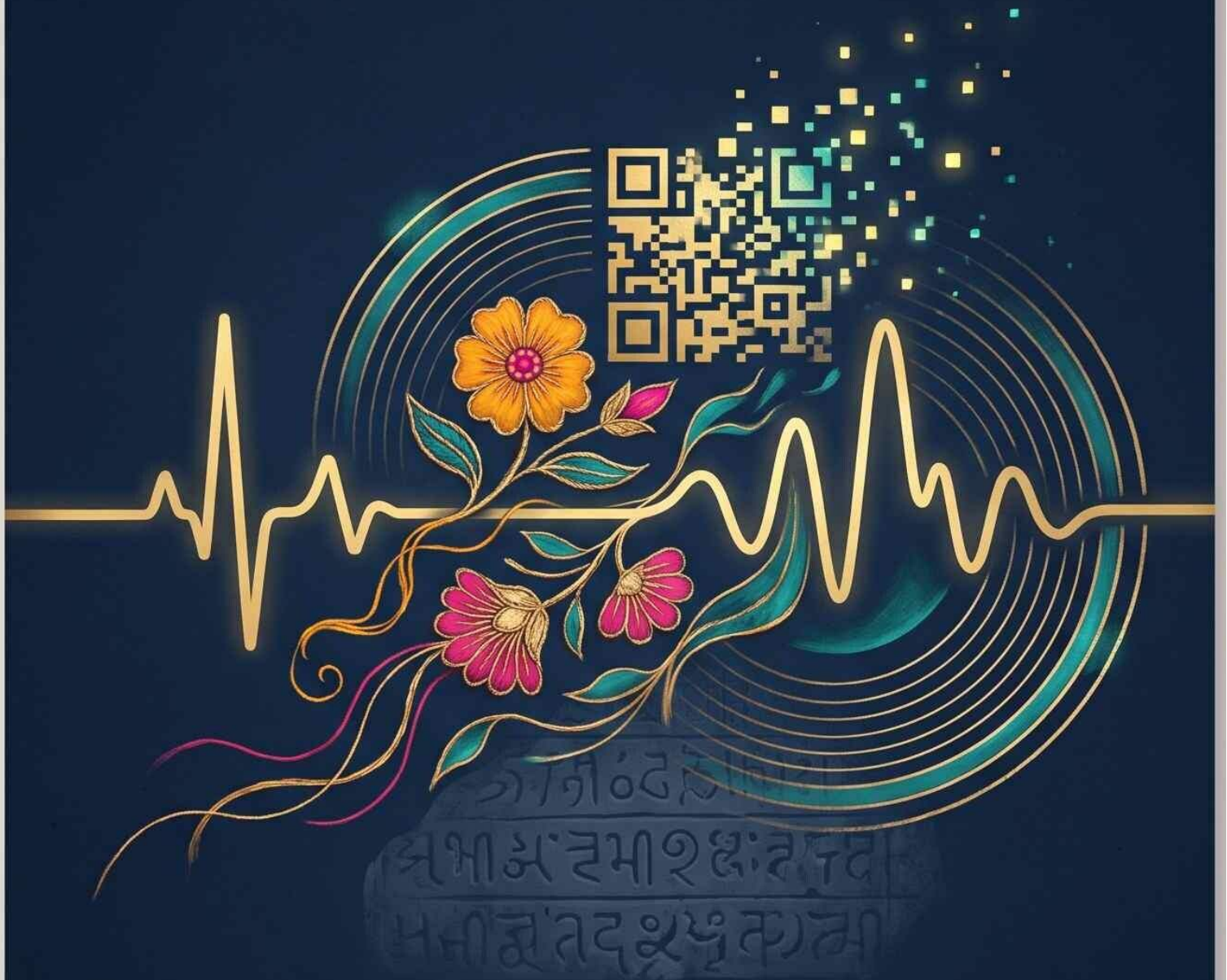


JULY 2026 • ISSUE 1

PULSE

The South Asian Culture and Lifestyle Magazine



ED SHEERAN SINGS IN HINDI

PUNJABI POP'S SHADOW TAX

UPI AT THE EIFFEL TOWER

6,000 YEARS OF INDIAN SOUND

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02

From the Editor

PULSE · July 2026 · Issue 1

GARGEE SARKAR · EDITOR

Putting this first issue together, I kept circling one question: what does it cost — and what does it pay — to be from two places at once?

Sometimes the answer arrives as a WhatsApp voice note demanding money, which is where we open: "The Extortion Calls Punjab's Biggest Singers Can't Stop Answering" is the story the Punjabi music industry lives with but rarely says out loud. And sometimes the answer sounds like Ed Sheeran singing a chorus in Hindi with Arijit Singh, as if it were always meant to be there — "When Ed Sheeran Sang in Hindi, Everything Shifted" explains why that moment felt less like a crossover and more like an arrival.



In between, we cover a lot of ground. "Vietnam Filled Up First" maps the factory jobs leaving China; "Is India Still the World's Back Office?" watches AI split a workforce down the middle; "The Eiffel Tower Takes UPI Now" finds a QR code doing quiet diplomacy in Paris. "The Map on the Cape" and "The 2026 Desi Bride Finally Gets to Move" both ask what we're really saying when we get dressed. And we close far from the news cycle — with an emperor who carved his laws in Greek, and six thousand years of Indian music that never stopped absorbing the world.

Some questions are older than the headlines. Welcome to Pulse. Kindly subscribe to Pulse on your kindle or other device and help our regional magazine grow.

Gargee Sarkar,
Cincinnati, Ohio
USA

Editor, Pulse

01

In This Issue

PULSE · July 2026 · Issue 1

1. The Extortion Calls Punjab's Biggest Singers Can't Stop Answering

Gangsters on WhatsApp, hits claimed on Facebook — the protection racket shadowing Punjabi music's biggest stars.

2. When Ed Sheeran Sang in Hindi, Everything Shifted

Number one in India in two weeks, a chorus in Hindi with Arijit Singh — and it felt inevitable.

3. Vietnam Filled Up First. Now India and Mexico Are Racing for What's Left of China's Factory Floor

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4. The Map on the Cape: How Diaspora Musicians Wear Where They're From

From Diljit's Met Gala cape to AP Dhillon's monochrome: dressing the question every diaspora kid gets asked.

5. Is India Still the World's Back Office — Or Its Next AI Lab?

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6. The 2026 Desi Bride Finally Gets to Move: Detachable Sleeves and Featherweight Lehengas

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7. The Eiffel Tower Takes UPI Now. So Does Half the Gulf.

Pay for the Eiffel Tower like it's a roadside dhaba — UPI's quiet conquest of the world's checkouts.

8. Why a Multipolar World Order Finally Deals India a Hand Worth Playing

Putin, Xi, and Washington in one season: why a fractured world finally rewards refusing to pick sides.

9. TikTok Was Born in Asia. Asia Is Where It Keeps Getting Banned.

Born in Asia, banned across it — inside the region that made TikTok and keeps switching it off.

10. The Day an Indian Emperor Carved His Laws in Greek

A limestone slab outside Kandahar, and the emperor who wrote his laws in the language of Athens.

11. How Indian Music Evolved Over 6,000 Years Into Global Fusion

From three-note Vedic chants to a Naatu Naatu Oscar — six thousand years in one unbroken melody.

03

The Extortion Calls Punjab's Biggest Singers Can't Stop Answering



By AIE Editorial · July 16, 2026 · Indian Music

An empty Punjabi concert stage at dusk with a security fence's shadow falling across the floor, evoking the industry's undercurrent of gang threats.

