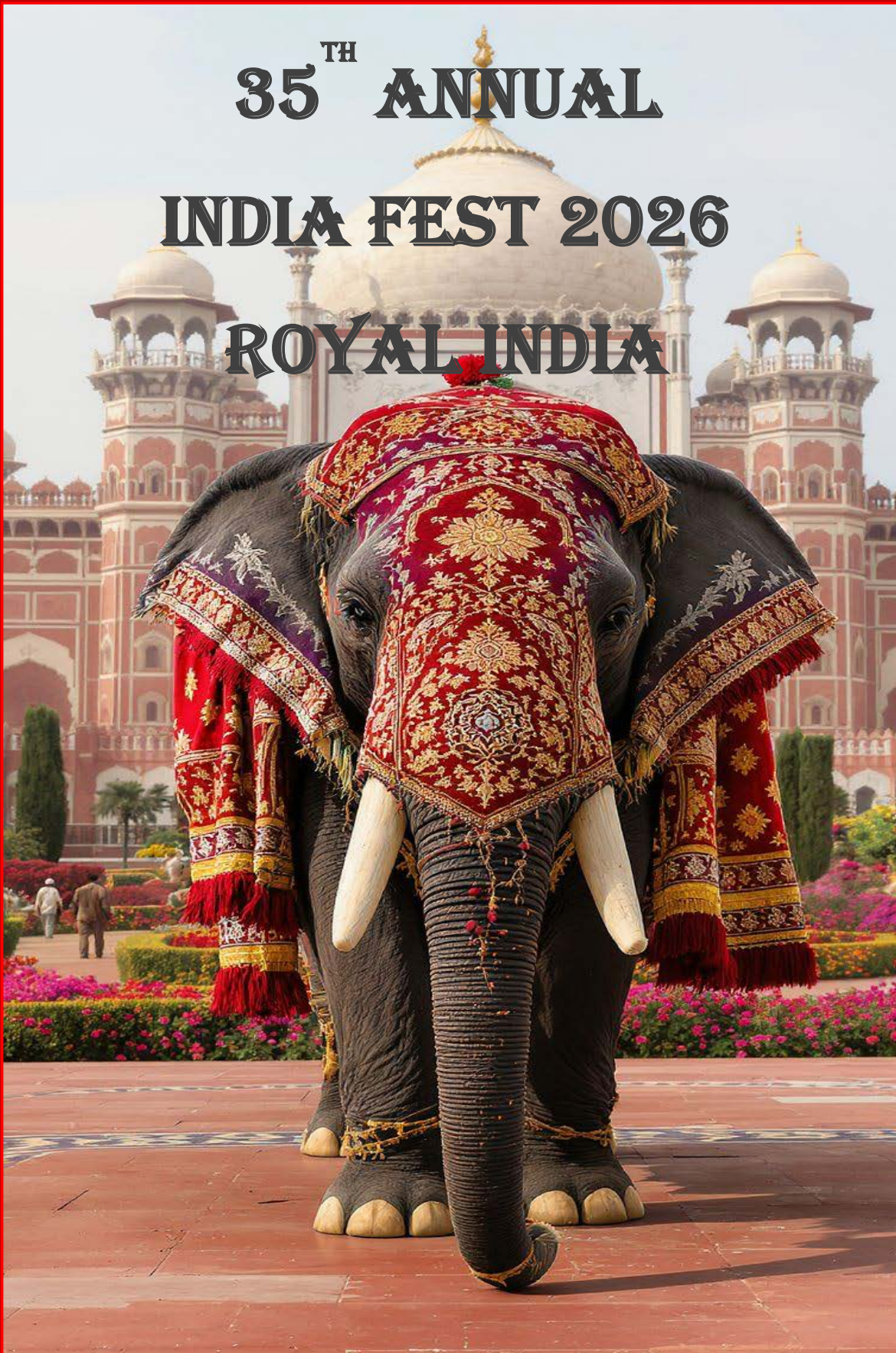


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INDIA FEST 2026
ROYAL INDIA**



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On behalf of the **Board of Trustees** and the **Executive Committee of the India Association of Fort Myers**, it is my profound honor and privilege to welcome you to the **35th Annual India Fest 2026**. Today, we celebrate not just a milestone but a legacy. Thirty-five years ago, our founding members created a space where families could gather, traditions could flourish, and our rich Indian heritage could shine brightly in our adopted homeland. That vision has now grown into one of the most cherished cultural celebrations in Southwest Florida, a living testament to unity, and community spirit.

For last three and a half decades, **India Fest** has been connecting generations, preserving timeless traditions, and sharing Indian culture with the broader community of Southwest Florida, celebrating diversity with pride.

This achievement belongs to all of you, our Members, past Presidents, Trustees, Volunteers, Sponsors, Performers, Attendees, and Families whose dedication and sacrifice built the strong foundation we celebrate today. We are deeply grateful to each and every one of you for helping IAFM grow and evolve over time.

India Fest is a celebration of culture and values. We proudly honor the democratic foundation of India, the largest democracy in the world, whose enduring principles of freedom, and civic responsibility has shaped who we are today. These ideals empower us to embrace the opportunities of our new homeland and to contribute meaningfully to the growth of Southwest Florida. As we mark this **35th anniversary**, we honor our past as we step boldly into the future.

With renewed purpose, we reaffirm our commitment to strengthening community engagement, expanding youth leadership, promoting cultural awareness, and creating meaningful opportunities for service and connection. Our mission embodies preservation of our heritage, supporting local charities, fostering diversity and tolerance, and also to inspire our next generation to lead with pride, humility and confidence.

