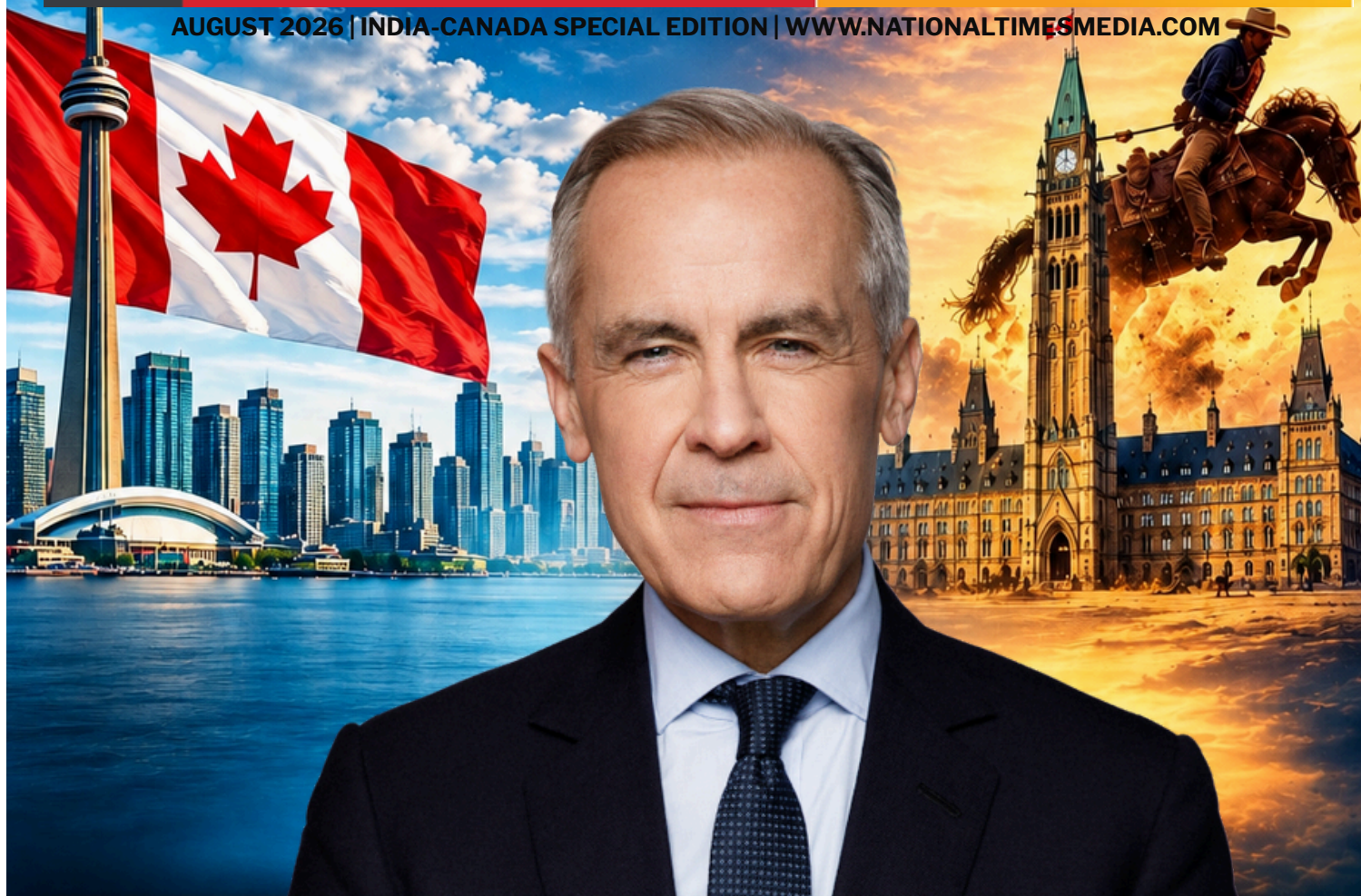




NATIONAL

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CANADA'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE: CARNEY GOVERNMENT FACES KEY TESTS IN AUGUST

**CANADA TIGHTENS
THE DOOR:
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS FACE A NEW
IMMIGRATION REALITY**



**India-U.S. Trade
Tensions and
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Intensify**
Amid Ongoing
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of Independence**



**From Self-Reliance
to 'Viksit Bharat':
The Big Ideas Behind
PM Modi's 80th
Independence Day
Address**



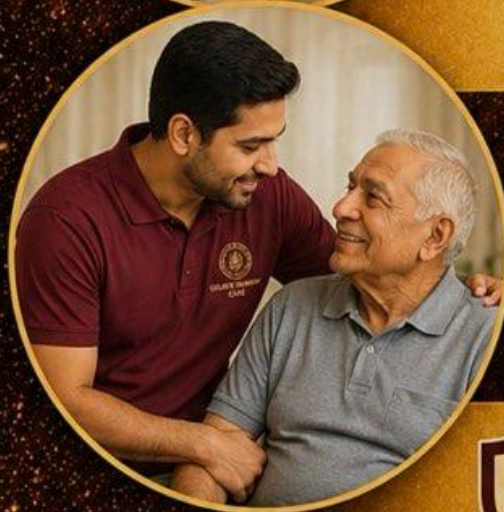


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EDITOR'S NOTE

The world we live in is being shaped by decisions made across borders—decisions that influence economies, migration, diplomacy, and the aspirations of millions. In this edition of News, we bring together stories that capture some of the most significant political and global developments shaping the present moment.

Canada takes centre stage as we examine the political challenges confronting the Carney government and the key tests that could influence the country's domestic and international trajectory. We also look at Canada's evolving immigration framework, particularly the tightening pathways for international students, and what these changes could mean for those who see the country as a destination for education and opportunity.

Beyond Canada, the growing strain in India–U.S. trade relations takes us into the complex world of tariffs, negotiations, economic interests, and strategic partnerships. At a time when global trade is undergoing significant shifts, the relationship between two of the world's major economies carries implications far beyond bilateral commerce. This edition also turns to a moment of celebration and reflection as India marked its 79th Independence Day.

We also look beyond the celebrations to the larger vision articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address—from the idea of self-reliance to the ambition of building a Viksit Bharat. The vision reflects India's continuing conversation about growth, innovation, national capability, and its place in a rapidly changing world.

Together, the stories in this edition offer a window into a world where politics and economics are increasingly interconnected, borders are being redefined, and national ambitions are influencing global conversations.



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A NEW PATH TO CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP DRAWS THOUSANDS OF APPLICANTS



A CHANGE TO CANADA'S CITIZENSHIP LAWS HAS OPENED A NEW ROUTE TO CITIZENSHIP FOR PEOPLE WITH CANADIAN ROOTS, AND THOUSANDS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN USING IT.

CALGARY | RAJEEV SHARMA

More than 6,100 people had received proof of Canadian citizenship under the expanded rules by May 31, according to figures from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Applicants born in the United States make up the largest share, accounting for 51 per cent of the citizenship certificate applications approved under the new provisions.

The change came into force on December 15, 2025, following the passage of Bill C-3, which amended the Citizenship Act. The legislation significantly broadened the circumstances in which people born outside Canada can claim citizenship through a Canadian parent or more distant ancestor.

Under the previous system, citizenship by descent was generally limited to the first generation born outside Canada. That restriction had faced legal challenges and was declared unconstitutional by the Ontario Superior Court in 2023. The new framework allows certain people born before December 15, 2025, to establish citizenship if they can demonstrate a direct connection to a Canadian ancestor, even when that connection stretches back several generations.

Americans Lead the Rush

The early figures show that the United States is by far the largest source of successful applications under the revised rules. Mexico follows, accounting for 20.5 per cent of approvals, while applicants born in Bolivia represent 6.1 per cent.

People born in the United Kingdom and its territories account for 3.2 per cent, followed by Belize at 2.2 per cent.

Immigration consultant Al Parsai, based in Toronto, said his firm has witnessed sustained interest in citizenship certificates, particularly among applicants in the United States.

The surge comes at a time when some Americans are reassessing their long-term options amid changing political and geopolitical circumstances. Parsai believes the broader citizenship rules and the wider environment in the U.S. are contributing to increased interest at the same time.

For many applicants, however, obtaining a certificate is far from a straightforward administrative exercise. Having a Canadian relative or ancestor is only the beginning. Applicants must establish a documented chain connecting themselves to that Canadian ancestor and demonstrate that they satisfy the legal requirements.

Genealogy Becomes Part of the Process

The new rules have prompted many would-be citizens to dig into family histories that may have remained undocumented for decades.

Among those exploring the new route are descendants of French-speaking Acadians who moved to Louisiana after being expelled from the Canadian Maritimes by British authorities

during the 18th century. For such families, establishing a Canadian connection can involve searching through generations of historical records.

Old birth and marriage certificates, immigration papers, naturalization documents and other archival material can become crucial pieces of evidence. Records may be incomplete, difficult to locate or inconsistent across different jurisdictions.

As Parsai noted, identifying a Canadian ancestor does not automatically establish citizenship. Applicants must also demonstrate the legal and documentary links connecting each generation.

Processing Backlog Grows

The increased demand has also placed additional pressure on Canada's citizenship certificate system.

IRCC has said it anticipated the implementation of Bill C-3 and took measures to prepare for the change. The department maintains that applications must still undergo careful verification to ensure applicants meet the requirements established under Canadian law.

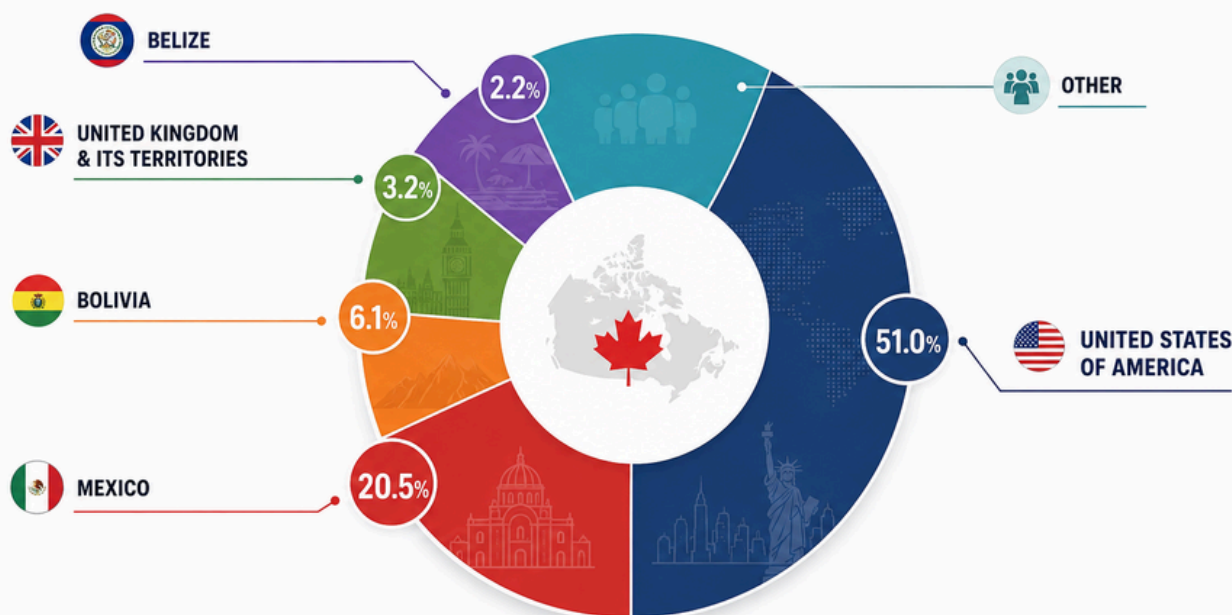
Interest Likely to Continue

The first months of the expanded citizenship regime suggest that Canada's decision to loosen the previous first-generation restriction has unlocked a significant pool of potential citizens around the world.

For some, the process may simply confirm a family connection that has existed for generations. For others, the legislation represents an opportunity that was previously unavailable under Canadian law.

APPROVED PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS UNDER BILL C-3

Percentage of approved proof of citizenship applications by country of birth for those applied under Canada's expanded citizenship eligibility requirements between Dec. 15, 2025 and May 31, 2026.



Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

IRCC currently estimates that processing a citizenship certificate application takes around 25 months. That represents a sharp rise from the roughly nine to 10 months reported earlier in the year. Applicants living outside Canada and the United States may face an additional three to four months of processing time.

The backlog is substantial. Around 121,800 citizenship certificate applications were awaiting decisions as of the latest figures. The queue includes applications made under the expanded rules as well as cases involving replacement certificates and people establishing citizenship through Canadian-born parents.

But the growing application numbers also highlight the practical challenges of turning ancestry into citizenship. Historical family ties may be easy to remember, yet proving them decades or centuries later can require extensive research.

