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# Editor's Note



In this month's edition of our news magazine, we bring together stories that reflect the rapidly changing political, economic, and cultural landscape of our world. From global leadership decisions in India and policy shifts in Canada to ongoing international tensions involving Iran and other global powers, each article highlights how deeply connected today's world has become. We live in a time where local events are influenced by global forces. Economic trends, diplomatic relations, and security concerns now cross borders instantly, shaping the lives of people everywhere. Whether it is rising living costs, changing immigration patterns, or technological transformation, these issues are no longer isolated they are shared global experiences. At the same time, communities in cities like Calgary continue to grow in diversity and strength. The contributions of immigrants, youth, and local leaders play a vital role in building inclusive societies and driving economic progress.

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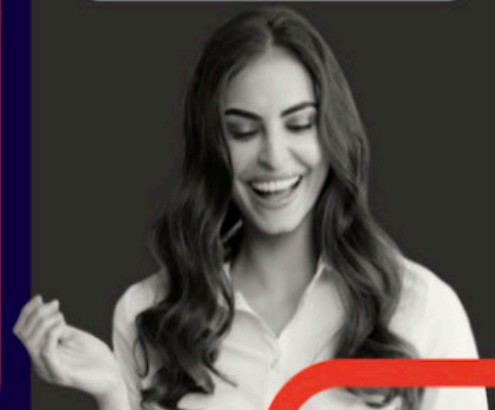
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# The “Condo King” of Ottawa: Bill Malhotra — A Top Indian Trailblazer in Canada’s Real Estate Landscape

Rajeev Sharma | National Times

*In the ever-evolving skyline of Ottawa, few names have left as profound and lasting an imprint as Bill Malhotra. Widely recognized as the “Condo King” of Ottawa and counted among the most influential Indian-origin business leaders in Canada, Malhotra has redefined urban living through innovation, ambition, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. As the Founder and CEO of Claridge Homes, his journey reflects entrepreneurial brilliance, resilience, and the growing global impact of the Indian diaspora in shaping modern economies and cities.*



From humble beginnings to becoming one of Canada’s most respected real estate visionaries, Bill Malhotra’s rise is a story driven by determination, foresight, and hard work. At a time when Ottawa’s housing landscape was largely dominated by conventional suburban developments, he recognized the immense potential of vertical urban growth and condominium living. Long before high-rise residential communities became the norm, Malhotra saw an opportunity to transform the city’s future. His bold vision not only changed how people lived in the nation’s capital but also established

him as a pioneer who helped usher Ottawa into a new era of modern urban development. Under his dynamic leadership, Claridge Homes has become synonymous with innovation and quality. The company has developed some of Ottawa’s most recognizable residential towers, mixed-use developments, and master-planned communities, dramatically reshaping the city’s skyline over the past several decades. From luxury condominiums in the downtown core to large family-oriented communities in growing suburbs, every project reflects careful planning, architectural sophistication, and a strong understanding of evolving

lifestyle needs. His developments are not merely buildings; they are carefully designed environments that balance comfort, accessibility, and functionality for modern residents. What truly distinguishes Bill Malhotra from many others in the real estate industry is his philosophy of building communities rather than simply constructing homes. His projects consistently emphasize livability, sustainability, and long-term value. Green spaces, pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, fitness facilities, modern amenities, and environmentally conscious planning are often integrated into his developments. This holistic approach has earned him widespread industry



respect and has strengthened his reputation as a visionary leader who understands that successful urban growth must also improve quality of life for residents.

Malhotra's influence extends far beyond business achievements alone. As a proud Indian-origin entrepreneur, his success carries broader cultural and social significance. He represents the remarkable rise of the Indo-Canadian community and its growing contribution to Canada's economy, innovation, and leadership landscape. His accomplishments serve as a source of inspiration for immigrants, young entrepreneurs, and professionals who aspire to succeed globally while maintaining a strong connection to their cultural roots. In many ways, his story symbolizes the possibilities that emerge when determination, opportunity, and vision come together in a multicultural society like Canada. Beyond the corporate world, his developments have contributed significantly to Ottawa's transformation into a vibrant and globally competitive city. Through urban densification and strategic development, his work has helped support economic activity, increase housing availability, attract investment, and encourage modernization within the capital. Known for his disciplined, focused, and results-driven leadership style, Bill Malhotra continues to expand his vision while remaining grounded in the values that shaped his journey. Industry peers often recognize his consistency, business acumen, and

commitment to delivering excellence on every project. The title "Condo King" is far more than a nickname — it is a recognition of decades of leadership, innovation, and transformative impact on Ottawa's urban identity.

Throughout his career, Malhotra has demonstrated that true leadership is not measured solely by financial success, but by the ability to create lasting change. His developments have provided homes to thousands of families, supported employment opportunities, and contributed to the broader economic growth of the region. By continuously investing in the future of Ottawa, he has helped shape not only the city's skyline but also its sense of progress and ambition.

