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CHIEF EDITOR DESK



Dear Readers,

On behalf of National Awareness Times (India's National Weekly), the editorial board and the team of our journal would like to wish all the readers a wonderful week ahead to all.

Ayodhya once again became the radiant heart of India's Diwali celebrations this year, as millions across the nation joined in the festival of lights that symbolizes the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness.

As part of the ongoing First Exposition of the Sacred Relics of Lord Buddha in the Republic of Kalmykia, Russian Federation, a special art exhibition was organized showcasing the works of Padma Shri awardee Vasudeo Kamath.

The Reserve Bank of India's October 2025 Monetary Policy Committee meeting reveal a central bank that is cautiously optimistic about India's economic trajectory.

The European Council has officially approved a new Strategic EU-India Agenda, marking a significant milestone in strengthening the partnership between the European Union and India.

Deepak Singh,
Chief Editor

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DIWALI CELEBRATED ACROSS INDIA

By Editor – Gaurav Singh



Ayodhya once again became the radiant heart of India's Diwali celebrations this year, as millions across the nation joined in the festival of lights that symbolizes the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness. The occasion took on special meaning in 2025, marking the first Diwali since the grand inauguration of the Ram Temple, a moment of deep spiritual and national pride. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath began his day in the sacred city with prayers at Hanumangarhi, where he offered his respects to Bajrangbali before proceeding to the Ramjanma-bhoomi site to seek blessings from Lord Ram Lala for the happiness and well-being of the people. After performing the rituals, the Chief Minister visited the Meerapur

Bulandi Dalit Basti in Abhiram Das Ward, where he distributed sweets, clothes, and chocolates to local families and children in celebration of the festival. The joy on the children's faces reflected the true essence of Diwali, a celebration of light, compassion, and unity. Speaking to the media later, Adityanath reflected on the enduring significance of the festival, recalling how Ayodhya was illuminated with lamps in Treta Yuga to welcome Lord Ram after his 14-year exile. "This festival continues to resonate with devotees across the country," he said. "This year is particularly special, as it marks the return of Lord Ram to his rightful abode after a 500-year gap." He described Diwali as a symbol of the spread of knowledge, faith, and prosperity, expressing hope that the

festival would inspire enthusiasm and joy among the people of Uttar Pradesh and all followers of Sanatan Dharma. After his visit to the Dalit colony, the Chief Minister proceeded to Karsevakpuram, where he met with local saints, thanking them for their support in organizing the Deepotsav and wishing them a joyous Diwali. "Deepotsav has become synonymous with Ayodhya and brings honor to our country on the global stage," he said. He added that the government had fulfilled the long-standing aspirations of the citizens and spiritual leaders of Ayodhya, urging everyone to uphold and elevate that legacy. Adityanath also cautioned against complacency and division. "Those who remain idle will miss out," he said. "We must avoid divisions



based on caste, opinion, language, or religion. Our heritage and nation are secure now, but we must boldly counter anyone who questions our existence. The future of India is intertwined with Sanatan Dharma, and our identity should be defined by our commitment to service.” He paid tribute to those who had sacrificed their lives for the Ram Temple, emphasizing that their devotion had paved the way for a new era in Ayodhya’s history.

The Chief Minister’s day continued with visits to several spiritual leaders, including Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust President Nritya Gopal Das Maharaj, Suresh Das Ji Maharaj at Digambar Akhara, and Kishore Das Ji Maharaj at Bada Bhakt Mal, where he was honored with a shawl. He also visited the Mani Ram Das Cantonment to enquire about the well-being of its residents. His interactions reflected both devotion and gratitude to the religious fraternity that had played a major role in shaping Ayodhya’s transformation.

As Adityanath led the celebrations in Ayodhya, the rest of the nation was equally immersed in Diwali festivities. Millions of Indians celebrated Diwali 2025 with homes, temples, and city streets illuminated by lamps, fairy lights, and fireworks. Observed on October 21 this year, the festival brought together joy, devotion, and reflection, blending centuries-old

traditions with growing awareness about environmental sustainability. The festival, which lasts five days, symbolizes renewal, victory, and the shared joy of family and community. Beyond its religious meaning, Diwali continues to serve as a reminder of India’s cultural unity in diversity, celebrated not only by Hindus but also by Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists in their own distinctive ways.

