

# **T** NATIONAL AWARENESS **S** **TIME**

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## **H.E. DR. PATRICK HERMINIE**

*Addresses The Nation Amid Global Crisis*



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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 & Happy Baisakhi to all.*

*In a powerful and timely national address, the President spoke to the nation against the backdrop of rising global instability, particularly the escalating conflict involving Iran, the United States, and Israel.*

*Former Member of Parliament for Ealing Southall, Virendra Sharma, has been awarded the Freedom of the Borough of Ealing — one of the highest civic honours — in recognition of his exceptional and lifelong contribution to public service and community leadership.*

*On the sidelines of the 9th Indian Ocean Conference held in Port Louis, S. Jaishankar, India's External Affairs Minister, met with Barry Faure, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Seychelles.*

*JJ Valaya is a renowned Indian fashion designer known for his luxurious and heritage-inspired creations. Born as Jagsharanjit Singh Ahluwalia, he founded the House of Valaya in 1992 and quickly became a leading name in India's fashion industry.*

*Launched as a transformative initiative to deepen youth participation in policymaking, MY Bharat Budget Quest 2026 serves as a national platform connecting young citizens with governance processes and the Union Budget.*

**Deepak Singh,**  
Chief Editor

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# H.E. DR. PATRICK HERMINIE ADDRESSES THE NATION AMID GLOBAL CRISIS

By Editor – Gaurav Singh



In a powerful and timely national address, the President spoke to the nation against the backdrop of rising global instability, particularly the escalating conflict involving Iran, the United States, and Israel. The speech reflected a blend of concern, preparedness, and reassurance, emphasizing that while the country may not be directly involved in the conflict, the ripple effects are already being felt across multiple sectors of the economy. The President began by

acknowledging the seriousness of the international situation. The ongoing tensions in the Middle East have created uncertainty worldwide, affecting not only political stability but also economic systems, travel routes, and supply chains. Despite the geographical distance, the interconnected nature of today's global economy means that no nation remains untouched. He stressed that even though the conflict is far away, its consequences are being

experienced locally, particularly in tourism, fuel supply, and the cost of living.

One of the most immediate impacts highlighted in the address was on the tourism industry. At the beginning of the year, expectations were high, with projections suggesting record-breaking tourist arrivals. However, due to the disruption of air routes through the Middle East, many international airlines have reduced or rerouted flights. As a result, tourist arrivals have significantly declined,



production, particularly in agriculture. Farmers are being encouraged and supported to increase production, reduce dependency on imports, and strengthen national food security. Subsidies and incentives are being introduced to assist agricultural growth, including support for livestock feed and fertilizers. Efforts are also being made to enhance fishing and other local industries to ensure a steady supply of essential goods.

Energy conservation emerged as a key strategy in the government's response plan. Public sector employees are being encouraged to work from home where possible to reduce fuel consumption and traffic congestion. These temporary measures aim to ease pressure on national resources while maintaining essential services. The President reassured citizens that these steps would not compromise the efficiency of government operations.

reportedly dropping by nearly 40 percent. This downturn has had a cascading effect on businesses dependent on tourism, from hotels and transport services to small vendors and local artisans.

Fuel supply and pricing were another major concern addressed. With global tensions affecting oil production and transportation routes, the risk of fuel shortages and rising prices has increased. The President assured citizens that the government has already taken proactive steps by maintaining sufficient fuel reserves and securing additional shipments. However, he cautioned that if the situation does not improve, further disruptions could occur. As a precautionary measure, fuel prices have been increased, a decision described as necessary but carefully considered to ensure long-term stability.

To mitigate these challenges, the government has established a high-level

committee to coordinate response efforts. This committee is responsible for monitoring essential supplies, stabilizing economic activities, and ensuring timely decision-making. Measures have also been implemented to secure basic commodities, strengthen foreign currency reserves, and maintain financial system stability.

Recognizing the importance of self-reliance, the President emphasized boosting local





Support for businesses and workers was another focal point of the address. The government has introduced relief measures such as tax adjustments, flexible loan repayment options, and temporary reductions in rental payments for affected sectors. Employers are also being given the option to defer pension contributions without penalties, providing immediate financial relief. These initiatives are designed to sustain businesses, protect jobs, and maintain economic continuity during uncertain times.

Healthcare and essential services remain a top priority. The government is ensuring that hospitals and clinics are adequately supplied with necessary medical resources. Despite challenges in global supply chains, efforts are being made to prevent shortages and maintain the quality of healthcare services.