With thousands already receiving citizenship certificates and more than 100,000 applications still awaiting decisions, the impact of Bill C-3 is likely to remain visible for some time. The coming months will show whether the initial surge represents a temporary rush or the beginning of a sustained new demand for Canadian citizenship by descent.



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CANADA'S WORK PERMIT DISPUTE LEAVES HUNDREDS OF INTERNATIONAL GRADUATES IN LIMBO

BY RAJEEV SHARMA | NATIONAL TIMES



For hundreds of international students in Alberta, completing their studies has been followed not by the expected transition into the Canadian workforce, but by uncertainty over their future.

Around 500 graduates of continuing education programs at Portage College have taken part in protests across the province after their applications for Post-Graduation Work Permits (PGWPs) were refused. Some affected students have even gone on hunger strike, seeking clarity from the federal government over a policy interpretation that they say was not made clear when they enrolled.

The dispute centres on the eligibility of non-credit programs for PGWPs. Students who began their courses in 2024 say they were led to believe that they could qualify for a work permit after graduation if they fulfilled the applicable requirements.

That expectation changed dramatically when Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) updated its online guidance on June 24, stating that non-credit programs, with the exception of flight training, do not qualify for the post-study work permit.

The department maintains that the update did not introduce a new restriction. Instead, officials describe it as a clarification of requirements that had already been in place.

For students facing refusal letters, however, the distinction offers little comfort.

Students Challenge the Government's Position

The affected graduates argue that they made decisions about their education and finances based on the information available when they enrolled. They contend that the exclusion of non-credit courses was not explicitly stated in the previous guidance and therefore should not be applied retrospectively to their applications.

A petition supported by regulated Canadian immigration consultant Dimple Verma is calling on the government to stop what students describe as mass refusals and reconsider the rejected applications.

The campaign also challenges what supporters characterize as an unpublished policy change added quietly to the IRCC website.

The issue has attracted attention because of the apparent gap between the government's interpretation and what applicants say they understood from the published rules.

Immigration Minister Lena Diab, speaking at a July 28 press conference, rejected the suggestion that the government had altered the eligibility criteria. She said non-credit programs had never qualified for PGWPs and that the department had not changed the rules.

That explanation has failed to settle the concerns of the graduates.



A Question of Clarity

The disagreement has raised a broader issue about how immigration policies are communicated to international students, particularly when their ability to remain in Canada may depend on a technical eligibility requirement.

Immigration consultant Matthew McDonald said existing PGWP guidance frequently referred to academic credits, courses and grades in a manner that appeared to assume applicants understood what constituted an eligible program. However, he noted that earlier guidelines did not appear to contain an explicit statement excluding non-credit programs.

In his view, the controversy reflects a communication failure rather than simply an issue of individual applications.

McDonald has also questioned whether international students receive adequate immigration guidance from the institutions they attend. He argued that designated learning institutions accepting international students should have a clear responsibility to explain immigration consequences and eligibility requirements.

The controversy has consequently expanded beyond the immediate question of work permits. It has revived concerns about who should be responsible when students make major educational and financial decisions based on information that later proves incomplete or open to interpretation.

Confusion Across the Student Community

The Portage College student union estimates that around 1,500 graduates across Canada could have been affected, although confirmed cases have so far been concentrated in Alberta.

Adding to the uncertainty are reports that some students enrolled in the same courses did receive work permits. Local media reports have put the number of approved applicants from the affected courses at about 50.

For students whose applications were refused while others from similar programs were approved, the difference has been particularly difficult to understand.

The situation has also created a race against time. Refused graduates have a limited period to determine their next legal and immigration options, with reports indicating that some have around 90 days following completion of their programs before their existing status expires.

For many, that window is not simply an administrative deadline. It could determine whether they can remain in Canada, seek another immigration pathway or leave the country after investing years of effort and significant amounts of money in their education.



The Bigger Policy Picture

The dispute comes during one of the most unsettled periods for Canada's international education and immigration systems.

Ottawa has introduced a series of measures aimed at reducing the number of international students and bringing the program back to what the government considers a more sustainable level. Changes to study permits, work permits and PGWP eligibility have followed in relatively quick succession.

The government has argued that such adjustments are necessary to manage the size of the international student population and ensure that immigration levels remain sustainable.

Critics, however, say frequent changes have created an environment in which students, colleges and immigration professionals can struggle to keep pace.

The structure of Canada's education system adds another layer of complexity. While immigration policy is controlled federally, education falls under provincial and territorial jurisdiction. Universities and colleges therefore operate within provincial education systems while their international students remain subject to federal immigration requirements.

The Alberta dispute has exposed how difficult that division can become when students are caught between institutional information and federal immigration rules.

IRCC Defends Its Approach

IRCC has said it worked with provincial and territorial governments to ensure that educational institutions received consistent information about PGWP eligibility.

According to the department, the June 2026 update was prompted by feedback from stakeholders and was intended to make existing requirements clearer.

The agency has also acknowledged the human consequences of the controversy. An IRCC spokesperson said the department understands that behind every application are individuals, families and plans for the future.

For those whose applications have already been refused, however, acknowledgement of their concerns does not resolve the immediate problem.

IRCC has pointed out that people who do not qualify for a PGWP may have other work permit options, although the suitability of those alternatives will depend on each person's circumstances.

Portage College Seeks Clarity

Portage College has maintained that immigration decisions are made by the federal government and are outside the institution's control.

The college has nevertheless acknowledged the anxiety among its graduates and said it continues to seek clarification from government authorities.

It has advised affected students to seek individual advice from licensed immigration lawyers or regulated immigration consultants before deciding what to do next.

For the students protesting in Alberta, that advice may come too late to undo the uncertainty that has already taken hold.

Their central argument is straightforward: they enrolled, studied and graduated believing they were following a pathway that could lead to a work permit. They now want the government to consider the information and expectations that existed when those decisions were made.

More Than a Work Permit

The controversy highlights a difficult reality facing international students in Canada. Immigration rules can change, but students make decisions years in advance. Tuition payments, accommodation, career plans and family commitments are often based on an expectation that the rules will remain understandable and consistently applied.

Whether the government ultimately changes its position on the affected Portage College graduates remains to be seen. But the dispute has already raised a larger question for Canada's international education sector: when policies are technically complex and frequently revised, who bears the cost when their meaning is not communicated clearly enough?

For the hundreds now waiting for answers, that question is not theoretical. It concerns their jobs, their immigration status and, in many cases, the future they had planned in Canada.



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CALGARY STUDENT PROTEST TAKES NEW TURN AS 12 PARTICIPANTS REFERRED TO BORDER AGENCY

BY NATIONAL TIMES EDITORIAL TEAM

A weeks-long protest by international graduates in Calgary took an unexpected turn after immigration officials were called to the demonstration site, with 12 participants subsequently identified as potentially inadmissible to Canada.

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) confirmed that its officers attended the protest in northeast Calgary on Wednesday after being contacted by the Calgary Police Service. Officers initially went to the site to verify the immigration status of four people. Following that interaction, the checks were expanded to include 20 individuals.

Of those examined, 12 were identified as potentially inadmissible under Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. The individuals were asked to report to a CBSA office later the same day for further interviews.

The agency has not disclosed details about the cases, citing privacy legislation. It also stressed that people facing immigration enforcement measures are entitled to due process under Canadian law.

The development has added another layer of tension to a protest that began on July 24 and has largely focused on international graduates' concerns over denied post-graduation work permits.

Protest Over Work Permit Refusals

The demonstration at Saddletowne Circle, near the Genesis Centre, has brought together international graduates and supporters who say they have been unfairly caught up in Canada's changing immigration rules.

A number of protesters studied at Portage College and say they enrolled in their programs believing that they could seek a Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) after completing their studies.

Many later discovered that their applications had been refused.

The dispute centres on the interpretation of rules surrounding certain non-credit programs and whether students who enrolled before earlier policy changes should be treated differently.

Portage College says it is seeking clarification from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

According to college spokesperson Andre Delaire, the institution understood that students who entered non-credit public-private partnership programs before May 15, 2024, could apply for a PGWP, provided they met the other requirements. That understanding, he said, was based on information available at the time and how similar applications had historically been handled.

IRCC, however, has offered a different explanation for the refusals now under challenge.

The department has said students who began their studies before May 2024 are not affected by the more recent change. Instead, it says the applications at the centre of the dispute concern a longstanding requirement that an eligible program must lead to a recognized credential such as a degree, diploma or certificate. The department has also reminded students that being enrolled at a designated learning institution does not

automatically make every program offered by that institution eligible for a PGWP.

Police Called CBSA to the Demonstration

The involvement of federal border officials followed a police response at the protest site.

Calgary police said the demonstration had generally remained peaceful since it began. However, officers had received complaints involving noise, obstruction of businesses, disturbances and public intoxication.

On Wednesday, police were called after receiving a report that people were blocking sections of a sidewalk and making it difficult for pedestrians to pass.

Officers subsequently requested identification from people who had erected tents or other structures on city property without a permit.

Police said concerns arising from the identification provided during that interaction prompted them to contact CBSA for immigration-status verification.

The border agency initially attended to check four people. After determining that two of them were not complying with their immigration status, officers expanded the verification process.

That eventually resulted in 20 people having their status checked, with 12 being referred to the CBSA for follow-up.

What Happens to Those Referred?

Being identified as potentially inadmissible does not, by itself, mean that an individual has immediately been ordered to leave Canada.

The CBSA has said the affected individuals were asked to attend its office for further interviews. Any subsequent enforcement action would depend on the circumstances of each case and the applicable provisions of Canadian immigration law.

The agency also reiterated that individuals subject to enforcement proceedings have access to due process.

For the students involved in the wider work permit dispute, however, the incident has intensified fears about their immigration status.

Calgary immigration lawyer Jatin Shory, who represents roughly a dozen graduates challenging PGWP refusals in federal court, has advised his clients against attending public demonstrations.

Shory argued that students whose immigration status may already be in question risk drawing additional attention to themselves by participating in highly visible protests.

He described the circumstances as unusual because a large number of people potentially affected by immigration issues were publicly gathering at the same location.

The lawyer said CBSA has the authority to investigate information or concerns brought to its attention and suggested that the incident could serve as a warning to other international graduates about the increasingly strict immigration environment.

Protests Spread Beyond Calgary

The Calgary demonstration is not an isolated event.

Similar protests have been reported in Edmonton, where some affected international graduates have taken more drastic steps, including hunger strikes, in an attempt to draw attention to their work permit concerns.



The protesters say they are seeking recognition of what they believe was a misunderstanding surrounding their eligibility rather than attempting to bypass Canada's immigration system.

Their campaign comes as the federal government continues to tighten rules surrounding international students and post-study employment.

For graduates who planned to build careers in Canada, a work permit is often a crucial bridge between education and longer-term immigration options. A refusal can therefore have consequences far beyond the loss of a temporary employment document.

A Growing Clash Between Policy and Expectations

The Calgary incident illustrates how the international student debate in Canada has moved beyond questions of tuition, education and employment.

For affected graduates, the dispute is about whether they were given enough information to make informed decisions about their education and immigration plans.

For federal authorities, eligibility requirements must be applied

according to the rules governing each individual application.

For educational institutions, the episode has highlighted the difficulty of operating between a provincial education system and a federal immigration framework.

The result is a growing sense of uncertainty among some international graduates who say they followed the information available to them when they began their studies, only to encounter a different interpretation when they applied for work permits.

Meanwhile, the CBSA's involvement has added an entirely new dimension to the dispute.

What began as a campaign for reconsideration of work permit refusals has now placed immigration status itself at the centre of attention for some protesters.

As court challenges and government discussions continue, the affected students are left waiting for clarity on whether their work permit refusals can be overturned—and, for those referred to the border agency, what their next chapter in Canada will look like.



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Rajeev Sharma (National Times): India's 80th Independence Day was celebrated with pride, patriotism and enthusiasm by Indians and people of Indian origin across the world. From India to Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, the Middle East, Europe and beyond, Indian communities came together to honour the nation's journey, remember the sacrifices of freedom fighters and celebrate India's rich heritage.

Across major cities and communities, Independence Day programmes featured flag-hoisting ceremonies, patriotic songs, cultural performances, traditional food and community gatherings. The celebrations reflected the remarkable diversity of India, bringing together people from different states, languages, religions and cultural backgrounds under the shared identity of being Indian.

In Canada, Indian communities in Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Vancouver and other cities organized celebrations through community associations, cultural organizations, temples, gurdwaras, businesses and volunteer groups. Families participated enthusiastically, while children and young people were given opportunities to learn about India's history, traditions and contribution to the world.

Calgary was among the Canadian cities where numerous Indian organizations came together to celebrate. Community programmes showcased Indian music, dance, food, culture and traditions, while bringing together people from different parts of India. Events such as INDIYEAH FEST, which united more than 21 Indian associations and community organizations, reflected the spirit of "One Nation, One Celebration" and the growing strength of Calgary's Indian community.