In an industry defined by constant change and intense competition, Bill Malhotra stands as both a Canadian success story and a proud representative of Indian excellence abroad.

*His remarkable journey continues to inspire future generations of entrepreneurs and community builders. Through vision, perseverance, and innovation, he has left a legacy that extends far beyond construction — a legacy etched into skylines, communities, and aspirations across generations.*



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## Narendra Modi and India's Global Moment in 2026

Rajeev Sharma | National Times

In the modern political history of India, few leaders have had as much influence on the nation's direction and international image as Narendra Modi. From humble beginnings in Gujarat to becoming one of the world's most recognized political figures, Modi's journey mirrors India's own transformation into a rising global power. Under his leadership, India has expanded its digital economy, strengthened infrastructure, improved global partnerships, and positioned itself as an important voice in international affairs.

Born on September 17, 1950, in Vadnagar, Gujarat, Modi often speaks about helping his family sell tea during his childhood. His modest upbringing became an important part of his political identity, allowing him to connect with ordinary citizens across the country. Modi entered politics through the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, commonly known as the RSS, before joining the Bharatiya Janata Party, or BJP.

Modi gained national attention during his tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat from 2001 to 2014. During this period, Gujarat developed a reputation for industrial growth, strong infrastructure, and business friendly policies. Large investment summits attracted international companies, and the state was often presented as a model for economic development. His supporters viewed him as an efficient administrator focused on growth and modernization. In 2014, Modi led the BJP to a historic victory in India's general elections. His campaign centered on economic



development, anti corruption measures, job creation, and stronger governance. He presented himself as a decisive leader capable of transforming India into a modern and economically powerful nation. The message strongly appealed to young voters, business communities, and millions of Indians hoping for faster growth and better opportunities.

Since becoming Prime Minister, Modi has introduced several major initiatives aimed at modernizing India's economy and governance systems. One of the most influential has been the Digital India campaign. The initiative expanded internet access, promoted digital services, and transformed financial transactions across the country. India's Unified Payments Interface, or UPI, became one of the world's largest digital payment systems, allowing millions

of people to make instant mobile transactions.

India's economy has continued to grow rapidly under Modi's leadership, making it one of the fastest growing major economies in the world. International investors increasingly view India as a long term economic opportunity because of its large population, expanding middle class, and rising consumer demand. India has also gained greater importance in global trade and supply chain discussions.

However, economic challenges remain. Unemployment, inflation, agricultural concerns, and income inequality continue to affect millions of Indians. Critics argue that while infrastructure and economic indicators have improved, the benefits of growth have not reached everyone

equally. Job creation for India's large youth population remains one of the country's biggest challenges.

Despite criticism, Modi continues to maintain strong political influence. His communication skills, nationalist messaging, and use of social media have helped him build a direct connection with voters. The BJP remains India's most dominant political party, and Modi continues to be one of the country's most popular political leaders.

Beyond domestic politics, Modi has significantly reshaped India's foreign policy. Under his leadership, India has become more assertive and ambitious on the global stage. Relations with countries such as the United States, France, Japan, Israel, and several Middle Eastern nations have strengthened considerably. India has expanded defense partnerships, technology cooperation, and trade agreements with major global powers. India's role in the Indo Pacific region has also grown. Modi has emphasized stronger ties with Southeast Asian nations and increased strategic cooperation in Asia. India is increasingly seen as an important balancing power in global geopolitics, especially as international tensions continue to rise in different parts of the world.

One of Modi's key foreign policy strategies has been maintaining strategic autonomy. India continues to build relationships with multiple global powers while avoiding complete alignment with any single bloc. This approach has allowed India to protect its national interests while expanding diplomatic influence.

India has also positioned itself as a voice for developing nations and the Global South. Modi frequently speaks

about the need for reforms in global institutions and greater representation for emerging economies. India has advocated for issues such as climate finance, food security, energy cooperation, and technology access for developing countries.

Another major focus of Modi's leadership has been renewable energy and sustainability. India has expanded solar energy projects, green hydrogen initiatives, and clean energy investments. The government aims to reduce dependence on fossil fuels while supporting long term economic growth. India's renewable energy ambitions are now among the largest in the world.

Critics, however, raise concerns regarding freedom of speech, religious tensions, political polarization, and democratic institutions. Opposition leaders and international organizations have questioned certain government policies and accused the administration of increasing centralization of power. These debates remain an important part of discussions surrounding Modi's political legacy.

Regardless of differing opinions, Narendra Modi has undeniably transformed India's global image. India is increasingly viewed not only as a regional power but also as an emerging global leader in economics, technology, diplomacy, and innovation. International businesses and governments now see India as a critical partner in trade, manufacturing, and strategic cooperation. As India continues its journey toward becoming a developed nation, Modi's leadership will remain closely connected to the country's future direction. His vision of a stronger, technologically

advanced, and globally influential India continues to shape national policy and international perception. Today, India stands at a historic turning point. With a young population, growing economy, expanding infrastructure, and rising global influence, the country is preparing for a larger role in the twenty first century world order. Narendra Modi's leadership has become one of the defining forces behind that transformation, making him one of the most influential political figures of modern India.