The President also called for collective responsibility, urging



citizens to remain calm, avoid panic, and act responsibly. He emphasized that national resilience depends not only on government action but also on individual behavior. Simple steps such as reducing unnecessary travel, supporting local products, and avoiding wasteful spending can collectively make a significant difference.

In a tone of unity and determination, the address highlighted the country's history of overcoming challenges through discipline and solidarity. The President expressed confidence that, just as in the past, the nation would emerge stronger from this crisis. He also extended gratitude to healthcare workers, government officials, private sector contributors, and citizens for their dedication and resilience.

The speech concluded with a message of hope and faith, encouraging people to trust the process and remain united. While acknowledging the difficulties ahead, the President reaffirmed the government's commitment to safeguarding the nation's economy, ensuring stability, and protecting the well-being of its people.

In essence, the address served as both a warning and a reassurance. It underscored the seriousness of the global situation while outlining clear strategies to navigate its impact. Above all, it reinforced the idea that through preparedness, cooperation, and resilience, the nation can withstand external shocks and continue moving forward with strength and confidence.

# EVENTS



*The Union Minister for Defence, Shri Rajnath Singh chaired Informal Group of Ministers (IGoM) to takes stock of India's readiness in view of the recent developments in West Asia during its third meeting at Kartavya Bhawan-2, in New Delhi.*

*Gathering at the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Sammelan' at Vigyan Bhawan, in New Delhi, PM addressing on the occasion.*



*The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan in a group photograph during the Ran Samwad 2026, in Bengaluru.*

# VIRENDRA SHARMA AWARDED FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH OF EALING



journey of public service possible. If my life has meant anything, it is simply this: to serve the people, with humility, with dignity, and with an unwavering belief in secularism, equality, unity and fairness.”

Mr Sharma’s journey in Ealing began shortly after arriving in the United Kingdom, where he became actively involved in community work, trade union activity, and youth engagement. He was elected as a councillor in the London Borough of Ealing in 1982, later serving as Mayor, before being elected as Member of Parliament for Ealing Southall in 2007.

Throughout his distinguished career, Mr Sharma has been a consistent and influential advocate for social justice, equality, and opportunity. His work has spanned housing, education, and youth development, alongside a longstanding commitment to human rights and international engagement. He is also widely recognised for his leadership within diaspora communities and his efforts to promote interfaith dialogue and understanding. The Freedom of the Borough is one of the highest honours a local authority can bestow, awarded to individuals who have rendered eminent service to the borough or brought distinction and honour to the area.

## Notes to Editors

Former Member of Parliament for Ealing Southall (2007–2024)  
Councillor, London Borough of Ealing (from 1982)  
Former Mayor of Ealing  
Over 50 years of public service in Ealing and beyond  
Longstanding advocate for equality, social justice, and community cohesion  
Active in promoting human rights, international engagement, and diaspora relations

**F**ormer Member of Parliament for Ealing Southall, Virendra Sharma, has been awarded the Freedom of the Borough of Ealing — one of the highest civic honours — in recognition of his exceptional and lifelong contribution to public service and community leadership.

The honour marks more than five decades of dedicated service to Ealing and beyond, during which Mr Sharma has played a pivotal role in

promoting equality, strengthening community cohesion, and championing the voices of diverse communities.

Speaking following the award, Mr Sharma said: “Receiving the Freedom of the Borough of Ealing is a deeply humbling honour. This community has been my home for over five decades, and I share this recognition with my wife Nirmala, my family, and all those whose support has made my lifelong

## INDIA–SEYCHELLES TALKS HELD ON SIDELINES OF INDIAN OCEAN CONFERENCE



**O**n the sidelines of the 9th Indian Ocean Conference held in Port Louis, S. Jaishankar, India's External Affairs Minister, met with Barry Faure, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Seychelles. The meeting highlighted the growing importance of India's engagement with island nations in the Indian Ocean region and reaffirmed the strong bilateral ties between the two countries.

India and Seychelles share a long-standing relationship rooted in mutual trust, historical connections, and strategic cooperation. Over the years, India has emerged as a key development partner for Seychelles, supporting various sectors including infrastructure, healthcare, education, and maritime security. The meeting between the two leaders provided an opportunity to review ongoing collaborations and explore new avenues of partnership. During the discussion, both sides emphasized the importance of maintaining peace, stability, and security in the Indian Ocean region. With increasing geopolitical competition and challenges such as piracy, illegal fishing, and climate change, cooperation among regional countries has become more crucial than ever. India has consistently

advocated for a rules-based maritime order and has worked closely with island nations like Seychelles to strengthen their maritime capabilities. A major area of focus in the meeting was maritime security. Seychelles, being a strategically located island nation, plays a significant role in ensuring the safety of sea lanes in the region. India has supported Seychelles through capacity-building initiatives, including training programs, supply of patrol vessels, and surveillance systems. These efforts have helped enhance Seychelles' ability to monitor its vast maritime domain and respond to emerging threats.