In the United States, Indian-American communities marked the occasion through cultural festivals, flag ceremonies, parades and community events. Similar celebrations were held across the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, demonstrating the extraordinary global reach of the Indian diaspora.

For Indians living abroad, Independence Day is more than a celebration—it is a connection to their roots. Parents and grandparents often use the occasion to share stories of India's freedom struggle with younger generations, helping children understand the significance of the national flag, the sacrifices of freedom fighters and the values associated with India's independence.

The occasion also provided an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of Indians around the world. Indian-origin professionals, entrepreneurs, doctors, engineers, scientists, educators, artists, athletes and community leaders are contributing significantly to the societies where they live while maintaining strong connections with India.

Over the past 79 years, India has made remarkable progress in areas including technology, space exploration, education, medicine, infrastructure, manufacturing, agriculture and entrepreneurship. The achievements of Indians at home and around the world have contributed to India's growing presence and influence on the global stage.

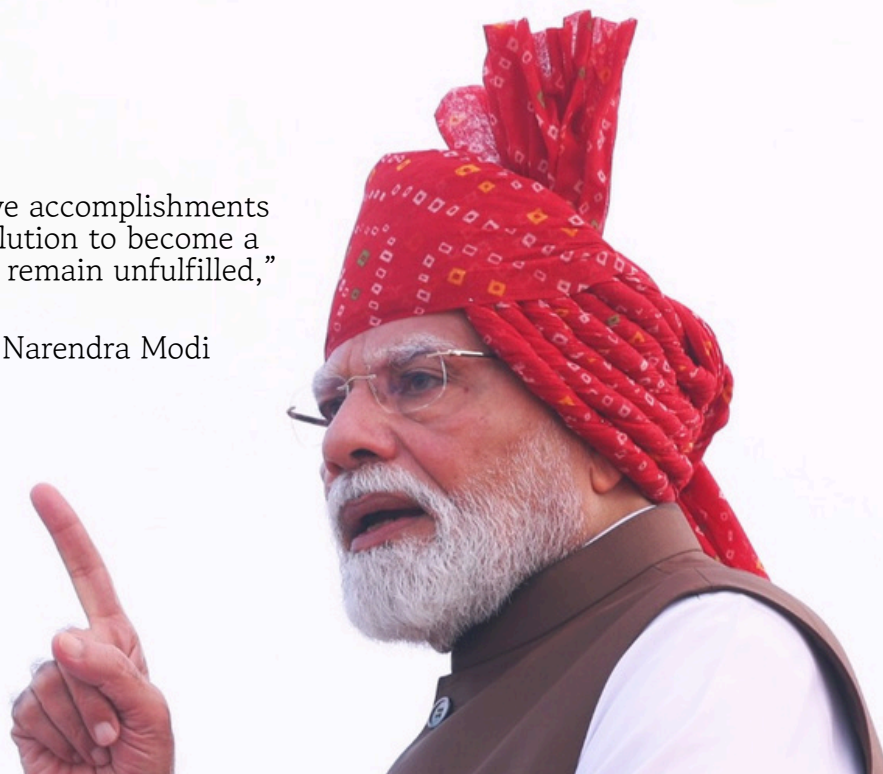
The global celebrations also highlighted India's powerful message of unity in diversity. Despite differences in language, region, religion and culture, Indians around the world came together to celebrate one national occasion with a common sense of pride and belonging.

From the streets of Indian cities to community halls and public spaces in Calgary, London, New York, Dubai, Sydney and countless other cities, the Indian tricolour became a symbol of heritage, freedom and shared identity.

India's 79th Independence Day was therefore a celebration that reached far beyond the country's borders. It was a worldwide expression of Indian pride, culture, achievement and unity, showing that wherever Indians live, the spirit of India continues to remain strong.

“When so many massive accomplishments are before us, the resolution to become a Viksit Bharat can never remain unfulfilled,”

- PM Narendra Modi



FROM SELF-RELIANCE TO 'VIKSIT BHARAT': THE BIG IDEAS BEHIND PM MODI'S 80TH INDEPENDENCE DAY ADDRESS

From Self-Reliance to 'Viksit Bharat': The Big Ideas Behind PM Modi's 80th Independence Day Address

Prime Minister Narendra Modi used his Independence Day address from the Red Fort to present a sweeping vision for India's journey towards 2047, combining economic ambition, technological self-reliance, national security, youth power and social transformation.

Marking the country's 80th Independence Day, Modi looked beyond the immediate achievements of the past decade and placed the next two decades at the centre of his message. His central proposition was clear: India cannot afford modest ambitions if it wants to emerge as a developed nation by the centenary of independence.

The speech moved across a remarkably wide landscape—from semiconductors and nuclear energy to agriculture, artificial intelligence, sports, women's participation, tourism and defence. Running through almost every theme was one recurring idea: India must build the capacity to rely on its own strengths while becoming a larger contributor to the global economy.

The 2047 Vision

At the heart of the address was the goal of creating a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047, when India completes 100 years as an independent nation.

Modi argued that such a transformation would require more than government schemes or economic statistics. It would demand bigger ambitions from citizens, stronger institutions and a fundamental change in the pace at which the country works.

He pointed to the progress made over the previous 12 years as evidence that a faster transformation is possible. According to figures cited in the speech, 25 crore people have moved out of poverty, while India has moved from being counted among the world's 'Fragile Five' economies to becoming a major and rapidly growing economy.

For Modi, these developments form the foundation for the next phase. The remaining years before 2047, he suggested, cannot be treated as an extension of the past. India will need to accelerate reforms and rethink systems that were designed for an earlier era.

A Push for Self-Reliance

One of the strongest threads in the speech was the call for an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

Modi linked self-reliance not simply to producing more goods domestically, but to building strategic capabilities in sectors that could determine India's economic and national security in the future.

Semiconductors were presented as a prime example. The Prime Minister highlighted the emergence of domestic chip manufacturing and said several more facilities are expected to become operational in the coming years.

The same approach, he said, must be applied to critical minerals, which have become increasingly important as countries compete for control over the raw materials required for advanced technologies.



The underlying argument was straightforward: a country aspiring to become a global power cannot remain excessively dependent on external sources for technologies and resources that are essential to its economy.

Energy as the New Strategic Frontier

The speech also devoted considerable attention to energy security.

As artificial intelligence, data centres and advanced manufacturing expand, electricity demand is expected to become an increasingly important part of the technology race. Modi therefore placed nuclear power, solar energy, hydrogen and other alternatives within the broader self-reliance agenda.

He announced a target of 100 gigawatts of nuclear power by 2047 and referred to the government's efforts to expand nuclear capacity. The Prime Minister also highlighted India's growth in solar generation, pointing to a dramatic increase in installed capacity compared with the period before 2014.

The PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana was another example cited in the address. Modi said the programme had crossed the milestone of solar installations in 50 lakh homes, with households benefiting through lower electricity bills and, in some cases, the ability to sell surplus power.

The broader message was that the energy transition should not remain confined to large infrastructure projects. It should also reach ordinary households.

Manufacturing at the Centre of the Growth Story

If India is to become a developed economy, Modi argued, it must become a serious manufacturing power.

He called for India to build complete value chains rather than limiting itself to assembling finished products. From design and components to manufacturing and packaging, the objective should be to create an ecosystem capable of competing internationally.

For manufacturers and MSMEs, the Prime Minister identified three requirements: cost competitiveness, quality and scale.

Quality received particular emphasis. Indian products, he said, must earn global trust rather than merely compete on price.

The ambition extends beyond traditional industries. Electronics, defence equipment, pharmaceuticals, textiles, machinery and emerging technologies were all placed within the vision of an India capable of supplying global markets.

The Seven Pillars of 'Sapt Dhara'

A significant portion of the speech was built around what Modi described as seven streams of national strength, or 'Sapt Dhara'.

The first is **manufacturing**, with an emphasis on building India's position in global supply chains.

The second is **agriculture and food production**. Modi urged farmers and food-processing industries to use expanding international market access to take Indian products—from spices and millets to fruits, flowers and traditional foods—to consumers around the world.



The third is 'technology and innovation'. Artificial intelligence, quantum technology, robotics, space technology and data centres were identified as areas in which India should seek leadership rather than merely become a large consumer market.

The fourth is Gati Shakti, focusing on connectivity, logistics and infrastructure. High-speed rail, highways, airports, waterways and modern ports were presented as essential components of a more integrated economy.

The fifth is defence power, with the emphasis on domestic capabilities and next-generation technologies, including drones, counter-drone systems and hypersonic technologies.

The sixth is the green and blue economy, covering renewable energy, green hydrogen, storage, electric mobility, fisheries, coastal tourism and ocean technology.

The seventh is India's soft power.

Here, Modi pointed to yoga, Ayurveda, culture, films, animation, gaming, visual effects and the wider creative economy as areas where India can exercise influence beyond conventional economic power.

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Youth at the Centre

The Prime Minister repeatedly returned to India's young population, describing youth as both the principal driver and the eventual beneficiary of the developed-India project.

He cited the growth of India's startup ecosystem, saying that the country now has more than 2.5 lakh registered startups. An innovation fund of ₹1 lakh crore was also highlighted as part of the effort to make capital available to young innovators.

Education and skill development featured prominently in this section of the speech. Modi referred to the expansion of universities, medical education, Atal Tinkering Labs, the opening of the space sector and programmes designed to encourage entrepreneurship and technological skills.

Artificial intelligence received particular attention. The Prime Minister announced an ambition to train one crore young Indians in AI skills over the next year, arguing that the country must prepare its youth for a technology landscape that is changing at extraordinary speed.

The speech also pointed to the expansion of India's bioeconomy and electric-vehicle market as examples of new industries capable of generating employment and entrepreneurship.

A Sporting Ambition

Sports formed another major part of the address.

Modi highlighted India's growing presence on international sporting podiums and reiterated the country's ambition to host the 2036 Olympic Games.

But he went beyond the question of hosting the event. He argued that India needs to participate in a much wider range of Olympic disciplines and announced plans for a nationwide talent-identification drive focused on children between five and 15 years of age.

The idea is to identify sporting ability early and provide specialised training over time, creating a larger pipeline of athletes for international competition.

The Prime Minister also referred to the Commonwealth Games scheduled to be hosted by India in 2030, placing both events within a broader effort to build India's sporting ecosystem.

Women's Economic and Political Participation

Women's contribution to the economy and public life received a prominent place in the address.

Modi pointed to the growing participation of women in STEM education, aviation, defence and sports, while also highlighting the expansion of the 'Lakshmi Didi' initiative.

The government's original target of creating three crore Lakshmi Didis, he said, has already been exceeded, with a new goal of six crore women reaching that level of economic empowerment.

The Prime Minister also renewed his appeal for greater representation of women in legislatures, urging political parties to support the implementation of women's reservation in state assemblies and the Lok Sabha.

The message was that women's participation should not be treated as a peripheral social objective but as an essential component of India's development.

Security in a Changing World

National security occupied another important section of the speech.

Modi argued that the nature of conflict is changing rapidly. Modern warfare, he noted, can extend beyond conventional battlefields to critical infrastructure such as refineries, financial systems, factories and data centres.

He pointed to the growth of India's defence exports and domestic weapons production while stressing the need to strengthen both military capabilities and civilian preparedness.

The Prime Minister also announced plans for a stronger civil-defence network designed to prepare citizens for modern forms of crisis.

The address further claimed that Naxalism and Maoist violence had been substantially reduced, while warning against the persistence of extremist ideology even after the decline of armed insurgency.

Beyond the Government

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of the speech was its attempt to place responsibility for the 2047 vision beyond New Delhi.

Modi argued that development cannot be delivered by the central government alone. State governments, local administrations, businesses, manufacturers, farmers, institutions and citizens would all need to change the way they operate.

He called for reforms not as an obligation imposed by circumstances, but as a deliberate choice driven by national ambition.

He also challenged Indian businesses to think globally, asking why Indian companies should not dominate international rankings in banking, pharmaceuticals, consulting, technology and other fields.

The message was less about catching up with the world and more about competing for leadership.

A Speech About Speed and Scale

Taken as a whole, Modi's Independence Day address was built around two ideas: scale and speed.

India, he argued, has already demonstrated that transformation on a large scale is possible. The next challenge is to increase the pace while simultaneously expanding the country's capabilities.

The vision is deliberately expansive. It includes factories making advanced components, farms supplying global markets, young entrepreneurs developing new technologies, women becoming economic leaders, athletes competing across a wider range of sports and Indian cultural industries finding audiences around the world.



The Prime Minister's larger message was that the journey to 2047 cannot be left to the final years of the countdown. It must begin with decisions made now—in classrooms, laboratories, factories, farms, businesses and homes.