In August 2025, Mohali police pulled a man off a flight at Delhi airport just as he was about to board for Italy, where he'd been living for over a decade. His name was Harjinder Singh, alias Ravinder Singh, and for weeks he'd been messaging Mankirt Aulakh's management team on WhatsApp: voice notes in Punjabi, photos of Aulakh's house, photos of his cars, threats against his family unless money changed hands. Under questioning, he admitted the whole thing was a straightforward extortion attempt: send enough fear, collect an easy payday. It barely made a ripple outside Punjabi-language press, because for Aulakh, this wasn't new. It was the second act of something that started years earlier.

That first act traces back to 2022, when Aulakh turned up on a hit list attributed to Goldy Brar, the Canada-based gangster who publicly claimed responsibility for the murder of Sidhu Moose Wala. The Bambiha gang came after him too that year, and threats have resurfaced since, most recently an audio clip circulating online in which a caller identifying himself as gangster Lucky Patial claims credit for a fresh death threat. Aulakh has spent close to four years cycling between security upgrades and public statements downplaying the danger, which is its own kind of tell.

“Aulakh has spent close to four years cycling between security upgrades and public statements downplaying the danger, which is its own kind of tell.”

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He's far from alone. Parmish Verma was shot in the thigh in Mohali in 2018 by a gangster named Dilpreet Singh, who claimed the hit on Facebook; Verma survived, and Punjab police later said he'd quietly paid the shooter protection money through hawala channels to make the threats stop. When that payment became public, police briefly pulled his security detail, until then-DGP Suresh Arora overruled it, arguing the state's duty to protect a threatened citizen didn't evaporate because he'd also paid a bribe. Gippy Grewal fielded extortion calls that same year. Karan Aujla was threatened by the Harry Chatha group in 2022, his family named directly in the messages. A 22-year-old singer named Navjot Singh was found shot dead in Dera Bassi that same year. None of this required Moose Wala's assassination to happen first. It just took his murder to make outsiders notice a pattern that Punjab's music scene had been living with for years.



Pramod Kumar, who directs the Institute for Development and Communication in Chandigarh, put it plainly to reporters: extortion and protection money have become a given in the industry, and the underworld now expects its cut. That's the part that rarely survives translation into Western entertainment coverage: this isn't stalker behavior or isolated threats. It's a functioning shakedown economy layered on top of one of India's fastest-growing music scenes, one industry estimate puts at roughly ₹700 crore and still expanding by more than 10% a year.

That growth is inseparable from the diaspora, and so is the danger. Karan Aujla, one of the singers the Harry Chatha group threatened, is also the genre's biggest current draw: his songs made up four of Apple Music India's ten most-played tracks of 2025, and he headlined the first Rolling Loud India. A meaningful share of Punjabi music's audience sits in Toronto, Vancouver, Birmingham, and Southall, not Ludhiana. That's also where the gangs live now. In September 2024, two men hired by the Bishnoi network set fire to vehicles outside AP Dhillon's home on Vancouver Island, then fired fourteen rounds into the windows and garage. One of them, Abjeet Kingra, had arrived in Canada four years earlier on a student visa; he's since been sentenced to six years and faces deportation to India, where he now says the same gang that hired him is threatening to kill him. Dhillon's offense, per investigators, was producing a video featuring Salman Khan, whom the Bishnoi camp has targeted for years over a decades-old blackbuck poaching case. Gippy Grewal's Vancouver home was hit the same way in November 2023, with a Bishnoi-linked Facebook post warning in Punjabi that no one could protect him.

American and Canadian prosecutors describe a network that's outgrown any one country: Lawrence Bishnoi has run it from an Indian prison cell using encrypted apps, while associates in the U.S., Canada, Britain, and Europe use WhatsApp and Signal to relay demands, cross-referencing government records and social media to pick targets before arranging shootings back in Punjab if payment doesn't arrive. Two dozen arrests across the U.S., Canada, and Europe this month, part of an investigation called Operation Hard Ball, barely dented it.

Aulakh is still releasing music. So is Dhillon, still living in the house the bullets went through. That's the part that doesn't fit neatly into a headline — the industry isn't pausing for any of this, it's just absorbing it, one increased security detail at a time, as the price of getting big enough to matter to men who've never heard the songs.

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04

When Ed Sheeran Sang in Hindi, Everything Shifted

By AIE Editorial · July 07, 2026 · International music

When Ed Sheeran released “Sapphire” in June 2025, the song hit number one on Spotify India in two weeks—the first English-language track to top the country’s charts since 2021. Within three weeks, it had 46 million Spotify streams and 74 million YouTube views. The music video, featuring cameos from Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan and featuring tabla, dhol, and sitar throughout, eventually crossed 1.5 billion TikTok views. But the numbers aren’t what made the moment stick: it’s that Sheeran recorded the chorus in Hindi alongside Arijit Singh, one of the world’s most-streamed artists, and the collaboration felt neither like a novelty nor a charity moment. It felt inevitable.

That inevitability is the real story. For years, Western pop treated South Asian sounds like an occasional curiosity—a sitar loop here, a Bollywood sample there. What’s happening now is different. Ed Sheeran didn’t feature an Indian artist as a guest; he built an entire album, *Play*, around Indian instrumentation as foundational, not decorative. The tabla work by Gautam Sharma and Jayesh Kathak isn’t a flourish on the chorus. Tapas Ray’s santoor and hammered dulcimer run through the record’s sonic DNA. Arijit Singh didn’t just sing—he played banjo and sitar on “Sapphire,” and his fingerprints are across production choices that will define what Sheeran sounds like for the next era.

“Ed Sheeran didn’t feature an Indian artist as a guest; he built an entire album, *Play*, around Indian instrumentation as foundational, not decorative.”

Arijit Singh’s reach makes this collaboration different from past transatlantic collabs. As of June 2025, Singh holds the most-followed artist position on Spotify with over 150 million followers—surpassing Taylor Swift and Sheeran himself. His YouTube channel averages 38.5 million daily views, nearly double the engagement of other chart-toppers. He’s not a South Asian artist getting a shot at a Western audience; he’s an established engine of engagement that Western artists now have to build toward. When Sheeran brought Hindi vocals into “Sapphire,” he wasn’t reaching down to an emerging market. He was collaborating across two fully realized, globally scaled fan ecosystems.

This shift runs deeper than one collaboration. Diljit Dosanjh, the Punjabi-language artist, became the first artist of any background to headline and sell out Australian stadiums in 2025—90,000 fans per show for someone singing primarily in Punjabi. In 2023, he performed in Punjabi at Coachella, breaking ground that seemed impossible five years earlier. Karan Aujla announced his “P-POP CULTURE” world tour earlier in 2025, a deliberate blending of Punjabi rhythms with Western pop sensibilities across the US, Europe, and Asia. AP Dhillon, already charting globally with hip-hop inflected Punjabi production, is headlining major festivals. These aren’t niche artists with diaspora fanbases anymore; they’re drawing mainstream festival crowds and stadium attendance at scales that demand serious label investment.

What's changed isn't the artists or the music—those existed for years. What's changed is who's paying attention and why. Streaming algorithms don't care about language barriers; they care about engagement. Indian music fandom is, by multiple metrics, the most participatory music audience globally. When those two facts collide, Western A&R departments stop treating South Asian sounds like a novelty and start treating them like competitive advantage. Ed Sheeran recording with Arijit Singh wasn't artistic whimsy. It was strategic response to where listener attention actually lives.

The instrumentation is the most audible part of this shift. Tabla and dhol were once signals that a song was “ethnic fusion”—set apart, marked as different. In Ed Sheeran's *Play*, they're just part of how the album sounds, no more exoticized than a synthesizer. When Gautam Sharma's tabla hits the opening of a track written by Sheeran, McDaid, and Indian producer Savan Kotecha, the listener doesn't hear fusion. They hear pop. This distinction matters: fusion can feel like two things forced together. Pop with Indian instrumentation at its core just sounds like what pop sounds like now.