The leaders also discussed development cooperation projects. India has been involved in several infrastructure initiatives in Seychelles, ranging from government buildings to community development projects. These initiatives are aimed at improving the quality of life for the people of Seychelles while strengthening the overall partnership between the two countries. The meeting reaffirmed India's commitment to continue supporting Seychelles in its development journey.

Another key topic of discussion was climate change, which poses a

serious threat to small island developing states like Seychelles. Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation are major concerns for the island nation. India reiterated its support for global climate action and emphasized the need for collaborative efforts to address these challenges. Initiatives such as renewable energy development and climate resilience projects were also highlighted as areas of cooperation.

The interaction between the two ministers also underscored the broader significance of the Indian Ocean Conference as a platform for dialogue and cooperation. The conference brings together leaders, policymakers, and experts from across the region to discuss key issues affecting the Indian Ocean. It serves as an important forum for strengthening regional partnerships and addressing shared challenges. India's engagement with Seychelles is part of its wider "Security and Growth for All in the Region" (SAGAR) vision, which focuses on promoting collective security and sustainable development in the Indian Ocean. Through this approach, India aims to build strong partnerships with neighboring countries and contribute to regional stability.

The meeting between S. Jaishankar and Barry Faure reflects the continued commitment of both countries to deepen their relationship. It highlights the importance of dialogue, cooperation, and mutual support in addressing the complex challenges of the modern world. As India continues to expand its presence in the Indian Ocean region, partnerships with countries like Seychelles will remain vital. Overall, the discussions held in Port Louis reaffirmed the strong and evolving partnership between India and Seychelles. By focusing on shared priorities such as security, development, and climate action, both nations are working together to build a stable and prosperous future for the region.

# GRAND CELEBRATION OF JJ VALAYA'S DAUGHTER HOORVI'S WEDDING

**J**J Valaya is a renowned Indian fashion designer known for his luxurious and heritage-inspired creations. Born as Jagsharanjit Singh Ahluwalia, he founded the House of



***JJ Valaya with Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi***

Valaya in 1992 and quickly became a leading name in India's fashion industry. His designs are famous for blending traditional Indian craftsmanship with modern styles, often inspired by royal history and culture. He is especially known for bridal wear and high-end couture. JJ Valaya is also a founding member of the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) and has contributed significantly to promoting Indian fashion globally.



***Chief Editor Dr. Deepak Singh with Harshdeep Kaur, Indian playback singer and Ms Aishwarya Singh, Professional Dancer, Kingston University***



***A cherished family photograph of three brothers, symbolizing togetherness and enduring strength — Mrs. & Mr. G. S. Ahluwalia, Mrs. & Mr. T. J. Valaya, and Mrs. & Mr. J. J. Valaya***



***Chief Editor Dr. Deepak Singh & Editor Mr. Gaurav Singh with HOORVI J. VALAYA (Bride) & Paawan Chawla (Groom)***

# OVER 7,000 YOUNG WOMEN LEAD DEMOCRATIC DIALOGUE IN NARI SHAKTI YOUTH PARLIAMENT



Launched as a transformative initiative to deepen youth participation in policymaking, MY Bharat Budget Quest 2026 serves as a national platform connecting young citizens with governance processes and the Union Budget. Inspired by the consultative spirit of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026, where youth ideas meaningfully contributed to national priorities and were reflected in the Union Budget 2026, the initiative builds a structured pathway to channel youth aspirations into policy discourse.

As part of this nationwide effort, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, through Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat), organised the Nari Shakti Youth Parliament on 12 April 2026 across 17 zones. Anchored in the theme “Nari Shakti: Viksit Bharat Ki Awaaz, Strengthening Inclusive Democracy”, the event brought together over 7,000 young women in a remarkable exercise of democratic participation and policy dialogue. The Youth Parliament was conducted simultaneously across major cities including Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Lucknow, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Patna, and Srinagar, reflecting the scale, diversity, and inclusiveness of the

programme. Participants from varied academic, social, and regional backgrounds engaged in structured parliamentary-style debates, showcasing informed perspectives and a strong commitment to Janbhagidari (people’s participation). Aligned with the goals of Budget Quest 2026, discussions across all zones focused on key thematic areas such as human capital development, agriculture and rural economy, future economy, women-led development, and sustainable growth. These discussions enabled participants to critically engage with national priorities and contribute thoughtfully to policy narratives.