As India looks towards its centenary of independence, the challenge outlined from the Red Fort is therefore not merely to become richer or more powerful. It is to develop the confidence, institutions and capabilities required to shape its own future.

For Modi, that future rests on a simple progression: bigger dreams must produce stronger resolve; stronger resolve must create greater capability; and greater capability must ultimately translate into a developed India.



Hormuz Becomes a New Flashpoint as Tehran Rejects Trump's Claim Over Strategic Strait

Rajeev Sharma | National Times



A sharp war of words between Washington and Tehran has added another layer of uncertainty to an already fragile situation in the Persian Gulf, after US President Donald Trump suggested that the Strait of Hormuz could eventually be declared US territory.

Iran swiftly rejected the suggestion, insisting that the strategically important waterway remains under Iranian control and will continue to be governed according to Tehran's decisions.

The exchange comes amid an increasingly tense confrontation between the United States and Iran, with the Strait of Hormuz emerging as one of the most sensitive issues in negotiations over the conflict.

Speaking in New York on Friday, Trump said, with a chuckle, that after defeating Iran he could soon declare the Strait of Hormuz a territory of the United States. He also claimed that the US blockade meant ships could not pass through the waterway unless Washington allowed them to.

Whether Trump intended the comment as a serious policy proposal or as a provocative political statement was not immediately clear. Tehran, however, responded in unequivocal terms.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi said on social media that the Strait had been Iranian, remained Iranian and would continue to be Iranian.

He further asserted that decisions on closing or reopening the waterway would remain in Iran's hands, while accusing Washington of refusing to accept what Tehran described as the reality of the conflict.

Why Hormuz Matters to the World

The significance of the dispute extends far beyond the territorial claims being exchanged by the two countries.

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most important energy corridors. Connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, the narrow passage provides a critical route for oil and gas shipments leaving the Gulf region.

Roughly a quarter of global seaborne oil trade normally passes through the strait, making any prolonged disruption a potential shock to international energy markets.

For decades, the waterway has therefore occupied a central position in the strategic calculations of Iran, the United States and Gulf countries.

Any confrontation that restricts commercial shipping through Hormuz can quickly become a global economic concern, affecting fuel prices, transportation costs, inflation and energy security well beyond the Middle East.

From Negotiations to Confrontation

The latest dispute follows months of tension surrounding the waterway.

Iran effectively closed the passage after the conflict with the United States broke out in late February. The status of Hormuz subsequently became one of the most difficult questions confronting negotiators attempting to prevent a wider escalation.

A provisional understanding reached in June had sought to create a pathway towards de-escalation.

Under the arrangement, Iran was expected to reopen the waterway and reaffirm its commitment not to acquire or develop nuclear weapons. Washington, in return, had agreed to withdraw its naval blockade and lift sanctions imposed on Tehran.

The two sides were given 60 days to work towards a more comprehensive agreement.

That fragile arrangement, however, came under renewed strain after attacks on shipping in the Strait during July. The incidents were followed by another round of US strikes and the reimposition of a naval blockade around Iranian ports.

The developments have since raised fresh concerns about whether the diplomatic process can survive the military confrontation.

Tehran Draws a Red Line

Iran's response to Trump's latest statement reflects the strategic importance Tehran attaches to the waterway.

By insisting that Hormuz will remain Iranian, the Iranian government has sought to make clear that it does not accept any suggestion that Washington can unilaterally claim sovereignty over the strait.

Gharibabadi's comments also linked the future of the waterway directly to the wider conflict, saying that Iran would determine when the passage could be opened or closed.

That position places the issue of maritime access at the centre of the broader dispute between the two countries.

For Tehran, control over the waterway represents both a strategic asset and a means of exerting pressure. For Washington and its allies, uninterrupted shipping through the strait is closely connected to global energy security.

A Dangerous Maritime Standoff

The confrontation also creates risks for commercial shipping. Any uncertainty over access to Hormuz can force shipping

companies, insurers and energy traders to reassess routes and risk exposure. Even without a complete shutdown, the threat of attacks, blockades or military confrontation can increase the cost of moving energy through the region.

The possibility of further incidents involving naval forces or commercial vessels adds another layer of danger.

The June understanding had offered a potential route away from escalation, but the subsequent attacks and renewed military action demonstrate how quickly fragile diplomatic arrangements can unravel.

What Comes Next?

The immediate question is whether Washington and Tehran can restore enough diplomatic space to prevent the Strait of Hormuz from becoming the centre of a broader confrontation.

Trump's remarks have intensified the rhetoric, while Iran's response has shown that Tehran is unwilling to compromise on what it considers its authority over the waterway.

At the same time, the international stakes make prolonged disruption particularly risky. The Strait is not merely a geographical feature on a map; it is a vital artery for the global energy economy.

For the moment, the competing claims have left the waterway caught between military pressure, diplomatic negotiations and national sovereignty.

Whether Hormuz becomes a bargaining instrument in the conflict or a trigger for an even wider crisis could depend on what happens next between Washington and Tehran.



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Rajan Nath | National Times

India's 39-Medal Glasgow Run Signals a Wider Sporting Ambition

India walked away from the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow with a fourth-place finish and 39 medals, a haul that included 13 gold, 17 silver and nine bronze medals. On the surface, the numbers mark another successful campaign. In context, however, the performance tells a more interesting story about how India's sporting strengths are beginning to change.

The Glasgow Games featured a significantly reduced sports programme, leaving out several disciplines that have traditionally carried much of India's medal hopes. Shooting, wrestling, badminton, hockey and table tennis were among the notable omissions.

That made India's final tally particularly significant. Rather than relying on its familiar medal-producing sports, the contingent had to find success in disciplines that have not always dominated the country's Commonwealth Games story.

Australia finished at the top of the standings with 171 medals, including 70 golds. England followed with 110 medals, while Canada collected 62. India's 39-medal haul was enough for fourth place.

More importantly, India once again remained among the leading sporting nations at the Games—a position it has occupied consistently since 2002.

Boxing Takes Centre Stage

Boxing emerged as India's standout success story in Glasgow.

Indian boxers returned with 10 medals, seven of them gold. That gold-medal tally was the highest achieved by any country in boxing during a single edition of the Commonwealth Games.

The result represents more than a successful campaign for individual fighters. It suggests that India's boxing programme is developing the depth required to perform across multiple weight categories.

Athletics also played a major role, contributing 16 medals to the Indian tally. Weightlifting added another eight, providing the kind of consistency that has traditionally been associated with India at the Commonwealth Games.

Together, these performances helped compensate for the absence of several established medal-winning sports.

New Names, New Milestones

The Glasgow Games also produced several firsts for Indian sport.

Asmita Dey created history by becoming the first Indian to win a Commonwealth Games gold medal in judo. Harsh Singh followed by becoming the first Indian male judoka to claim gold at the event.

Another landmark came in para-athletics. Sharmila Dhankar won gold in the women's F57 shot put, becoming the first Indian para-athlete to secure a Commonwealth Games gold medal in para-athletics.

Then there was Mirabai Chanu, whose consistency has made her one of India's defining figures in international weightlifting. Her Glasgow gold marked her third consecutive Commonwealth Games title, adding another chapter to an already remarkable career.

These individual achievements matter because they demonstrate that India's medal ambitions are gradually reaching beyond the disciplines traditionally associated with the country.

A Medal Tally With Context

India's Commonwealth Games history provides useful perspective.

The country first competed at the Games in 1934. Its first Commonwealth Games gold medals came at Cardiff in 1958, when athletes including the legendary Milkha Singh announced India's arrival on the podium in spectacular fashion.

The transformation became much more visible after the turn of the century.

India's strongest overall Commonwealth Games performance came at the 2010 Delhi edition, when the home contingent collected 101 medals and finished second behind Australia.

Since 2002, India has maintained a remarkably consistent presence among the top five nations in the overall standings.

But the country's medal profile has traditionally been heavily concentrated in a handful of sports.

Weightlifting, shooting and wrestling have collectively accounted for 390 of India's 603 Commonwealth Games medals—more than 60 per cent of the country's entire haul.

That dependence makes the Glasgow performance especially noteworthy.

Moving Beyond the Traditional Medal Factories

The exclusion of shooting and wrestling, in particular, could have significantly reduced India's medal prospects. Badminton, hockey and table tennis have also played important roles in previous campaigns.

Yet India still finished fourth.

The performance of boxing and athletics suggests that the country's competitive base is becoming broader. Judo and para-athletics added further evidence that India's medal prospects are no longer confined to a small group of familiar disciplines.

This expansion is important for the long-term development of Indian sport.

A wider medal base means the country becomes less vulnerable when particular sports are absent, when individual stars retire or when qualification patterns change.

It also creates opportunities for athletes who might otherwise have remained outside the national sporting spotlight.

What Glasgow Could Mean for Indian Sport

The 2026 Games may ultimately be remembered less for India's exact position on the medal table and more for what the composition of the medal haul represents.

India did not have access to several of its traditional strengths, yet it still produced double-digit gold medals and remained comfortably inside the top five.

That does not mean the country can afford to become complacent. Australia's 171-medal haul and England's 110 illustrate the enormous gap between India and the two leading nations. The challenge is therefore not simply to maintain fourth place but to build the depth necessary to compete consistently at the highest level.

For that to happen, India's sporting system will need to continue investing in grassroots development, coaching, sports science, facilities and athlete support across a much wider range of disciplines.

The emergence of new champions is encouraging. But the bigger objective is to ensure that today's breakthroughs become tomorrow's sporting systems.

From Dependence to Diversity

For decades, India's Commonwealth Games success was strongly tied to a familiar group of sports. Glasgow offered a glimpse of what could happen when that equation begins to change.

Boxing delivered seven gold medals. Athletics became a major contributor. Weightlifting continued its tradition of excellence. Judo produced historic breakthroughs, while para-athletics added another milestone.

The result is a medal table that reflects both continuity and change.

India's 39 medals may not match the record haul from the Delhi Games, but the circumstances make the achievement significant. The country managed to remain among the leading nations without several of the sports that have historically sustained its Commonwealth campaign.

That could prove to be the most encouraging takeaway from Glasgow.

India's sporting journey is no longer only about protecting its traditional strengths. It is increasingly about creating new ones.

And if the performances of its boxers, athletes, judokas, para-athletes and weightlifters are any indication, the next phase of Indian sport could be defined by a much broader—and potentially more resilient—medal base.



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PUNJAB CM BHAGWANT MANN: A DEVELOPMENT-FOCUSED VISION FOR A STRONGER PUNJAB

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann is placing development, employment, education, healthcare, sports and social welfare at the centre of his government's agenda, with a strong emphasis on creating greater opportunities for the state's youth and strengthening communities across Punjab. His recent public initiatives reflect a broader vision of building a more prosperous, modern and self-reliant Punjab.

A major focus of the government is empowering young people through employment, education and sports. Punjab's sporting culture continues to receive attention through initiatives such as "Khedan Wattan Punjab Diyan," which aims to provide athletes from villages and towns with opportunities to compete and develop their talent. The programme also reinforces the state's long-standing tradition of producing athletes who have represented Punjab and India at national and international levels.

Education and affordability are another important part of the government's priorities. Measures aimed at regulating fee increases in private educational institutions, along with efforts to expand access to digital and open education, are intended to make learning more accessible to families while creating greater opportunities for students.

Rural development remains an equally important part of the agenda. The government has announced increased financial support for village sarpanches, reflecting an effort to strengthen grassroots leadership and encourage greater participation in local development.

Stronger village institutions can play an important role in improving basic infrastructure, community services and development planning.

The government has also been highlighting environmental initiatives, particularly efforts to address pollution and waste management. Projects such as the compressed biogas plant announced in Ludhiana are aimed at turning agricultural and organic waste into useful energy while helping address pollution concerns. Such initiatives can contribute to a cleaner environment while creating opportunities in the emerging green economy.

Healthcare and public welfare continue to feature prominently in the state government's priorities, alongside efforts to combat the drug problem. The government has repeatedly emphasized the importance of prevention, enforcement, rehabilitation and community participation in protecting Punjab's younger generation and strengthening families affected by addiction.

Mann has also stressed the importance of maintaining peace, communal harmony and Punjab's distinctive culture. For a state with a rich history and a large global diaspora, social stability remains essential for attracting investment, creating employment and ensuring sustainable development.

The broader message from the government is centred on building a Punjab where young people have reasons to study, work and build their futures within the state. Better employment opportunities, modern infrastructure, quality education, healthcare, sports facilities and rural development are all important components of that vision.

Punjab has enormous strengths, including its hardworking people, agricultural heritage, entrepreneurial spirit, cultural influence and global diaspora. The challenge is to convert these strengths into sustainable economic growth and opportunities for the next generation.

As Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's government continues to pursue its development agenda, the success of these initiatives will ultimately be measured by their impact on ordinary Punjabis. If effectively implemented, the focus on youth, education, employment, rural development, sports and cleaner communities can contribute to a more confident, prosperous and future-ready Punjab.