Thank you for being part of this extraordinary journey. Your presence, your support, and your belief in our shared vision makes **INDIA FEST** what it is today. Together, we will continue to build a vibrant, united, and thriving community. Not just for today, but for generations to come.

With warm regards

Shaila Singh MD

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35TH INDIA FEST 2026 - HIGHLIGHTS

This year's royal theme celebrates the timeless legacy of **Royal India**, a heritage that continues to shape and inspire modern India. From the majestic palaces of Jaipur and Udaipur to the regal traditions of the Rajput's and Mughals, this theme brings history to life in spectacular fashion

Guests can look forward to:

- Savoring authentic Indian royal cuisine ,boutiques showcasing exquisite fashion, handcrafted jewelry, and henna tattoo
- Experiencing vibrant cultural showcases — from live vocal music, classical and folk dances
- Immersing in the colors, rhythms, and pageantry that echo India's majestic past.



Delicious Cuisine



ROYAL INDIA: GRANDEUR, POWER, AND TRANSFORMATION

For centuries, India was a land of **kings and emperors**, where royalty shaped not only politics but culture, architecture, and art. The idea of **Royal India** evokes images of jeweled crowns, marble palaces, elephant processions, and palaces rising from deserts, hills, and riverbanks. This royal past was not a single empire, but a tapestry of dynasties **Mughals, Rajput's, Marathas, Nizams**, and countless **princely states** each contributing to India's unmatched splendor.

The Age of Kings and Empires

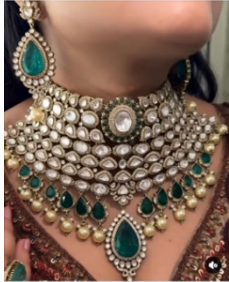
India's royal tradition dates back thousands of years, from ancient kingdoms like the Maurya's and Guptas to the medieval Rajput courts and the Mughal Empire. Rulers were seen not merely as administrators but as divinely sanctioned protectors of culture and faith. Courts became centers of learning, poetry, music, dance and craftsmanship.

The **Mughal Emperors**, especially **Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan**, elevated royal grandeur to legendary heights. Monumental architecture such as the **Red Fort, Fatehpur Sikri**, and the **TAJ MAHAL** symbolized imperial authority and refined taste.

Meanwhile, **Rajput kings** built impregnable forts like **Mehrangarh, Chittorgarh, and Amber** that combined military strength with artistic elegance.

Jewels, Wealth, and Royal Splendor

Royal India was renowned for its immense wealth. India was once the world's richest region, and its rulers' possessed treasures beyond imagination. Diamonds such as the **Koh-I-Noor**, emerald-studded necklaces, pearl-encrusted turbans, and gem-filled thrones reflected not only luxury but power and prestige.



Jewelry was symbolic worn during coronations, wars, and religious ceremonies. Royal families patronized master artisans, giving rise to exquisite traditions in Kundan, minakari, and temple jewelry. Mansions and palaces were equally extravagant, adorned with mirrored halls, gold-leaf ceilings, silk tapestries, and carved stone.

The world came to India for its treasures, and empires rose and fell in pursuit of its wealth. Yet within royal hands, jewels became symbols of divine order, worn in coronations, weddings, and farewells to war.

Mansions, Palaces, and Fortresses



Across India, royal residences ranged from desert palaces to lakefront mansions. **The City Palace of Udaipur, Mysore Palace, Falak Numa Palace in Hyderabad, and the Hawa Mahal of Jaipur** stand as symbols of **royal life**. These were not political centers spaces where diplomacy, justice celebration unfolded. Forts served dual purposes: defense and display. Massive gates, battlements, and secret passages coexisted with courtyards, gardens, and royal chambers. Together, they embodied a civilization where beauty and power were inseparable.

The Turning Point: Democracy and Independence



The royal order began to fade under **British colonial rule**, as princely states were subordinated to imperial authority. **The defining transformation came in 1947**, when India gained independence from the British Raj **and soon became a democratic republic in 1950**.

The jewels were locked away, the processions faded, and the silence of unused courts settled with dust. **With democracy, sovereignty shifted from kings to the people**. Princely rulers lost their political power, and royal privileges were gradually abolished. The final symbolic break came in **1971, when the Indian government ended privy purses and official royal titles**.

Royalty in Modern India

Though stripped of political authority, **India's royal families** did not vanish. Many adapted, transforming their palaces into heritage hotels, museums, and cultural centers. **Their legacy lives on in tourism, fashion, philanthropy, and public memory.**

Today, Royal India exists not as a ruling force, but as a cultural inheritance visible in architecture, jewelry, festivals, and stories passed through generations. Democracy reshaped the nation, but it did not erase its **royal past**. Instead, it reframed it as magnificent history deeply woven into India's identity

Today, **Royal India** lingers in carved balconies and heirloom gems, in stories whispered by stone walls and reflected in still palace lakes. It lives not in rule, but in remembrance and reminder that once, grandeur walked openly upon this land. ***And even though the crowns are gone, their echoes remain***



UMAID BHAWAN PALACE, A TAJ HOTEL AND PARTIAL HOME TO THE MAHARAJA OF JODHPUR, IN RAJASTHAN, INDIA. Courtesy of Umaid Bhawan Palace



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—MAHATMA GANDHI

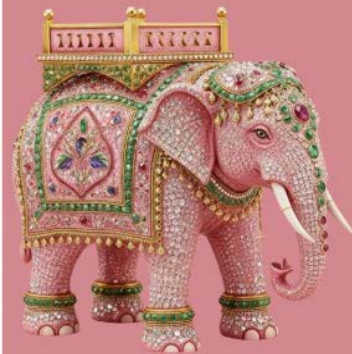
DR. JAGAT PRAKASH SETHI & DR. RAMESHWARI SETHI

CONGRATULATIONS

Best wishes Dr. Shaila Singh, President IAFM, and the entire Executive
Committee Team for India Fest 2026.