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# Mark Carney, Alberta, and the Future of Canada's Economy

**International Feature Desk  
National Times**

As Prime Minister Mark Carney shapes a new economic vision for Canada, few provinces stand more central to that future than Alberta. Long recognized as the country's energy powerhouse, Alberta today sits at the crossroads of economic transformation, political debate, and national growth. Carney's leadership arrives during a period when Canadians are facing rising living costs, housing shortages, global trade instability, and increasing questions about how Canada can remain competitive in a rapidly changing world. His government's policies on energy, housing, climate, and investment are expected to significantly impact Alberta as well as the broader Canadian economy.

Carney entered politics with an international reputation as one of the world's leading financial experts. Before becoming Prime Minister, he served as Governor of the Bank of Canada and later the Bank of England during major global financial crises. His background in economics and global finance has shaped his image as a steady and pragmatic leader focused on long term stability rather than short term politics. Supporters believe this experience makes him uniquely prepared to guide Canada through uncertain economic conditions. For Alberta, this conversation is especially important. The province remains deeply tied to oil and gas production, which continues to generate billions of dollars in economic activity and support thousands of



jobs. Cities such as Calgary and Edmonton have become major business centers connected to Canada's energy sector, financial services, logistics, and technology industries. Carney's challenge has been balancing climate goals with the economic importance of Alberta's resource economy.

Unlike some earlier federal leaders who focused heavily on reducing fossil fuel use, Carney has attempted to take a more balanced approach. His government supports clean energy investment and emissions reduction while also recognizing that Alberta's energy industry remains critical to Canada's economy. Carney has emphasized that the global energy transition cannot happen overnight and that Canadian oil and gas will continue to play a role in international energy markets for years to come.

At the same time, his government is pushing Alberta and the rest of Canada toward greater investment

in renewable energy, carbon capture technology, hydrogen development, and critical minerals. Alberta has increasingly become part of this transition. Companies across the province are investing in carbon capture projects and hydrogen production, positioning Alberta as both a traditional energy leader and an emerging clean energy hub. Supporters argue this could create thousands of new jobs while keeping Alberta economically competitive in the future.

Housing affordability is another issue where Carney's policies are expected to have major effects across Canada, including Alberta. Rising home prices and rent costs have become a national concern, particularly for younger Canadians and immigrants. Although Alberta remains more affordable than cities such as Toronto and Vancouver, prices in Calgary have risen rapidly in recent years due to population growth and high demand.

Carney's government has introduced large scale housing initiatives designed to accelerate construction and improve affordability. These plans include partnerships with provinces and municipalities to reduce development barriers, encourage modular housing, and increase infrastructure investment. In Alberta, where cities continue to grow quickly, federal housing support could help address supply shortages while also supporting construction jobs and economic activity. Immigration also plays an important role in Carney's economic vision. Canada continues to rely heavily on newcomers to address labour shortages and support long term economic growth. Alberta has benefited from this trend, attracting both international immigrants and Canadians relocating from other provinces. Businesses in construction, healthcare, transportation, and hospitality continue to face labour shortages, making immigration a critical economic tool.

However, rapid population growth has also increased pressure on housing, healthcare, and infrastructure. Critics argue that immigration levels must be balanced with the country's ability to build homes and expand public services. Carney's government faces the challenge of maintaining economic growth while responding to concerns about affordability and infrastructure strain.

This approach reflects a broader shift in Canadian politics. Many Canadians increasingly support environmental action but also recognize the importance of economic stability and energy security. Alberta's role in this debate remains central because the province contributes significantly to national GDP, exports, and government revenues.

Carney has also spoken about the importance of national unity during economic transformation. Regional tensions between Ottawa and Alberta have existed for years, especially regarding environmental regulations and resource development. Many Albertans remain skeptical of federal climate policies and worry that national decisions could harm the province's economy. Carney's leadership will likely depend on whether he can build trust between Ottawa and western provinces while advancing his broader economic agenda.

Politically, Carney presents himself as a modern centrist leader focused on stability, investment, and economic competence. His supporters see him as someone capable of guiding Canada through global uncertainty and positioning the country for fu-

ture growth. Critics, however, argue that affordability problems remain severe and that many Canadians are still struggling with high costs and economic anxiety.

The future of Canada's economy under Mark Carney will depend on whether his government can successfully balance growth, sustainability, affordability, and regional interests. Alberta will remain one of the most important parts of that story. As Canada navigates changing global markets and domestic challenges, the relationship between Ottawa and Alberta could shape the country's economic future for decades to come.

For Alberta and Canada alike, the coming years will test whether Carney's vision of investment driven growth, energy transition, and national resilience can deliver real results for ordinary Canadians.