CANADA'S IMMIGRATION RESTRICTIONS CONTINUE AS OTTAWA MOVES TOWARD A MORE TARGETED SYSTEM

By National Times Bureau

Canada's immigration system is continuing its shift toward tighter controls, lower temporary-resident numbers and more targeted pathways for newcomers. The federal government's 2026–2028 Immigration Levels Plan aims to bring immigration to what Ottawa describes as more sustainable levels while giving greater priority to workers and professionals who can help address critical labour shortages. The plan includes reductions in new temporary residents while stabilizing permanent-resident admissions.

One of the clearest changes is the government's effort to reduce the number of international students and temporary foreign workers entering Canada. Ottawa has committed to bringing the temporary population below 5 per cent of Canada's total population by the end of 2027. Immigration officials say the approach is intended to ease pressure on housing, infrastructure and public services while ensuring that immigration remains aligned with Canada's economic capacity.

International students remain at the centre of the policy changes. For 2026, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada expects to issue up to 408,000 study permits, including 155,000 permits for newly arriving international students and 253,000 extensions for current and returning students. The overall figure is lower than the previous targets, reflecting Ottawa's continuing effort to reduce the growth of the temporary-resident population.

The changes have significantly altered the environment for students considering Canada as a study destination. Applicants are facing greater scrutiny, and obtaining a study permit is no longer simply a matter of receiving admission from a Canadian

institution. Financial capacity, the credibility of the proposed study plan, documentation and the applicant's overall circumstances can play an important role in the assessment process.

Canada has also tightened rules affecting international graduates and temporary workers. The broader policy direction is increasingly focused on ensuring that temporary residents have a clear economic rationale for being in Canada and that pathways into permanent residence are aligned with labour-market needs. This represents a major shift from the period when Canada significantly expanded temporary migration to address labour shortages.

The government's new approach is also being reflected in Express Entry. In 2026, Canada introduced additional priority categories designed to attract skilled workers in areas including health care, research, aviation and other sectors facing labour shortages. Certain military recruits and specialized professionals are also being considered under the updated system. The objective is to attract people who can contribute to the Canadian economy while addressing specific workforce needs.

For prospective immigrants, this means that simply having Canadian education or Canadian work experience may not guarantee a pathway to permanent residence. Candidates increasingly need to understand how their occupation, education, language ability, work experience and other qualifications fit within federal and provincial immigration priorities.





The tightening of immigration policy also reflects growing concerns about Canada's ability to accommodate rapid population growth. Housing availability, rental costs, health-care capacity, transportation infrastructure and access to other public services have become central parts of the immigration debate. The federal government has increasingly linked immigration planning to the country's ability to provide adequate housing and services for both newcomers and people already living in Canada.

For international students, particularly those arriving from major source countries such as India, the changing environment has been especially significant. Canada has historically been one of the most popular destinations for Indian students, but increased scrutiny and reduced study-permit volumes have made the pathway more competitive. Reuters reported that the refusal rate for Indian study-permit applications had risen sharply by 2025, illustrating how dramatically the student-visa environment had changed.

The changes are also being closely watched by Canadian colleges, universities, employers and communities that have traditionally benefited from international migration. International students contribute to educational institutions and local economies, while temporary foreign workers play important roles in sectors ranging from health care and construction to agriculture, hospitality and other services.

The challenge for policymakers is therefore to find a balance between reducing unsustainable population pressures and ensuring that Canada continues to attract the talent it needs. A highly restrictive system could make Canada less competitive internationally, while uncontrolled temporary migration could place additional pressure on housing and public services.

For newcomers and prospective applicants, the message from the current policy direction is increasingly clear: Canada remains open to immigration, but the system is becoming more selective. Economic needs, labour-market demand, qualifications and long-term contribution are playing a larger role in determining who is prioritized.

The immigration landscape is therefore entering a new phase. Canada is not abandoning immigration, but it is moving away from the rapid expansion of temporary migration seen in recent years and toward a more controlled and targeted model. For students, workers and families considering Canada, understanding the latest rules and planning carefully before making major financial or immigration decisions has become more important than ever.

As Ottawa continues to adjust immigration levels and eligibility policies, the coming years will determine whether the new approach can successfully relieve pressure on housing and public services while maintaining Canada's reputation as a destination for skilled workers, students, entrepreneurs and families. For millions of prospective newcomers around the world, Canada's message is no longer simply about opportunity—it is increasingly about selection, sustainability and skills that match the country's evolving needs.

The policy shift has created uncertainty for some international students and temporary workers who had planned their future around earlier immigration rules. Changes to eligibility requirements can affect people who arrived in Canada under one set of expectations but now face a more competitive environment when seeking work permits, permanent residence or other forms of status.

At the same time, Ottawa argues that immigration remains an essential part of Canada's economic future. The government's levels plan continues to prioritize economic immigration and aims to ensure that newcomers help address critical labour shortages. Permanent economic immigration is projected to account for 64 per cent of all immigration in 2027 and 2028, representing the highest proportion in decades.



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CANADIAN MEDIA INDUSTRY FACES MAJOR CHANGES

Rajeev Sharma | National Times Media Group

Canada's media industry is undergoing a major transformation as traditional newspapers, television and radio face growing competition from digital platforms, social media, streaming services and artificial intelligence. Changing audience habits and declining advertising revenues have placed significant financial pressure on traditional news organizations, while many Canadians now receive breaking news directly through smartphones and social media.

The shift is also creating new opportunities. Digital newspapers, independent media outlets, podcasts, video journalism and multilingual platforms are expanding their reach and connecting with audiences in more targeted ways. Local and multicultural media are particularly important as communities seek news that reflects their languages, businesses, culture and local issues.

Artificial intelligence is adding another dimension to the industry, helping newsrooms with research, translation, transcription and content production while raising important questions about accuracy, copyright and editorial responsibility. At the same time, misinformation and rapidly spreading online content have made trust and fact-checking more important than ever.

For Canadian media organizations, the future will depend on their ability to adapt while maintaining strong journalism and audience trust. Print, television and radio are evolving rather than simply disappearing, while digital platforms are becoming increasingly central to how Canadians consume news. In this changing environment, credibility, innovation and a strong connection with readers could determine which media organizations thrive in the years ahead.





Haryana Shows the Strength of Dialogue and Community Unity Amid Tensions



By Balwinder Singh | National Times

Haryana has once again demonstrated the importance of dialogue, community participation and peaceful resolution of public concerns following tensions surrounding the death of Hisar dairy operator Jeevan Kundu. While the situation briefly escalated during protests on Independence Day, subsequent discussions between the government, the victim's family and community representatives helped move the matter toward a peaceful resolution.

The Haryana government responded to key concerns raised by the family and supporters, including assistance for the bereaved family and employment support for a family member. The understanding reached between the authorities and community representatives helped ease tensions and allowed the family to proceed with Kundu's last rites, bringing an emotional chapter closer to closure.

The developments also highlighted the constructive role that community leaders, farmers' organisations and local representatives can play during sensitive situations. Rather than allowing tensions to continue indefinitely, dialogue provided a path forward and demonstrated that difficult issues can be addressed through communication and mutual understanding.

The incident has also reinforced the importance of maintaining peace while seeking justice. Authorities continue to pursue the investigation into the death, while the community's concerns have received significant public attention. The emphasis now is on allowing the legal process to take its course and ensuring that accountability is determined through evidence and due process.

For Haryana, the episode offers an important message: disagreements and public grievances can be addressed more effectively when governments and communities remain open to dialogue. The state's ability to bring stakeholders together and reduce tensions reflects the value of cooperation, patience and responsible leadership during challenging circumstances.

As Haryana continues to grow economically and socially, maintaining peace, public trust and strong community relations will remain essential. The recent developments show that even during difficult moments, dialogue can help communities move from confrontation toward understanding, stability and a constructive path forward.



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Rajeev Sharma | National Times

India–U.S. Trade Tensions and Tariff Pressure Intensify Amid Ongoing Negotiations

India is facing renewed trade pressure from the United States as Washington intensifies efforts to prevent what it describes as the circumvention of tariffs on Chinese goods through third countries. India has been among the countries mentioned in discussions surrounding alleged transshipment and tariff-evasion routes, adding another layer of complexity to the broader India–U.S. trade negotiations.

The issue comes at a sensitive time for economic relations between New Delhi and Washington. The two countries have been working to expand bilateral trade while attempting to resolve disagreements over tariffs, market access and the treatment of key products. Both governments have expressed interest in strengthening their economic partnership, but differences over trade policy have remained a significant obstacle.

Washington's concerns centre on the possibility that Chinese products could be routed through other countries, undergo limited processing or receive changes in documentation before being exported to the United States in an effort to avoid higher U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods. American authorities have been increasing scrutiny of global supply chains as the United States seeks to prevent companies from bypassing trade measures imposed on Chinese imports.

For India, the issue is particularly important because the country is seeking to expand its role as a major manufacturing and export hub. Indian policymakers have been promoting initiatives designed to attract global companies and diversify supply chains away from excessive dependence on China. Greater scrutiny of Indian exports could therefore create additional compliance requirements for exporters and manufacturers seeking access to the U.S. market.

The tariff issue also comes amid wider negotiations aimed at improving market access between India and the United States. The discussions involve a range of products and sectors, with both countries seeking better opportunities for their exporters. India has traditionally sought greater access to the American market for its manufactured goods, textiles, pharmaceuticals, agricultural products and other exports, while the United States has pushed for greater access for American agricultural, industrial and consumer products in India.

Indian exporters are closely watching developments because higher tariffs or tighter customs scrutiny could affect their competitiveness in the American market. Industries that operate on relatively narrow margins could face additional costs if companies are required to provide more detailed documentation proving the origin and manufacturing history of their products.

At the same time, India has an opportunity to strengthen its position as companies around the world reconsider their supply chains. If India can demonstrate strong origin verification, transparent production processes and reliable compliance systems, it could reinforce its reputation as a trusted alternative manufacturing destination. This could potentially attract additional investment and create opportunities in sectors ranging from electronics and automobiles to pharmaceuticals and industrial manufacturing.

The trade tensions also highlight the increasingly complicated nature of global commerce. Modern products often contain components sourced from several countries before final assembly. Determining the true country of origin can therefore be challenging, particularly when governments impose different tariff rates on products from different countries.



For New Delhi, maintaining constructive relations with Washington remains an important economic priority. The United States is one of India's most important trading partners, while bilateral cooperation has expanded beyond traditional commerce into technology, defence, energy and critical supply chains. Both governments have an interest in preventing trade disagreements from affecting the broader strategic relationship.

India is also seeking to protect the interests of its domestic industries while negotiating improved access to international markets. New Delhi has traditionally taken a cautious approach to opening sensitive sectors and has emphasized the importance of protecting Indian farmers, small businesses and domestic manufacturers. These considerations can make trade negotiations complex, particularly when the United States seeks reciprocal market access.

For American policymakers, meanwhile, the focus remains on ensuring that tariff policies achieve their intended effect and that imports from China do not enter the U.S. market indirectly through third countries. This means countries such as India could face greater scrutiny as Washington strengthens enforcement of its trade measures.

The immediate outcome of the India-U.S. negotiations will be closely watched by businesses on both sides. A mutually acceptable agreement could reduce uncertainty, encourage investment and strengthen bilateral trade. Continued disagreements, however, could increase costs for exporters and complicate supply-chain decisions.

The latest tariff concerns therefore represent both a challenge and an opportunity for India. While increased scrutiny could place additional pressure on exporters, stronger compliance and transparent supply chains could help India establish itself as a more trusted and competitive participant in global trade.

As negotiations continue, both New Delhi and Washington face the task of balancing domestic economic priorities with the long-term benefits of a stronger bilateral relationship. The outcome could have implications not only for India-U.S. trade but also for India's broader ambitions to become a major global manufacturing and export centre





Canada-U.S. Trade Deal 'Very Close' as Tariff Deadline Approaches

National Times | Canada Business & Economy

Canada and the United States are moving closer to a potential trade agreement as negotiators race to resolve outstanding issues ahead of a looming tariff deadline. Canadian Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc has described the two countries as "very close" to an agreement, raising hopes that Ottawa and Washington can prevent another escalation in their ongoing trade dispute. However, negotiations remain active, and no final agreement has been announced.

The talks have focused heavily on tariffs affecting some of Canada's most important export industries, including automobiles, steel and aluminum. Reports indicate that the United States is considering reducing tariffs on Canadian-built vehicles from 25 per cent to 15 per cent, while tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum could be reduced from 50 per cent to 25 per cent. Such reductions would provide significant relief to Canadian manufacturers and exporters that have been facing increased costs and uncertainty in cross-border trade.