Today we celebrate not just your leadership, but the incredible spirit behind it.
Your dedication and perseverance have strengthened the IAFM community
and lifted it to new heights. It's truly a privilege to witness the impact you
continue to make — you deserve every bit of appreciation and applause.

With pride and admiration,
Ashwani Sethi, M.D.



MAYORS MESSAGE



India Fest 2026

Experience the vibrant culture, bold flavors, and lively music of India Fest, here at Alliance for the Arts! The City of Fort Myers is proud to celebrate the diversity and cultural richness that India Fest brings to our community. This event offers a unique opportunity for residents and visitors alike to experience the beauty and traditions of Indian culture.

A sincere thank you to India Fest for once again choosing Fort Myers as their home for this incredible celebration!

-Kevin B. Anderson, City of Fort Myers Mayor



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CARMINE MARCENO MESSAGE

LEE COUNTY SHERIFF

The Lee County Sheriff's Office joins me in proudly congratulating the Indian community on the celebration of **India Fest 2026**.

As your Sheriff, I am proud to serve a county enriched by diverse cultures, backgrounds, and traditions that make our community stronger every day.

The Indian community, in particular, has made incredible contributions across many aspects of our region — from business and healthcare to education, technology, faith, and civic engagement. These contributions help drive innovation, strengthen our economy, and deepen the cultural fabric that makes our county so vibrant and unique.

It is truly an honor to serve as Sheriff in a culture-driven county where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, prosper, and work together. Our diversity is not just something we celebrate — it is one of our greatest strengths.

When we embrace our differences and unite around shared values of respect, opportunity, and service, we create a community that is cohesive, welcoming, and beautiful for all.

Together, we continue building a county where every culture is valued and every family has the chance to succeed.

Our deputies remain committed to providing a safe, welcoming environment for all who attend. We look forward to celebrating alongside you and supporting the continued success of India for many years to come

Wishing everyone a joyful, safe, and memorable celebration.





RAJPUTS THE FIERCE WARRIORS

The **royal history of state of RAJASTHAN** is a saga of valor, sacrifice, diplomacy, and architectural brilliance. Known as the “Land of Kings,” this vast desert state was shaped by powerful **Rajput dynasties** whose courage and code of honor left an indelible mark on Indian history. From towering hill forts to intricately planned cities, **Rajasthan’s legacy** reflects both the fierce independence and the refined statecraft of its rulers



Among the greatest heroes of Rajasthan was **Maharana Pratap**, who refused to submit to the **Mughal emperor Akbar**. His resistance culminated in the legendary **Battle of Haldighati** in 1576, a symbol of unwavering Rajput pride and resilience. While Mewar chose resistance, other Rajput states adopted diplomacy. The kingdom of Amber, for instance, formed a strategic alliance with the Mughals. Its ruler, Raja Man Singh I, became one of Akbar’s most trusted generals. Under this alliance, Amber prospered politically and economically, and architectural marvels such as Amber Fort were expanded, blending Rajput and Mughal styles.



The story of **JAIPUR**, one of the most prominent princely states of **Rajputana**, represents a remarkable synthesis of valor and vision. In 1727, **Sawai Jai Singh II** founded the modern city of Jaipur, shifting his capital from Amber due to growing population and water scarcity. A skilled astronomer and enlightened administrator, he designed Jaipur as India’s first planned city. Wide streets, organized markets, and fortified walls reflected both scientific precision and aesthetic harmony

Jai Singh II also constructed the magnificent **JANTAR MANTAR**, an astronomical observatory that is now recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and stands as a symbol of India's scientific heritage.

In 1818, Jaipur entered into a treaty with the **British East India Company**, becoming a princely state under British protection while retaining internal autonomy. The city later earned the affectionate title "**Pink City**" in 1876, when its buildings were painted terracotta pink to welcome the Prince of Wales, a tradition that continues to define Jaipur's identity.

The 20th century brought modernization under **Sawai Man Singh II**, who ruled from 1922 to 1949. A progressive leader, he represented India internationally and oversaw Jaipur during a transformative era. After India gained independence in 1947, he signed the Instrument of Accession, integrating Jaipur into the Indian Union under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. In 1949, Jaipur formally became part of the newly formed state of Rajasthan. Jaipur's royal heritage is vividly reflected in landmarks such as the City Palace, Jaipur and the iconic Hawa Mahal, whose honeycombed façade symbolizes the artistic refinement of Rajput architecture.

The legacy of the Jaipur royal family continued beyond monarchy. **Maharani Gayatri Devi, wife of Sawai Man Singh II**, was celebrated for her beauty and elegance and later served as a Member of Parliament, playing a vital role in preserving Jaipur's cultural heritage. Their legacy endures in contemporary public life through descendant **Maharani Diya Kumari**, and her son **Prince Padmanabh Singh**, the most eligible bachelor in India. Together they are carrying forward the traditions of service and leadership. The Prince is also a dynamic Polo Player, a regal game of the Royals.



The royal history of Rajasthan and particularly of Jaipur is not merely a chronicle of battles and rulers, beauty and jewels but also a rich narrative of swords and science, of fortresses and finely planned cities. From the defiant stands of **Mewar** and **Chittor** to the diplomatic wisdom of **Jaipur**, Rajasthan's story remains one of India's most inspiring royal chapters.