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# Why Mental Health Conversations Are Growing Worldwide in Today's Fast-Changing Society

**Himani Sharma | National Times**

Mental health conversations are growing worldwide because more people are beginning to understand that emotional wellbeing is just as important as physical health. In the past, topics like stress, anxiety, or depression were often ignored or considered private struggles. Today, however, they are openly discussed in schools, workplaces, families, and on digital platforms.

One major reason for this shift is the rise in stress and social pressure, especially among young people. Academic competition, job uncertainty, and financial worries are stronger than before in many countries. Reports show that youth mental health has been declining over the past decade, influenced by pressure from studies, career expectations, and global uncertainty. These pressures often lead people to talk more about what they are feeling, as silence no longer feels like an option.

Another important factor is digital life and social media. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and others have made it easier for people to compare their lives with others. This constant comparison can increase feelings of anxiety, loneliness, and low self-esteem. Research suggests that social media use is linked to mental health outcomes such as anxiety and low mood, although the impact depends on how it is used. At the same time, digital spaces also allow people to find support communities and mental health resources, making it easier to talk openly about struggles.

Changing attitudes in society have also played a big role. Mental health is no longer seen only as a medical issue, but as part of everyday wellbeing. Celebrities, athletes, and influencers sharing their experiences have helped reduce stigma. As a result, more people feel comfortable saying things like "I'm stressed" or "I need help," instead of staying silent.

Global events have also contributed. Climate concerns, political instability, and economic challenges can create a constant sense of uncertainty, especially for younger generations. These shared worries often lead to more open discussions about coping,

resilience, and emotional balance.

Finally, better awareness and education are making a difference. Schools and workplaces are now introducing mental health programs, counselling services, and awareness campaigns. This helps people recognize early signs of stress and encourages conversations before problems become severe.

Overall, the rise in mental health conversations reflects a major cultural change. While life today brings more pressures, it also offers more understanding, support, and openness than ever before.





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# Punjab in 2026: Bhagwant Mann, Youth Aspirations, and the Fight for Punjab's Future

Rajeev Sharma | National Times

Punjab is changing faster than ever before. Once known almost entirely for agriculture and migration, the state is now entering a new phase shaped by politics, technology, business, music, and the ambitions of a younger generation. At the center of this transformation is Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, whose government continues to push the idea of a “new Punjab” focused on jobs, investment, and governance reforms.

But Punjab in 2026 is also a state facing major challenges. Concerns over unemployment, drug abuse, declining groundwater, and youth migration remain serious issues. While many young Punjabis are optimistic about change, others still feel opportunities are limited compared to countries like Canada, Australia, or the United Kingdom.

The debate over Punjab's future has become one of the most important conversations happening in India today.

## *Bhagwant Mann's Push for a New Punjab*

Since becoming Chief Minister, Bhagwant Mann has tried to present himself as a leader focused on ordinary people, youth empowerment, and government accountability. His administration has heavily promoted anti corruption campaigns, government recruitment drives, and indus-

trial investment projects.

One of the biggest priorities for the Mann government has been employment. Punjab has long struggled with educated youth leaving the state in search of better opportunities abroad. Mann's government says it wants to reverse that trend by creating jobs within Punjab itself. Over the past year, the government has promoted industrial expansion in Mohali, Ludhiana, and Amritsar while also encouraging startup culture and entrepreneurship. Technology parks, manufacturing projects, logistics hubs, and small business programs are now central parts of Punjab's economic strategy. The government has also increased its focus on infrastructure. Road development projects, urban modernization, and investment summits are being promoted as ways

to improve Punjab's economy and attract national and international companies. For many supporters, Bhagwant Mann represents a break from traditional politics in Punjab. His speeches often focus on transparency, education, and opportunities for younger generations. Critics, however, argue that while announcements are frequent, deeper economic problems still require long term structural reforms.

## *Punjab's Youth Want More Than Migration*

For decades, migration has shaped Punjabi society. In many villages, families dream of sending their children abroad for education and better employment. Canada especially remains a top destination for Punja-





bi students and immigrants. Today, IELTS coaching centers and immigration offices are common across Punjab's cities and towns. Many students still see foreign education as the safest path toward financial security. But a new conversation is also emerging among Punjabi youth. More young people are beginning to ask whether Punjab itself can become a place where they can build successful careers and businesses without leaving home. This shift is especially visible in cities like Mohali and Chandigarh, where technology startups, digital marketing agencies, photography studios, content creators, and online businesses are growing rapidly. Young Punjabis are increasingly using social media platforms, e-commerce, and digital tools to create careers independently. The rise of entrepreneurship is slowly changing Punjab's mindset. Instead of only focusing on government jobs or migration, many young people now want to become creators, influencers, business owners, and innovators. Still, unemployment remains one of the biggest concerns facing the state. Many graduates struggle to find stable work matching their education and skills. This gap between aspiration and opportunity continues to drive frustration among youth.


