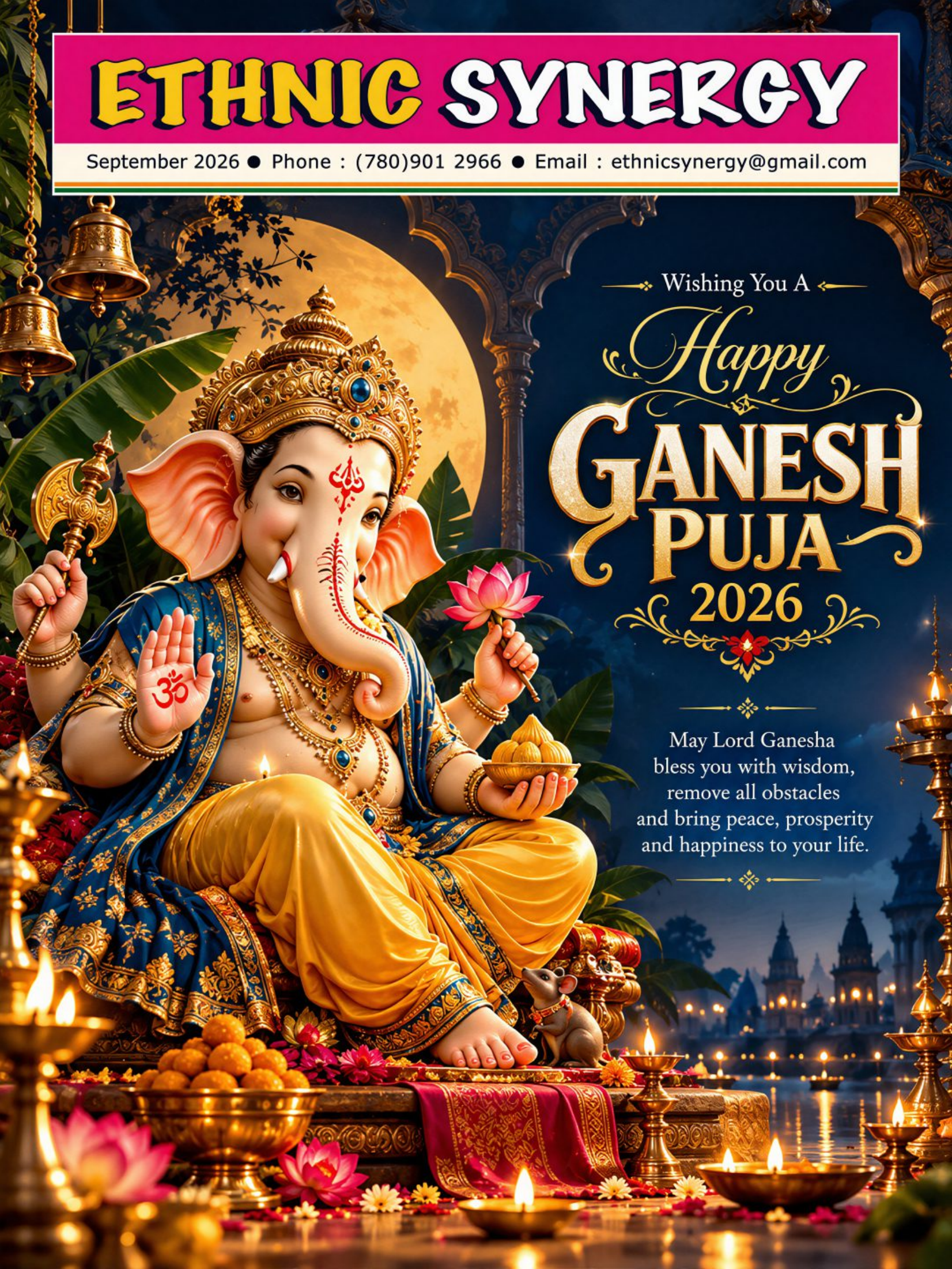
ETHNIC SYNERGY

September 2026 ● Phone : (780)901 2966 ● Email : ethnicsynergy@gmail.com



Alberta Bonga Society Presents

DURGA PUJA FESTIVAL 2026



All Are Invited

OCTOBER 19–21, 2026

NEIL CHAUDHURI

THE VOICE OF KISHORE KUMAR

LIVE IN CONCERT

Exclusively at the Durga Puja of Alberta Bonga Society

SUPPORTED BY

AKSHAYA MOORTHI — VOCAL

MANJIT SINGH — CELEBRATED SAXOPHONIST

ARATI & PUJA • 6 PM | **CONCERT • 8 PM** | **FOOD • 9 PM**

FREE ENTRY

DONATE GENEROUSLY

BLUE QUILL COMMUNITY LEAGUE

11304 25 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB T6J 5B1

FREE PARKING

For more information:

Bikash Talukdar: 587-566-3103

Lipika Choudhury: 780-901-2966

Event Supported by: ETHNIC SYNERGY

CONTENTS

Subject	Page	Subject	Page
• Alberta's fuel-tax pause: pump-price advantage	4	• What would Canada's EU associate membership look like?	12
• Stephen Harper backs economic diversification	6	• Alberta health card modernization	14
• Referendum: October 19, 2026 – 10 questions	7	• Labor targets backpackers, students and visa overstayers	16
• "It's a cheap, opportunistic political move," Doerkson says	8	• Students invited to join focus group	19
• EU opens door to Canada as associate member	10	• PM Narendra Modi pays tribute to Uttam Kumar	22

Editorial Team:
Lipika Choudhury, Susmita Sen, Sujoy Das, Smritikana, Indranil Chaudhury and Andrea Lestar

Management Team: Mike Chadha (President)
Advisory Team:
Avishek Chaudhury and Sanjana Chakraborty

Ethnic Synergy Association

Address : 4105 Allan Crescent SW, Edmonton, AB, T6W 2J9, Canada
Phone: (780) 901 2966; Email : ethnicsynergy@gmail.com



In this issue, we commemorate the birth centenary of legendary Bengali screen icon Mahanayak Uttam Kumar and feature the message from the Prime Minister of India marking this historic occasion. We also provide our readers with concise perspectives on Alberta's fuel-tax exemption and the forthcoming provincial referendum. Looking beyond Canada, we examine the potential opportunities and implications of Canada becoming the European Union's first associate member.

ETHNIC SYNERGY is a non-partisan and impartial news medium in Bengali and English, distributed in Edmonton in print and through electronic versions. This is a not-for-profit venture published monthly, reaching one of the fastest-growing South Asian communities.

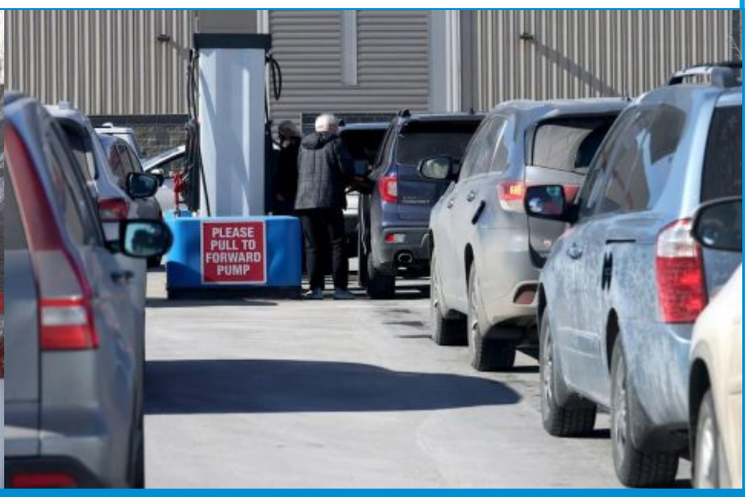
In December 2012, Ethnic Synergy created history in Edmonton by introducing, for the first time, a Bangla news medium. By embracing the rich literature and heritage of the Bangla language, we have sought to reflect Alberta's cultural diversity.