Across the country, small earthen oil lamps glowed on doorsteps and balconies, giving homes a golden warmth that represented the triumph of light over darkness. Lighting these lamps, for many, is a sacred act of inviting prosperity, positivity, and divine blessings into one’s home. Yet, alongside this radiance came the familiar sound of fireworks, long associated with Diwali’s celebratory spirit. Despite the Supreme Court’s regulations allowing only green crackers designed to emit less pollution, many cities witnessed widespread firework use. Environmentalists remained skeptical about their effectiveness, and the morning after Diwali, air quality levels across

northern India dipped sharply, with Delhi and its neighboring regions recording severe pollution levels. Authorities deployed anti-smog guns and water sprinklers, but a thick haze lingered over the capital, reflecting the ongoing tension between celebration and sustainability.

In contrast, Ayodhya’s Deepotsav stood out as a historic and spiritually charged celebration. Along the banks of the Sarayu River, over 24 lakh diyas were lit, setting a new world record and transforming the riverfront into a sea of golden light. Cultural performances, devotional songs, and laser shows brought scenes from the Ramayana to life, while chants of “Jai Shri Ram” echoed across the night sky. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath both attended the grand celebration, lighting lamps and performing aarti before thousands of devotees. The event’s success underscored how Ayodhya has evolved into both a spiritual center and a symbol of India’s cultural resurgence.

In Delhi, Diwali was celebrated with grandeur and restraint. Streets shimmered with decorative lights, while homes displayed colorful rangolis and flower garlands. Temples such as Akshardham and Birla Mandir were crowded with devotees offering prayers to Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Ganesha. Markets like Chandni Chowk and Lajpat Nagar thrived in the days leading up to the festival, as families shopped for new clothes, gifts, and sweets. Traditional treats such as motichoor laddoos, kaju katli, and gulab jamuns filled sweet shops, while





families prepared homemade snacks to share with neighbors, reinforcing the sense of community that defines Diwali.

Mumbai celebrated with its characteristic flair, blending faith, glamour, and festivity. The city's skyline glittered with lanterns and diyas, while devotees thronged the Siddhivinayak Temple. Bollywood stars hosted lavish Diwali parties, and bustling markets saw record sales in gold, jewelry, and festive wear. In Gujarat, the festival coincided with Chopda Pujan, when traders and business owners performed rituals to mark the start of the new financial year, seeking blessings for prosperity. Ahmedabad and Surat were alive with color and light as fireworks illuminated the night sky.

Across Rajasthan, cities such as Jaipur and Udaipur glowed with royal splendor as palaces, havelis, and forts were draped in lights, attracting tourists from across the world. In Kolkata, Diwali coincided with Kali Puja, with the city's temples, especially Dakshineswar and Kalighat, decorated with lamps and flowers. Devotees offered red hibiscus garlands and sweets to Goddess Kali, blending spirituality with artistic celebration. Meanwhile, in South India, Diwali, known as Deepavali, was celebrated with distinctive customs. Families began the day with oil baths, prayers, and feasts. Homes were decorated with intricate kolams and fresh flowers, and the air was filled with the aroma of traditional snacks like



murukku and seedai. Cities such as Chennai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad glowed under a gentler light, focusing on family gatherings and devotion.

Diwali's significance transcends religion. Sikhs observe it as Bandi Chhor Divas, commemorating Guru Hargobind Sahib's release from imprisonment, while Jains celebrate the day Lord Mahavira attained nirvana. For Buddhists, it marks Emperor Ashoka's embrace of the path of peace. In every faith, Diwali represents hope, renewal, and compassion, reminding people that light and kindness know no boundaries.

Economically, Diwali remains India's most vibrant season of growth. Markets across the country saw record consumer spending this year, with strong sales in gold, automobiles, electronics, and apparel. E-commerce platforms reported unprecedented activity as people shopped online for decorations and gifts. Travel surged too, with families reuniting across states and cities. For artisans, sweetmakers, and small businesses, Diwali continued to be a lifeline of prosperity.

At the heart of the festival lies food and family. Kitchens came alive with the fragrance of ghee and cardamom, as sweets like jalebi, barfi, mysore pak, and adhirasam symbolized the sweetness of togetherness. Families cleaned and decorated their homes to welcome Goddess Lakshmi, filling them with rangolis, flowers, and incense. The evening puja brought families together in prayer before the night unfolded in laughter, lights, and shared meals.

As the diyas faded and the smoke settled, Diwali 2025 left behind a lasting glow in the hearts of millions. From Ayodhya's record-breaking Deepotsav led by Yogi Adityanath to the quiet lamp-lit homes in every corner of India, the festival reaffirmed a timeless truth: no matter how deep the darkness, a single flame of faith and unity can light the way forward.