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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE INDIA ASSOCIATION ON THE CELEBRATION OF INDIA FEST 2026!

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the India Association for organizing this wonderful celebration. May this event continue to unite communities, celebrate culture, and inspire future generations.



With warm wishes from:
Renuka, Sonali & Shandon
Dr. Devacaanthan and Thanam

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ANJU UTTAMCHANDANI

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COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES & CHARITIES

IAFM is proud to have supported the following charitable organizations over the past 38 years in our mission to help build a stronger, more connected society.

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- Meals of Hope
- Relief for victims of Hurricane Katrina
- American Red Cross for victims of Hurricane Wilma
- Hurricane Relief for Lee and Charlotte counties
- International Medical Health Organization
- Tsunami Relief for India and Sri Lanka
- Victims of September 11, 2001
- Florida Gulf Coast University Scholarship Fund
- Pinkal Patel Scholarship (North Fort Myers High School)
- American Red Cross
- Lee County Sheriffs Department
- Project Pride Shelter for the Homeless
- Lee County Science Fair Public Broadcasting Systems (PBS)
- YMCA
- Nationals Association (Soup Kitchen)
- Earthquake Relief in India
- Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc.
- Habitat for Humanity
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters
- Ronald McDonald House
- Hope Hospice
- Jennifer Craig Memorial Fund
- Southwest Florida Addiction Society
- American Lung Association
- Gabriel Foundation
- Mercy International
- United Way
- Lee County Schools Math Competition
- Dunbar High School Science Olympiad
- Kiwanis Regional Science Fair

OUR FOOTPRINT IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

- Contributions of the Indian Community in Southwest Florida

- The Indian community in Southwest Florida has played a key role in the region's growth and diversity. Members work across many fields—healthcare, education, business, engineering, and IT—while Indian-owned enterprises add economic value and cultural flavor to Southwest Florida.

- Community Engagement and Civic Participation

- Indian Americans actively support local charities, volunteer efforts, and civic initiatives, serving on nonprofit boards and participating in government and community discussions. Youth excel academically, artistically, and athletically, proudly representing their heritage.
- **Cultural Events and Lasting Impact**
- Events like India Fest and Diwali promote cultural exchange and deepen connections within the broader community. Together, we continue to make a positive impact and help shape Southwest Florida's future





**WISHING IAFM A SUCCESSFUL
INDIA FEST 2026**

DR. NEETU MALHOTRA

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INDIA FEST 2026





HEARTFELT WISHES FOR A
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AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DR.SUBHASH KSHETRAPAL
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Best Wishes for India Fest 2026



**DR.BEENU
SINGH**

**DR.RAMESH
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SUDITI

SIDDHI





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ASSOCIATION OF FORT MYERS**

PRASAD KASIREDDY

KALA KASIREDDY



CITY OF FORT MYERS

**WARM WISHES FOR ANOTHER
SUCCESSFUL INDIA FEST 2026**

KEVIN .B.ANDERSON

MAYOR





BEST WISHES TO IAFM FOR A
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KOH-I-NOOR: MOUNTAIN OF LIGHT



Before history learned to record it, **the Koh-i-Noor** was already ancient. Formed over a billion years ago and drawn from the earth sometime before the 13th century, it surfaced in the diamond-rich soils of **Golconda, India**

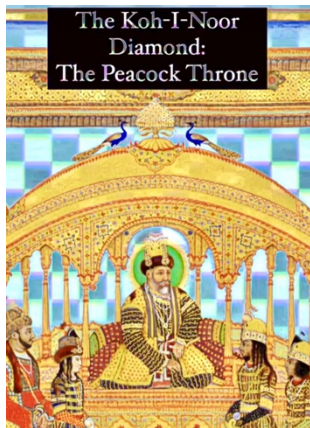
In early India, diamonds were not adornments alone. They were cosmological objects—believed to channel divine power, capable of protecting kingdoms or undoing them. The

Koh-i-Noor entered human memory not as property, but as destiny.

A Stone and the Rise of Kings

The earliest recorded references place the diamond in the possession of Indian rulers by the **early 1300s**, likely under the **Kakatiya dynasty**, before being seized by **Sultan Alauddin Khalji** during his Deccan campaigns in **1310 CE**. From there, the stone moved north, passing through the Delhi Sultanate—each transfer echoing with conquest.

By **1526**, the **Koh-i-Noor** had entered in Mughal hands when **Babur, founder of the Mughal Empire**, defeated Ibrahim Lodi at the **First Battle of Panipat**. Babur wrote of the diamond in his memoirs, noting its unmatched size and value.³



THE MUGHAL ZENITH The diamond became a symbol of absolute sovereignty. During the reign of **Shah Jahan (1628–1658)**, it was set into the legendary **Peacock Throne**, surrounded by rubies, emeralds, and gold—an altar to imperial power. In this era, the **Koh-i-Noor** was not merely worn; it was displayed as proof of divine favor.

FIRE, BLOOD, AND A NAME

In **1739**, **Persian ruler Nader Shah** invaded **Delhi**. The city fell, the **Peacock Throne** was dismantled, and the diamond was carried away amid devastation. Upon seeing it, Nader

Shah is said to have exclaimed “*Koh-i-Noor!*”—*Mountain of Light*—giving the diamond the name it carries today.⁵

Nader Shah was assassinated in **1747**, and the diamond passed to Afghan rulers of the **Durrani Empire**, shadowed by betrayal and exile. The legend of a curse hardened that men who possessed the **Koh-i-Noor** rarely kept either power or peace.