Ethnic Synergy also made history by organizing a joint celebration of India and Pakistan Independence Day in August 2015 in Edmonton, attended by nearly 1,000 people. We have collaborated with UNICEF to raise funds for Syrian refugee children and for Fort McMurray wildfire relief. In August 2025, we successfully organized a fundraising concert at the India Centre and contributed to the Alberta Government's 3× matching program in support of the Jasper wildfire relief efforts.

Sincerely,
Team Ethnic Synergy
August 15, 2026

Alberta's Fuel-Tax Pause: A Closer Look at the Pump-Price Advantage





Common caption for both images: Alberta's temporary fuel-tax suspension is designed to provide motorists with direct relief at the pump

Beginning October 1, 2026, Alberta will suspend its provincial tax on gasoline and diesel, reducing the rate from 13 cents per litre to zero until at least December 31, 2026. The Government of Alberta says the measure will provide motorists with the full 13-cent-per-litre provincial tax saving at the pump. For households relying on vehicles for commuting, school, medical appointments or rural travel, even a temporary reduction can ease transportation costs.

The change comes under Alberta's oil-price-based Fuel Tax Relief Program, which links the provincial fuel tax to West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil prices. Under the program, the regular 13-cent-per-litre tax falls to 9 cents when WTI averages between US$80 and US$84.99. It drops to 4.5 cents when the average reaches US$85–89.99, and to zero when WTI reaches US$90 or higher. Rates are reviewed quarterly, so the level of relief changes with international oil prices.

The program has already provided substantial savings. Alberta Treasury Board and Finance estimates that drivers saved $1.1 billion in provincial fuel tax during 2023–24. By March 2024, cumulative savings since the program began in April 2022 had exceeded $2 billion.

The latest suspension follows renewed volatility in global energy markets. During the August 18–September 15 review period, WTI averaged US$90.54, triggering the zero-tax threshold. The next review will determine whether the rate continues or changes.

For Alberta drivers, the immediate effect is straightforward: the provincial gasoline-tax component of the pump price will temporarily fall to zero. However, other factors influence the final price, so the full benefit may not appear uniformly across Alberta. Prices can still differ between urban centres, rural communities and individual retailers, depending on local competition, supply costs and station pricing decisions.

Alberta motorists generally benefit from comparatively lower gasoline prices, partly because of the province's proximity to oil production and refining. Yet crude oil costs, refining, transportation, distribution, regional levies, sales taxes and market conditions can all affect the price displayed at a service station.

The fuel-tax measure also forms part of Alberta's broader tax position. The province estimates its overall 2026–27 "tax advantage" at $16.9 billion—the additional provincial taxes Alberta individuals and businesses would collectively pay if Alberta used the tax systems of other provinces. This includes income, corporate, sales, fuel, payroll and other taxes. Alberta also has no provincial sales tax.

For motorists, the suspension offers immediate relief: from October 1, the provincial gasoline tax is scheduled to be zero through the end of December. Other pricing factors will continue to determine the final cost, so savings may vary by vehicle, mileage, fuel type and station.

The scale of Alberta's fuel-tax relief becomes clearer when the province is compared with gasoline taxes elsewhere in Canada.

Once Alberta's provincial gasoline tax falls to zero on October 1, the difference between Alberta and other provinces will range from several cents to almost 20 cents per litre, depending on the province and the applicable gasoline-tax rate.

The comparison, however, is specifically about provincial gasoline taxes—not the total amount of tax paid or the final price motorists see at the pump.

Natural Resources Canada's figures show that provincial gasoline taxes vary considerably across the country. Newfoundland and Labrador is listed at 7.50 cents per litre, Prince Edward Island at 8.47 cents and Ontario at 9 cents. New Brunswick is listed at 10.87 cents, while Manitoba is at 12.50 cents per litre.

For Alberta motorists, the zero-cent provincial rate therefore represents a measurable difference compared with the specified gasoline taxes in other provinces. A driver purchasing 50 litres of gasoline would, for example, have a provincial-tax difference of $6.25 compared with a province applying a 12.50-cent-per-litre gasoline tax.



The comparison also highlights how Alberta's oil-price-linked approach can produce a changing tax environment. Rather than maintaining one fixed rate regardless of oil-market conditions, the Fuel Tax Relief Program adjusts the provincial tax according to the WTI price thresholds established under the program.

Further comparisons show the range continuing across the country. Saskatchewan is listed at 15 cents per litre, Nova Scotia at 15.50 cents and Quebec at 19.20 cents. British Columbia is listed at 14.50 cents for the rest of the province, while the source notes that additional regional fuel taxes apply in Victoria and Vancouver.

These figures should therefore be read as a provincial-tax comparison rather than a ranking of gasoline prices across Canada. Sales-tax treatment also varies among provinces, while crude oil prices, refining costs, distribution expenses and regional charges can affect what motorists ultimately pay.

The accompanying table provides the province-by-province figures and shows the corresponding difference relative to Alberta's zero-cent provincial gasoline-tax rate after October 1. It offers a snapshot of the tax component while leaving the broader factors affecting retail gasoline prices outside the comparison.

For Alberta drivers, the immediate policy change remains straightforward. Beginning October 1, 2026, the specified provincial gasoline tax is scheduled to fall from the regular 13 cents per litre to zero, providing a temporary reduction in the provincial tax component of fuel costs through at least December 31.

The final impact at the pump will continue to depend on the wider energy and retail market. The tax suspension removes one clearly identifiable provincial charge, while the remaining components of gasoline pricing continue to shape the amount consumers pay when they fill their vehicles.

–Source: Ethnic Synergy



Stephen Harper delivers the closing keynote at the Canada Investment Summit in Toronto, Sept. 15, 2026.

Prime Minister Mark Carney speaks at the Canada Investment Summit in Toronto.

Stephen Harper Backs Canada's Economic Diversification Amid U.S. Trade Tensions

Former prime minister Stephen Harper told investors that Canada has little alternative but to reduce its economic dependence on the United States as trade relations deteriorate. He made the comments while delivering the closing keynote at the inaugural Canada Investment Summit in Toronto on September 15, 2026.

Harper, who served as Conservative prime minister from 2006 to 2015, supported Prime Minister Mark Carney's government in walking away from recent U.S. trade negotiations. He argued that the current U.S. administration appeared to view Canada's deep economic integration with the United States as incompatible with maintaining its separate sovereignty. Harper therefore said Canada must pursue "diminished reliance upon the United States," while acknowledging that diversification would carry significant costs.

> "Canada must pursue 'diminished reliance upon the United States.'"
>
> Stephen Harper

The remarks were notable because Harper, a former Conservative prime minister, spoke at an investment summit organized by a Liberal government. Rather than emphasizing partisan differences, he called for a broader Canadian response to the changing international economic environment. He also urged Canada to make greater use of its natural resources and strengthen its position as an international energy supplier.

Prime Minister Carney similarly used the summit to promote greater investment in Canada. The government is seeking to stimulate $1 trillion in new investment over five years, while highlighting Canada's energy and natural resources, technology, skilled workforce and access to international markets.

Harper's remarks therefore reflect an emerging area of cross-partisan agreement: Canada faces substantial costs from weaker U.S. trade relations, but diversification of trade, investment and energy markets is increasingly being presented as a strategic economic necessity. His message was that Canada should respond by developing resources, attracting international capital and building stronger economic relationships beyond the United States.

Referendum on ALBERTA on October 19, 2026

The 10 Questions Simplified



Albertans are scheduled to vote on **10 referendum questions** on **October 19, 2026.**
Five concern immigration, four concern proposed changes to Canada's constitutional arrangements, and one concerns the process that could lead to a future referendum on Alberta's separation from Canada.
Questions 1–9 are answered **Yes or No**, while Question 10 provides **two choices.**

1 IMMIGRATION LEVELS

Should Alberta seek greater control over immigration, with the goals of reducing immigration to what the question describes as sustainable levels, prioritizing economic immigrants and giving Albertans first priority for new jobs?

2 ELIGIBILITY FOR PROVINCIAL PROGRAMS

Should provincially funded services—including health care, education and social services—be limited to Canadian citizens, permanent residents and people holding an Alberta-approved immigration status?