EVENTS



The Union Minister for Defence, Shri Rajnath Singh receiving the Vice President of Brazil Mr Geraldo Alckmin and Defence Minister of Brazil Mr. Jose Mucio Monteiro Filho ahead of their meeting, in New Delhi.

The Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah attends the conference on “Extradition of Fugitives: Challenges and Strategies” organised by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), in New Delhi.



The President of Mongolia Mr. Khurelsukh Ukhnaa, Cultural welcome at Bharat Mandapam, in New Delhi.



The Union Minister for Defence, Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurates Titanium & Superalloy Materials Plant at PTC Industries' Strategic Materials Technology Complex, in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

PM celebrates Diwali with armed forces personnel on board the INS Vikrant.



The Vice-President of India & Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan called on the President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu and exchanged Deepawali greetings at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi.

PADMA SHRI ARTIST SHRI VASUDEO KAMATH SHOWCASES SPECIAL EXHIBITION ON THE LIFE OF LORD BUDDHA



As part of the ongoing First Exposition of the Sacred Relics of Lord Buddha in the Republic of Kalmykia, Russian Federation, a special art exhibition was organized showcasing the works of Padma Shri awardee Vasudeo Kamath. The exhibition presented a captivating visual journey through the life and teachings of Lord Buddha, blending artistic mastery with spiritual reflection.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Shri Keshav Prasad Maurya, Deputy Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, in the presence of dignitaries including the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Shri Manoj Sinha, senior officials from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, and representatives of the Government of the Republic of Kalmykia. The exposition, organized by the National Museum, New Delhi under the Ministry of Culture, in collaboration with the National Museum of the Kalmyk Republic, aims to deepen the cultural and spiritual bonds between India and Russia, rooted in their shared Buddhist heritage.

Titled "Depicting the Life of the Buddha: From Renunciation to Enlightenment", the exhibition featured 28 paintings created by Shri Kamath over more than a year. Each painting narrates a defining episode from the Buddha's life ranging from Dipankara Buddha's renunciation of Sumedha, Prince Siddhartha's departure from the palace, the defeat of Mara, the moment of enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, the first sermon at Sarnath, to Angulimala's surrender and Rahula's quest for inheritance. The artworks were distinguished by Kamath's precision, serene color palette, and emotional depth, transforming profound spiritual events into timeless visual narratives.

Audiences in Kalmykia, including monks, scholars, students, and art enthusiasts, were deeply moved by the exhibition's spiritual resonance. Many described the experience as both artistic and meditative, noting how Kamath's works illuminated the essence of Buddhist philosophy compassion, peace, and renunciation through a uniquely Indian lens.

Born in Karakal, Karnataka, in

1956, Vasudeo Kamath is one of India's most accomplished painters, renowned for his versatility in portraiture, landscapes, and conceptual art. A Gold Medalist from the Sir J. J. School of Art, Mumbai, he has received several national and international honors, including the Bombay Art Society Gold Medal, The Draper Grand Prize by the Portrait Society of America, and awards at the Salon International and San Diego Watercolor Society. His art, spanning oils, acrylics, and watercolors, is known for blending realism with imagination, exploring human consciousness and the search for inner truth.

In recognition of his remarkable artistic journey, Shri Kamath was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India in 2025. Demonstrating his humility and devotion to cultural harmony, he donated all 28 paintings from the exhibition to the National Museum of Elista, Kalmyk Republic. He described this act as "a humble offering of art from India to the land where the Dharma continues to live in people's hearts."

The Director of the National Museum of Elista presented Shri Kamath with a Letter of Appreciation, praising the gesture as a lasting symbol of Indo-Russian friendship and shared Buddhist values. The exhibition not only celebrated the life of the Buddha but also reaffirmed the enduring cultural and spiritual connection between India and Russia. Through this artistic exchange, Kamath's creations have become an eternal bridge of peace, compassion, and enlightenment, inspiring generations across borders.

RBI HINTS AT FUTURE RATE CUTS AS INFLATION EASES AND GROWTH HOLDS STEADY



The Reserve Bank of India's October 2025 Monetary Policy Committee meeting reveal a central bank that is cautiously optimistic about India's economic trajectory. While the committee decided to maintain the policy repo rate at 5.50 percent, the tone of the discussions suggested growing confidence that inflation is well under control, leaving space for possible rate cuts in the coming months.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra noted that both headline and core inflation have shown a sustained decline, creating "policy space" for potential easing in the future. Inflation fell sharply to an eight-year low of 1.54 percent in September 2025, aided by moderation in food prices and a favourable base effect. Consequently, the committee revised its inflation forecast for the 2025–26 fiscal year downward to about 2.6 percent, while GDP growth projections were upgraded to around 6.8 percent, reflecting resilience in private consumption and continued government spending.