THE COLONIAL SEVERANCE



The diamond’s final journey from India occurred under British colonial rule. In **1849**, after the defeat of the **Sikh Empire** and the annexation of Punjab, the **Koh-i-Noor** was taken from the ten-year-old Maharaja **Duleep Singh** and formally presented to **Queen Victoria**.⁶

In **1852**, the stone was recut in London to increase its brilliance, reducing its weight from approximately **186 carats to 105.6 carats**—a transformation that erased its original Indian form to suit European aesthetics.



LIVING DISPUTE

Today, the **Koh-i-Noor** rests within the **British Crown Jewels**, set in the Queen Mother’s Crown and displayed in the **Tower of London**. India formally requested its return in **1947**, again in **1956**, and on multiple occasions thereafter—each request echoing unresolved histories of extraction and empire.⁸ The diamond remains contested, claimed not only by India but also by Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran—each tied to its journey.

What the Stone Remembers: The **Koh-i-Noor** does not sparkle innocently.

It carries centuries—of coronations and collapse, of sacred reverence turned into imperial trophy. It is both geological miracle and historical wound, valued at approximately **1 billion dollars**



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THE MUGHAL EMPIRE & THE TAJ MAHAL

The Empire That Changed India



In the early 1500s, a young ruler named **Babur** crossed the snowy mountains of Central Asia and looked down at the land that would one day become his new home. He wasn't just a warrior — he loved poetry, gardens, and beautiful things. When he won a major battle in 1526, he didn't just gain a kingdom. He planted the first seed of what would grow into the **Mughal Empire**, one of the most powerful and artistic empires in India's history.

Babur was succeeded by his son **Humayun**, who expanded the empire to include modern day Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh

In 1556, Humayun's son **Akbar the great** took the throne. He invited people of different religions, languages, and cultures to his court. He wanted to understand the world, not just rule it. Under Akbar, the empire became a place where ideas mixed like colors on a painter's palette. Cities grew, trade expanded, and artists created new styles of painting, music, and architecture. During Akbar's reign, the Mughal Empire expanded across the Indian subcontinent.



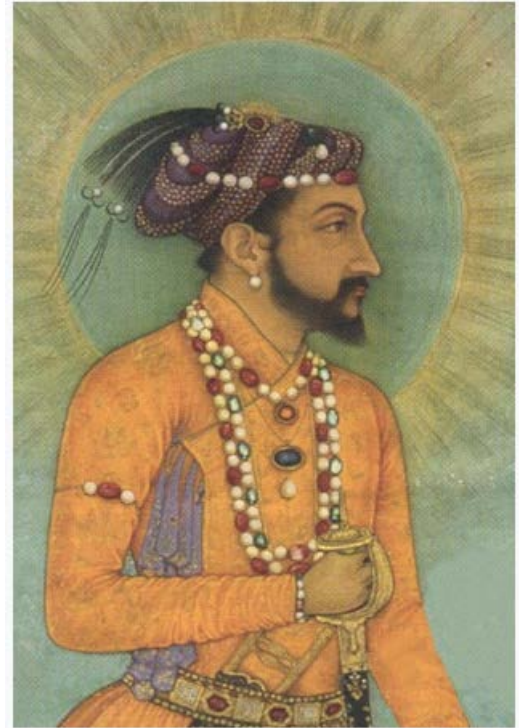
After Akbar came his son **Emperor Jahangir**. But it was Jahangir's son, **Shah Jahan**, who would take Mughal art to its highest point. Under him, buildings didn't just stand tall — they seemed to glow. Marble replaced sandstone, domes rose like giant pearls, and every detail was carved with care.

But even great empires change. After the long rule of Shah Jahan's son **Aurangzeb**, the Mughal Empire slowly weakened but left a mark in the world.

And at the heart of that legacy stands one shining monument **Taj Mahal**— a building born from love and grief.

The Taj Mahal: A Love Story in Stone

The story of the **Taj Mahal** begins with a love so deep that it changed the landscape of India forever. When Shah Jahan was emperor, he was married to **Mumtaz Mahal**, a woman he adored. She traveled with him everywhere — even on dangerous military campaigns. But in 1631, while giving birth to their fourteenth child, Mumtaz Mahal died. Shah Jahan was heartbroken. Some say he cried for days. Others say he stopped listening to music because it reminded him of her.



But one thing is certain he wanted the world to remember her forever

So he decided to build a monument unlike anything ever seen before. Workers came from all over Asia, stonecutters from Rajasthan, calligraphers from Persia, jewelers from Central Asia. Ships carried precious stones from faraway lands. For more than twenty years, thousands of people worked along the Yamuna River, shaping white marble into something magical.

When the Taj Mahal was finally finished in 1653, it didn't look like an ordinary building. It looked like a dream. The huge white dome seemed to float in the sky. The four tall minarets stood like guards. The marble walls were decorated with flowers imbedded with colorful semiprecious stones. And when the sun rose or set, the whole building changed colors — pink in the morning, bright white at noon, and golden at dusk.

Inside the TajMahal the tombs of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal rest side by side. Even in death, they are together. It is regarded as one of the best examples of Mughal architecture and a symbol of Indian history.



Today, millions of people visit the Taj Mahal every year. Some come to admire its beauty. Others come to feel the love story behind it. But everyone leaves with the same thought: that love, when expressed with devotion, can last longer than any empire.