3 12-MONTH WAITING PERIOD

Should people with non-permanent legal immigration status have to live in Alberta for at least 12 months before becoming eligible for provincially funded social-support programs? Canadian citizens and permanent residents would continue under existing eligibility rules.

4 FEES FOR NON-PERMANENT RESIDENTS

Should Alberta charge people with non-permanent immigration status a reasonable fee or premium for their families' use of publicly funded health-care and education systems, while citizens and permanent residents continue to qualify as they do now?

5 PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP TO VOTE

Should voters be required to provide proof of Canadian citizenship—such as a passport, birth certificate or citizenship card—to vote in an Alberta provincial election?

6 APPOINTMENT OF PROVINCIAL JUDGES

Should Alberta work with other provinces to amend the Constitution so that provincial governments rather than the federal government select judges appointed to provincial King's Bench and Appeal courts?

7 ABOLISHING THE SENATE

Should Alberta work with other willing provinces toward a constitutional amendment abolishing Canada's unelected Senate?

8 OPTING OUT OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Should provinces have a constitutional right to opt out of federal programs affecting areas such as health care, education and social services without losing the associated federal funding?

9 PROVINCIAL LAWS VS. FEDERAL LAWS

Should the Constitution be amended so that, where provincial and federal laws conflict in provincial or shared areas of jurisdiction, the provincial law takes priority?

10 ALBERTA AND CANADA

Albertans would choose between **two options:**

A **Alberta should remain a province of Canada.**

OR

B **The Alberta government should begin the constitutional/legal process required to hold a future binding referendum on separation.**

The October 19 question itself is therefore not the proposed binding separation referendum.

People. Choices. Alberta's Future.

"It's a Cheap, Opportunistic Political Move," Lorne Doerkson Says

B.C. Premier David Eby Calls Snap Election, Citing 'Existential Threat' of Trump Presidency





B.C. Premier David Eby's snap election call draws sharp criticism from Conservative Leader Lorne Doerkson

British Columbia is heading to the polls on October 24, 2026, less than two years after its last provincial election, after NDP Premier David Eby asked Lt.-Gov. Wendy Cocchia to dissolve the legislature. Eby has framed the election around what he describes as an "existential moment" created by U.S. President Donald Trump, his trade policies and threats to Canadian economic interests and sovereignty.

From the perspective of the opposition B.C. Conservatives, however, the central question is different: Why does British Columbia need an election now?

Interim Conservative Leader Lorne Doerkson has attacked the timing of Eby's decision, describing the election call as a "cheap, opportunistic political move." He argues that British Columbians did not ask for another election and that holding one now will cost millions of dollars at a time when the province faces significant fiscal pressures.

The timing gives the Conservatives considerable material for that argument. Eby's government still held a one-seat majority when the election was called and therefore was not forced to seek a new mandate because it had lost the confidence of the legislature. The previous provincial election took place in 2024. The Conservatives can therefore question why voters are being asked to return to the polls so soon after the previous election, particularly while the government still maintains its legislative majority.

Meanwhile, B.C.'s projected deficit recently increased by another $450 million to a record $13.8 billion, with Finance Minister Josie Osborne attributing the revision largely to an error involving projected natural-gas royalties.

The Conservatives can therefore challenge Eby's contention that the Trump presidency itself necessitates an immediate election. Trump and the Canada-U.S. trade conflict are serious issues for an export-oriented province. Significantly, Doerkson has not attempted to defend Trump. He called the U.S. president the "bully south of the border," establishing some distance between the B.C. Conservatives and Trump while disputing Eby's argument that an election is required to confront the American challenge.

The political circumstances surrounding the election call also attract scrutiny. Until days before Eby's announcement, the B.C. Conservatives were experiencing severe internal divisions. Former leader Kerry-Lynne Findlay resigned after less than four months in the position, and several MLAs had previously quit or been expelled from the Conservative caucus. The NDP caucus reportedly met after Findlay's resignation to discuss election plans.

Yet the early election has unexpectedly accelerated Conservative reunification. Within hours of Eby's announcement, seven CentreBC legislators returned to the Conservative caucus. ***–Source: CTV News***





Lorne Doerkson leads a newly reunited B.C. Conservative opposition as the province enters a snap election campaign

Yet the early election has unexpectedly accelerated Conservative reunification. Within hours of Eby's announcement, seven CentreBC legislators returned to the Conservative caucus. Doerkson, previously little known outside his Cariboo-Chilcotin riding, suddenly found himself leading a substantially reunited opposition into an election campaign. He declared that he was running not merely as a temporary leader but with the intention of becoming premier, giving the newly consolidated opposition a clear political direction as the campaign began.

That rapid consolidation complicates the political environment Eby may have anticipated. Peter Milobar, CentreBC's briefly serving leader, returned to the Conservatives and described the reunited organization as combining "progressive ideas" with "conservative values." Nevertheless, divisions have not disappeared entirely. Eleanor Sturko remained with CentreBC, while Brent Chapman moved to OneBC.

There is another controversial aspect to the timing. The provincial vote will occur just one week after B.C.'s October 17 municipal elections. Eby proceeded despite concerns expressed by municipal leaders about overlapping campaigns.

Vancouver mayoral candidate Ken Sim argued that provincial and municipal election cycles are separate for a reason and should not be displaced merely because the timing may appear politically advantageous. B.C. Green Leader Emily Lowan likewise criticized the snap election as costly and unwanted.

Eby presents a fundamentally different case. He argues that circumstances have changed dramatically since British Columbians last voted. He says Trump's actions threaten workers, businesses and Canadian sovereignty and that B.C. requires a strong mandate to build infrastructure, diversify its economy and protect itself against further economic shocks. He has likened the situation to detecting smoke before a wildfire and called for a political "firebreak" against the trade war and what he calls "Trump-style politics," framing the election as a response to circumstances he considers fundamentally different from those of the previous vote.

The Conservative counterargument is that opposing Trump's economic pressure does not require dissolving a functioning majority legislature. Instead, Doerkson wants the campaign focused on the NDP government's provincial record—including spending, the deficit and other domestic issues—rather than allowing Trump to become the dominant ballot question.

The resulting campaign therefore presents British Columbians with two competing interpretations of the same moment. Eby says extraordinary external circumstances justify asking voters for a renewed mandate. Doerkson says the premier is using those circumstances to justify an unnecessary election at a politically advantageous time.

The voters-not either party-will ultimately decide which interpretation carries greater weight on Oct. 24.

EU opens the door to Canada as First Associate Member

Von der Leyen backs Carney's push for closer economic, security and technology ties as Ottawa seeks to diversify beyond the United States



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in Strasbourg as the EU considers making Canada its first associate member

Canada's push for a deeper relationship with Europe has received an important endorsement from European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who said she would work to make Canada the European Union's first associate member. Speaking at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, von der Leyen said Europe needed stronger cooperation with like-minded democracies, particularly Canada, as it confronted a more uncertain international environment.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney was in the audience for her annual address. Von der Leyen called for partnerships to be reimagined and said the EU and Canada should build stronger coalitions around resilience and democracy. The proposal reflects a broader debate in Europe about whether the 27-member bloc can create more flexible forms of partnership without extending full membership. It also comes as European officials reconsider how the bloc can strengthen cooperation beyond its traditional limits.

European and Canadian officials have been discussing the idea for weeks, according to officials cited in the source material. Full EU membership is not being considered for Canada, but both sides are exploring the closest possible relationship.

The proposed associate-membership model would give the two partners a framework for expanding cooperation while keeping Canada outside the EU's formal membership structure. The proposal signals a new approach in Brussels toward Canada.

Among the areas under discussion are closer integration of supply chains in critical sectors, including defense; possible joint European-Canadian cloud and data centers; greater Canadian energy exports to Europe; and cooperation on artificial intelligence and digital rules. Carney has also confirmed discussions about certain forms of mutual visa-free travel and work arrangements.

The details are still being developed by technical working groups on both sides. At the same time, significant limits remain. Countries with full access to the EU's single market must follow common rules, contribute to the EU budget and accept freedom of movement for workers.