The automotive sector is particularly important because Canada and the United States have deeply integrated manufacturing and supply chains. Vehicles and automobile components frequently cross the border multiple times during the production process. Any reduction in tariffs could help Canadian manufacturers remain competitive while also reducing pressure on suppliers and workers on both sides of the border.

Canada's steel and aluminum industries are also watching the negotiations closely. These sectors employ thousands of workers and supply materials to manufacturers throughout North America. Although a reduction from 50 per cent to 25 per cent would still leave Canadian exporters facing tariffs, industry representatives could view the move as an important step toward restoring more predictable trading conditions.

The negotiations have become more urgent following a U.S. proposal to impose an additional 50 per cent tariff on approximately \$20 billion worth of Canadian goods. The deadline was extended by several days as officials continued negotiations and reported progress. The possibility of additional tariffs has increased pressure on both governments to find common ground and avoid further disruption to businesses and consumers.

Ottawa is also seeking to protect important Canadian economic interests. Among the issues under discussion are access to Canada's dairy market, provincial restrictions affecting American alcohol products and policies related to U.S. vehicles. Washington has been pressing Canada for greater market access and changes to measures it considers barriers to American exporters.

For Prime Minister Mark Carney's government, the negotiations represent a major economic and political challenge. Canada relies heavily on the United States as its largest trading partner, and thousands of Canadian businesses depend on stable access to the American market. Prolonged tariffs could affect manufacturers, farmers, transportation companies, retailers and other businesses connected to cross-border commerce.



The impact of the dispute could also extend to Canadian consumers. Higher tariffs can increase the cost of imported goods and components, while businesses may pass some additional costs through to customers. Uncertainty can also make companies more cautious about investment, hiring and expansion decisions.

Despite the progress, several important details still need to be finalized before any agreement can be considered complete. Negotiators continue to discuss automobile content requirements, parts, tariff exemptions and other market-access questions. Canadian officials have expressed optimism while making clear that discussions are continuing.

The broader significance of the negotiations extends beyond the immediate tariff deadline. Canada and the United States have one of the world's most integrated economic relationships, with billions of dollars in goods and services crossing the border. Energy, agriculture, automobiles, manufacturing, technology and numerous other industries depend on the smooth movement of products between the two countries.

A successful agreement could provide Canadian businesses with greater certainty and reduce some of the immediate pressure created by tariffs. It could also create an opportunity for Ottawa and Washington to move toward broader discussions about the future of North American trade, including the long-term framework governing Canada-U.S.-Mexico economic relations.

For now, however, businesses and investors remain cautious. While Minister Dominic LeBlanc's assessment that the two sides are "very close" has generated optimism, the final outcome will depend on whether negotiators can resolve the remaining differences before the deadline.

The coming days could therefore prove critical for Canada's economy. A deal would provide much-needed stability for exporters, manufacturers and workers, while a breakdown in negotiations could lead to another round of tariffs and increased economic uncertainty. For Ottawa, the priority remains securing meaningful tariff relief while protecting Canadian industries and maintaining a stable, long-term trading relationship with the United States.



Interviewed by Rajeev Sharma, National Times

EYE INJURY: CAN A SMALL ACCIDENT COST YOU YOUR VISION?

An Exclusive National Times Interview with Retina Surgeon Dr. Jag Anand

Our eyes are among the most delicate and important organs in the human body, yet eye injuries are often underestimated. A speck of dust, a sports-related impact, a chemical splash or an accidental blow may appear harmless—but in some cases, the damage can extend beyond the surface of the eye and affect the retina, potentially putting vision at risk.

To better understand the different types of eye injuries, warning signs that require immediate medical attention, common mistakes people make after an injury and the latest treatment options, National Times Managing Editor Rajeev Sharma spoke with renowned Retina Surgeon Dr. Jag Anand.

Q: Dr. Anand, let's start with a very common situation. If something gets into your eye—such as dust, dirt or a small particle—what should you do immediately, and what should you avoid doing?

Dr. Jag Anand: The most important thing is to avoid rubbing the eye. Rubbing can potentially cause further irritation or even scratch the cornea. If it is a superficial particle, gently rinsing the eye with clean water or sterile saline may help remove it. However, if the object appears embedded, the injury is significant, or symptoms continue, the person should seek medical attention rather than attempting to remove the object themselves.

Q: Can an injury that looks minor on the outside actually cause serious damage inside the eye?

Dr. Jag Anand: Yes. The external appearance of the eye does not always tell us what is happening internally. Trauma can affect the retina, lens and other internal structures. Some complications can threaten vision, which is why persistent or sudden visual symptoms should never be ignored.

Q: What are the major warning signs—or red flags—that indicate someone should seek immediate medical attention?

Dr. Jag Anand: Sudden loss or reduction of vision, new flashes of light, a sudden increase in floaters, a curtain or shadow across the field of vision, significant pain, bleeding, double vision or an injury involving a sharp or penetrating object are important warning signs. Chemical injuries also require immediate attention.

Q: Let's talk about flashes and floaters. Many people experience these symptoms and may simply ignore them. When should someone be concerned?

Dr. Jag Anand: New or sudden flashes and floaters can sometimes indicate a retinal tear or another retinal problem. If these symptoms appear suddenly—particularly when accompanied by a curtain-like shadow or loss of peripheral vision—urgent retinal assessment is important.

Q: What should someone do if a cleaning chemical or another chemical substance gets into the eye?

Dr. Jag Anand: The eye should be flushed immediately with clean running water or sterile saline. Do not wait. If contact lenses are present, they should be removed if they come out easily during irrigation. After flushing, urgent medical evaluation is important, particularly following a significant exposure or if symptoms continue.

Q: What are some of the most common mistakes people make after an eye injury?

Dr. Jag Anand: Some common mistakes include rubbing the eye, trying to remove an embedded object, using inappropriate or leftover eye drops, putting home remedies into the eye, and delaying medical assessment. It is important to remember that the eye is a very delicate organ, and an apparently minor injury should not automatically be dismissed.

Q: Sports and recreational activities can also cause eye injuries. Can something as simple as a ball hitting the eye cause retinal damage?

Dr. Jag Anand: Yes. High-speed objects can cause significant blunt trauma to the eye. Sports and occupational activities where there is a risk of impact should be performed with appropriate protective eyewear. Protective equipment is particularly important when participating in activities involving fast-moving balls, racquets, sticks or other objects that could strike the eye.

Q: Dr. Anand, what exactly is a retinal detachment, and why is it considered an emergency?

Dr. Jag Anand: A retinal detachment occurs when the retina separates from its normal position. It can threaten vision and may require urgent treatment.

Warning symptoms can include flashes of light, new floaters and a curtain or shadow appearing over part of the visual field. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should seek urgent ophthalmic assessment.

Q: Can someone have serious retinal damage without experiencing severe pain?

Dr. Jag Anand: Yes. Retinal problems may occur without significant pain. That is why changes in vision can be more important than the amount of pain someone experiences. A person should not assume that an eye injury is harmless simply because there is little or no pain.

Q: How have modern treatments changed the outlook for patients suffering from retinal injuries?

Dr. Jag Anand: Retina care has advanced significantly. We now



have sophisticated diagnostic imaging and a range of treatment approaches, including laser procedures, injections and microsurgical techniques.

The appropriate treatment depends on the specific injury, the structures involved and the patient's individual diagnosis.

Q: If someone develops a retinal tear or retinal detachment following an injury, does that automatically mean permanent vision loss?

Dr. Jag Anand: Not necessarily. The outcome depends on several factors, including the location and extent of the injury, whether the central retina is involved and how quickly appropriate treatment is provided.

Early assessment and timely treatment can be very important in protecting vision.

Q: Finally, what is your message to parents, workers, athletes and the general public when it comes to protecting their eyesight?

Dr. Jag Anand: Prevention is extremely important. Use appropriate protective eyewear whenever there is a risk of eye injury, do not ignore sudden changes in vision, and seek professional medical assessment following significant trauma. Your eyesight is precious, and early attention can make an important difference.

A Final Word from National Times

Rajeev Sharma: Dr. Jag Anand, thank you for joining National Times and sharing your expertise on this important topic.

For our readers, the message is simple: an eye injury that looks minor on the outside can sometimes have serious consequences inside the eye. Avoid rubbing an injured eye, do not experiment with home remedies or inappropriate eye drops, and never ignore sudden changes in vision.

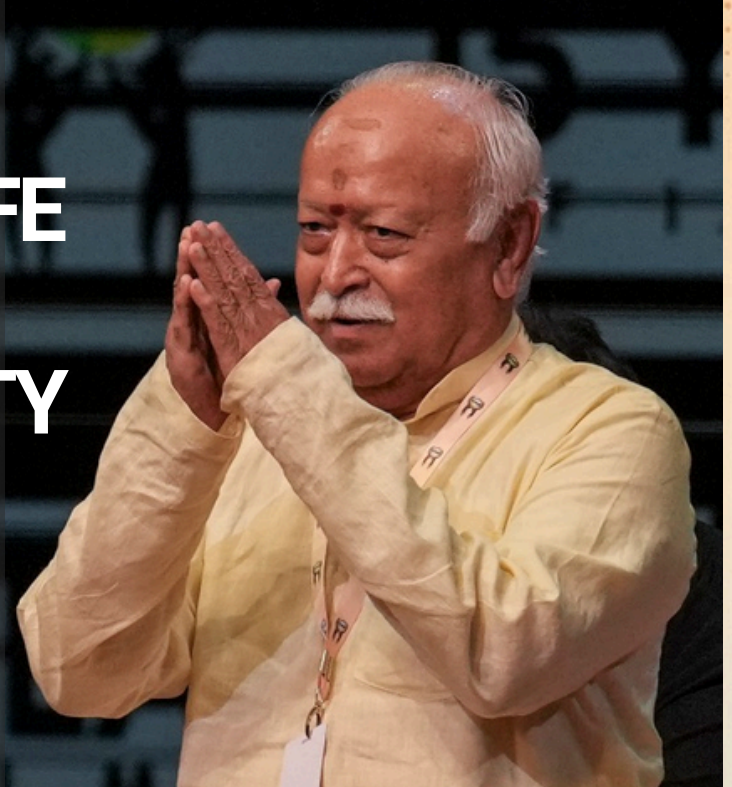
When it comes to your eyesight, timely medical attention can make a difference.





DR. MOHAN BHAGWAT: A LIFE DEDICATED TO NATION, SOCIETY AND SELFLESS SERVICE

RAJEEV SHARMA | NATIONAL TIMES



As Dr. Mohan Bhagwat prepares to visit Canada, attention is turning not only to his position as the Sarsanghchalak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), but also to a life shaped by discipline, simplicity, organisational service and a longstanding commitment to the idea of national and social service. For millions of people associated with the RSS and its wider network, Bhagwat represents a leadership philosophy centred on seva, discipline, social responsibility, cultural awareness and national unity. His supporters describe his journey as one of personal sacrifice, in which organisational responsibility and public service have taken precedence over a conventional pursuit of wealth, political office or personal prominence.

From Chandrapur to national leadership

Mohan Madhukar Bhagwat was born on September 11, 1950, in Chandrapur, Maharashtra. He studied veterinary science and later chose the path of full-time organisational work with the RSS.

Rather than pursuing a conventional professional career, Bhagwat became a pracharak—a full-time worker dedicated to the organisation. Over the years, he took on increasingly important responsibilities within the RSS and worked across different parts of the country. His rise through the organisation was gradual and based on decades of grassroots involvement. In 2000, he became the RSS Sarkaryavah (General Secretary), and on March 21, 2009, he was chosen as the organisation's sixth Sarsanghchalak, succeeding K. S. Sudarshan. The RSS continues to identify Bhagwat as its Sarsanghchalak in its current organisational activities.

A life built around service

One of the defining themes of Bhagwat's public life has been seva—service without expectation of personal reward. The RSS's philosophy emphasises developing disciplined and socially

responsible citizens who contribute to society. Under Bhagwat's leadership, the organisation has continued to emphasise volunteerism, social service, education, community outreach and national integration.

RSS reports have highlighted extensive service activities carried out through organisations associated with its social-service network. An earlier RSS annual report, for example, documented more than 1.56 lakh service projects being operated under the patronage of organisations involved in its service activities. For Bhagwat's supporters, this wider volunteer network is an important part of his legacy: the belief that nation-building cannot depend solely on governments or political leaders, but requires ordinary citizens to contribute their time and abilities.

Leadership beyond political office

Bhagwat has never held elected political office. His influence comes from his leadership of a large volunteer organisation rather than from occupying a government position. This distinction is important in understanding his public role. His speeches frequently focus on character building, social cohesion, cultural identity, education, environmental responsibility and the responsibilities of citizens. In a 2020 address on environmental responsibility, Bhagwat spoke about the relationship between human beings and nature and argued that people should view themselves as part of creation rather than treating nature simply as something to be consumed. His approach to leadership has therefore often connected national development with individual conduct—arguing that a strong nation requires responsible, disciplined and socially conscious citizens.