Despite this encouraging backdrop, the MPC preferred to

wait and watch before announcing any additional rate cuts. Members cited the need to monitor how earlier reductions are transmitted through the economy and how global conditions evolve. Two external members of the committee supported shifting the monetary policy stance from "Neutral" to "Accommodative," indicating their readiness to ease rates sooner rather than later. However, the majority of the committee voted to retain the neutral stance until there is clearer evidence on how earlier actions are influencing inflation and growth.

The RBI's decision reflects a careful balancing act. By maintaining rates while acknowledging the scope for future easing, the central bank is sending a message of conditional preparedness. It signaled to markets that although a rate cut is not imminent, the door remains open should the economic environment warrant it. Financial markets interpreted this position as moderately dovish, with bond yields declining slightly on expectations of a possible cut in the next few months.

The implications of the minutes extend beyond monetary policy. For households and businesses, the signal is that borrowing costs are unlikely to rise further and may gradually decline if inflation remains subdued. Banks may begin to adjust lending strategies in anticipation of lower policy rates later in the fiscal year. At the same time, depositors and savers should prepare for the possibility of reduced returns if easing begins. For the government, the RBI's stance underscores that fiscal and monetary coordination must remain disciplined, as the central bank is unlikely to provide automatic support unless growth slows significantly.

Analysts believe that the RBI's cautious optimism is well-founded. India currently enjoys a rare combination of low inflation and steady growth, a mix that allows for policy flexibility. However, the global environment remains uncertain, with fluctuations in oil prices, trade tensions, and slowing demand in major economies posing potential risks. The central bank's decision to hold its firepower for now appears prudent in light of these uncertainties.

In conclusion, the October 2025 MPC minutes highlight a central bank in a position of strength but mindful of its timing. By maintaining rates while keeping an eye on evolving data, the RBI has effectively reassured markets that it stands ready to act if conditions soften further. Investors and borrowers will now look to the next meeting in December for clearer signals on whether India's monetary easing cycle is about to resume.



Govardhan Asrani

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EUROPEAN COUNCIL APPROVES NEW STRATEGIC EU-INDIA AGENDA



The European Council has officially approved a new Strategic EU-India Agenda, marking a significant milestone in strengthening the partnership between the European Union and India. The renewed framework sets a forward-looking vision for deeper cooperation in trade, technology, security, and sustainability, underscoring both sides' commitment to shaping a rules-based international order amid shifting global dynamics. The new agenda replaces the 2020 EU-India Roadmap and introduces a broader, more ambitious plan that aligns with contemporary challenges. It aims to reinforce the political, economic, and cultural links between the two democracies, which share common values of democracy, multilateralism, and sustainable development. The agreement comes at a time when geopolitical uncertainties, climate crises, and digital transformations are reshaping global relationships. Both sides see this as a crucial opportunity to position the EU-India partnership as a pillar of stability and progress in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. At the heart of the agenda is the goal of boosting economic and trade ties. The European Union is already one of

India's largest trading partners, accounting for nearly 14 percent of India's total trade, while India ranks among the EU's top ten trading partners. The agenda envisions the early conclusion of the long-pending EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which is expected to unlock immense opportunities for businesses, particularly in sectors such as renewable energy, digital services, and green technologies. The new framework emphasizes creating resilient supply chains, encouraging sustainable investment, and ensuring fair and open markets on both sides. Technology and innovation also feature prominently in the new roadmap. The EU and India have agreed to expand cooperation in critical and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, quantum computing, cybersecurity, and space research. A new EU-India Technology Council, established earlier, will play a key role in steering joint research initiatives, facilitating start-up exchanges, and building a trusted framework for digital governance. Both sides have expressed their intention to enhance data protection standards and collaborate on building ethical and transparent AI ecosystems. Climate