The diaspora angle matters too. Karan Aujla's P-Pop explicitly targets the second-generation South Asian listener—someone fluent in both Punjabi and English, equally at home at a Coachella set and a shaadi celebration. These aren't artists trying to “cross over” in the sense of assimilating. They're artists doubling down on diaspora identity because that identity is now a globally legible musical language. When millions of listeners worldwide grew up on Bollywood soundtracks and bhangra alongside Western pop, Punjabi-language production stops needing translation. It just needs distribution.

What began as Western artists sampling Indian sounds has reversed into Indian sounds reshaping what Western pop is. That shift, once started, doesn't reverse. The artists headlining festivals in 2026, the producers building studios in India rather than outsourcing there, the streaming algorithms optimizing for Arijit Singh's engagement rates—these are permanent structural changes. Ed Sheeran's Hindi chorus on “Sapphire” was the sound of an entire industry catching up to where listeners already were.

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05

**Vietnam Filled Up First.
Now India and Mexico Are
Racing for What's Left of
China's Factory Floor**

By AIE Editorial · July 17, 2026 · Finance

Ask a site-selection consultant in Ho Chi Minh City to find you 50,000 square meters of ready-built factory space this quarter, and you'll get a long pause before the answer. Vietnam's premium industrial parks in the south are running at 89 to 92 percent occupancy, and some individual sites have hit 99 to 100 percent, fully leased with waiting lists behind them. The country that every "China+1" playbook names first is starting to feel the walls close in on its own success.

That success is downstream of a bigger number. A recent SemiAnalysis dataset, circulated widely in early July, shows U.S. smartphone imports from China falling from 90 percent of the market in 2022 to roughly 25 percent today. That's not a gradual drift, it's the floor giving way, and it's why Beijing's Ministry of Commerce rolled out a 15-point plan on June 23 aimed at holding onto research, management, and a slice of manufacturing even as new factory investment walks out the door. China isn't being abandoned. It's being downgraded to "plus one" status, and the "plus one" slot has three serious applicants.



“China isn’t being abandoned. It’s being downgraded to “plus one” status, and the “plus one” slot has three serious applicants.”

Vietnam got there first for the obvious reason: it sits right on China’s southern border, components can roll across with minimal friction, and finished goods ship out under a non-Chinese label the U.S. tariff schedule doesn’t punish. It pulled in more than \$36 billion in foreign direct investment in 2025 alone, concentrated in electronics, semiconductors, and footwear.

But being first mover for five straight years means the good land is gone, rents in the industrial corridors around Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi have climbed accordingly, and companies signing deals now are often building further from ports than they'd like.

India's pitch is different, and its numbers are hard to ignore. Apple assembled roughly 55 million iPhones there in 2025, a 53 percent jump from 36 million the year before, pushing India's share of global iPhone output to about 25 percent, one in four handsets on earth. The tariff math explains the urgency: Chinese-made iPhones face import duties near 55 percent entering the U.S., while Indian-made units face roughly 10 percent. That gap alone rewires Apple's supply chain faster than any five-year strategic plan could. Since 2021, cumulative iPhone exports out of India under the government's production-linked incentive scheme have crossed \$50 billion, and the device has become the country's single largest export item, ahead of diamonds and pharmaceuticals.





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What's less discussed outside industry trade press is that India isn't just competing with Vietnam and Mexico, it's running an internal race too. Tata Electronics, which became the first Indian-owned company to assemble iPhones after buying out Wistron's local operations in 2023, has scaled its workforce to around 75,000, edging past Foxconn's roughly 69,000 at its Indian sites this year. Foxconn isn't standing still either. Its Devanahalli facility near Bengaluru, a ₹20,000 crore build designed for close to 20 million units a year, could flip that lead back once it's fully online later in 2026. For a country where "Made in India" has mostly meant assembling someone else's design, watching a homegrown conglomerate out-hire a Taiwanese giant on its own soil reads as more than a manufacturing footnote. It's the kind of export headline that lands as national pride as much as economic data, and it's one the diaspora has been quick to notice and repeat.

India's limits are real too, just less visible from outside. Port congestion at JNPT in Mumbai, inconsistent inland trucking, and multi-layer GST compliance chip away at labor costs that otherwise run 30 to 40 percent below Vietnam's for comparable skill levels. The advantage on paper doesn't always survive contact with the supply chain.

Mexico's case looks the strongest of all on a map: USMCA gives it tariff-free U.S. access, and road freight reaches American distribution centers in four to eight days instead of the weeks a container ship needs from Asia. Yet nearshoring investment announcements there fell 78 percent year-over-year in the first quarter of 2026, and Chinese FDI into Mexico collapsed 80 percent to just \$588 million, as Mexico tightens rules to avoid becoming a backdoor for Chinese-origin goods ahead of the 2026 USMCA review, which is expected to squeeze China-content limits further. Mexico's constraint isn't land or labor. It's politics, and a rulebook that's about to get stricter, not looser.

None of the three has actually won this. Vietnam is out of room, India is racing itself as much as anyone else, and Mexico's proximity advantage keeps colliding with a tightening border on paper goods it can't fully control. The factory floor of the world isn't relocating to one address. It's splitting into three, each with its own ceiling.

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06

**The Map on the Cape: How
Diaspora Musicians Wear
Where They're From**

By AIE Editorial • July 10, 2026 • Fashion

cape with microphone

When Diljit Dosanjh climbed the Met Gala steps in May 2025, the cape falling from his shoulders carried an embroidered map of Punjab, its lettering set in Gurmukhi script. Prabal Gurung had built the whole ivory-and-gold look around early-twentieth-century Punjab royalty: a feathered, jewel-studded turban, a diamond necklace echoing a Cartier piece once made for a Sikh maharaja, a jewel-encrusted sword at the hip. On fashion's most surveilled staircase, the first turbaned Punjabi to arrive there dressed not as a guest but as a maharaja who had decided to show up.

None of that is costume. Clothing has always done heavier lifting for people living between two places than it does for anyone settled in one. In a 2024 study in the journal *Social Identities*, researchers Rohit Dasgupta and Nazli Alimen spent ten months among South Asian shopkeepers and shoppers in Glasgow and found that what diaspora communities wear is never only self-expression. It is how they negotiate hybrid identities and mark, to themselves and to each other, who belongs and who doesn't. Put that instinct in front of a musician whose every frame gets screenshotted, and the signal goes out at stadium scale.



Not everyone reaches for map-on-the-cape maximalism. Karan Aujla, whose tracks pull hundreds of millions of streams, mostly moves in Amiri and Chrome Hearts, a palette of black, white and denim blue that could belong to any rapper from Toronto to Atlanta, until you clock the kara on his wrist or the specific way the whole silhouette reads Punjabi. AP Dhillon goes quieter still, Fear of God Essentials and monochrome, the heritage almost withheld rather than announced. Two artists, two opposite volumes, same underlying question.

“Clothing has always done heavier lifting for people living between two places than it does for anyone settled in one.”

That question is the one every diaspora kid gets asked twice: too brown for one room, not brown enough for the next. Babneet Lakhesar, the Toronto artist who hand-paints jackets as Babbuthepainter, has said flatly that she makes work in response to being told she is “too South Asian” in the West and “too Western” back home. A turban stacked with necklaces and an Essentials hoodie worn just so are two answers to the same standoff, and neither is wrong.





The clothes double as a rebuttal. Nisha K Sethi, who runs the California streetwear label Kalakari Crew, describes her work as “about reclaiming our identity in a society that is constantly appropriating culture.” That worry isn’t theoretical. For years bindis and mehndi surfaced on festival lawns, floated free of anyone who grew up with them. The brothers behind the label Rootsgear started it after 9/11, when a turban could get a Sikh man harassed or worse, and turned Punjabi hip-hop apparel into something closer to visible defiance than merch.