Emphasis on unity and social harmony

Another recurring theme in Bhagwat's public addresses is the importance of bringing society together despite differences of language, caste, region and community. In a speech on the



legacy of Maharaja Chhatrasal, Bhagwat argued that national progress cannot be attributed solely to a particular leader, government or political party, but depends on the collective thinking and participation of society. He emphasised the importance of people working toward a common national purpose despite social differences. For his supporters, this message of social organisation is central to his understanding of nation-building.

Preserving culture while embracing the future

Bhagwat's public philosophy also places considerable emphasis on India's civilisational heritage and cultural traditions. At the same time, he has argued that India should remain open to useful knowledge and technology from around the world. In a 2013 discussion, he said that India should acquire critical knowledge and technology from other countries while doing so on its own terms. He also spoke in favour of value-based education and the development of character. This reflects a broader theme associated with his leadership: modernisation without abandoning cultural roots.

A century of RSS service

Bhagwat's leadership has coincided with an important milestone for the RSS. The organisation marked the beginning of its centenary year in 2025, 100 years after its founding in 1925. In his 2025 Vijayadashami address, Bhagwat reflected on the organisation's century-long journey and connected its work with broader questions of national identity, social responsibility and service. The centenary has provided Bhagwat with an opportunity to speak about both the RSS's historical journey and its future responsibilities.

A leader known for simplicity and discipline

Supporters frequently point to Bhagwat's personal lifestyle as an example of the traditional pracharak model: travelling extensively, meeting volunteers and communities, addressing gatherings and spending decades working within the organisation rather than building a private political career.

His journey illustrates a form of leadership in which authority is built over many years through organisational work and personal discipline. For admirers, this is perhaps the most significant aspect of Bhagwat's life: the decision to dedicate his working life to an organisation and a philosophy of social service rather than pursue personal wealth or elected political power.

His message to a changing generation

Bhagwat has also increasingly addressed younger generations and the challenges created by rapid social and technological change.

His speeches have emphasised the need for young people to think independently, engage in democratic discussion and contribute constructively to society. His broader message has been that disagreement and debate should ultimately strengthen society rather than permanently divide it. That emphasis is particularly relevant to the Indian diaspora, including young Canadians of Indian origin who are balancing cultural heritage with life in a modern, multicultural society.

The Canada visit

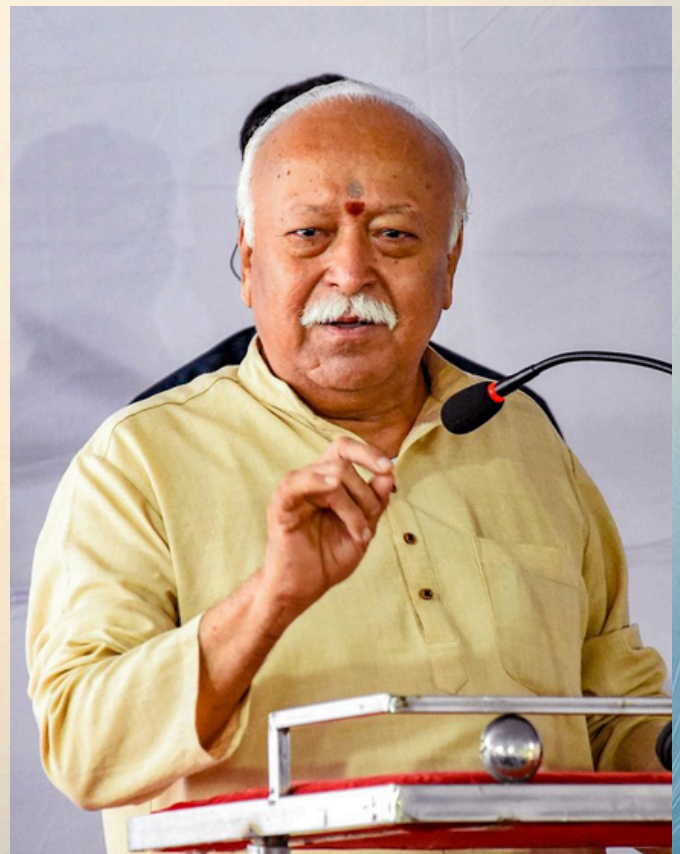
Bhagwat's expected visit to Canada on August 31 and September 1, 2026, is therefore significant for his supporters beyond the formal programme itself.

For members of the Indian diaspora, it provides an opportunity to hear directly from a senior figure who has spent decades working within India's largest volunteer organisation. The visit also comes during the RSS centenary period, giving it additional symbolic importance. Supporters are expected to highlight themes of Indian culture, community service, family values, social responsibility, youth engagement and stronger connections between the Indian diaspora and India.

A legacy of dedication

Dr. Mohan Bhagwat's life is ultimately a story of organisational dedication. From a young volunteer in Maharashtra to the head of a century-old organisation with a vast volunteer network, his journey has been defined by discipline, long-term commitment and service. His supporters see him as a leader who has devoted much of his life to strengthening society from the grassroots, encouraging citizens to place responsibility toward the nation and community above individual interests. Whether viewed through the lens of culture, volunteerism, social service or national development, Bhagwat's decades of public work have made him an influential figure in contemporary India.

As Dr. Bhagwat prepares to meet members of the Indian community in Canada, his supporters are likely to see the visit not simply as that of an organisational leader, but as an opportunity to share a message built around seva, moral values, unity and a lifelong commitment to the nation





CANADA TIGHTENS THE DOOR: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FACE A NEW IMMIGRATION REALITY

RAJEEV SHARMA | NATIONAL TIMES



Study permits are shrinking, immigration pathways are becoming more selective, and a Canadian credential is no longer a guaranteed ticket to permanent residency.

Canada's international education system is entering a significantly more restrictive phase as the federal government moves to reduce temporary resident numbers and better align immigration with housing capacity, infrastructure and labour-market needs. For prospective international students, the message is increasingly clear: choosing to study in Canada is no longer simply an education decision, it is an immigration and financial decision that requires careful planning.

Study Permit Numbers Under Pressure

Canada has sharply reduced the number of new international students it intends to admit. For 2026, the federal government has established a national target of 155,000 new study permits, continuing its broader strategy of reducing temporary migration. The reduction represents a major shift from the rapid growth experienced by Canada's international education sector in previous years. The government has linked tighter controls to concerns surrounding housing availability, public services, infrastructure and the overall size of the temporary-resident population.

More Screening Before Students Arrive

The application process has also become more demanding. For many students, a Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL) or Territorial Attestation Letter (TAL) is required in addition to the study-permit application. Applicants must also demonstrate that they have sufficient financial resources to support themselves in Canada. That means prospective students need to budget not only for tuition, but also for accommodation, transportation, food, health-related expenses and other living costs.

Not All Programs Offer the Same Future

One of the biggest changes is the growing importance of what students study. Canada is increasingly emphasizing education that connects with labour-market needs. Graduate-level education particularly master's and doctoral programs has received more favourable treatment in several federal and provincial policy measures. Fields connected to areas such as healthcare, STEM and other high-demand occupations may offer stronger opportunities, depending on the applicable immigration program and labour-market conditions. However, students should not assume that enrolling in a particular program automatically creates an immigration pathway.

A Canadian Diploma Is No Longer a PR Guarantee

Perhaps the most important message for international students is this: Graduation from a Canadian institution does not automatically lead to permanent residency. Canada has been separating its international education system from its permanent-residence strategy. Immigration selection is increasingly based on factors such as occupation, work experience, language ability, education, age, provincial nomination opportunities and Canada's evolving labour-market priorities. The Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) system has also undergone significant changes, making program selection and eligibility increasingly important. For students choosing a program primarily because they believe it will guarantee a work permit or permanent residence, the risks are considerably higher than they were several years ago.



The New Student Strategy: Education First, Immigration Planning Alongside It

The new environment does not mean international students have no opportunities in Canada. Instead, it means students need to approach their decisions with considerably greater care. Before paying tuition or submitting a study-permit application, prospective students should ask:

- Does the institution and program qualify for the applicable PGWP rules?
- What are the current federal and provincial immigration requirements?
- Is the field connected to genuine labour-market demand?
- What are the total tuition and living costs?
- Can the student demonstrate the required financial capacity?
- What provincial immigration options could potentially be available after graduation?
- What happens if immigration rules change before graduation?

Province-by-Province Differences Matter

Immigration is increasingly becoming a complex combination of federal and provincial policies. Provincial nominee programs, attestation requirements, labour-market priorities and student allocations can differ significantly across Canada. A program that appears attractive in one province may not provide the same opportunities in another. Students should therefore avoid making decisions based solely on advice from agents, social media posts or older immigration information.

A More Selective Canadian Dream

Canada remains an attractive destination for international education, but the rules of the game have changed. The era in which a student could simply enrol in a Canadian college, graduate, obtain a work permit and expect an eventual pathway to permanent residency is no longer a reliable model. Today's international student needs a stronger strategy: choose the right institution, select a program carefully, understand PGWP eligibility, prepare adequate finances, monitor immigration rules and develop skills that match Canada's evolving labour-market needs.

Canada is not necessarily closing its doors to international students but it is becoming far more selective about who enters, what they study and who ultimately has a pathway to permanent residence. For students considering Canada in 2026 and beyond, the most important lesson may be simple: Don't choose a Canadian education solely because you want Canadian immigration status. Choose an education that remains valuable even if immigration rules change.



THE DHILLON FACTOR: BJP'S PUNJAB RESET AND THE HIGH-STAKES BATTLE FOR 2027

"With a Jat Sikh leader at the forefront, BJP aims for a statewide breakthrough but AAP, Congress and Akali Dal stand between the party and Punjab's political transformation"

RAJEEV SHARMA | NATIONAL TIMES



Punjab's political battlefield is already beginning to take shape ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) preparing for one of its most ambitious attempts to expand its footprint in the state. At the centre of this strategy is Kewal Singh Dhillon, whose leadership represents a major shift in the party's approach towards Punjab's complex political landscape.

Dhillon's elevation as Punjab BJP president has been seen as a calculated move to strengthen the party's connection with Sikh voters, particularly among sections of the Jat Sikh community that hold significant political influence in the state. The appointment marks an effort by the BJP to move beyond its traditional urban support base and build a stronger presence in rural Punjab. The BJP's decision to contest all 117 Assembly seats independently signals a new political experiment. After years of alliance-based politics in Punjab, the party is now attempting to establish itself as a standalone force and directly compete across the state.

A New BJP Formula for Punjab

Punjab politics has historically revolved around agriculture, Sikh identity, regional issues, and economic concerns. The BJP has traditionally performed strongly in urban constituencies but has faced challenges in expanding its influence among rural and farming communities.

Dhillon's leadership is expected to focus heavily on issues that matter to Punjab's voters, including agricultural concerns, Minimum Support Price (MSP) discussions, industrial development, investment, and employment opportunities for youth. Punjab's economy remains one of the biggest challenges for any government.

Industrial growth, unemployment, farmer income, and migration of young people in search of opportunities are expected to dominate the 2027 election debate.

Political Impact on AAP and Akali Dal

Dhillon's emergence has drawn attention from all major political parties because any expansion of BJP's influence could change the traditional electoral calculations of Punjab.

For Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), a stronger BJP campaign under a Jat Sikh leader could create a new challenge in constituencies where voter preferences remain competitive. AAP will likely defend its governance record while highlighting its work on development, welfare schemes, and administrative reforms. For Sukhbir Singh Badal and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), Dhillon's rise carries significance because the party has historically maintained strong links with Sikh and rural voters. A BJP strategy aimed at connecting directly with these communities could create additional competition for SAD's traditional political space.

While there is no public evidence that Bhagwant Mann or Sukhbir Badal personally support Kewal Singh Dhillon, his political rise is being closely watched across party lines because it has the potential to influence Punjab's electoral equations.

The Biggest Challenge: Converting Leadership Into Votes

Political analysts believe Dhillon's biggest challenge will be transforming a leadership announcement into a strong grassroots organization. Punjab elections are often decided at the village level, where personal connections, local issues, and community trust play a crucial role. The BJP will need to convince voters that it understands Punjab's concerns and can provide solutions on agriculture, industry, jobs, and social issues. Opposition parties, meanwhile, will attempt to question the BJP's approach and protect their traditional voter bases.



Punjab 2027: A Battle Beyond Parties

The upcoming Assembly election is expected to be a multi-cornered contest involving AAP, Congress, BJP, SAD, and other regional forces. Each party will attempt to present itself as the best option for Punjab's future. For Kewal Singh Dhillon and the BJP, the 2027 election is more than a political contest; it is a test of whether a new leadership formula can succeed in a state where regional identity and local issues have always played a

decisive role.

