



US & CANADA

Newsletter

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MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

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US POLITICS

Presidential elections head into final lap

The highlight of the month was the US Presidential debates on June 27th. Conducted under [rules](#) agreed to by both parties, which included no live audience, and mics to be muted throughout the debate except for the candidate whose turn it is was to speak, the debate was widely seen as a win for former President Trump, with President Biden much criticised for his debate performance, “which at times created an image of a raspy-voiced elderly man who struggled to complete a [thought](#).” This only served to reinforce misgivings that age had caught up with the former President and he would be incapable of serving another 5-year term at the ripe old age of 81. Though the Democrats and their donors have outwardly maintained a faced of business as usual, there are indications of [tumult](#) within the party on the way forward.

The 2024 presidential election season began with as many as 13 [candidates](#) vying for the nomination in the Republican party. By the time the debates came around, that list had reduced to nine, including President Trump. The Republican candidates went through four rounds of debates where they sparred with each other on various hot button issues including immigration, foreign policy, the economy, reproductive rights, public safety and gun control. President Trump did not participate in any of these debates and instead held headline events on those same days. Nikki [Haley](#) was the last to withdraw from the campaign on March 6th after Trump garnered the required number of votes needed to secure the nomination.

On the Democrat side, President Biden had a few nominal opponents; the first person to announce candidature for the Democratic nomination was Marianne Williamson who had previously stood for presidential elections in 2020 as well. She finally suspended her campaign in June 2024. Senator [Robert F Kennedy Jr.](#) also announced his candidature in April 2023. He subsequently announced that he was leaving the Democrat party and standing as an independent. A contrarian and controversial candidate, Kennedy, currently polling at 7%, nevertheless could act as a spoiler for both Trump and Biden, drawing away their votes toward himself.

The second and final debate is scheduled for September 10, after both parties have formally announced their candidates at the respective party conventions.

INDIA-US RELATIONS

- Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval held talks with his US Counterpart Jack Sullivan who finally made it to Delhi after his trip was postponed twice earlier. The main purpose of the trip was to co-chair the US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology(iCET), a landmark partnership to expand strategic cooperation across key technology sectors including space, semiconductors, advanced telecommunications, artificial intelligence, quantum technology, biotechnology and clean energy. A joint [factsheet](#) brought out at the conclusion of the event highlighted the progress of the initiative on various fronts as well as new directions including that of Indian and American astronauts to participate in a joint mission at the International Space Station. During his visit, Sullivan also met with Prime

Minister Modi, and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. Sullivan was accompanied by Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell who gave an online [briefing](#) on the sundry other achievements of the visit as well as the discussion that took place across the board on all outstanding issues.

- US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti described US-India relations as not just “addictive” but “[multiplicative](#)” at an event on the sidelines of the SelectUSA Investment Summit held in National Harbour, Maryland from 23-26 June 2024. The summit is an annual event focused on promoting foreign direct investment (FDI) in the United States. The event is organized by SelectUSA, which operates under the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration. According to reports, the largest contingent this year was from India. At the event, India's JSW Steel announced its plans to invest USD 140 million in Bayton, Texas in addition to its existing investment of USD 2 billion.

- US lawmakers, corporate leaders and senior White House officials were present at the seventh annual Leadership [Summit](#) of the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) which took place in Washington in June. Among those in attendance were Republican Senators Steve Daines and Dan Sullivan, Principal Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finer, Domestic Policy Advisor to President Biden, Neera Tanden, and former US envoy to India and USISPF Board Member Tim Roemer. India's Deputy Ambassador to the US, Sripriya Ranganathan, called for Indian and

American companies to work together in fields like defence, space, communications, and biotech. Henry R Kravis, co-founder and co-executive chairman of global investment company Kohlberg Kravis Roberts and Co. was awarded the USISPF 2024 Global Leadership Award for his “unwavering commitment to enhancing the US-India relationship.”