**## Agriculture Still Defines Punjab's Identity**

Despite modernization, agriculture remains the soul of Punjab. Farming is deeply connected to Punjabi culture, family life, and history. Punjab's farmers played a major role in transforming India into a food secure nation during the Green Revolution. However, the agricultural

sector is facing increasing pressure. Groundwater levels continue to decline due to excessive dependence on wheat and paddy farming. Environmental experts have repeatedly warned that Punjab's farming model needs diversification to remain sustainable in the future. Bhagwant Mann's government has promoted crop diversification and improved irrigation systems, encouraging farmers to reduce dependence on tube wells and conserve water resources. But changing decades old farming patterns is not easy.

At the same time, farmers continue to demand better support prices, lower debt burdens, and stronger protections against economic uncertainty. Agriculture remains both an economic issue and an emotional issue in Punjab because it represents identity, pride, and tradition.


Punjab in 2026 stands at a crossroads between tradition and transformation.



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# How Grocery Stores Are Changing in Modern Cities

*Grocery stores have changed a lot in recent years, especially in modern cities where people want faster, easier, and more flexible shopping options. What used to be a simple place to buy food has now become a smart, organized space that supports busy lifestyles. One major change is the rise of self-checkout systems and digital payment methods.*

Many grocery stores now allow customers to scan and pay for items

without waiting in long lines. Mobile wallets and contactless payments have made shopping quicker and more convenient, especially for people who are always on the go.

Another important shift is the growth of online grocery shopping. Instead of visiting stores, many people now order fruits, vegetables, and household items through apps.

Delivery services bring groceries directly to homes, saving time and effort. Grocery stores are also focusing more on healthy and organic food options. Shelves now include products labeled organic, low sugar, gluten-free, or locally sourced. This reflects a growing awareness about health and nutrition among custom-

ers who want better food choices for their families. In addition, stores are becoming more organized and customer-friendly.

Clear labeling, improved layouts, and special sections for different products help shoppers find what they need quickly. Some large stores even include bakeries, ready-to-eat meals, and small cafés inside them. In conclusion, grocery stores today are much more than places to buy food. They are evolving into modern service hubs that focus on convenience, health, technology, and sustainability. As lifestyles continue to change, grocery shopping will keep adapting to meet the needs of people.

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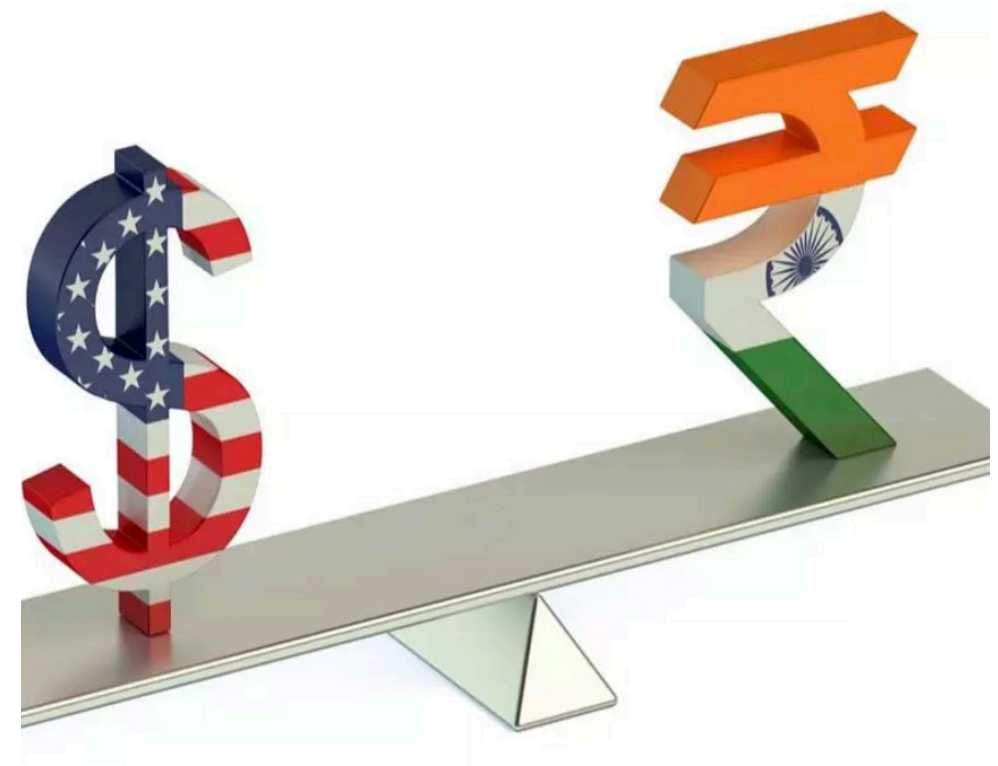
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# The Degradation of the Indian Rupee and Its Impact on India's Economy

The Indian rupee has witnessed a gradual decline against major global currencies over the past several years, especially against the United States dollar. Once considered relatively stable among emerging market currencies, the rupee now faces continuous pressure due to global economic uncertainty, rising imports, inflation, geopolitical tensions, and domestic economic challenges. The weakening of the rupee is not just a financial issue discussed by economists and bankers. It directly affects businesses, students, travelers, industries, and ordinary citizens across India.