Canadian officials have said they aren't willing to accept all those terms. Canada must also balance expanded economic cooperation with Europe against the requirements of its existing trade relationship with the United States.

Brussels initially viewed associate membership cautiously, fearing a halfway category that could receive some membership benefits without carrying the same obligations. Canada nevertheless pressed the concept as part of Carney's broader effort to reduce the country's dependence on the United States. The European Commission's public embrace of the term marks a significant step in that discussion and gives the proposal new visibility in Brussels. Together, these discussions would make the proposed relationship significantly broader than trade and commerce.





Canada and the European Union expand cooperation across trade, defence, technology, energy and economic security

The proposal comes as Canada and other U.S. allies reassess their economic and security relationships. Canada remains particularly dependent on the United States, with two-thirds of its trade crossing the shared border, but the government has been pursuing alternatives. Since becoming prime minister, Carney has made trade diversification a central objective, especially amid U.S. tariffs and repeated comments about using economic pressure against Canada.

Europe has become an important part of that strategy. Von der Leyen said the EU and Canada should deepen their technology partnership, integrate their defense-industrial base and cooperate on energy, critical minerals, artificial intelligence and economic security. Their free-trade agreement, enacted in 2017, has helped commerce grow substantially, although the source notes that 10 EU countries have still not ratified it.

Carney's government says closer European ties are intended to strengthen Canadian sovereignty, improve affordability, opportunity and security, and safeguard the country's way of life. The government has welcomed von der Leyen's proposal as a positive approach that Canada and Europe would define together.

The closer relationship also carries a wider strategic meaning. The source describes a broader shift among traditional U.S. allies as they consider how to reduce their reliance on Washington as both a trading partner and military protector. This makes Europe even more prominent in Canada's diversification strategy.

In Canada, however, the prospect has drawn criticism from opposition lawmakers who argue that associate membership could impose additional regulations and red tape on businesses and could raise questions about sovereignty. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre said such a decision should not be made without consulting Parliament, while rejecting both the idea of Canada becoming the 51st U.S. state and the 28th EU state.

Public opinion cited in the source is more supportive of closer European ties. An Abacus Data survey found that more than 80% of Canadians supported strengthening links with Europe while Canada remained outside the EU. A majority said they felt Canada had more in common with Europe than with the United States, and nearly half supported Canada becoming an EU member state.

Von der Leyen's proposal is part of a wider European effort to strengthen security and sovereignty while relations with Washington remain strained. Her address called for stronger European security coordination and involvement from non-EU partners, including Norway, Britain and Canada.

For Canada, associate membership would represent a new form of engagement with Europe rather than full EU membership. Negotiations remain at an early stage, with details still being developed. But European Commission backing gives Carney's strategy a clearer political framework as Canada broadens its economic, technological and security partnerships across key areas. ***–Source: WSJ News***

What would Canada's associate membership of the EU look like?

A new relationship takes shape as Canada and the EU explore cooperation Beyond Full Membership



Canada and the European Union explore a new form of partnership that could deepen cooperation while stopping short of full EU membership

The European Union's top official has proposed granting Canada associate membership, singling Ottawa out as part of a wider shift among U.S. allies. Canadian officials have backed the idea, but what associate membership would mean in practice remains unclear, and significant hurdles still stand before the relationship could become official.

Associate membership, however, would not mean full membership in the EU. Canadian and European officials have stressed that the newly coined term would create a different relationship with the trading bloc. Full entry for a country outside Europe is almost certainly legally impossible. Canada also would not receive full, frictionless access to the EU's single market.

The European Economic Area offers a useful comparison. Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein enjoy access to the single market without being EU members, but they must follow EU rules, contribute to the bloc's budget and accept freedom of movement for workers. Canada has said it is not prepared to accept all of those terms.

The idea is both new and not entirely new. EU treaties provide no legal basis for associate membership, although they allow association agreements with partners such as Ukraine. There has been a debate over whether the EU should become more flexible in structuring relations with like-minded nonmember countries, including the U.K., Norway and Canada.

The question now is what an associate relationship could look like. The two sides are pitching cooperation on everything short of Canadian membership. That could include a deeper trade agreement, consultation on regulation and the integration of some Canadian exporters into European supply chains.

Opening effective single-market access for Canadian businesses in cutting-edge sectors is also being discussed. The areas mentioned include artificial intelligence, defense, semiconductors and magnets. Canada and the EU are also discussing joint research and cloud-data projects, along with cooperation on energy, space and quantum computing.

Canadian officials have confirmed discussions about mutual free movement for workers. These ideas would expand cooperation beyond trade and could connect businesses, researchers, digital infrastructure and workers more closely across the Atlantic. But the proposal remains at an early stage, with details of any eventual arrangement still unclear.

The European Union's interest in a more flexible relationship reflects the broader debate over how it structures ties with countries that are closely aligned but remain outside the bloc. For Canada, the immediate question is therefore not full membership, but whether a new associate category can provide deeper cooperation without requiring Canada to accept all the obligations attached to EU membership.





Canada and the European Union could deepen cooperation across trade, energy, technology, supply chains and security under a new associate relationship

The biggest obstacle is sovereignty. Canada and the EU want to cooperate in ways that would strengthen their ability to withstand interference from foreign powers, including the United States, China and Russia. At the same time, neither side wants to give up its ability to set its own laws at home. That balance is expected to remain a persistent tension as cooperation develops, and it has already generated some opposition within Canada.

The European Union also wants reassurance that Canada is committed to the relationship for the long term and will not be persuaded by Washington to abandon the idea. A new arrangement could also create friction with Canada's existing trade agreements with the United States, making the shape of any future partnership more complicated.

Another uncertainty involves the private sector. Many of the decisions and investments needed to deepen Canada-EU ties will ultimately depend on businesses. Companies may question whether a geographically distant partner can realistically become an economic bedrock, creating another hurdle for a relationship that both sides are still defining.

The question is therefore how much cooperation can be offered while both sides retain control over their own domestic decision-making. For Canada, that means maintaining the ability to establish its own rules even as it works more closely with European partners.

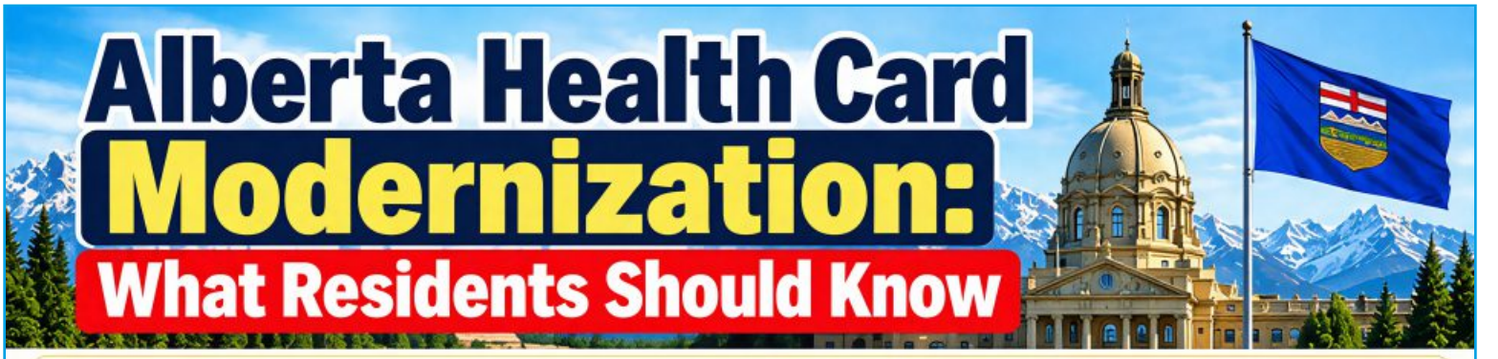
There are concerns on the EU side as well. The bloc must ensure that anything it offers Canada does not amount to a better deal than the arrangements available to EU members or countries in the European Economic Area. Preferential treatment for Ottawa could weaken the willingness of those countries to accept the obligations that come with access to the single market.