By Coachella this past April, that reclaiming had its own runway. Designers and creators like Sheel Yerneni styled entire crews in mini saris and custom Svarini pieces, one butterfly top clocking over two hundred hours of craftsmanship, while beauty creator Aditya Madiraju drew the line out loud: “Don’t call it retro, don’t call it vintage, don’t call it bohemian. Call it South Asian.” The same desert stage where Dosanjh became the first Punjabi artist to perform in 2023 was now ringed by fans who had dressed the part on purpose.

And the craft runs deeper than the red-carpet spectacle suggests. Around the turban alone there is a whole quiet economy now: bespoke, made-to-order versions, fusion textiles that pair heritage embroidery with modern weaves, and long-running debates among wearers over which cloth holds best, Full Voile for its structure, the lightest mal mal for an everyday dumalla. A garment that anti-Sikh violence once tried to make dangerous is being tailored, streamed and styled with obsessive care.

The maharaja reference in Dosanjh's Met Gala look was pointed for a reason. Punjab's royals were once photographed draped in jewels that European houses later locked into Western vaults; wearing that lineage back onto the world's biggest fashion night is a quiet act of repossession. The garment says what the discography says. Punjabi artists are among the largest streaming forces on the planet right now, and they got there without sanding off the Gurmukhi, the folk melody, or the dumalla. The wardrobe is simply the thesis worn on the body: you don't have to translate yourself to be heard.

Dosanjh's world-tour merch, all pearls and sneakers and the map motif again, sold out in hours. Which tells you the fans weren't only buying a T-shirt. They were buying the right to wear the same answer he does, to walk into their own too-brown, not-brown-enough rooms carrying a small embroidered map of exactly where they're from.

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07

Is India Still the World's Back Office — Or Its Next AI Lab?

By Andrej T · July 14, 2026 · News



A darkened Bengaluru office tower with empty desks beside a glowing server building, symbolizing India's shift from outsourcing offices to sovereign AI infrastructure.

Same country, same month, two headlines that don't seem to belong in the same story. Tata Consultancy Services confirms it cut 23,460 jobs in FY26, its largest reduction ever, and points to an "AI-first" delivery model as the reason. Weeks later, an eight-person research outfit called Sarvam AI closes a \$234 million round that values it at \$1.5 billion, with HCLTech alone writing a \$150 million check for a stake. Both are true. Both are happening to the same workforce, in the same cities, at the same time. India isn't being disrupted by AI so much as split by it, and which half of that story you land in depends on what you were doing five years ago.

The IT services model that built India's outsourcing boom ran on billable headcount: more engineers on a client account meant more revenue, predictably, quarter after quarter. AI-first delivery breaks that math directly, and TCS isn't alone in feeling it. Infosys has quietly cut over 950 jobs this year, shut a Pennsylvania back-office site, and trimmed campus recruitment, while the Nifty IT index is down more than 20% in 2026 as investors price in the same thing employees are living through. None of this arrives as a press release. It shows up as a "performance exit," a bench that never gets refilled, a fresher offer letter that quietly doesn't materialize.

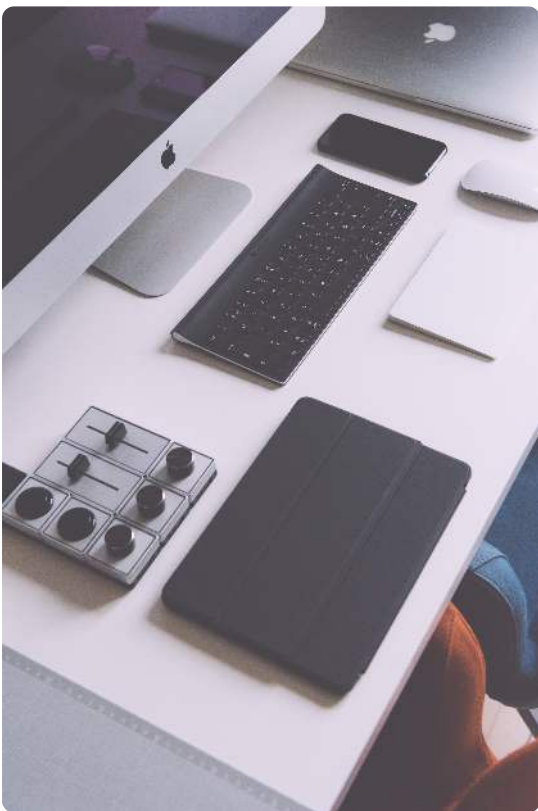
"India isn't being disrupted by AI so much as split by it, and which half of that story you land in depends on what you were doing five years ago."

Set that against what Rest of World reported this year from the other end of the same industry: a cluster of Indian labs building what they call frugal AI, models designed from the ground up for a market where bandwidth, hardware, and money are all constrained. Sarvam AI, founded by Vivek Raghavan and Pratyush Kumar out of AI4Bharat at IIT Madras, built SarvamM, a 24-billion-parameter model trained across ten Indian languages, and has since shipped open-weight models scaling up to 105 billion parameters. Krutrim, launched by Ola co-founder Bhavish Aggarwal, took a rockier path to the same goal, and Aggarwal has since admitted publicly that its early models weren't close to global benchmarks. The design philosophy both are chasing borrows explicitly from Aadhaar and UPI: infrastructure built cheap enough and open enough that a billion people can actually sit on top of it. The problem it's solving is concrete rather than aspirational. Tokenizing a query in an Indian language can cost roughly five times what the same query costs in English, which makes every American-built model an expensive and clumsy fit for the country's own languages.



The government has decided this gap is worth subsidizing directly. The IndiaAI Mission has onboarded more than 38,000 GPUs through its compute portal, rented out to startups, MSMEs, and academic labs at roughly 42% below market rate, with an official target of 100,000 GPUs by the end of the year. Sarvam was the first startup selected to build a sovereign LLM under the mission. This is industrial policy aimed squarely at not repeating the outsourcing playbook: build the infrastructure domestically this time, rather than renting it from Redmond or Mountain View and providing the labor underneath it.

The workforce caught between these two stories isn't abstract, and it's the same demographic that has spent two decades building the diaspora's professional identity around the words "I work in IT." A Blind survey of over 1,200 verified tech professionals this year found that 53% had witnessed colleagues return to India from the US, with reverse migration highest among staff at Amazon, Walmart, and Uber. Higher H-1B fees and AI-driven restructuring at US tech firms are pushing that migration, and the landing isn't soft: one returning Google employee described pay abroad at roughly a fifth of what it had been in the US. A 2025 thematic analysis of Indian IT professionals facing AI-driven displacement, published in a peer-reviewed occupational health journal, names the pattern plainly: emotional shock, erosion of professional identity, and what researchers term "perceived organizational betrayal" among workers who did everything the outsourcing economy asked of them.



What's absorbing some of that shock is India's own Global Capability Centre boom, on track to add over 510,000 jobs in 2026, growing 18-27% annually against 4-6% for legacy IT services, with nearly two-thirds of new roles now requiring AI or automation skills. It's a real cushion, but not a return to the old bargain. A GCC job in Bengaluru pays a fraction of a US tech salary, and everyone taking one knows it.

So the honest answer isn't "disrupted" or "next AI lab." It's that the generation whose parents' career currency was proximity to American clients is now watching its own kids choose between prompt-engineering someone else's model at a GCC desk, or building the sovereign one down the street from where TCS just handed out its layoff notices.

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08

**The 2026 Desi Bride Finally
Gets to Move: Detachable
Sleeves and Featherweight
Lehengas**



By AIE Editorial · July 09, 2026 · Fashion

“Gone are the days of heavy lehengas that feel like armour.” That line, from a Masala Thai roundup of the desi wedding trends couples are choosing in 2026, is doing more than it lets on. It captures exactly where desi bridal fashion in 2026 is heading: away from weight as proof of love, and toward an outfit a bride can actually survive. For generations, the heft of a bridal ensemble was the point. More zardozi, more velvet, more kilos of embroidery meant more status, more occasion. The bride who could barely lift her arms by the walima had, in a sense, won. That equation is quietly breaking.