In recent years, the rupee has crossed several psychological milestones against the US dollar. While currency depreciation is common in developing economies, the pace and consistency of the rupee's fall have raised concerns about India's economic resilience and future growth trajectory.

One of the primary reasons behind the depreciation of the rupee is India's heavy dependence on imports, particularly crude oil. India imports nearly 85 percent of its crude oil requirements. Since oil is traded globally in US dollars, any increase in global oil prices raises India's import bill. As demand for dollars increases to pay for these imports, the value of the rupee weakens further. Global conflicts and international instability have



caused fluctuations in energy prices, increasing pressure on India's currency reserves.

Another major factor is the strength of the US dollar itself. Whenever the US Federal Reserve raises interest rates, investors move their money from emerging markets like India to safer American assets that provide higher returns. This leads to capital outflows from India, reducing demand for the rupee and causing depreciation.

Inflation is another challenge linked closely to the rupee's decline. A weaker currency makes imports more expensive, especially fuel, machinery, electronics, and industrial raw materials. As transportation and production

costs rise, inflation spreads across sectors. Ordinary consumers feel the impact through higher prices of food, fuel, household products, and services.

The depreciation of the rupee also affects Indian students studying abroad. Countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom remain popular destinations for higher education. As the rupee weakens against foreign currencies, tuition fees, accommodation costs, and living expenses become significantly more expensive for Indian families.

At the same time, some sectors benefit from a weaker rupee. India's export industries, particularly information technology, phar-

maceuticals, textiles, and business outsourcing services, often gain because their earnings in dollars translate into higher rupee revenues.

The Reserve Bank of India plays a critical role in controlling excessive volatility in the currency market. The central bank often intervenes by selling foreign exchange reserves to stabilize the rupee. However, continuous intervention cannot permanently stop depreciation if structural economic weaknesses remain unresolved.

India's trade deficit is another important issue connected to the rupee's weakness. The country imports more goods than it exports, especially oil, electronics, gold, and industrial equipment. Although the government has promoted initiatives such as "Make in India" to strengthen domestic manufacturing, India still relies heavily on imports in several key sectors.

Global investors also monitor political stability, economic reforms, taxation policies, and infrastructure development when investing in India. Concerns about unemployment, inflation, and global recession risks can weaken investor confidence and place additional pressure on the rupee.

To strengthen the rupee in the long term, India must focus on increasing exports, improving industrial productivity, reducing import dependence, encouraging innovation, and attracting sustainable foreign investment. Infrastructure development and stronger domestic production can gradually re-

duce vulnerability to external shocks.

The degradation of the Indian rupee is more than a currency story. It reflects the economic challenges facing one of the world's fastest growing economies. For millions of Indians, the value of the rupee shapes everyday life, from fuel prices and education costs to employment opportunities and economic security. As India continues its journey toward becoming a larger global economic power, managing currency stability will remain one of the country's most important priorities.



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# Iran vs United States: Rising Tensions and the Global Impact

Rajeev Sharma | National Times

*The relationship between Iran and the United States remains one of the most important and closely watched geopolitical rivalries in the world today. Decades of political disagreements, economic sanctions, military tensions, and diplomatic disputes have created deep mistrust between the two nations.*

In recent years, concerns surrounding Iran's nuclear program and its growing regional influence have once again brought international attention to the conflict. The United States and several Western allies believe Iran's nuclear activities could potentially lead to the development of nuclear weapons, while Iran insists that its program is designed for peaceful energy and scientific purposes. The situation became more complicated after the United States withdrew from the Iran nuclear agreement in 2018 and reintroduced major economic sanctions. These sanctions placed heavy pressure on Iran's economy, increasing inflation, reducing foreign investment, and affecting the lives of ordinary citizens. Since then, diplomatic efforts to restore negotiations have continued, but progress has remained uncertain as both countries continue to disagree on key political and security issues.

Another major aspect of the Iran–United States conflict is the struggle for influence in the Middle East. Iran has developed strong political and military relationships with groups and governments across countries such as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Ye-



men. The United States views many of these activities as destabilizing to regional security, while Iran argues that it is defending its national interests and supporting allies in the region. Military incidents involving naval operations in the Persian Gulf, attacks on strategic sites, and rising regional violence have repeatedly increased fears of direct confrontation between the two countries. One of the biggest global concerns is the Strait of Hormuz, a critical oil ship-

ping route located near Iran through which a large portion of the world's oil supply passes every day. Any conflict or instability in this region can quickly disrupt global energy markets and lead to rising fuel prices around the world. Countries such as India, which rely heavily on imported oil, closely monitor the situation because higher energy costs can affect inflation, transportation, and economic growth.