The existing EU-Canada trade agreement also illustrates the challenge. It has been in effect since 2017 and has significantly strengthened commerce, yet 10 EU member states still have not fully ratified the deal. That unfinished process shows that even an established framework can face political and institutional hurdles.

Some parts of the proposed relationship could move relatively quickly. Canada and the EU are already focusing on a digital agreement, while Canada could relatively easily join Europe's Erasmus education exchange program. A truly transformational relationship, however, would take years to build and would depend partly on integrating Canadian exporters into European supply chains.

A deeper partnership could require a more active security relationship alongside NATO. For now, associate membership remains a developing concept rather than an established status, with questions about sovereignty, trade, investment and security still to be worked out. These issues will shape how quickly the concept can move from discussion to an arrangement.

–Source: WSJ News



Alberta Health Card Modernization: What Residents Should Know

Alberta is moving forward with health card modernization as part of an effort to strengthen the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan and reduce misuse of health cards.

Why the Change?

According to the office of **Jason Stephan, MLA for Red Deer-South,** the change follows a 2015 recommendation from Alberta's Auditor General to create a more proactive process to confirm that individuals with an Alberta personal health number continue to meet residency requirements for publicly funded health care.

Population vs. Coverage

As of April 2026, Alberta's population was estimated at about 5.05 million, while approximately 5.51 million individuals had Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan coverage. The renewal process is intended to help ensure that health coverage records remain accurate and that Alberta's publicly funded health care system remains sustainable.

Existing Cards Remain Valid

Albertans who currently hold a paper health card without an expiry date do not need to take any action at this time. These cards will remain valid until the government decides otherwise, and any future expiry date will be communicated well in advance.

How the New Process Will Work

When eligible Albertans renew their driver's licence or identification card, their personal health number will be added to that card. The health coverage expiry date will then align with the driver's licence or ID card expiry date. Albertans who do not have a driver's licence or identification card, or who are not eligible to combine their personal health number with those cards, will receive a separate standalone health card with an expiry date.

You Will Receive Notice

Albertans will receive notice two months before their renewal date. If coverage is cancelled because it is not renewed, they will be notified about how to reinstate it. Residents will have one year from the date of cancellation to apply for reinstatement. If reinstated, coverage will be effective from the date of cancellation.

Potential Costs and Reimbursement

If coverage is cancelled, the individual may be responsible for paying for health services received while uninsured. However, if coverage is later reinstated, they may be eligible for reimbursement.

Emergency Services Will Not Be Affected

In urgent situations, an expired health card will not prevent access to emergency health services.

Where to Get More Information

Residents seeking more information can visit the Government of Alberta's health card information page.



Key Messages:

- Sport and recreation facilities plays a valuable role in community well-being and promoting an active lifestyle.
- We are proud to invest $14 million this year to build, renew and improve 20 sport and recreation projects in communities across the province.
- These investments will benefit communities across the province by ensuring Albertans have the opportunity to remain healthy and actively engaged in the sports they love.

Labor targets backpackers, students and visa overstayers in immigration plan

Most international students unable to bring dependants or family members under new migration changes





Australia's new immigration measures tighten visa enforcement while introducing significant changes for international students and other temporary visa holders

Foreign citizens staying in Australia without a valid visa face new enforcement measures to force them to leave the country, while Labor's immigration changes will also affect backpackers and prevent international students from extending their stays indefinitely.

The announcement has received praise from business and industry groups, while political opponents and human rights advocacy groups have criticised the changes.

Home affairs minister Tony Burke has unveiled long-awaited changes to immigration rules, promising to bring down net overseas migration (Nom) to 245,000 this financial year and 225,000 in 2027-28.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics confirmed that Nom had eased to 292,000 in the year to March, from 299,000 in December.

Burke said the government would introduce new compliance measures to ensure people without valid visas leave the country. Plans include repurposing a former quarantine facility in Melbourne as a detention centre and bringing on an additional 100 compliance officers.

"This is not the sort of operation that some people have seen on TV happening in other countries," Burke said, in an apparent reference to US president Donald Trump's ICE agency.

Tweaks to ministerial directions will also direct bureaucrats to prioritise visa applicants with in-demand skills, including healthcare, construction, education and law enforcement. The skilled jobs list covers hundreds of professions, including paramedics, electricians and teachers. Applicants in defence, resources, agriculture, aquaculture and fishing could also receive improved consideration under the changes.

Before an address to the National Press Club in Canberra, Burke said so-called visa hopping by international students would be restricted, as would visas for family members of students.

Last year Australia issued more than 337,000 international student visas, of which about 45,000 went to dependants or family members of the primary applicant. Under the latest changes, the vast majority of students will be required to come alone.

Dodgy migration agents face new penalties for helping visa rorters. A new "no further stay" condition will also be added to all visitor visas, ensuring they are used by genuine short-term visitors and do not provide a pathway for individuals to remain in Australia.

"Once they get here, and if they apply onshore, the process has been that they stay, and they're [put] on a bridging visa," Burke said. He described the existing arrangement as a double standard and said its consequences had been deeply problematic.





Australia's migration changes reshape working-holiday visas and regional work requirements, while farmers face concerns over seasonal labour and workforce availability

Amid concerns from the agriculture sector that changes to immigration policy could create workforce shortages and delay some harvesting and processing before Christmas, Burke said Labor would change backpacker visa rules.

The changes would introduce a ballot system for backpacker visas for years two and three, including a regional work requirement.

Burke said processing times for working holidaymaker visa applications would be stabilised to three months. The onshore waiting period is typically five days, while offshore applicants can face waits of several months.

Working holidaymakers from the UK will remain excluded from caps and regional working requirements under the free trade agreement with Australia.

Burke said there were almost 80,000 UK working holidaymakers living in Australia, more than double the pre-pandemic peak of 35,000. He described the growth rate as a "challenge" that would be discussed with the UK government.

"It's a level of growth that means we are just, at the moment, going to continue to be processing that one slowly," he said.

The character test would also be updated to reflect Australia's stance on stamping out hatred and family violence.

Before the speech, Burke said Labor would maintain control of the migration system while treating individuals with the fairness and decency that Australians expect.

"The government supports immigration but is opposed to anyone rorting the immigration system," Burke said. "Almost everyone who comes to Australia is a good guest in our country. These reforms are to ensure that our migration system can be better targeted to the current needs of Australia."

Coalition Says Labor 'All Over the Shop'

Burke's speech is the latest push by Labor to control the politics of immigration, coming as One Nation surges in the polls and as community sentiment about the number of overseas arrivals influences politics around the country.

The deputy opposition leader, Jane Hume, told ABC that Labor's immigration policy had been "all over the shop" and could not be supported without further details.

The Greens said it was a "Tony Abbott-era" policy in a "race to the bottom with One Nation".

The Business Chamber of Australia's chief executive, Bran Black, welcomed the changes but said there was concern that it would be tougher to get certain skilled workers through the new system quickly.

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre said a lack of clarity on whether time restrictions would be placed on people in Australia seeking asylum showed that migrants and refugees remained "political punching bags."

–Source: theguardian.com



- Recognizing Alberta's Skilled Trades Professionals
- Apprenticeship Day is recognized annually on the fourth Monday of September.
- Alberta has more than 81,000 registered apprentices, the highest number in the province's history
- Apprenticeship education combines on-the-job learning with classroom instruction, providing apprentices with practical experience and technical knowledge.

Students invited to join focus group



Current post-secondary students and recent graduates of Alberta post-secondary institutions are invited to express interest in participating in a student focus group.

Alberta's government is seeking input from current students and recent graduates as it considers recommendations from the **Expert Panel on Post-Secondary Institution Funding and Alberta's Competitiveness.**

The focus group will provide an opportunity for participants to share their experiences and perspectives on campus learning environments, freedom of expression, institutional neutrality and student conduct processes. Participant feedback will help inform the government's consideration of recommendations in these areas and will be considered alongside feedback from post-secondary institutions, faculty representatives, elected student leaders and other interested groups.