A key outcome of the Youth Parliament was the unanimous adoption of a resolution supporting the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2026. The proposal advocates expanding Lok Sabha seats from 543 to 816, with 33% reservation for women. It also emphasised the timely implementation of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023 from the 2029 General Elections, while urging that its execution be delinked from delimitation constraints to ensure immediate and effective representation of women in politics. The proceedings reflected a strong

spirit of nation-building, beginning with Malarpan to Swami Vivekananda, symbolising inspiration from his vision of youth-led transformation, and concluding with the collective rendition of “Vande Mataram,” reinforcing unity and national pride.

The events were attended by Governors, Chief Ministers, and public representatives across states, who highlighted the growing role of women as leaders and decision-makers in India’s development journey. In a message shared on the occasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi appreciated the enthusiastic participation of youth, noting that such platforms unlock creative potential and strengthen participatory governance.

Addressing the gathering, Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya emphasised the importance of youth in strengthening democracy, urging them to be guided by the principles of “Nation First” and Kartavya. Reiterating the vision of Panch Pran, he encouraged young citizens to actively contribute towards building a Viksit Bharat through responsible leadership.

He also announced a decentralised format for future editions of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue, starting with state-level competitions and quizzes, allowing broader grassroots participation before advancing to the national stage. Complementing this policy engagement, initiatives like “Sundays on Cycle” were organised nationwide to promote sustainability, fitness, and environmental awareness, presenting a holistic approach to youth mobilisation. The successful culmination of the Nari Shakti Youth Parliament highlights MY Bharat’s ability to mobilise youth at scale and translate national priorities into meaningful engagement. As India progresses towards the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, this initiative reflects a new generation that is informed, empowered, and actively shaping the nation’s future—with Nari Shakti at its core.



# Asha Bhosle

Indian great playback singer

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## PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS JOINS BENTLEY AS GLOBAL AMBASSADOR



Global star Priyanka Chopra Jonas has been announced as the new global brand ambassador for Bentley Motors, marking the beginning of a new collaboration between the actor-producer and the luxury automobile brand. The announcement is accompanied by a new campaign set to launch this weekend, with an extended film scheduled to premiere in the coming weeks.

The campaign introduces a fresh creative direction for Bentley, captured by Co-Creative Director Greg Williams. Shot in a documentary-style format, the film offers a more personal and conversational look at Priyanka's journey, featuring candid reflections on her life, career, and creative outlook. The visuals were filmed at Sony Studios in Los Angeles, with the Bentley

Continental GT subtly integrated into the narrative. Priyanka Chopra Jonas joins a growing roster of global ambassadors associated with the brand, including Greg Williams and Mai Ikuzawa, who were appointed as Co-Creative Directors last year. The campaign positions her as part of Bentley's broader effort to evolve its storytelling and connect with audiences through more authentic narratives.

Speaking about the collaboration, Priyanka said, "I've always been drawn to Bentley's commitment to craftsmanship and storytelling, because there's an intentionality behind every detail that feels rare. As someone who lives for the creative energy of being on set, this collaboration felt instinctive. It's about shared values, but also about a shared appreciation for the process behind what we create."

Ben Whattam, Marketing Director at Bentley Motors, also commented on the association, stating, "Priyanka brings a fresh energy and authentic perspective that aligns with Bentley. The film's relaxed style allows her voice and personality to come through naturally, creating something more authentic than traditional advertising."

With a career spanning nearly 25 years, Priyanka Chopra Jonas has established herself as a prominent figure across film, television, and global entertainment. In addition to her work as an actor, she is also a producer, entrepreneur, and author. Beyond her professional achievements, she is associated with several social causes and serves as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, advocating for education and child welfare.

The collaboration marks another global milestone for Priyanka Chopra Jonas, as she continues to expand her presence across international platforms and brand partnerships.

## SREELEELA BECOMES THE NEW FACE OF SANTOOR AS BRAND TARGETS YOUNGER AUDIENCES



Santoor, a name long linked with a distinct identity, is signalling a fresh shift with actor Sreeleela stepping in as the new face of the brand. The move marks a noticeable change in how the legacy beauty brand is choosing to engage with today's younger consumers.

Known for her youthful energy and strong connect with Gen Z and millennial audiences, Sreeleela brings a distinctly contemporary presence to the brand — one that reflects evolving ideas of beauty and self-care rooted in confidence.

While Santoor has traditionally been associated with a specific beauty narrative, this shift points to a broader, more inclusive conversation around everyday beauty and

personal care for younger consumers. Details of the campaign featuring Sreeleela are expected to be revealed in the coming days.