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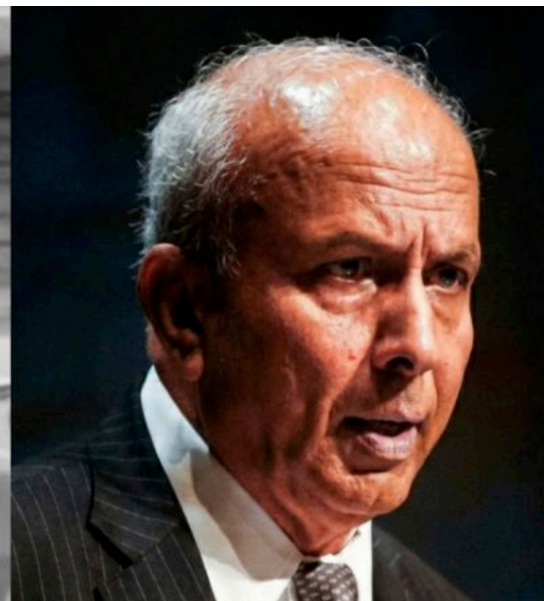




# Prem Watsa: The “Canadian Warren Buffett” Building a Global Financial Empire with Discipline and Vision

Himani Sharma | National Times

In the world of global finance, few names command as much respect as V. Prem Watsa, the visionary founder and chairman of Fairfax Financial Holdings. Often referred to as the “Canadian Warren Buffett,” Watsa has built a formidable financial empire grounded in discipline, patience, and value investing principles. From his early days in India to establishing himself as one of Canada’s most influential business leaders, his journey reflects a rare combination of resilience, foresight, and unwavering commitment to long-term growth. Born in Hyderabad, India, Watsa moved to Canada in the 1970s, where he pursued higher education at the University of Western Ontario. With a strong academic foundation and a keen interest in financial markets, he began his career as an analyst before taking a bold step in 1985 by acquiring control of a small, struggling insurance company, a move that would eventually lead to the creation of Fairfax Financial. Over the decades, under his leadership, Fairfax has grown into a global financial powerhouse with assets exceeding \$80 billion USD and operations spanning insurance, reinsurance, and investment management across multiple continents. What truly distinguishes Watsa is his disciplined investment philosophy, deeply influenced by the principles of Warren Buffett. He focuses on preserving capital, making calculated long-term investments, and maintaining a contrarian mindset during volatile



market conditions. His strategic foresight was particularly evident during the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, when Fairfax generated billions in gains through well-timed hedging strategies, while many global financial institutions faced severe losses. He has fostered a corporate culture that emphasizes ethical governance, decentralized decision-making, and long-term relationships. At the same time, his role as a prominent Indian-origin leader in Canada highlights the growing influence of the diaspora in shaping global economic landscapes. Equally noteworthy is his commitment to philanthropy. Through various initiatives, Watsa has supported education, health-care, and community development in both Canada and India, reflecting a belief that success must be accompanied by social responsibility. Today, his legacy extends far beyond financial success; it is rooted in building institutions, creating opportunities, and inspiring future generations.

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## Nagar Kirtan: A Spiritual Procession of Faith, Unity, and Community Service

Arvind.A | National Times

**Nagar Kirtan is one of the most vibrant and spiritually meaningful traditions in Sikh culture. It is a religious procession that takes the teachings of the Guru to the streets, allowing people from all walks of life to participate in prayer, reflection, and community service. The term “Nagar Kirtan” comes from two words: “Nagar,” meaning town or city, and “Kirtan,” meaning devotional singing of hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib, the central religious scripture of Sikhism. Together, it represents a procession of sacred music and devotion moving through the community.**



The tradition of Nagar Kirtan dates back to the time of the Sikh Gurus, particularly Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhism. Guru Nanak Dev Ji emphasized equality, humility, and service to humanity. He traveled widely, spreading messages of love, unity, and truth through kirtan and dialogue. The modern Nagar Kirtan reflects these teachings by bringing people together regardless of religion, background, or social status.

A typical Nagar Kirtan is led by the Panj Pyare, meaning “Five Beloved Ones,” who represent the first five Sikhs initiated by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. They walk at the front of the procession carrying the Sikh flag known as the Nishan Sahib. Behind them is the beautifully decorated Palki Sahib, a float that carries the Guru Granth Sahib, treated with the utmost respect

and reverence. The entire procession follows slowly, accompanied by devotional singing, hymns, and the rhythmic sound of traditional instruments such as the tabla and harmonium.

One of the most striking aspects of Nagar Kirtan is the spirit of seva, or selfless service. Volunteers prepare and distribute free food known as langar to everyone along the route. This reflects the Sikh principle that all human beings are equal and should be treated with dignity and respect. People often clean streets before and after the procession, offer water and food to participants, and help manage crowds. In this way, Nagar Kirtan becomes more than a religious event; it becomes a community effort rooted in compassion. In cities across the world,

including places like Calgary, Vancouver, London, and New York, Nagar Kirtan has become a significant cultural event. It is not only attended by Sikhs but also by people from different communities who are curious about the tradition. Many schools, local leaders, and residents join to witness or participate in the procession. This helps build cultural understanding and strengthens social harmony in diverse societies.