Look at what brides are buying this season and the whole story sits in the fabric. Organza, chiffon, georgette and soft silk have edged past the old heavyweights of brocade and velvet, chosen specifically because they breathe and move through hours of ritual. Designers have leaned in with thread-painting techniques that mimic the visual density of heavy embroidery while keeping the garment light enough to dance in — the impact of a kilo of zari at a fraction of the load.

“The bride who could barely lift her arms by the walima had, in a sense, won. That equation is quietly breaking.”

Then there's the engineering, because that's genuinely what it is. The defining innovation of the season isn't a colour or a neckline, it's the detachable piece. Cape sleeves that unhook. Dupattas that lift away. Jackets and drapes built to come off between events. A single lehenga can now carry a bride from a heavily layered ceremony look to a stripped-back reception silhouette without a full costume change. Convertible two-piece sets, separable blouses and lighter skirts that pair with multiple tops are being sold on value as much as comfort — one outfit, several lives. Even the silhouettes leaning most Western, the flowy Anarkali-style gowns and saree-gowns Masala Thai flags as rising, are prized precisely because they let a bride move through a long function the way a good dress would.



The couture houses have stopped treating comfort as the enemy of grandeur. DESIblitz, previewing the designers set to define 2026, puts the shift bluntly: bridalwear “is no longer about excess weight or rigid tradition, but intelligent design that adapts to modern lifestyles.” Tarun Tahiliani is building engineered blouses made for movement. Jayanti Reddy is pairing handwoven silks with easy jackets and corsets. Even the maximalists are sculpting their drapes to sit lighter on the shoulders. The tech-meets-tradition language isn’t marketing fluff; it describes a real change in how these garments are constructed.

For the diaspora bride, this is less a trend than a survival kit. A full Pakistani wedding can run five or six outfits across dholki, mayoun, mehndi, nikkah, baraat and walima, according to the bridalwear guide Karigur — a wardrobe, not a dress. Stage those events across continents, as so many NRI weddings now are, with a mehndi in Toronto and a reception in Dubai, and every kilo and every non-reworkable piece becomes a logistical and financial headache. Lighter, modular clothes travel. They fold into a suitcase, clear an airport, and don’t demand a separate ensemble for every single function.



Which is why the smartest strategy circulating this season is refreshingly unromantic: pick one hero outfit, almost always the baraat, and go all in there. Karigur's advice is to keep everything else "lighter spend, reused, restyled, or rented," so the bride ends the week neither exhausted nor overspent. It maps neatly onto how designers now pitch to NRI brides across the UK, US and the Gulf — rewearability and conscious luxury over one-and-done spectacle. The dupatta that detaches for the reception is also the dupatta you might actually wear again.

None of this means the grandeur has gone anywhere. The 2026 bride, as DESIblitz frames it, wants "comfort, camera impact and versatility without sacrificing heritage or grandeur," and camera impact is doing real work in that sentence. Outfits are being designed to photograph across distances and angles, to hold up on a phone screen shared from London to Lahore within the hour. A garment now has to satisfy the room, the lens, and the family group chat at once, all while letting its wearer sit down for dinner.

That's the quiet revolution under the organza. For a very long time, desi bridal fashion was engineered around everyone except the woman inside it — the guests, the photographs, the family's standing. The detachable sleeve and the featherweight lehenga flip that. They start from an almost radical premise: that the bride should be able to breathe, move, dance and make it to the walima without being carried there by her own outfit. Tradition isn't being thinned out. It's being redesigned around the person it was always meant to celebrate.

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09

**The Eiffel Tower
Takes UPI Now. So
Does Half the Gulf.**

By Gargi Sarkar · July 13, 2026 · Finance



:* A smartphone displaying a QR code payment screen against a blended backdrop of the Eiffel Tower and an Arabian souk, symbolizing UPI's expansion beyond India.

At the base of the Eiffel Tower, a tourist from Bengaluru scans a QR code on the official ticketing site and pays for her entry exactly the way she'd pay for parathas at a roadside dhaba back home: through UPI. No currency-conversion screen, no "insufficient forex balance" alert, no line at a counter that only takes euros. France became the first European stop in UPI's international expansion in February 2024, when NPCI International tied up with French payments provider Lyra to wire the tower's ticketing system into India's rails. As of this month, the same connection runs through Charles de Gaulle airport and several other French locations.

The tower is one data point in a much larger map. UPI now works, in some functional form, in close to a dozen countries beyond India: Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Singapore, the UAE, Qatar, Mauritius, Cambodia, and now France. The texture changes country to country. In the UAE, Network International wired UPI into more than 200,000 point-of-sale terminals across 60,000 merchants, from Dubai Mall counters to neighborhood restaurants, on top of Mashreq Bank's NEOPAY and the local AANI network. Singapore has over 12,000 merchants on board through local payments firm HitPay, up from roughly 9,000 a year ago. Nepal was the first country to run UPI as core payment infrastructure rather than a tourist add-on.

"No currency-conversion screen, no "insufficient forex balance" alert, no line at a counter that only takes euros."

For the diaspora, the more consequential change happened quietly in January 2023, when NPCI let banks onboard NRE and NRO accounts onto UPI using international mobile numbers, no Indian SIM required. An NRI in Toronto or Melbourne can now link an Indian bank account directly to a UPI app on a Canadian or Australian number, and pay a landlord in Kochi or settle a wedding vendor's bill in real time, the way anyone standing in India does. It closes a gap that had quietly persisted for years: a system built to erase friction inside India had, for a long stretch, simply locked out anyone who'd left.

The traffic runs the other direction too. Under a program called UPI One World, travelers from G20 countries can get a prepaid wallet activated on UPI after a passport-and-visa KYC check at the airport, loaded with rupees off a foreign card, without ever opening an Indian bank account. It's a quiet reversal: for over a decade, visitors to India dealt in cash or card surcharges at every counter. Now someone landing from Tokyo or Toronto can be tapping into the same rail as the chaiwala outside their hotel within fifteen minutes of clearing immigration.

The volumes underneath all this are hard to hold in your head. NPCI puts UPI at more than 23 billion transactions a month domestically as of May 2026, worth close to \$312 billion, a figure industry trackers place at close to half the world's real-time payment volume. Transaction counts have compounded at roughly 46% a year since 2017-18, when the entire system cleared under a billion transactions annually. It clears that most weeks now.

That scale is exactly why other governments keep signing on. Writing in *Diplomatist*, analyst Pitamber Kaushik frames UPI's real export value as "credibility, the currency of influence." His argument: India isn't selling a finished product so much as a working blueprint, interoperable rails and low friction that let competing private apps sit on shared public infrastructure instead of one company owning the plumbing. As UPI's international expansion continues, NPCI is reportedly in talks with more than 30 countries and has floated a target of 20 nations running UPI-linked rails by 2028-29. Malaysia's DuitNow system was the latest name added to that pipeline, with integration reported this past February.

It's worth being precise about what's actually crossed the border, though. UPI abroad still settles in rupees; it isn't a foreign-exchange platform, and an NRI's linked account still has to be funded in INR. A resident paying at a Dubai Mall counter is really extending an Indian bank balance across a border, not creating a new currency corridor. The feeling of "the same app, everywhere" undersells the plumbing behind it: separate bilateral deals, separate KYC regimes, separate limits, city by city.

What doesn't need translating is the smaller, almost boring feeling it produces. Ask an NRI who's paid a Kochi landlord from a Toronto number, or a tourist who bought an Eiffel Tower ticket without hunting for a currency counter, and neither describes it as diplomacy. They describe it as not having to think about money for one extra second, which, for a generation that grew up watching parents wire funds home through agents and paperwork, might be the quieter revolution.