You can express interest if you currently attend a **publicly funded post-secondary institution in Alberta** or **graduated from one in 2016 or later.**

FOCUS GROUP TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Whether students feel able to ask questions, share different viewpoints and participate fully in classroom discussions and academic work.
- Exposure to a range of ideas and perspectives in courses, programs and campus communities.
- Confidence in institutional support for lawful expression, academic freedom, campus events and a range of viewpoints.
- Experiences with student conduct processes, including whether the processes were clear, timely, fair and appropriately supported.

DEADLINE TO EXPRESS INTEREST:
Sept. 30

FOCUS GROUP WILL TAKE PLACE:
Oct. 1 – Oct. 8

How to take part

Visit **Post-secondary student focus group | Alberta.ca** to learn more and complete the expression of interest form.


APPLY TO PARTICIPATE
IN A POST-SECONDARY STUDENT
FOCUS GROUP BY
SEPTEMBER 30!
Ideas
Discussion
Diversity
Future
Alberta

Meta



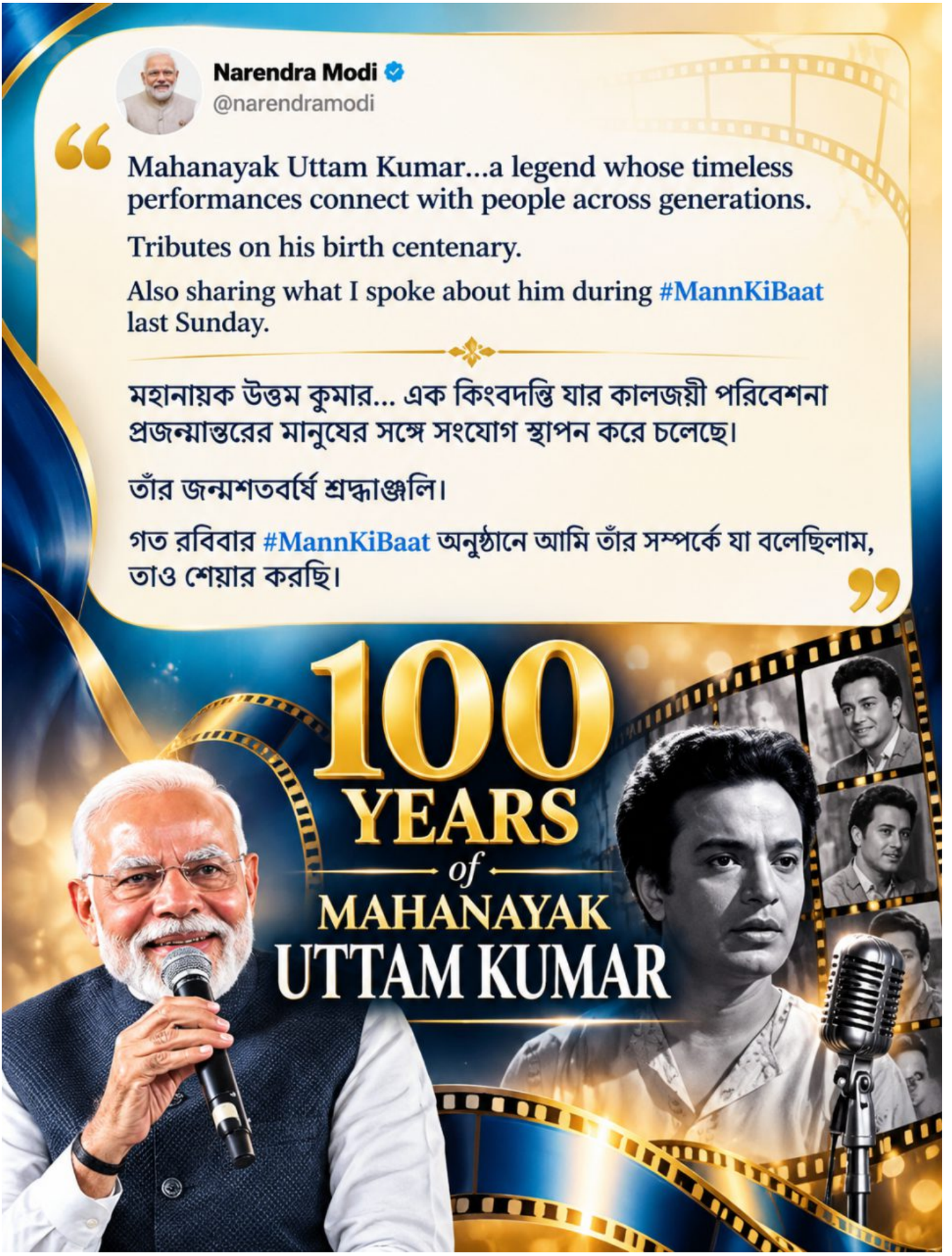
BREAKING

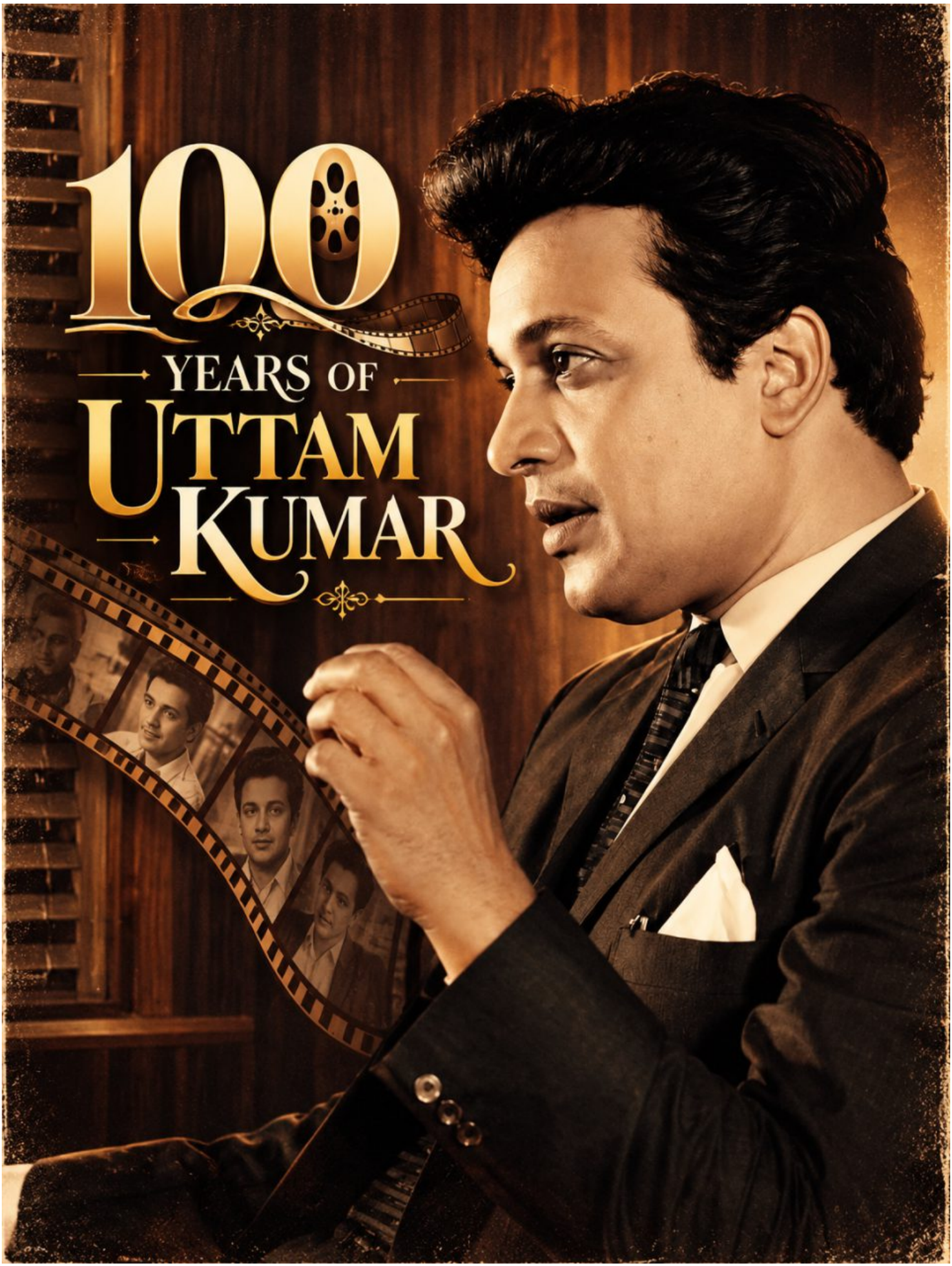
META MAKES $13B INVESTMENT IN ALBERTA

- Meta chooses Alberta for their first Canadian data centre
- One of the largest private sector investments in Canadian history
- Thousands of new Alberta jobs

