



US & CANADA

Newsletter

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US POLITICS

Presidential elections round-up

What a difference a month makes. The first presidential debates had left the Democrats despondent after President Biden's disastrous performance. Calls on him to step down were met with the response that only the God Almighty could make him do so and "the [Lord](#) Almighty's not coming down". It took a third tryst with COVID for Biden to decide that he should step down and he officially [announced](#) on July 21 that he would end his campaign for the presidency in the "best interest of the party and the country". In the weeks leading up to Biden's decision, there was immense pressure from [Democrat](#) leaders and lawmakers on Biden to withdraw due to concerns over his age and declining cognitive abilities. Elders such as Nancy [Pelosi](#), former speaker of the House openly called on Biden to withdraw.

Though there were concerns about chaos following Biden's withdrawal, the Democrats swiftly closed ranks and Vice President Kamala Harris emerged as the leading candidate to assume the Democratic nomination for president. This was the only viable option given that she was already on the ticket and could have access to the \$100 million in campaign funds already collected by Biden. In the weeks since picking up the baton, she has [raised](#) a further \$310 million in campaign contributions.

Harris got off to a flying start, with a surge in approval ratings both within the party and nation-wide. She has drawn level with Republican candidate Trump in the seven battle ground states of Wisconsin, Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Nevada. Much of her support has come from key demographic

constituencies such as Black and Hispanic voters. The youth vote, which [powered](#) Biden's victory in 2020, has also rallied behind her, galvanised by youth [icons](#) such as Beyonce and Megan Thee Stallion.

The Republican campaign was equally eventful over the month, starting with a failed [assassination](#) attempt on candidate Donald Trump on 13 July in Pennsylvania. The shot heard and seen around the world and images of Trump with blood streaming down his face led to a short-lived [bump](#) in his ratings upto the Republican National Convention held just two days later. However, the convention and his choice of Ohio senator JD Vance as running mate was overshadowed by Biden's withdrawal announcement a few days later. The Trump campaign has struggled to re-orient itself to the reality of a Kamala Harris campaign, with many of the criticisms earlier directed at Biden, regarding age and cognitive abilities, now being directed at Trump. His running mate Vance has also proved to be an underwhelming [choice](#), and come under criticism for his changing stance on various issues for political benefits. He had earlier described Trump as an idiot and reprehensible and compared him to Hitler.

There is an India connection also at play in the campaign with Vance's wife Usha being of Indian origin, and Kamala Harris being of Indian and black mixed parentage. Whilst Usha Vance has not gone down well with the white supremacists in the Republican party, Trump has been trying to raise doubts on Harris' African- American credentials, saying time and time again that she identifies as Indian and posting pictures of her in a [sari](#) to prove his point. In a throwback to the less American campaign directed against Barack Obama, Trump's running mate has characterised Harris as a

‘Phony’ Who ‘Grew Up in [Canada](#)’ even though she was in Quebec for just four years during her childhood. Whilst the two candidates are yet to come face to face, the fate of a scheduled presidential debate is unknown since Trump wants to [shift](#) the debate venue from ABC News to the Fox News network.

INDIA-US RELATIONS

- US Ambassador Eric Garcetti emphasized the deep, broad and longstanding ties between the US and India at a [seminar](#) on the US-India Defense and Security Partnership, held in New Delhi. Garcetti mentioned the importance of commerce, technology, and startups in strengthening the partnership, and noted that both countries had a common goal of promoting regional stability and prosperity. He highlighted the historical and growing ties between the US and India, stressing the importance of mutual trust and cooperation. His statement that, in times of conflict, “there is no such thing as strategic autonomy,” with reference to the conflict in Ukraine, evoked a robust [response](#) from the Ministry of External Affairs, with the official spokesman reiterating that India, like many other countries, values its [strategic autonomy](#).

- At an event to [commemorate](#) the 248th US Independence Day (or National Day), US Ambassador Garcetti took stock of the relationship and highlighted new initiatives, including the first ever U.S.-India Cancer Moonshot Dialogue, to be held in India on August 5-6. He also reaffirmed that new consulates would be opening in Ahmedabad and Bengaluru shortly. This had been announced during the state visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the United States in 2023. India

also opened a new consulate in Seattle in December 2023, with full visa and [consular](#) services starting in July 2024.