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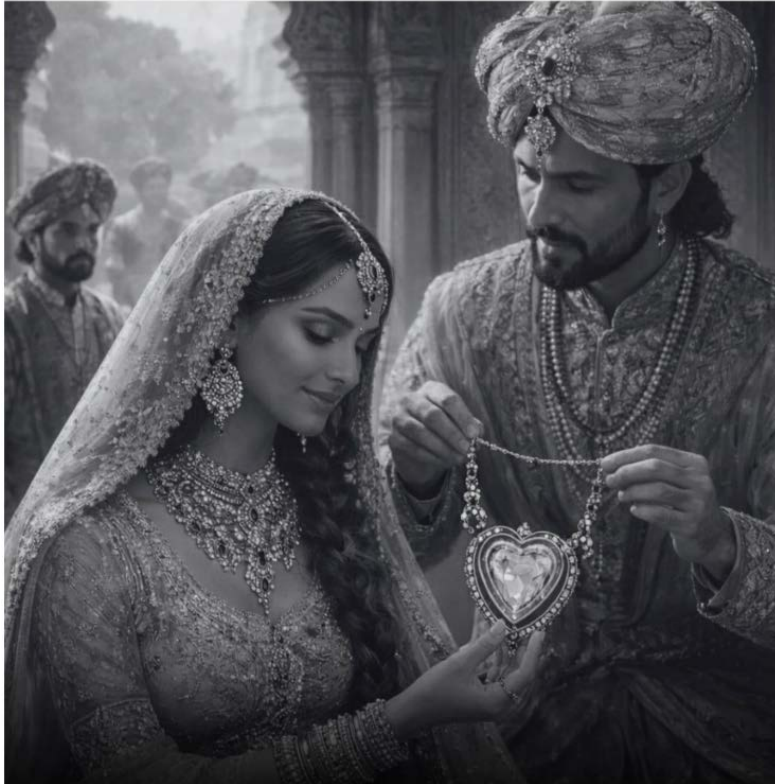
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THE DIAMOND HEART OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

THE TAJ MAHAL HEART NECKLACE

A Gift from an Emperor



The heart diamond's history began in 1627. It was originally owned by **Emperor Shah Jahan**, the man who commissioned the Taj Mahal as a tomb for his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. The stone is inscribed with Persian calligraphy that reads: "*Nur Jahan, Begum-e-Padshah; 23; 1037*"—a tribute to the Emperor's mother, though legend and history often blur, linking the stone's spirit to the eternal devotion Shah Jahan held for Mumtaz.

Elizabeth Taylor's **Taj Mahal Diamond** was a testament to "love that transcends time" and a very expensive 40th birthday present. In 1972, while filming in Budapest, Richard Burton presented Elizabeth with a heart-shaped diamond that carried the weight of the Mughal Empire and the romantic ghosts of 17th-century India.

"I would have liked to buy her the Taj Mahal, but it would cost too much to transport. This diamond has so many carats, it's almost a turnip." — **Richard Burton**, with his trademark dry wit.

From a Silk Cord to Cartier Gold

When Elizabeth first received the diamond, it was suspended from a simple, traditional silk cord. While she cherished its history, she felt the presentation didn't quite match the "Taylor" standard of opulence. She took the piece to **Cartier**, who transformed it into a breathtaking ceremonial necklace. The flat, heart-shaped diamond was encased in gold and surrounded by synthetic rubies (replicating the style of the Mughal era) and smaller diamonds. Cartier crafted a magnificent neck chain made of gold, rubies, and diamonds, designed to evoke the architectural grandeur of the Mughal court. The back of the necklace featured intricate gold and ruby tassels, ensuring the piece was as beautiful from behind as it was from the front.



The Jewel of the Auction

For decades, the necklace was one of Elizabeth's most prized possessions, often worn with flowing kaftans or elegant gowns, embodying her "Bohemian Queen" aesthetic. After her death in 2011, the necklace took center stage at the historic Christie's auction for \$8.8M.



The necklace was worn by actress Margot Robbie to the *Wuthering Heights* premiere in January 2026, marking its return to the public

THE RULE OF THE NIZAMS: OPULENCE AND MODERNIZATION IN HYDERABAD

Introduction

The **Asaf Jahi dynasty**, famously known as the **Nizams of Hyderabad**, governed the Deccan region from 1724 to 1948. Originally viceroys under the Mughal Empire, they rose to lead what became the largest and wealthiest princely state in British India. Their reign was marked by a unique mix of Persian-influenced culture, progressive administration, and a drive toward modernization that altered Hyderabad's future.

Architectural and Urban Changes



The Nizams were noted for ambitious construction projects that dramatically changed Hyderabad's cityscape. Although landmarks like Charminar date back to Qutb Shahi rule, it was the Nizams who introduced core modern infrastructure.

Public Buildings: Mir Osman Ali Khan, the 7th Nizam, led major developments such as the **Osmania General Hospital, High Court, and State Central Library**, which helped make Hyderabad a hub for healthcare, justice, and education.

Educational and Cultural Flourishing

The Nizams built an environment where learning and the arts flourished. They

supported the **Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb**, a harmonious blend of Hindu and Muslim traditions that enriched Hyderabad's cultural identity.



Osmania University: Established in 1918, Osmania University stood out as India's first higher education institution to teach in Urdu, while maintaining rigorous standards in English and science subjects.

The Last Reign: Mir Osman Ali Khan



Mir Osman Ali Khan (1911-1948), the seventh Nizam, is widely regarded as one of **history's richest individuals**. He famously used the 184.97-carat Jacob Diamond as a simple **paperweight** on his desk. His reputation balances modest personal habits with remarkable public generosity, as he donated vast sums to numerous Indian institutions, including **Banaras Hindu University** and **Aligarh Muslim University**, demonstrating his dedication to causes beyond his territory.