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10

Why a Multipolar World Order Finally Deals India a Hand Worth Playing

By AIE Editorial · July 09, 2026 · Geopolitical analysis

India in a multipolar world order

Within the span of a few months, India rolled out the red carpet for Vladimir Putin in December, hosted Xi Jinping at a BRICS summit it now chairs, and kept courting a Washington that spent last summer slapping it with tariffs. Hosting the heads of Russia, China and the United States in near-succession is not a scheduling accident. It is the clearest picture yet of what India's decades-old refusal to join anyone's camp actually buys it — and why a fracturing, multipolar world order might reward that refusal rather than punish it.

The doctrine has a new name. What Nehru called non-alignment, New Delhi now sells as “multi-alignment” or, more precisely, strategic autonomy: the ability to make sovereign choices in foreign policy and defence without being bound by alliance obligations. Analysts are careful to stress it is not neutrality or isolationism. It is the freedom to deal with several powers at once, on India's own terms, issue by issue — deterrence through the Quad, coalition-building through BRICS, energy through Russia, capital through the West.



“It is the freedom to deal with several powers at once, on India's own terms, issue by issue — deterrence through the Quad, coalition-building through BRICS, energy through Russia, capital through the West.”

That freedom has a price tag, and India paid part of it in public. In August 2025, President Trump imposed a 25 percent tariff on Indian goods, then doubled it, citing India's purchases of Russian crude. India's foreign ministry called the move "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable," and the Quad leaders' summit meant to be held in India was quietly postponed as relations soured. A country that had spent two decades being courted by

Washington was suddenly being squeezed by it.



India did not blink on Russia, and the reasoning is not sentiment. Moscow underwrites the strategic autonomy New Delhi prizes: veto cover at the UN Security Council, nuclear submarine technology, and the BrahMos hypersonic know-how the West still hesitates to hand over. As one Fair Observer analysis put it, ditching a "time-tested, trusted partner of decades for the fads of some will be a strategic folly." When you have engineered your entire posture around never being anyone's dependent, folding under pressure from one capital defeats the point.



None of this works without a domestic engine, which is where self-reliance stops being a slogan. The Atmanirbhar Bharat push, anchored by Production-Linked Incentive schemes across fourteen sectors, had drawn cumulative investment of about Rs 2.16 lakh crore (US\$24 billion) and generated production worth roughly US\$227 billion by the end of 2025, per India's investment agency IBEF. The pitch to global companies rethinking their China exposure is blunt: come build here instead. Autonomy abroad is only credible when it rests on manufacturing, defence production and an economy now ranked fourth-largest in the world.

The timing is the opportunity. By 2026 it is arguably the West that is dismantling the order it built, and that vacuum is precisely the space a middle power can grow into. India has positioned itself as an alternative supply-chain hub for investment diverted out of China, and as a self-appointed voice for the Global South inside forums like BRICS — where its chairmanship this year gives it an agenda-setting seat rather than a spectator's one. A world with several poles instead of one hegemon is, structurally, a world where a country that talks to everyone has more leverage than a country locked into a bloc.

The skeptics have a case worth taking seriously. In late 2025, Foreign Policy ran the argument bluntly under the headline that India's strategic autonomy "doesn't work in a great power world," and East Asia Forum spent June cataloguing India's limits as a middle power — the gap between the ambition and the capacity to back it. The Sino-Russian axis that hardened after Ukraine has eroded Russia's old role as India's balancer against China. Closer to home, Bangladesh's February 2026 elections and a mooted Pakistan-Bangladesh defence understanding raise the specter of a hostile arc on India's own borders. Strategic autonomy, in that reading, is less a masterstroke than a demanding high-wire act that a genuine crisis could knock off balance.

For the diaspora watching from New Jersey, London, Toronto and the Gulf, the answer to that argument is not abstract. India's standing in a multipolar world order shapes how tens of millions of people of Indian origin are read abroad — as citizens of a swing power courted by everyone, or of a middle power that overreached. The bet Nehru placed in the 1950s, that India was better off owing no one, is being re-run at far higher stakes and with a real economy behind it. Multipolarity does not guarantee India wins. It just, finally, deals the country a hand worth playing.

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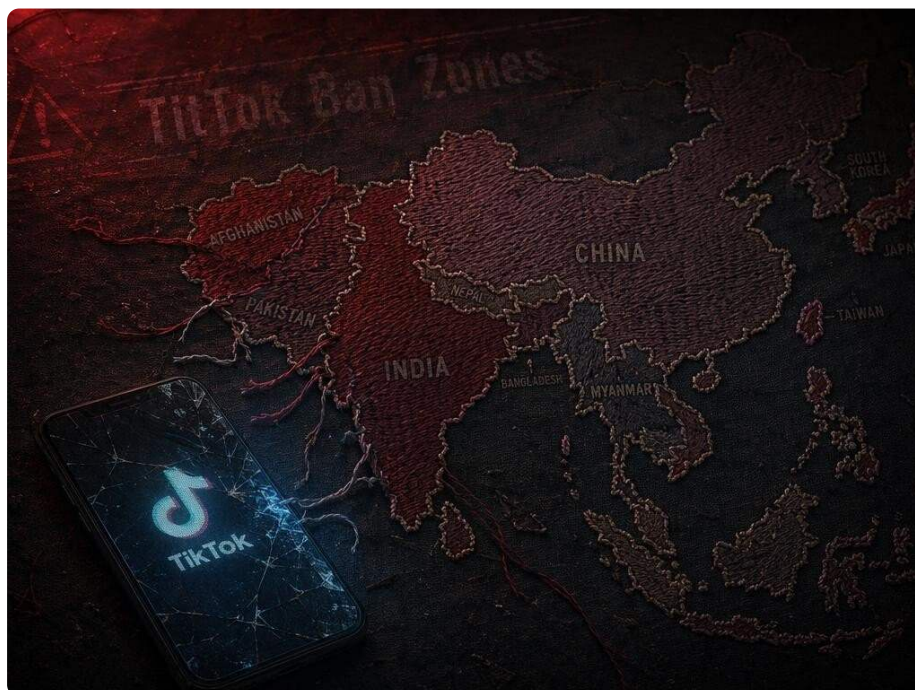
**TikTok Was Born in
Asia. Asia Is Where It
Keeps Getting Banned.**

By AIE Editorial • July 10, 2026 • IT, AI and Social Media

A cracked phone screen glowing over an embroidered map of Asia with threads cut near India and Afghanistan, symbolizing the region's patchwork of TikTok bans.

On June 29, 2020, roughly 200 million people in India lost TikTok in a single afternoon. The government banned it hours after a deadly border clash with Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley, and the app has never come back. Six years later, in 2026, India's IT minister has confirmed there's still no proposal to lift it. The country that generates some of the platform's most-remixed sound and dance content anywhere on earth is also the one that can't legally open the app.

China's relationship with TikTok is stranger still, because there isn't one. The international app was never launched inside mainland China at all; users there run Douyin, a separate product built by the same parent company, ByteDance, from the ground up to satisfy domestic law. Content flagged as touching Tibet, Taiwan, or the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown gets pulled immediately, and since 2021 Douyin has capped users under fourteen at forty minutes a day, tilted toward "educational" and nationalistic content. TikTok's own home company decided the platform it built for the rest of the world wasn't fit to run at home.



“The country that generates some of the platform’s most-remixed sound and dance content anywhere on earth is also the one that can’t legally open the app.”

Afghanistan went further than restriction and reached for outright morality policing. In 2022, the Taliban’s Ministry of Communications and Information Technology ordered TikTok banned, with a spokesman telling Bloomberg it carried “filthy content not consistent with Islamic laws” and was “misleading the younger generation.” PUBG got banned alongside it for ninety days. The justification wasn’t security or data. It was that short-form video itself, dancing, music, unveiled faces, read as a threat to the social order the Taliban wanted to enforce.