- Rafale fighters of The Indian Air Force (IAF) marked their debut in the [Exercise](#) Red Flag 2024, held at Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska, USA. This advanced aerial combat training exercise, hosted four times a year by the US Air Force, saw the IAF join forces with international air forces including those from Singapore, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, and the USA. The IAF's involvement featured the Rafale fighters, supported by IL-78 refuellers and C-17 transporters. The exercise, which ran from June 4 to 14, 2024, provided the IAF with valuable insights into interoperability and mission planning in a collaborative, multinational environment. The knowledge and experience gained from the Red Flag exercise will be of use as the IAF prepares to host Ex-Tarang Shakti-2024, the first-ever Indian multinational air exercise scheduled for later this year.

- Prime Minister Modi [met](#) with a visiting bipartisan Congressional delegation led by Congressman Michael McCaul and including former Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Congressman Ami Bera. The delegation was in India to meet with the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Parliament- in-exile to reaffirm US support for the Tibetan cause.

DIASPORA NEWS

The Boston Consulting Group released a [study](#) comprehensively analysing the contributions of the Indian American community across various sectors. The study was commissioned by Indiaspora, a nonprofit organisation based in the US. The Indiaspora Impact Report: Small Community, Big Contributions illuminates the substantial impact of Indian Americans in the United States. The study notes that despite comprising only 1.5% of the U.S. population, Indian Americans have made significant strides in economic, scientific, social, cultural, and civic spheres. From 60 in 2013, the number of notable positions held by Indian Americans in the federal administration in 2013 has grown to more than 150 by 2023, including Vice President Kamala Harris, making history as the first woman to hold that office. Around 22,000 faculty members of Indian origin are teaching at US colleges and universities, making up about 2.6 per cent of all full-time faculty.

Notable contributions in the economic arena include leading Fortune 500 companies, co-founding successful startups, and making significant advancements in scientific research and innovation. CEOs of Indian-origin head 16 Fortune 500 companies. According to the report, Indian Americans also have a significant presence in the startup world, co-founding 72 out of 648 US unicorns.

Beyond economic contributions, the report also emphasizes the cultural influence of Indian Americans, ranging from cuisine and wellness practices to literature and fashion. Additionally, it highlights the community's strong commitment to

philanthropy and giving back to both the U.S. and India.

CANADA POLITICS

Liberal Party loses key seat in byelection

The Canadian Conservative party wrested the Toronto-St. Paul's riding or electoral constituency from Justin Trudeau's Liberal party which had held it for more than three decades. This has come as a shock to the Liberal party and is widely seen as heralding the end of the road for Prime Minister Trudeau's [political career](#). The first rumblings within the party were seen when Liberal MP [Wayne Long](#) called for Trudeau's resignation in an email to caucus colleagues on June 28th, saying "for the future of our party and for the good of our country, we need new leadership and a new direction". More [byelections](#) are due before the next general election due on or before 20 October 2025. Out of the 4 byelections due, 3 are currently held by the Liberal Party and their results will be keenly watched.

INDIA-CANADA RELATIONS

- Canada's National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians issued a [Special Report](#) on Foreign Interference in Canada's Democratic Processes and Institutions. The report, originally classified as "Top Secret," has been highly redacted to "to avoid injury to Canada's national security, national defence or international relations." That caveat notwithstanding, China, India and Iran have been named in the report with the names of three other countries redacted. The report mentions India by name no less than 44

times, and seems designed to play into Canadian domestic politics.

- The Canadian House of Commons held a moment of silence for Hardeep Singh Nijjar, officially proscribed by the Indian government as a Khalistani terrorist. An Indian government [spokesman](#) noted that India “opposed any moves giving political space to extremism and those advocating violence.”

- The Indian Parliament marked one minute of [mourning](#) for the victims of Air India 182 that was bombed by Khalistani groups on June 23, 1985, killing 329 people, including 86 children, on board. Commemorative [events](#) were also held at

the High Commission of India in Canada to pay homage to the victims.

DIASPORA NEWS

The sudden change in Canadian immigration rules and reduced work permits have led to protests by international students in various cities and provinces across Canada. Most affected are Indian students who make up 41% of Canada’s international student population. Students in [Prince](#) Edward Island have been protesting and holding hunger strikes and “blackouts” since May after the province announced a 25% reduction in work permits which would result in many of the students currently on 3 year work permits facing deportation when their permits expired.