action and sustainable development form another cornerstone of the partnership. The agenda outlines joint efforts toward achieving net-zero targets, advancing renewable energy deployment, and promoting circular economy models. It includes cooperation on green hydrogen, clean mobility, and energy-efficient infrastructure, aligning closely with India's National Green Hydrogen Mission and the EU's Green Deal. The partners also plan to intensify work on biodiversity conservation and water management, areas that are increasingly critical for both regions. Security and global governance are also major priorities under the new agenda. Both sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, grounded in international law and respect for sovereignty. They aim to deepen cooperation in maritime security, counterterrorism, and defense research. Additionally, the EU and India will strengthen dialogues on global governance reforms, including at the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, to reflect the realities of the 21st century. Cultural and people-to-people exchanges continue to be vital for deepening mutual understanding. The agenda supports greater academic collaboration, youth mobility, and tourism initiatives. Enhanced visa facilitation and educational partnerships, especially under programs such as Erasmus+, will contribute to fostering stronger connections between European and Indian societies. The approval of the Strategic EU-India Agenda signals a renewed chapter in the evolving relationship between Brussels and New Delhi. It reflects a recognition that the partnership is not only about economic gains but also about shaping global norms and addressing shared challenges. As both regions navigate an increasingly fragmented world, this strategic alignment promises to reinforce their roles as responsible and forward-looking actors on the global stage.

KARTIK AARYAN TO BEGIN SHOOTING FOR NAAGZILLA FROM NOVEMBER 1



Earlier this year, Kartik Aaryan fans were in for a treat when it was announced that he would be seen in the high-concept creature comedy Naagzilla, backed by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions and Mahaveer Jain's Mahaveer Jain Films (with Mrighdeep Singh Lamba and Sujit Jain as partners). Bollywood Hungama has now learned that the much-awaited film, featuring Kartik as a shape-shifting nag, goes on floors in around two weeks' time.

A source told Bollywood Hungama, "Kartik Aaryan will start shooting for Naagzilla from November 1 in Mumbai. The actor and the whole team of the film are excited to begin shooting. The pre-production has been successfully going on in full swing for a while. Hence, the team is fully

prepared to commence shooting. The aim is to release the film next year on Independence Day, as planned."

When asked about the female lead, the source replied, "The makers are yet to take the final call, but rest assured, it'll surely be a surprise that would further cheer all those who are waiting for this one-of-a-kind film."

Yesterday, on October 16, Bollywood Hungama had reported that Kartik Aaryan would resume the shoot of Anurag Basu's next in November as well. The source revealed, "Kartik will juggle the shoot of both the films. He's a thorough professional and has planned his dates impeccably for next month."

Naagzilla is directed by Mrighdeep Singh Lamba and marks the beginning of a long partnership between Karan Johar's Dharma Productions and Mahaveer Jain's Mahaveer Jain Films. The aim is to make out-of-the-box entertainers – from high-concept fantasies to contemporary dramas to compelling narratives rooted in Indian ethos, etc.

Interestingly, Kartik Aaryan and Mahaveer Jain were recently seen at Whistling Woods International, where they were honoured by Gautam Adani, Chairman of Adani Group. Earlier this year, Kartik and Karan Johar completed the filming of the romcom Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri. Co-starring Ananya Panday, it is all set to release on December 31, 2025. Naagzilla marks the second collaboration between Kartik and Kjo.

PARAM SUNDARI FINDS ITS FEET WITH AUDIENCES & QUIETLY WINS BIG



A 2025 feel-good romance with modern sensibility, Param Sundari proves that films made with a smart approach to storytelling and resources can quietly make a mark. Produced by Maddock Films with a clear-eyed focus on both narrative and budget, the film demonstrates a formula for success that is increasingly relevant in today's unpredictable Bollywood climate.

Made on a modest ₹45 crore budget, the film has already crossed ₹90 crore worldwide, doubling its investment. It's a case study in how thoughtful cost-to-profit management can deliver meaningful results, echoing the grounded successes that defined an earlier era of Hindi cinema.

So why did it work? Param Sundari connected with its audience through a mix of sincerity and simplicity- Sidharth Malhotra and Janhvi Kapoor's easy chemistry, relatable

performances, and chart-topping music all contributed to its sustained theatrical run.

Trade analysts note that Param Sundari also reaffirms Sidharth Malhotra's steady box-office reliability. Over the years, his performances in films like Shershaah, Kapoor and Sons and Ek Villain have built a loyal audience that responds to sincerity and emotional resonance over star theatrics, a trait that's clearly worked again here.

For Maddock Films, Param Sundari reinforces its reputation as one of the few production houses balancing creativity with commerce. With strong satellite and OTT prospects ahead, the film stands as proof that thoughtful cost-to-profit management, not just box-office noise, can define the new benchmark for success in Bollywood.

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