The atmosphere of Nagar Kirtan is both peaceful and joyful. The streets are filled with the sound of devotional singing, echoing messages of peace, truth, and equality. Participants often walk barefoot as a sign of humility. Some perform Gatka, a traditional Sikh martial art, showcasing discipline and heritage. Others sing hymns or carry flags and banners displaying spiritual messages.



es. Children often play a central role as well, learning values of respect and community from a young age. In modern times, Nagar Kirtan has also evolved to address contemporary issues. Many processions include messages about environmental awareness, anti-drug campaigns, and mental health support. Volunteers use the opportunity to educate the public and promote positive social change. In this way, Nagar Kirtan remains rooted in tradition while also responding to the needs of today's world. The preparation for Nagar Kirtan begins days or even weeks in advance. Gurdwaras, the Sikh places of worship, organize committees to plan the route, coordinate volunteers, and arrange food and logistics. The Guru Granth Sahib is ceremonially placed in the Palki Sahib with great respect. On the day of the procession, the entire community comes together, dressed in traditional attire, ready to serve and participate. One of the most powerful experiences for participants is the sense of collective devotion. As the procession moves through streets, it transforms ordinary public spaces into sacred spaces. People bow in respect, listen to hymns, and reflect on spiritual teachings. Even those who are not familiar with Sikhism often feel moved by the atmosphere of peace and unity.

In conclusion, Nagar Kirtan is much more than a religious procession. It is a living expression of Sikh values such as equality, humility, service, and devotion. It brings communities together, promotes cultural understanding, and spreads messages of peace and compassion. In a world often divided by differences, Nagar Kirtan stands as a beautiful reminder that unity and kindness can bring people closer. Whether in India or across the globe, its message continues to inspire millions and strengthen the bonds of humanity.

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## Shri Guru Angad Dev Ji – The Guru Who Spread Knowledge and Service

Arvind.A | National Times

*Shri Guru Arjan Dev Ji was the fifth Sikh Guru and one of the most influential figures in Sikh history. Born in 1563 in Goindval, Punjab, he was the youngest son of Guru Ram Das Ji, the fourth Sikh Guru. From an early age, Guru Arjan Dev Ji showed deep spiritual wisdom, humility, and a strong commitment to serving humanity. His leadership helped shape Sikhism into a well-organized and spiritually rich faith. One of Guru Arjan Dev Ji's most important contributions was the compilation of the Adi Granth in 1604.*

This sacred scripture included hymns of earlier Sikh Gurus as well as writings of saints from different religions and backgrounds, such as Hindu and Muslim mystics. By including diverse spiritual voices, he emphasized that divine truth is universal and not limited to any single faith. This act promoted unity, tolerance, and respect among all communities. Guru Arjan Dev Ji also played a major role in developing the city of Amritsar as a spiritual center. He oversaw the construction of the Harmandir Sahib, now known as the Golden Temple, which remains the holiest site in Sikhism. The temple was designed with doors on all four sides to symbolize openness and equality, welcoming people from every caste, religion, and region. This architectural vision reflected his core belief that all humans are equal before God.

Beyond his spiritual and cultural contributions, Guru Arjan Dev Ji was also a strong advocate of social harmony and justice. He encouraged the principles of seva (selfless service), humility, and devotion to God through honest living. Under his guidance, Sikh communities grew stronger and more organized, with a focus on helping the poor and supporting those in need through langar, the community kitchen that serves free meals to all.

However, Guru Arjan Dev Ji's growing influence and his refusal to compromise on spiritual independence led to conflict with the Mughal authorities. Emperor



Jahangir viewed him with suspicion and ordered his arrest. He was subjected to severe torture in 1606 for refusing to change Sikh teachings and for standing firm in his beliefs. Guru Arjan Dev Ji embraced martyrdom with calmness and faith, becoming the first Sikh Guru to sacrifice his life for righteousness and religious freedom. His martyrdom marked a turningpoint in Sikh history. It inspired future generations of Sikhs to stand strong against injustice while upholding compassion and truth. Guru Arjan Dev Ji's life is remembered as a powerful example of courage, devotion, and unwavering faith. Today, his teachings continue to inspire millions around the world. His message of unity, equality, and love remains deeply relevant in a world divided by differences.

***Guru Arjan Dev Ji's legacy lives on through the Guru Granth Sahib and the Golden Temple, both of which stand as eternal symbols of peace and spiritual strength.***



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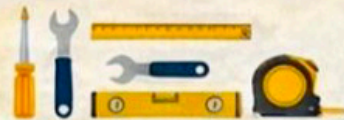


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