*Concept image Rendered with Meta AI

Alberta


Narendra Modi
@narendramodi
Mahanayak Uttam Kumar...a legend whose timeless performances connect with people across generations.
Tributes on his birth centenary.
Also sharing what I spoke about him during #MannKiBaat last Sunday.
মহানায়ক উত্তম কুমার... এক কিংবদন্তি যার কালজয়ী পরিবেশনা প্রজন্মান্তরের মানুষের সঙ্গে সংযোগ স্থাপন করে চলেছে।
তাঁর জন্মশতবর্ষে শ্রদ্ধাঞ্জলি।
গত রবিবার #MannKiBaat অনুষ্ঠানে আমি তাঁর সম্পর্কে যা বলেছিলাম, তাও শেয়ার করছি।
100
YEARS
of
MAHANAYAK
UTTAM KUMAR


100
YEARS OF
UTTAM
KUMAR


OUR MEDIA PARTNER
RED 106.7FM
ENOVA ENTERTAINMENT
calgaryarts development
SANDEEP DHESI
ICMF
INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC FESTIVAL
2026
ROZSA CENTRE, U OF C
206 UNIVERSITY CT NW, CALGARY, AB
Scan to Book
11TH SEPT 2026 FRIDAY DOOR OPEN 6:30 PM
Scan to Book
12TH SEPT 2026 Saturday DOOR OPEN 6:30 PM
Scan to Book
13TH SEPT 2026 Sunday DOOR OPEN 6:30 PM
ARTISTS
Ustad Tari Khan
Vidushi Arati Ankalikar
Vidushi Indrani Mukherjee
Vidushi Debasmita Bhattacharya
Ustad Akram Khan
Dr. Rodney Squance
Sunita Tikare
Pt. Lokesh Anand
Pt. Ratish Tagde
Pt. Hindole Majumdar
Pt. Apurba Mukherjee
Pt. Anirban Chakraborty
Pt. Pankaj Mishra
Kamaljeet Ahluwalia
Zaheer Abbas
FLEX BUILDING SUPPLIES
BHATIA CLOTH HOUSE
SIKH CENTRE
MANPREET JOHAL CHARANJIT JOHAL
SABRANG
TIMES
FOR MORE INFO BHAI HARJEET SINGH – 403.701.1760 RAMA KHARE – 403.850.8759


ETHNIC SYNERGY
PRESENTS
ON THE OCCASION OF
VIJAY DASHAMI
(VICTORY OF GOOD OVER EVIL)
RETRO BOLLYWOOD Concert
IN SUPPORT OF
HINDU SOCIETY OF ALBERTA
Featuring
NEIL CHAUDHURI
THE VOICE OF KISHORE KUMAR
MANJIT SINGH
CELEBRATED SAXOPHONIST
SABITA
KASHVI
AKSHAYA
SHAILAJA
CLASSICAL VOCALIST
LOCAL TALENTS from ALBERTA
FRIDAY
OCTOBER
23
2026
ARDEN THEATRE
5 Anne St, Albert, T8N 3Z9
TIME
7PM
ATTEND AND SUPPORT
THE CAUSE OF REBUILDING
THE FIRE RAVAGED
HISTORIC HINDU TEMPLE
OF ALBERTA.
EVENT SUPPORTED BY
INDO-CANADIAN FILM FOUNDATION
FOR MORE INFO CONTACT
HARI RAWAT: 780-937-2060
JUNAID QURAISHI: 780-964-8484
LIPIKA CHAUDHURY: 780-901-2966
ETHNICSYNERGY@GMAIL.COM
BUY TICKETS AT
https://stalbert.ca/exp/arden/
StAlbert
Cultivate Life
Sound:
Avishek
Camera:
Neelabh
SUPPORTED BY
Mazhathulli Media


ETHNIC SYNERGY
PRESENTS
ON THE OCCASION OF
VIJAY DASHAMI
(VICTORY OF GOOD OVER EVIL)
RETRO BOLLYWOOD Concert
IN SUPPORT OF
HINDU SOCIETY OF ALBERTA
Featuring
NEIL CHAUDHURI
THE VOICE OF KISHORE KUMAR
MANJIT SINGH
CELEBRATED SAXOPHONIST
SABITA CHOWDHURY
CLASSICAL VOCALIST
SABITA
KASHVI
AKSHAYA
SHAILAJA
LOCAL TALENTS from ALBERTA
FRIDAY
OCTOBER
23
2026
ARDEN THEATRE
5 Anne St, Albert, T8N 3Z9
TIME
7PM
ATTEND AND SUPPORT THE CAUSE OF REBUILDING THE FIRE RAVAGED HISTORIC HINDU TEMPLE OF ALBERTA.
EVENT SUPPORTED BY
INDO-CANADIAN FILM FOUNDATION
FOR MORE INFO CONTACT
HARI RAWAT: 780-937-2060
JUNAID QURAISHI: 780-964-8484
LIPIKA CHAUDHURY: 780-901-2966
ETHNICSYNERGY@GMAIL.COM
BUY TICKETS AT
https://stalbert.ca/exp/arden/
StAlbert Cultivate Life
Sound:
Avishek
Camera:
Neelabh
SUPPORTED BY
Mazhathulli Media


ETHNIC SYNERGY
PRESENTS
ON THE OCCASION OF
VIJAY DASHAMI
(VICTORY OF GOOD OVER EVIL)
RETRO BOLLYWOOD Concert
IN SUPPORT OF
HINDU SOCIETY OF ALBERTA
Featuring
NEIL CHAUDHURI
THE VOICE OF KISHORE KUMAR
MANJIT SINGH
CELEBRATED SAXOPHONIST
SABITA
KASHVI
SHAILAJA
AKSHAYA
CLASSICAL VOCALIST
LOCAL TALENTS from ALBERTA
FRIDAY
OCTOBER
23
2026
ARDEN THEATRE
5 Anne St, Albert, T8N 3Z9
TIME
7PM
ATTEND AND SUPPORT
THE CAUSE OF REBUILDING
THE FIRE RAVAGED
HISTORIC HINDU TEMPLE
OF ALBERTA.
EVENT SUPPORTED BY
INDO-CANADIAN FILM FOUNDATION
FOR MORE INFO CONTACT
HARI RAWAT: 780-937-2060
JUNAID QURAISHI: 780-964-8484
LIPIKA CHAUDHURY: 780-901-2966
ETHNICSYNERGY@GMAIL.COM
BUY TICKETS AT
https://stalbert.ca/exp/arden/
StAlbert
Cultivate Life
Sound:
Avishek
Camera:
Neelabh
SUPPORTED BY
Mazhathulli Media