## THE POWER OF WEEKLY WATER FASTING



**W**ater fasting, the practice of consuming only water for a specific period, has gained popularity as a method for detoxification and overall health improvement. Many people follow a routine of fasting once a week, believing it can reset the body and improve well-being. While this approach may offer certain benefits, it is important to understand both its advantages and potential risks. One of the most talked-about benefits of water fasting is its impact on metabolism and fat loss. During a fast, the body shifts from using glucose as its primary energy source to burning stored fat. This process, often linked to the concept of Ketosis, may contribute to gradual weight loss over time. A weekly fast can help reduce overall calorie intake and encourage better control over eating habits. Another potential benefit is cellular repair. Fasting is associated with a process called Autophagy, in which the body removes damaged cells and regenerates new ones. This process is believed to support longevity and reduce the risk of certain diseases. Although research is still ongoing, many health experts consider autophagy an important function triggered during fasting periods.

Water fasting may also support digestive health. Giving the digestive system a break once a week allows the body to focus on repairing and restoring gut function. People who fast regularly often report reduced bloating, improved digestion, and a feeling of lightness. Additionally, fasting can help regulate blood sugar levels when practiced carefully, which may be beneficial for individuals trying to prevent insulin resistance. Mental clarity is another commonly reported advantage. During fasting, some individuals experience improved focus and concentration. This could be due to stable energy levels and reduced fluctuations in blood sugar. Many people also find that fasting builds discipline and

mindfulness, helping them develop a healthier relationship with food. However, water fasting is not without risks. Going without food for an extended period can lead to fatigue, dizziness, dehydration, and nutrient deficiencies. Individuals with medical conditions such as Diabetes, low blood pressure, or a history of eating disorders should avoid fasting unless supervised by a healthcare professional. Even healthy individuals should approach fasting with caution and ensure they stay properly hydrated.

It is also important to break a fast gradually. Consuming heavy or processed foods immediately after fasting can shock the digestive system and cause discomfort. Instead, light and nutritious meals such as fruits, vegetables, or soups are recommended to ease the body back into regular eating. In conclusion, water fasting once a week may offer benefits such as weight management, improved digestion, and enhanced cellular repair. However, it is not a one-size-fits-all solution and should be practiced carefully. Understanding your body's needs and consulting a healthcare professional can help ensure that fasting is done safely and effectively. When balanced with a healthy diet and lifestyle, it can become a useful tool for overall wellness.



**PIC OF  
THE WEEK**



**Janhvi Kapoor**

felt like a tumblr girllll who remembers this phase

Source: Instagram

13 April, 2026

## BAISAKHI: A CELEBRATION OF HARVEST AND HERITAGE



**B**aisakhi, also known as Vaisakhi, is one of the most vibrant and significant festivals celebrated in India, especially in the state of Punjab. Observed every year on 13th or 14th April, Baisakhi marks the beginning of the harvest season and holds deep religious importance for the Sikh community. It is a festival that beautifully blends agriculture, spirituality, and cultural traditions.

The historical significance of Baisakhi dates back to 1699, when Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, established the Khalsa Panth at Anandpur Sahib. On this day, he called upon Sikhs to come forward and dedicate themselves to the service of humanity and the defense of righteousness. The formation of the Khalsa marked a turning point in Sikh history, promoting values of courage, equality, and unity. Since then, Baisakhi has been celebrated as a day of great religious pride and devotion among Sikhs.

Apart from its religious importance, Baisakhi is also a major harvest festival. During this time, farmers celebrate the harvesting of rabi crops, especially wheat, which is a crucial source of livelihood in Punjab. After months of hard work in the fields, the festival brings joy, relief, and a sense of accomplishment. It is a time when farmers express gratitude to nature for a good harvest and pray for future prosperity.

The celebrations of Baisakhi are filled with color, music, and enthusiasm. People visit Gurudwaras early in the morning to offer prayers and participate in kirtans. Special processions known as Nagar Kirtans are organized, where devotees sing hymns and spread messages of peace and unity. Traditional Punjabi dances like Bhangra and Gidda add energy and excitement to the festivities, reflecting the happiness of the harvest season.

Food also plays an important role during Baisakhi. Families prepare traditional Punjabi dishes and share meals with friends and neighbors. The spirit of togetherness and generosity is visible everywhere, as people come together to celebrate and support one another.

In conclusion, Baisakhi is much more than just a festival. It is a celebration of faith, hard work, and cultural heritage. It reminds people of the importance of gratitude, unity, and resilience. Whether celebrated in villages or cities, Baisakhi continues to bring people closer and spread happiness, making it one of the most cherished festivals in India.

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