The final verdict will come from Punjab's voters, who will decide whether this new political strategy represents a genuine change or simply another chapter in the state's long and competitive political history. Punjab 2027 will not only decide who forms the government, it will decide whether BJP's new strategy can reshape the political map of the state.

ONTARIO POLITICS: HOUSING, EDUCATION AND AI IN FOCUS

Ontario politics is being dominated by housing, infrastructure, education and the rapid growth of artificial intelligence. Premier Doug Ford's government has announced major investments aimed at helping municipalities build the infrastructure needed for new housing, as affordability and population growth remain key concerns for residents.

The province is also developing new rules for AI data centres as Ontario seeks to attract technology investment while addressing concerns about electricity demand and community infrastructure. Education remains another major issue, with new and expanded schools opening across the province ahead of the September return to classrooms.

Meanwhile, a continuing political debate surrounds Toronto's bike-lane policies and the balance between provincial authority and municipal decision-making. With housing costs, public services, jobs and economic growth dominating public concerns, Ontario's political agenda remains focused on issues that directly affect families and communities across the province.





CBSA INTENSIFIES IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AS CALGARY STUDENT PROTEST DRAWS NATIONAL ATTENTION

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) has come under increased public attention following immigration-status checks at a protest by international students in northeast Calgary. The demonstration, involving graduates who say they are facing difficulties obtaining post-graduation work permits, ended after CBSA officers identified 12 individuals for possible immigration-status concerns.

According to the CBSA, officers verified the status of 20 people and identified 12 who may be inadmissible under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. Those individuals were asked to report to the agency for follow-up interviews. The agency has emphasized that inland immigration investigations are part of its enforcement responsibilities and that people facing enforcement action have access to due process, including available appeals and judicial review.

The development has attracted significant attention among international students and immigration advocates, particularly because the protest involved graduates challenging work-permit decisions. Advocates have questioned the circumstances surrounding the CBSA presence, while authorities maintain that immigration-status verification is a legitimate enforcement function.

The Calgary incident comes as Canada continues to strengthen immigration enforcement. CBSA data show that the agency removed more than 10,000 inadmissible individuals during the first half of 2026, while the government has also increased its focus on serious criminality, organized crime and immigration non-compliance.



For international students and temporary residents, the message is increasingly important: maintaining valid immigration status and complying with Canadian immigration requirements remains essential. At the same time, the Calgary case highlights the importance of legal advice and due process when an individual's immigration status is questioned.

As Canada moves toward a more selective immigration system, CBSA enforcement is likely to remain an important national issue. For students, workers, families and employers across the country, understanding immigration obligations—and seeking qualified advice when problems arise—has become more important than ever.





B.C. POLITICS ENTERS A NEW PHASE AS NDP REGAINS LEAD AMID CONSERVATIVE SHAKE-UP



British Columbia's political landscape is entering a new and closely watched phase, with Premier David Eby's BC NDP regaining a narrow lead over the BC Conservatives while the Opposition undergoes a significant internal shake-up. A Research Co. poll conducted August 12–14 found the NDP at 44 per cent among decided voters, compared with 39 per cent for the Conservatives, with the Greens at 10 per cent.

The political picture has also been complicated by changes within the Conservative Party of B.C. Party leader Kerry-Lynne Findlay has been making significant organizational changes since taking over the leadership, including the replacement of party president Aisha Estey on August 20. Former leadership contender Peter Milobar also recently left the Conservative caucus and is now sitting as an independent MLA, saying his values no longer aligned with the direction of the party.

For Premier Eby and the NDP, the latest polling provides some breathing room after a period of strong Conservative momentum. Eby's approval rating stands at 49 per cent in the latest Research Co. survey, while housing, poverty and homelessness remain the province's most important issue, followed by the economy and jobs and health care.

The political competition remains far from settled. The Conservatives continue to have strong support in parts of Northern B.C., while the NDP maintains significant advantages on Vancouver Island and remains competitive in Metro Vancouver and Southern B.C. The relatively close numbers indicate that housing affordability, health care, jobs, public safety and economic growth are likely to remain central to the province's political debate.

For British Columbians, the coming months could be particularly important as both major parties work to strengthen their organizations and convince voters that they have the right plans for the province. The latest developments suggest that B.C. politics remains highly competitive, with neither side able to take public support for granted.





ALBERTA POLITICS HEATS UP AS BYELECTION AND MAJOR POLICY BATTLES TAKE CENTRE STAGE



Alberta politics is entering an increasingly important phase as Premier Danielle Smith's United Conservative government faces growing debate over health care, the economy, artificial intelligence projects and the province's proposed referendum on Alberta's future. With the next provincial election still ahead, both the UCP and Opposition NDP are working to strengthen their political positions and connect with voters across the province.

One of the most immediate political developments is the Calgary-Shaw byelection, which Premier Smith has called for September 14. The riding has been without an MLA since former UCP cabinet minister Rebecca Schulz resigned in May. The byelection will provide an early indication of the political mood in Calgary and is being closely watched by both the UCP and NDP.

Another major issue shaping Alberta politics is the proposed referendum on separation. Premier Smith's government has continued preparations surrounding the referendum, making Alberta's relationship with Ottawa and questions about provincial autonomy some of the most closely watched political issues in the province. The debate has created strong opinions among Albertans and is expected to remain a major topic as the government moves toward the fall political calendar.

Health care is also emerging as a central battleground. The Alberta NDP has intensified criticism of the UCP government over access to doctors and changes within the health-care system, while the government continues to defend its broader health-care reforms. The issue is particularly important to families, seniors and communities concerned about timely access to medical services.

Technology and artificial intelligence are another growing political issue. The proposed expansion of AI data centres has generated interest in Alberta's potential to attract major investment, but also concerns about electricity demand, land use, water and the impact on nearby communities. A proposed Synapse data-centre power project was recently rejected by the Alberta Utilities Commission, giving new momentum to the debate over how large technology projects should be approved and regulated.

For Alberta voters, these debates go beyond political parties. They involve questions about affordability, jobs, health care, energy, infrastructure, investment and the province's long-term relationship with Canada. As the UCP and NDP prepare for the next phase of political competition, Albertans will increasingly be looking not only at political promises but also at how proposed policies could affect their families, businesses and communities.

With a Calgary byelection approaching and several major policy debates underway, Alberta politics is becoming more competitive and consequential. The months ahead could provide an important indication of the issues that will shape the province's next major political contest.



CANADA'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE: CARNEY GOVERNMENT FACES KEY TESTS IN AUGUST



Canada's federal political scene is entering an important phase as Prime Minister Mark Carney's Liberal government prepares for three federal by-elections on August 31, while simultaneously dealing with intense Canada-U.S. trade negotiations. The by-elections in North Vancouver-Capilano, Beaches-East York and Chicoutimi-Le Fjord are being closely watched because the results could provide an early measure of public support for the new government.

The Liberals currently hold a parliamentary majority after winning three earlier by-elections in April, giving the Carney government greater room to advance its legislative agenda. The upcoming contests are nevertheless politically significant because opposition parties are seeking to demonstrate momentum and challenge the Liberals in key regions.

The biggest immediate issue for the federal government remains the Canada-U.S. trade relationship. Ottawa and Washington are in intensive negotiations, with Canadian Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc saying the two countries are "very close" to an agreement. The talks are aimed at reducing tariff pressures affecting Canadian exporters, particularly the automotive, steel and aluminum sectors.

The trade negotiations have also become a major political test for Prime Minister Carney. The government is attempting to protect Canadian industries while avoiding concessions that could have long-term consequences for the economy. The possibility of additional U.S. tariffs has increased pressure on Ottawa, while provincial leaders and Canadian businesses are watching the negotiations closely.

At the same time, the Carney government is promoting a major economic-development agenda focused on infrastructure, energy and national economic capacity. On August 17, the federal government announced a nearly \$70-billion clean-energy agreement involving Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec, including plans to expand Churchill Falls and develop the Gull Island project. Ottawa says the projects could support 23,000 jobs and generate significant economic activity.

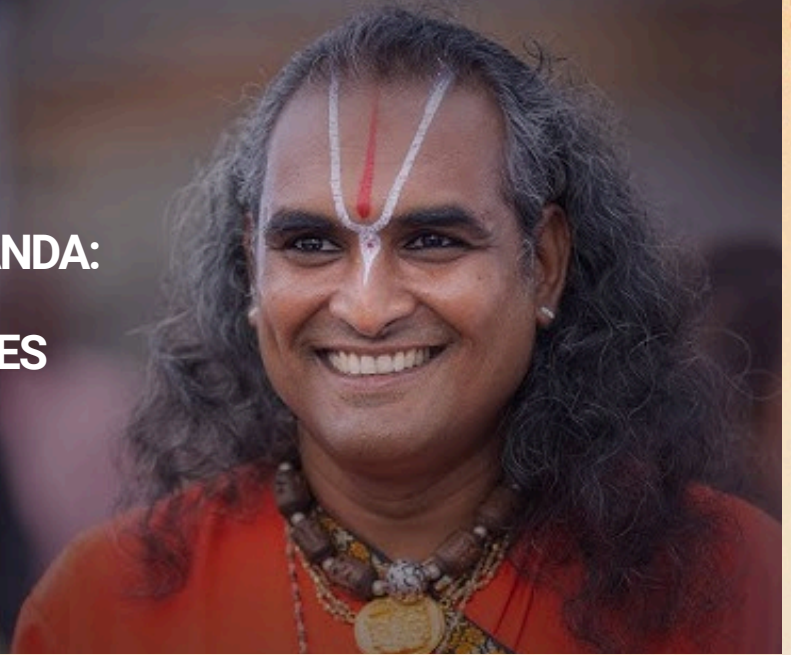
For Canadian voters, the political debate is increasingly centred on the economy, affordability, jobs, housing, national unity and Canada's relationship with the United States. The coming by-elections will offer voters an opportunity to express their views while giving political parties valuable insight into the issues that matter most to Canadians.

With a strong parliamentary position but major economic and international challenges ahead, Prime Minister Carney's government is entering a crucial period. The August 31 by-elections, ongoing trade negotiations and the government's ambitious economic agenda could shape the political conversation for the months ahead.





PARAMHANSA VISHWANANDA: BRINGING THE PATH OF DEVOTION TO COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD



Paramhansa Sri Swami Vishwananda is a spiritual teacher and the founder of Bhakti Marga, an international spiritual movement whose name means the "path of devotion." According to Bhakti Marga, his central mission is to help people open their hearts and deepen their relationship with the Divine through love, devotion and spiritual practice.

The teachings associated with Paramhansa Vishwananda place strong emphasis on bhakti, or devotion, as a way of experiencing spirituality in everyday life. Bhakti Marga describes its approach as combining yoga and meditation, spiritual knowledge, rituals and devotional arts. Music, chanting, prayer and other devotional practices are presented as ways for individuals to cultivate a deeper inner connection.

A distinctive feature of the Bhakti Marga tradition is its emphasis on devotional music and community participation. Kirtan and bhajan are used not simply as performances but as forms of spiritual practice, allowing participants to sing, listen, reflect and share an atmosphere of devotion. The organization says that sincerity and devotion are more important than musical ability.

Bhakti Marga has developed an international community around these teachings, with spiritual centres, courses, events and communities in different parts of the world. Its main spiritual centre, Shree Peetha Nilaya in Germany, serves as an important gathering place for followers and visitors. The organization also offers educational programs covering Hinduism, scriptures, meditation and devotional practices.

Paramhansa Vishwananda's teachings are associated with the Hari Bhakta Sampradāya, a spiritual lineage established around his teachings. Bhakti Marga describes the tradition as a pathway intended to make the experience of the Divine part of daily life, with devotion, spiritual discipline and service playing important roles.

For many participants, the attraction of Bhakti Marga events is the opportunity to step away from the pressures of everyday life and spend time in prayer, music, meditation and community. The organization's philosophy emphasizes moving from the mind toward the heart, with love and devotion at the centre of spiritual development.

Calgary will have an opportunity to experience this tradition directly in September when Paramhansa Vishwananda is scheduled to be featured in a Darshan Blessing program on Sunday, September 13, 2026, followed by a Ganesh Chaturthi and Bhajan Jamming celebration on Monday, September 14. The Calgary programs will combine devotional music, inspirational talks, sacred rituals and community participation.

For Calgary's diverse community, the two-day gathering offers more than a religious event; it provides an opportunity for people interested in spirituality, Indian devotional traditions, music and meditation to come together in a shared environment of reflection and celebration.

More information about Paramhansa Vishwananda, Bhakti Marga and its international activities is available through BhaktiMarga.ca/Calgary.

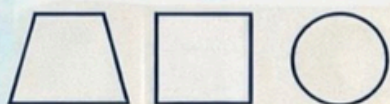




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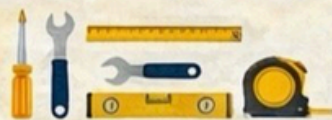


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