ETHNIC SYNERGY
PRESENTS
ON THE OCCASION OF
VIJAY DASHAMI
(VICTORY OF GOOD OVER EVIL)
RETRO BOLLYWOOD Concert
IN SUPPORT OF
HINDU SOCIETY OF ALBERTA
Featuring
NEIL CHAUDHURI
THE VOICE OF KISHORE KUMAR
SABITA
KASHVI
AKSHAYA
SHAILAJA
MANJIT SINGH
CELEBRATED SAXOPHONIST
FRIDAY
OCTOBER
23
2026
LOCAL TALENTS from ALBERTA
ARDEN THEATRE
5 Anne St, Albert, T8N 3Z9
TIME
7PM
ATTEND AND SUPPORT THE CAUSE OF REBUILDING THE FIRE RAVAGED HISTORIC HINDU TEMPLE OF ALBERTA.
EVENT SUPPORTED BY
INDO-CANADIAN FILM FOUNDATION
FOR MORE INFO CONTACT
HARI RAWAT: 780-937-2060
JUNAID QURAISHI: 780-964-8484
LIPIKA CHAUDHURY: 780-901-2966
ETHNICSYNERGY@GMAIL.COM
BUY TICKETS AT
https://stalbert.ca/exp/arden/
StAlbert Cultivate Life
Sound:
Avishek
Camera:
Neelabh
SUPPORTED BY
Mazhathulli Media


ETHNIC SYNERGY
PRESENTS
ON THE OCCASION OF
VIJAY DASHAMI
(VICTORY OF GOOD OVER EVIL)
RETRO BOLLYWOOD Concert
IN SUPPORT OF
HINDU SOCIETY OF ALBERTA
Featuring
NEIL CHAUDHURI
THE VOICE OF KISHORE KUMAR
MANJIT SINGH
CELEBRATED SAXOPHONIST
SABITA
KASHVI
AKSHAYA
SHAILAJA
MAZHATHULI MEDIA
Dance Troupe
LOCAL TALENTS from ALBERTA
FRIDAY
OCTOBER
23
2026
ARDEN THEATRE
5 Anne St, Albert, T8N 3Z9
TIME
7PM
ATTEND AND SUPPORT THE CAUSE OF REBUILDING THE FIRE RAVAGED HISTORIC HINDU TEMPLE OF ALBERTA.
EVENT SUPPORTED BY
INDO-CANADIAN FILM FOUNDATION
FOR MORE INFO CONTACT
HARI RAWAT: 780-937-2060
JUNAID QURAISHI: 780-964-8484
LIPIKA CHAUDHURY: 780-901-2966
ETHNICSYNERGY@GMAIL.COM
BUY TICKETS AT
https://stalbert.ca/exp/arden/
StAlbert Cultivate Life
Sound:
Avishek
Camera:
Neelabh
SUPPORTED BY
Mazhathulli Media

Rageshree Sangeet Sikshayatan

BRANCHES

Uttarpara:
104/2 Ramlal Dutta Road, Bhadrakali, Hooghly, 712232
"2nd Innings", Flat no 401

Baruipur:
"Eden Meghbalika Housing Complex"
Hariharpur
PO - Khasmallick,
PS - Baruipur,
Kolkata 700145



9432485451
8276806661

ATS
ATS EDMONTON CONTRACTING

FROM PERMITS TO OCCUPANCY– WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED

YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER IN CONSTRUCTION & RENOVATION

At ATS Edmonton Contracting, we bring expertise, precision, and reliability to every project. Whether you're building new, upgrading your business space, or creating your dream home, we deliver results that last.

OUR CORE SERVICES

- **Design & Build** – Tailored solutions from concept to completion
- **Commercial Construction** - Smart, efficient, and code-compliant builds
- **Renovation & Remodeling** - Transform your space with style and function
- **Custom Homes** – Crafted with care, built for your lifestyle

Rakesh Patel
780-993-1325
info@atsedmonton.ca
www.atsedmonton.ca

SPECIALIZED IN LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS

We understand the unique needs of tenants and landiords. Our team ensures your commercial space is functional, compliant and ready for business.

WHY CHOOSE ATS?

- Local Edmonton expertise
- End-to-end project management
- Transparent pricing & timelines
- Quality craftsmanship, guarantee





SITAR SOUL OF MUSIC ACADEMY

ANITA MITTAL
MASTERS DEGREE
AND HONORS IN SITAR
587-879-7666
ANITAJAINMITTAL25@GMAIL.COM

INTERESTED IN LEARNING SITAR
SITARS AVAILABLE FOR RENT

New Clinic



Windermere Massage & Sports Physio
Leaders in physiotherapy, sports injuries and chronic pain management
Ph: 780 466 9902 **Fax: 780 466 7715**

Sreepati Dey BScPT MSOM MCISc FCAMPT
Orthopaedic Physiotherapist



Windermere Health & Business Centre
6055 Andrews Way SW Unit 205, Edmonton, AB T6K 3Y7

www.millwoodsphysicaltherapy.com

Greetings
on the occasion of
GANESH UTSAV
2026



Constituency:
Phone: 780-466-3737
Unit 204-B, 3324 34 Street NW, Edmonton T6T 2K6
edmonton.meadows@assembly.ab.ca

– MLA Jasvir Deol
Edmonton - Meadows

Mike Chadha
EdmontonForSale.ca
Largest Selection of Homes, Businesses
and Commercial Properties
RE/MAX EXCELLENCE



Cell: 780-907-2737
E-mail: mike@mikechadha.ca

PARHAR
DENTAL GROUP

Dr. Jatinder Singh Parhar
Dr. Gaurav Sharma

Mill Woods Office
4222 - 66 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6K 4A2
(780) 450-6200

North Office
Unit 6,12981 - 50th Street
Edmonton, AB T5A 3P3
(780) 475-4847

Alzheimer Society
ALBERTA AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MAANAW SEVA ASSOCIATION
सर्वभूत हितेरताः
Humanity in Action
मानव सेवा एसोसिएशन

SHANTI NIKETAN
SOCIETY FOR SEMI-RETIRED AND SENIORS

Three organizations. One shared purpose.

MEMORY MATTERS

A community program on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias

The earlier you **recognize,** the better you can **respond,** the more you can **support.**



RECOGNIZE
Learn the early signs and what to look for.

RESPOND
Get practical tips and strategies.

SUPPORT
Hear from caregivers and connect with resources.

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 3, 2026
10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

SHANTI NIKETAN SOCIETY
#208, 4918 Roper Rd NW
Edmonton, AB T6B 3T7

FREE ADMISSION
Limited to **100** Participants

MANDATORY REGISTRATION
Visit the link below to register
https://tinyurl.com/MaanawSewaMemoryMatters

Contact for more information:

Alzheimer Society of AB & NWT
587-287-0495 ext. 419

Shanti Niketan Society
780-239-2582

Maanaw Seva Association
825-474-3013

Media Partner:
V4U RADIO & TV CANADA
Anytime - Anywhere


Best wishes
to Alberta's Hindu community
Congratulations for teaming up together to rebuild the historic temple damaged by fire. My sincere appreciation to the artists, organizers, and volunteers for raising awareness through this special event at the Arden Theatre on October 23, 2026.
Shane Getson, MLA
Lac Ste. Anne–Parkland
Chair India Trade Advisory committee
Parliamentary Secretary for Economic Corridor Development

ETHNIC SYNERGY

PRESENTS

ON THE OCCASION OF

VIJAY DASHAMI

(VICTORY OF GOOD OVER EVIL)

RETRO BOLLYWOOD Concert

IN SUPPORT OF

HINDU SOCIETY OF ALBERTA



Featuring

NEIL CHAUDHURI

THE VOICE OF KISHORE KUMAR

MANJIT SINGH

CELEBRATED SAXOPHONIST

SABITA
KASHVI
AKSHAYA
SHAILAJA



LOCAL TALENTS from ALBERTA

FRIDAY
OCTOBER
23
2026

ARDEN THEATRE
5 Anne St, Albert, T8N 3Z9

TIME
★ **7PM** ★



ATTEND AND SUPPORT THE CAUSE OF REBUILDING THE FIRE RAVAGED HISTORIC HINDU TEMPLE OF ALBERTA.

EVENT SUPPORTED BY

★ **INDO-CANADIAN FILM FOUNDATION** ★

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT
HARI RAWAT: 780-937-2060
JUNAID QURAISHI: 780-964-8484
LIPIKA CHAUDHURY: 780-901-2966
ETHNICSYNERGY@GMAIL.COM

BUY TICKETS AT
https://stalbert.ca/exp/arden/

St Albert Cultivate Life

Sound: Avishek

Camera: Neelabh

SUPPORTED BY

Mazhathulli Media