. Canada's approach reflects strong confidence in the global financial system and its own economic stability. By focusing on assets that generate returns and can be mobilized quickly, policymakers aim to ensure both security and adaptability in an increasingly complex

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global economy. This shift also aligns with broader international trends, as many countries have reduced their dependence on gold in favor of more dynamic financial tools.

Despite holding minimal official gold reserves, Canada continues to play a major role in the global gold industry. The country is one of the world's leading gold producers, with extensive mining operations across provinces such as Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia. These regions are rich in natural resources and contribute significantly to both domestic economic activity and international exports.

Canadian mining companies are also highly influential on the global stage, operating in multiple countries and contributing to the international supply of gold. The mining sector supports thousands of jobs, drives regional development, and attracts substantial foreign investment. It remains a vital part of Canada's economic landscape, reinforcing the country's position as a global resource leader.

The decision to eliminate most gold reserves has sparked ongoing debate among economists and financial experts. Some argue that gold still holds value as a safe-haven asset during times of crisis, offering stability when financial markets become volatile. Others believe that Canada's diversified strategy is more practical and better suited to the realities of modern finance, where liquidity and rapid response are essential.

In conclusion, Canada's transition away from gold reserves reflects a broader evolution in global economic thinking. While gold no longer plays

a central role in the country's official reserves, it remains an important part of its resource economy. Canada's strategy highlights a balance between tradition and innovation, combining a modern financial system with a strong presence in the global gold market.

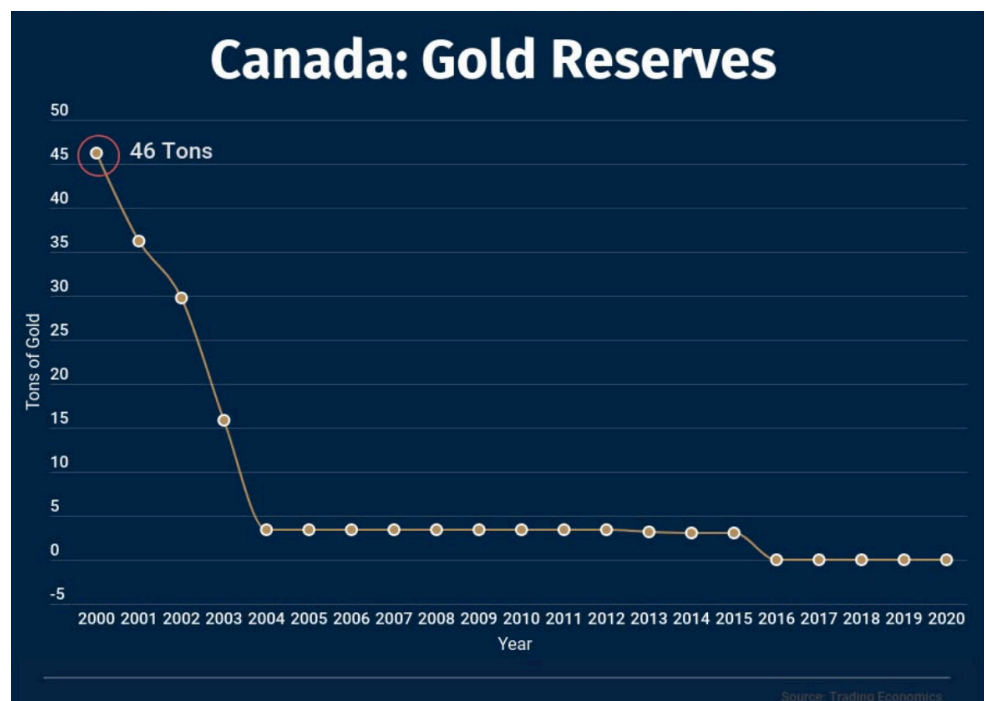
In addition, Canada's approach highlights a broader shift in how nations define financial security in the 21st century. Rather than relying on a single asset like gold, modern economies increasingly emphasize diversification, resilience, and global integration. Canada's strategy demonstrates how trust in financial institutions, stable governance, and access to international markets can serve as alternative pillars of economic strength, reducing dependence on traditional reserve assets while maintaining long-term stability.

In conclusion, Canada's transition away from gold reserves reflects a broader evolution in global economic thinking. While gold no longer plays

a central role in the country's official reserves, it remains an important part of its resource economy. Canada's strategy highlights a balance between tradition and innovation, combining a modern financial system with a strong presence in the global gold market.

Unlike Canada, several major economies continue to maintain substantial gold reserves as part of their financial strategy. Countries such as the United States, Germany, and China hold large quantities of gold to diversify their reserves and strengthen long-term financial security.

In these nations, gold is still viewed as a strategic asset that can provide stability during geopolitical tensions or currency volatility. This contrast highlights Canada's unique position among developed economies, as it has chosen to rely more heavily on liquid financial instruments rather than maintaining significant physical gold holdings.



Guru Amar Das Ji: A Life of Humility, Equality, and Selfless Service

Arvind.A | National Times

The life and teachings of Guru Amar Das Ji represent a profound legacy of humility, equality, and selfless service. As the third Guru of Sikhism, he played a crucial role in strengthening and expanding the Sikh faith, building upon the foundations laid by Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Guru Angad Dev Ji. His contributions not only shaped the spiritual direction of Sikhism but also brought significant social reforms that challenged deep rooted inequalities in society. Guru Amar Das Ji was born in 1479 in the village of Basarke in the Punjab region. Unlike many spiritual leaders, his journey to becoming a Guru began later in life. For many years, he lived as a devoted and religious person, following traditional practices. However, his life transformed when he came into contact with the teachings of Guru Angad Dev Ji. Deeply inspired, he dedicated himself entirely to serving his Guru with complete devotion and humility, and his years of selfless service eventually led to him being chosen as the next Guru.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Guru Amar Das Ji's leadership was his strong stand for equality and social justice. He firmly opposed the caste system and any form of discrimination based on birth, gender, or social status. He strengthened the tradition of langar, the community kitchen, where everyone sat together as equals to share a meal. It was made mandatory for anyone wishing to meet the Guru to first partake in langar, reinforcing the message that all human beings are equal. To



strengthen the Sikh community and ensure better organization, Guru Amar Das Ji introduced the Manji system, which helped spread the teachings of Sikhism to different regions. This system involved appointing dedicated representatives to guide local communities, making the faith more structured and accessible. Another important contribution of Guru Amar Das Ji was the establishment of Goindwal Sahib as a major center of Sikh pilgrimage. He also encouraged the construction of a baoli, a stepwell that became a place of spiritual gathering and reflection for devotees, strengthening community bonds. Guru Amar Das Ji composed many hymns that are now part of the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of Sikhism. His teachings emphasized devotion to

one God, honest living, humility, and service to humanity, highlighting that true spirituality lies in righteous living rather than rituals.

Despite becoming Guru at an advanced age, Guru Amar Das Ji showed remarkable dedication and vision. His leadership was characterized by compassion, wisdom, and a deep commitment to the welfare of others, inspiring people to follow a path of truth and service. The legacy of Guru Amar Das Ji continues to inspire millions around the world. His teachings on equality, social justice, and devotion remain highly relevant today. He showed that true leadership is rooted in service, humility, and the courage to stand against injustice, leaving a lasting impact on humanity.

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