- The Indian Navy and Air Force conducted a joint maritime [exercise](#) with the US Navy in the Arabian Sea on July 12, 2024. Participating units included the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, guided-missile destroyer, USS Daniel Inouye, guided-missile destroyer INS Visakhapatnam, replenishment ship INS Aditya, and Indian Air Force Su-30 fighter aircraft.

- The Foreign Ministers of Australia, India and Japan and the Secretary of State of the United States of America held a meeting of the Quad in Tokyo, Japan on July 29, 2024. Both in [remarks](#) made before the meeting and in a joint statement afterwards, the ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific region, addressing various regional and global challenges. A [statement](#) released after the meeting covered a wide range of topics including maritime security, critical technologies, cybersecurity, climate change, terrorism, infrastructure development, and international conflicts. The Quad partners also expressed their dedication to upholding international law, supporting regional institutions, and promoting peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

DIASPORA NEWS

According to a bi-annual Asian American Voter [Survey](#) (AAVS), the longest-running survey of Asian-American voters, there has been a sharp 19-per cent [decline](#) in Indian Americans supporting President Joe Biden in the four years since he was elected. Support for Biden, and by extension, the Democrat party had declined from 65% in 2022 to 46% in 2024. This was the largest

drop among all Asian-American communities surveyed. According to the survey, Biden has 55 per cent favourability rating among Indian Americans, while Trump has a favourability rating of 35 per cent. The poll, undertaken before President Biden dropped out of the race, found that Kamala Harris had a favourability rating of 54 per cent amongst Indian Americans.

Sikh Republican Harmeet Dhillon faced considerable backlash and racist comments after she recited 'Ardas', a Sikh prayer, at the Republican Party Convention in the presence of former President Donald Trump. Dhillon faced criticism and trolling from some Christian fundamentalists and ultra-conservatives who deemed the prayer "anti-Christian" and "blasphemous."

CANADA POLITICS

Polls show declining support for Liberal party

With the Federal election just over a year away, polls continue to show the Conservatives well ahead of Justin Trudeau Liberal party. In a poll conducted by Abacus data from July 4 to 9, 43% of voters said they would vote Conservative with 23% for the Liberals, 18% for NDP and 5% for the Greens. Fifty-nine percent of voters have a negative impression of Trudeau, with 77% of voters feeling the country is heading in the wrong direction.

The ruling party had tabled a bill to extend the election date from 20 October to 27 October 2025, ostensibly to avoid a clash with Diwali. However, most political parties opposed it with the Bloc Quebecois saying their party opposed the government making religious accommodations. It has also been speculated that the Liberal party

wants to postpone the election to facilitate its MPs to become eligible for a parliamentary pension which would kick in only on 21 October 2025. Currently the bill is languishing in the House of Commons.

INDIA-CANADA RELATIONS

- According to news reports, several rounds of meetings have been held between Indian and Canadian security officials and diplomats, including in third countries, to discuss the case of Khalistani activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. The meetings were described as "amicable" exchanges. In response to media queries, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police said it would not comment on an ongoing investigation.

- A Hindu temple in Edmonton, Canada, was defaced with anti-India graffiti on July 22. The Ministry of External Affairs reacted strongly to this incident noting that there was a rise in such attacks against temples, since the "lack of action" against the perpetrators involved had "emboldened" criminal elements in the country to carry out such attacks. The matter had been taken up with Canadian authorities in Ottawa and Delhi.

DIASPORA NEWS

Of the 633 Indian students who have died abroad in the past five years, the highest number of 172 was in Canada, according to the Ministry of External Affairs in reply to an MP's question in Parliament. While most deaths were due to reasons including "natural causes, accidents, medical emergencies," 19 students died to violence/attack, of which again the highest number was in Canada at 9. According to other statistics provided by the MEA, the number of Indian students studying abroad has doubled from 750,000 in 2022 to 1.33 million in 2024, of which almost 33% (427,000) are in Canada.