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MYSORE'S ROYAL STORY



For more than **600 years**, the **Wadiyars** shaped **Mysore** into one of India's most admired kingdoms. Their story has everything — palace intrigue, brilliant rulers, dramatic comebacks, and a whole lot of culture.

How It All Started

Back in **1399**, a young chieftain named **Yaduraya Wadiyar** was chosen to protect Mysore. He did such an excellent job that he became the first king — and kicked off a dynasty that would last until India became a republic.

Growing a Kingdom



Over the centuries, the Wadiyars:

- Expanded Mysore from a tiny principality into a powerful southern kingdom.
- Built iconic landmarks like **Mysore Palace, KRS Dam**
- Made **Dashara** a major public event.
- Supported music, dance, painting, and temple traditions.
- Established free education for all



Mysore gardens

The Dramatic Middle Chapter

In the 1760s, power shifted to **Hyder Ali**. Starting his career as a soldier in the Mysore army, Hyder Ali climbed the ranks to become commander and eventually emerged as the *de facto* ruler. During his ascendancy, the Wadiyars continued to hold their positions, but their role became largely symbolic as Hyder Ali exercised real authority over the kingdom. After Hyder Ali's death in 1782, his son **Tippu Sultan** came to power. Unlike the Wadiyars, Tippu Sultan built a strong French-trained army to fight the British forces. Tippu Sultan was killed while defending Mysore in 1799. After Tipu's fall, the British restored the Wadiyars — and Mysore entered a new era.



The Modern Makeover of Mysore

From the 1800s onward, Mysore became known as:

- One of the **best-governed regions in India**
- A pioneer in **electricity, railways, and public works**
- A hub for **education, arts, and progressive policies**



. Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV: The Maharaja Who Made Mysore Shine. His reign (1902–1940) is often called the “Golden Age of Mysore.” Everyone Loved him as he was not just a king but a visionary, a musician, a scholar, and a genuinely kind human being. Mahatma Gandhi called him a “Rajarshi” — a saintly king. Under his leadership Mysore became the first state to have Hydroelectric power. Bangalore became Asia's first electrified city in 1905

Education for All

He believed education should reach everyone, not just the elite. Therefore, he:

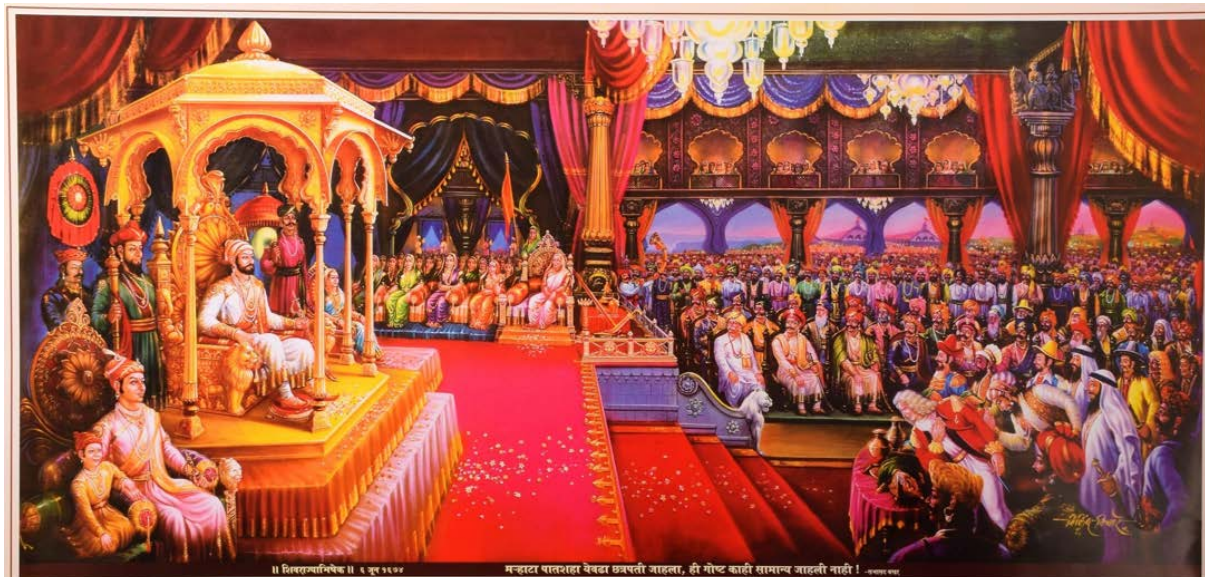
- Made **Elementary schooling mandatory**.
- Expanded colleges and libraries.
- Established the **University of Mysore**
- Donated land for the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)**

He turned Mysore state into a knowledge powerhouse.

A King with Rhythm

Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV wasn't just a patron of the arts — he was an artist himself. He played Violin, Veena, Mridangam, even the saxophone. He supported musicians, dancers, writers, and yoga masters like **T. Krishnamacharya**, whose students later took yoga to a global level.

MARATHA EMPIRE



Chhatrapati Shivaji Raje Bhosale was the legendary founder of the Maratha Empire, belonging to the [Bhosle Maratha clan](#), known for establishing an independent kingdom against Mughal and Deccan Sultanate rule in the 17th century, with his lineage continuing through sons Sambhaji and Rajaram, leading to distinct branches like Kolhapur, Satara, and Nagpur, all claiming descent from this iconic warrior king who championed Hindu freedom.