Pakistan has run the same argument on a loop. The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority has banned TikTok five separate times since October 2020, each time citing “immoral” or “indecent” content, each time lifting the ban once TikTok promised stricter moderation. Nepal tried a harder version in November 2023, banning the app entirely over what officials called threats to “social harmony,” before reversing course in August 2024 once TikTok agreed to help identify accounts tied to criminal activity. None of these governments treat the ban as permanent. They treat it as leverage.





India's ban is the one that actually reshaped a music scene, because TikTok had briefly done something Bollywood's label system never did: let an unsigned singer from a small city get heard nationally without a gatekeeper. Independent musicians who'd built real followings there watched that pipeline vanish overnight, alongside millions of ordinary creators. Industry tracking after the ban found that only about a third of creators managed by one marketing agency had recaptured their previous reach on Instagram Reels or YouTube Shorts within three months. Pooja Gunjal, who'd built a following posting Bollywood lip-sync videos with her husband from their food stall in Maharashtra, put the fragmentation simply a year later: "The crowd that was under one roof of TikTok got divided between several apps." Even the creators who did recover found the scrappy, largely rural culture TikTok had built in India narrowing into something more curated and top-down on whatever replaced it.

That's the split a diaspora audience lives inside without necessarily naming it. Someone in Toronto or Southall can open TikTok tonight and land on a Punjabi mashup or a Tamil dance trend within seconds. Someone in Mumbai or Delhi needs a VPN to see the same clip, assuming they know to look. The culture keeps circulating. Access to the platform carrying it depends entirely on which passport, or which government's threat assessment, you happen to be standing under.

A 2025 analysis in the journal *Politics and Governance* frames exactly this pattern as a fight over digital sovereignty: governments increasingly treat control over a foreign-owned platform, its data, its algorithm, its ability to shape what a population watches, as a matter of national self-determination rather than ordinary content moderation. Read India's border-triggered ban, Afghanistan's morality ban, and China's decision to never let the app in at all through that lens, and they stop looking like three unrelated stories. They're the same instinct wearing different justifications: keep this one platform, of all platforms, at arm's length from the population.

What makes the pattern land differently in Asia than anywhere else is that this is also the region TikTok depends on most for the sound of the app itself, the remixes, the bhangra transitions, the Bollywood needle-drops that travel everywhere else on earth uninterrupted. The platform keeps exporting the culture. A widening share of the countries that made it keep deciding they'd rather not import the app back.

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12

The Day an Indian Emperor Carved His Laws in Greek

By AIE Editorial · July 11, 2026 · Culture



An ancient carved rock inscription in Greek and Brahmi script beside a Gandharan Buddha statue, symbolizing the Hellenistic legacy in ancient India.

In 1958, workmen clearing rubble near a rock outcrop called Chehel Zina, outside Kandahar, uncovered a slab of limestone buried under a meter of debris. Carved into it were two languages, side by side: Greek and Aramaic. The Greek reads, in part, “having completed ten years, King Piodasses showed piety to men” — eusebeia, in the original. Piodasses was Ashoka. The emperor who unified most of the Indian subcontinent had chosen, for one of the very first edicts he ever put into stone, to write it in the language of Athens.

It wasn't a flourish. Roughly seventy years before Ashoka's reign, Alexander's armies had pushed through Bactria and Arachosia, in what is now southern Afghanistan, and left behind garrison towns that didn't empty out when he did. Greek soldiers settled, married locally, and raised children who grew up speaking Greek as a first language — and by the time Ashoka inherited that territory, those children's children were his subjects. The Kandahar inscription, dated to around 260 BCE, actually predates every other edict of his that survives in India itself. The first thing Ashoka ever carved in stone anywhere was addressed to Greek readers.

He didn't translate his own vocabulary into theirs, either. Eusebeia is a real term from Greek ethical philosophy, not a clumsy stand-in for dhamma — someone in Ashoka's chancery knew enough Greek moral thought to reach for a word that would actually land. The Aramaic half of the same inscription calls him "our lord, king Priyadasin," while the Greek stays flatter: just "King Ashoka." Two versions of the same law, pitched in two different registers, for two audiences who were each already at home in their own language.

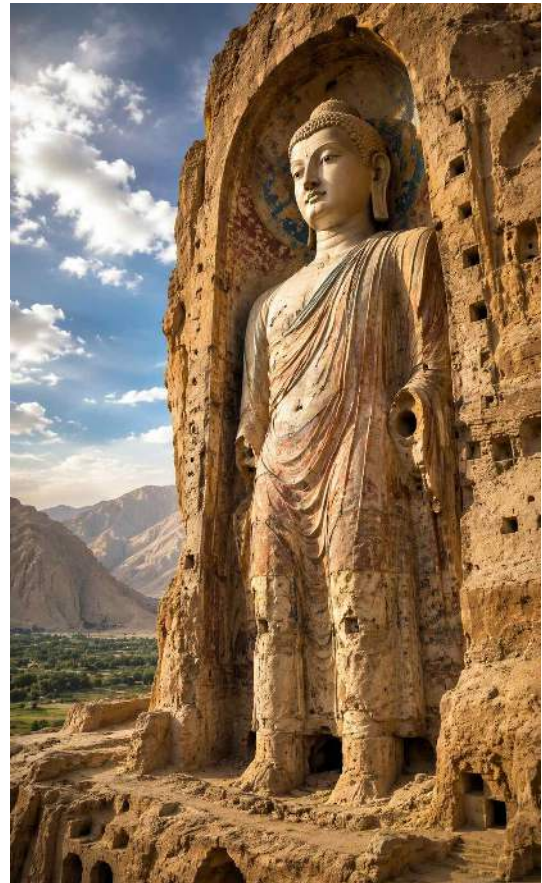
"The first thing Ashoka ever carved in stone anywhere was addressed to Greek readers."

That bilingual instinct outlived Ashoka by centuries. Around 180 BCE, a line of more than thirty Hellenistic kings carved the Indo-Greek Kingdom out of Punjab and Gandhara and ran it for two hundred years with Greek as the language of the court. Their coins carried Greek legends on one face and Kharosthi or Brahmi on the other — the same coin doing double duty for two literate publics at once.

The best remembered of those kings never set foot in Greece as an adult and is barely remembered there at all. Menander I turns up in Buddhist tradition as King Milinda, the sharp, skeptical interrogator of the Milinda Panha, a text still read today, in which he interrogates the monk Nagasena about the self, the soul, and what a king actually owes his people. A Greek ruler's argument technique, preserved because a Buddhist author thought it made the dharma land harder.

Menander wasn't the only Greek to go native, and not always at the top. In 113 BCE, an ambassador named Heliodorus arrived at the court of Bhagabhadra in central India, sent by the Indo-Greek king Antialcidas of Taxila. Instead of just delivering his message and going home, he put up his own column at Besnagar, in Brahmi script, describing himself as a Bhagavata — a devotee of Vasudeva, the god later known as Krishna. He's one of the earliest people on record, anywhere, to convert to what would become Vaishnavism.

Greek didn't vanish when the Indo-Greek Kingdom finally did, either. The Rabatak inscription records that around 120 CE, the Kushan emperor Kanishka issued an edict in Greek and then had it put into "the Aryan language" — a deliberate act of translating out of Greek, because Bactrian had by then become the more useful court language. Even after that, Greek script kept turning up in manuscripts and stone inscriptions for centuries, by some accounts as late as the eve of the Islamic conquests in the 7th and 8th century.



It's baked into stranger corners than inscriptions, too. Gandharan sculptors gave the Buddha's protector Vajrapani the muscular pose of Herakles, and a Greek artist named Agesilas signed his name on the reliquary casket commissioned by Kanishka himself. And in 269 CE, a Sanskrit poet named Sphujidhvaja versified a Greek astrological treatise into the *Yavanajataka* — "the horoscopy of the Greeks" — handing Sanskrit two words it still can't do without: *hora*, from the Greek for "hour," and *kendra*, from *kentron*, the Greek word for an angular house.