Key Figures in the Bhosale Royal Family:

- [Maloji Bhosale](#) (Grandfather): A commander for the Ahmadnagar Sultanate, he received the title 'Raja' and rights to lands, establishing the family's prominence.
- [Shahaji Bhosale](#) (Father): A Maratha general and nobleman who served multiple Deccan powers, he laid the groundwork for the Maratha Empire and was Shivaji's father.
- [Jijabai](#) (Mother): A deeply spiritual and influential figure who instilled strong values in Shivaji.
- [Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj](#) (1630-1680): The revered warrior king, founder of the Maratha Empire, crowned Chhatrapati in 1674, establishing his own kingdom with Raigad as capital.
- [Sambhaji Maharaj](#) (Son): Shivaji's elder son and successor, who continued the fight against the Mughals.
- [Rajaram Maharaj](#) (Son): Another son of Shivaji, who also carried on the Maratha resistance.



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THE GAEKWADS OF BARODA

The Gaekwads of Baroda, were a prominent Hindu Maratha dynasty that ruled the princely state of **Baroda (now Vadodara, Gujarat)** from the early 18th century until India's independence in 1947. They were known for their managerial sharpness, support of the arts, and luxurious lifestyle. The dynasty's wealth came from the lucrative cotton business as well as rice, wheat, and sugar production. The Gaekwads' rule began when the Maratha general Pilaji Rao Gaekwad conquered the city from the Mughal Empire in 1721. They were granted the city as a gift by Chhatrapati Shahu the emperor of the Maratha Empire. The Gaekwads became one of the largest and wealthiest princely states of British India, with their wealth coming from the lucrative cotton business as well as rice, wheat, and sugar production.



The Gaekwads' legacy endures in Vadodara's architecture, institutions, and cultural heritage. They were known for their progressive reforms and immense wealth. The family's wealth extends far beyond their magnificent palaces. The family possesses one of India's



most valuable private art collections, including numerous paintings by the celebrated **Raja Ravi Varma**. These masterpieces alone are worth hundreds of crores of rupees in today's market. **The family's jewel collection was legendary**, featuring pieces like the **seven-strand Baroda Pearl Necklace and the 128.6-carat Star of the South diamond**. While some pieces were sold over the years, the remaining collection still represents extraordinary wealth. Their legacy remains alive in Vadodara's architecture, institutions, and cultural heritage



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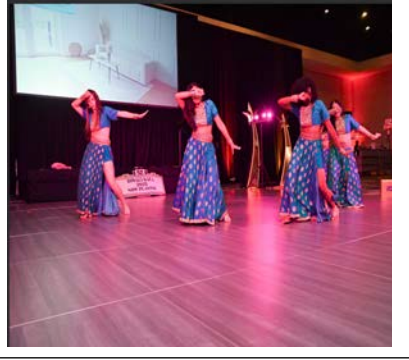
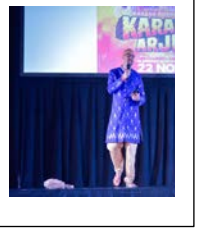
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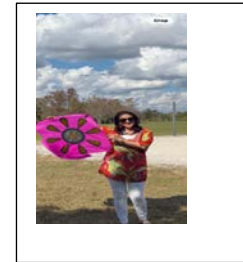
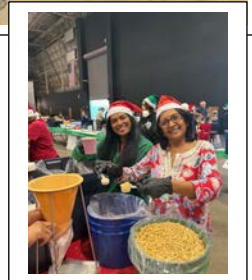
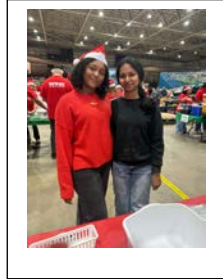
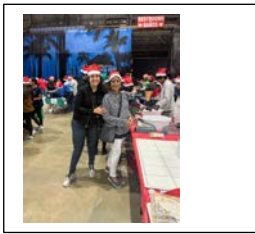
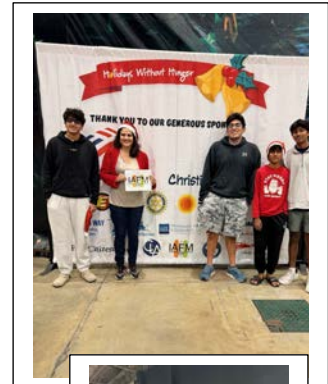
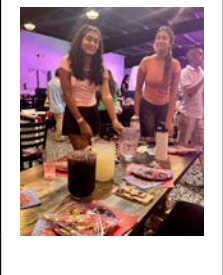
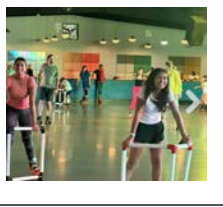
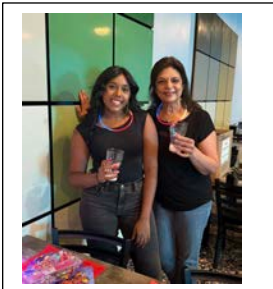
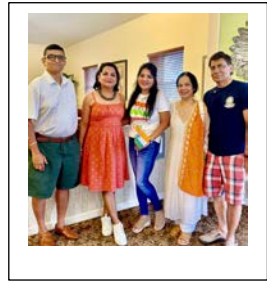
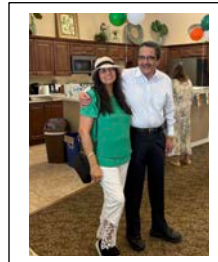
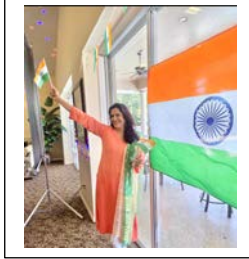




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