Neither word means anything else in Sanskrit. They only exist because someone needed them for a horoscope.

None of this reads like a footnote once you notice how much of it survived on purpose — a Buddhist scribe keeping a Greek king's arguments, a Vedic astrologer keeping a Greek word he had no substitute for, a sculptor lending Herakles' shoulders to a bodhisattva. Layered, borrowed, argued-over identity isn't something the subcontinent picked up recently. It was there before anyone thought to call it that.

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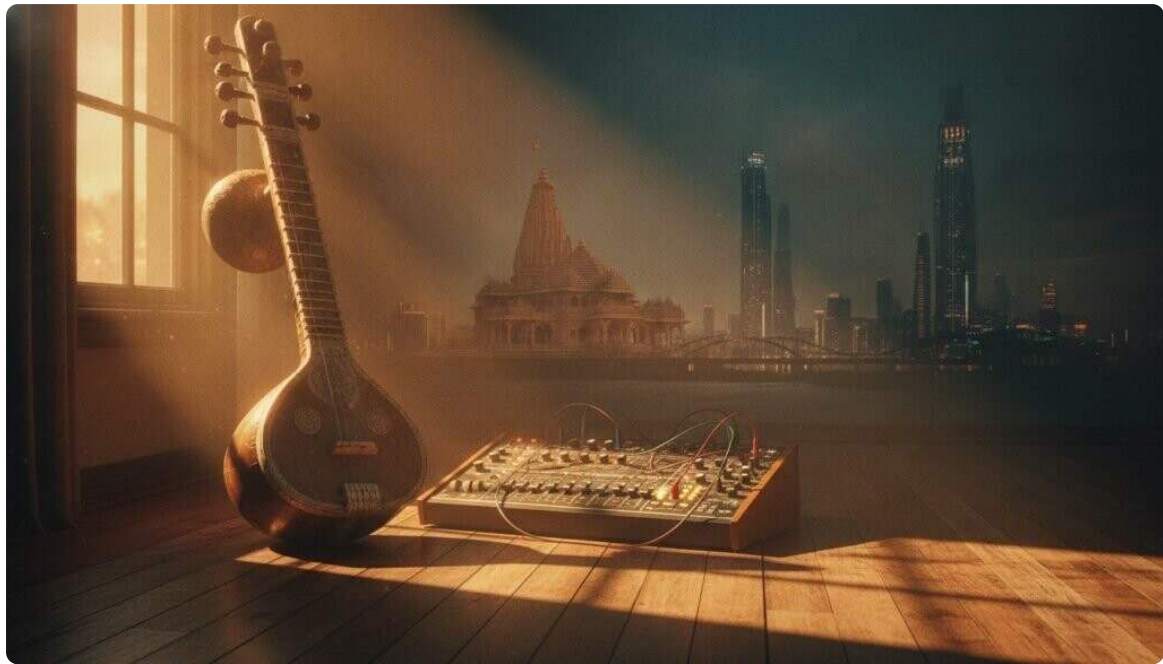
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How Indian Music Evolved Over 6,000 Years Into Global Fusion



By AIE Editorial · July 03, 2026 · Indian Music

A sitar and a synthesizer

“Naatu Naatu” took the stage at the 2023 Oscars and did something no Indian film song had done before: it won. Composers M.M. Keeravani and Chandrabose collected the Best Original Song trophy for a track built around nothing more exotic than a five-minute dance-off, and within weeks the “hook step” had been recreated by everyone from cricketers to foreign diplomats. It read like an overnight sensation. It wasn’t. The rhythmic pulse under that chorus is the latest note in a story of Indian music’s evolution that started roughly six thousand years ago, and it’s picked up a few strange detours along the way.

That story begins with the Samaveda, the Vedic text scholars point to as the root of Indian musical theory, where hymns from the Rigveda were set to melody using as few as three notes for ritual chanting. Those chants gave rise to the earliest ragas, and by the 6th century the treatise Brihaddeshi had turned raga into a formal system, complete with its own starting notes, resting notes, and rules for how a mood gets built one phrase at a time. This wasn't music as decoration. It was architecture: ragas were mapped to specific times of day and seasons so precisely that a musician playing an evening raga at sunrise wasn't taking a creative risk, they were simply doing it wrong. That framework held for close to a thousand years before anything seriously challenged it.

"This wasn't music as decoration. It was architecture: ragas were mapped to specific times of day and seasons so precisely that a musician playing an evening raga at sunrise wasn't taking a creative risk, they were simply doing it wrong."



That unity didn't last. Around the 14th century, as Persian influence spread through the Mughal courts of the north, Amir Khusrau helped blend Indian and Persian music, new instruments like the sitar and tabla entered the picture, and court musicians like Tansen carried the style further under royal patronage. Carnatic music, in the south, stayed closer to its roots, shaped instead by the Bhakti movement's devotional bhajans and kirtans and its deep ties to temple tradition. One root, two branches, split by geography and empire, and both still taught essentially the same way today.

Then, in November 1902, something happened that had nothing to do with courts or temples: a British sound engineer named Fred Gaisberg set up a makeshift studio in a Kolkata hotel room and recorded a singer named Gauhar Jaan performing a khayal in Raag Jogiya. Over six weeks he cut more than 500 recordings, shipped to Germany as shellac discs and pressed for sale back in India. Gauhar Jaan went on to record over 600 songs in ten-plus languages before her career ended, and in doing so, she took classical music out of courtesan salons and rich men's soirees and put it on turntables in ordinary living rooms for the first time in the tradition's history.



That's the platform Indian film music was built on. It effectively began with 1931's "Alam Ara," the country's first talkie, and by the 1970s composer R.D. Burman was openly splicing jazz, funk, and rock into what had been a classical-and-folk foundation. A.R. Rahman pushed it further in the 1990s, scoring "Roja," "Bombay," and "Dil Se" with arrangements that treated a Carnatic phrase and a synth pad as equally valid ingredients, not a compromise between two worlds.

While Bollywood fused on-screen, the diaspora was building its own version off-screen, thousands of miles from either. Between 1996 and 1999, tabla player Talvin Singh, creative producer Sweetie Kapoor, and producer Sam Zaman ran the Anokha club nights at Hoxton Square's Blue Note in London, mixing Indian classical music with jungle and drum and bass for British Asians who'd never had a soundtrack built specifically for them. Singh's 1998 album "OK" won the Mercury Music Prize the following year, and the night effectively named a movement: the Asian Underground. Researchers studying diaspora communities point to exactly this kind of music, made in clubs and bedrooms far from India, as one of the threads holding a scattered cultural identity together across generations, functioning less like a nostalgia act and more like proof that the tradition travels intact even when the people carrying it never set foot back home.

Which brings the story back to that Oscar stage. "Naatu Naatu" wasn't a first draft of Indian music going global, and it won't be the last. It's one more remix in a lineage that has already survived a few thousand years of evolution, a Mughal empire, a British recording engineer with a suitcase full of wax, and the arrival of Spotify. The next link in that chain is probably being built right now, in a bedroom studio somewhere between Chennai and Southall, by someone who has never once thought of "fusion" as a marketing word.

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From AIE Music

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Pulse - July 2026...

In "Pulse - July 2026 · Issue 1," explore the rich tapestry of Indian music as it evolves from ancient Vedic chants to modern global hits, uncovering the intricate interplay between culture and commerce. Delve into the darker undercurrents of the Punjabi music industry, where extortion threatens artistry, while artists like Diljit Dosanjh and Karan Aujla redefine identity through music and fashion on the world stage. This inaugural issue invites readers to consider the costs and rewards of belonging to two worlds, all set against the backdrop of a vibrant and shifting musical landscape.