

Grammy winning artist Falu releases new album with ancient Indian Vedic and Sanskrit chants

NEW YORK, AUG 23: Grammy Award-winning Indian-American vocalist and composer Falu, along with her husband and young son, has released a new album of ancient Indian Vedic and Sanskrit chants, bringing a medium of peace, connection and well-being to a global audience.

"Offering: Ancient and Timeless Chants", released on Friday, has been brought together by Falu, Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist and her husband Gaurav Shah and their 15-year-old son Nishaad Shah.

The family described the album as a "deeply personal" compilation rooted in the musical and spiritual traditions of South Asia, passing on a rich tradition of classical music from one generation to the next.

The album features Vedic and Sanskrit chants, bhajans, prayers, and devotional works in a cinematic family recording which connects centuries-old spiritual music with the modern language of reflection, meditation, and well-being.

"We wanted to make something that people could turn to when they need a moment of peace, light, or connection," the Shah family said in a statement.

"These chants have been part of our lives and



our spiritual traditions for generations, and our hope is that they can bring something meaningful to anyone who listens, regardless of where they come from or what they believe,".

The album features timeless and traditional bhajans and chants including "Asato Ma Sadgamaya", "Ganesh Shloka", "Vakratunda Mahakaya", "Madhurashtakam", the "Gayatri Mantra", "Om Jai Jagdish Hare", "Om Sahana Vavatu", "Raghu-pati Raghav Raja Ram", and "Saraswati Vandana and "Kundendu Tusharahara Dhavala", among others.

Produced by a team of Grammy Award-winning producers and engineers, and including a wide array of professional musicians, the album is a offers an "en-

during power" of music to a global audience.

"Chant has long held an important place within Indian musical and spiritual traditions, and "Offering" approaches these works as music that can become part of everyday moments of listening, reflection, meditation, and well-being," the statement said.

Born and raised in Mumbai and trained in the Jaipur Gharana tradition, Falu has collaborated with acclaimed artists including Yo-Yo Ma and A R Rahman, and has performed at Carnegie Hall and the White House.

The album marks a return for Gaurav Shah to the Hindustani classical and spiritual traditions that helped shape his musical life. His journey includes studying the

Bansuri with Pandit Ronu Majumdar, becoming an initiated disciple of Ustad Sultan Khan, and performing across genres on stages including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Lollapalooza, and Wolf Trap.

Nishaad continues his study of Indian music alongside his parents, carrying the family's musical tradition into a new generation.

In 2023, Falu and Gaurav Shah had released the track "Abundance in Millets", featuring Prime Minister Narendra Modi in celebration of the International Year of the Millets.

In the song, Prime Minister Modi talked about the importance of the "Shree Anna" and the initiative to commemorate 2023 as the International Year of Millets.

(PTI)

Pakistan to deploy army in Rawalpindi for 'sensitive security duties'

ISLAMABAD, AUG 23: Pakistan Government has approved the deployment of the army for six months in Rawalpindi at the request of Punjab's home department for "sensitive security duties".

"The federal Government, exercising the powers conferred under Article 245 of the Constitution of Pakistan, is pleased to authorise the deployment of three companies of the Pakistan Army for sensitive security duties in Rawalpindi," according to a notification issued by the Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control on Friday.

It said that the decision was taken "to avoid any undesirable situation as well as to respond effectively in any unforeseen situation as per the requirement of the district administration".

Article 245 of the Consti-



tution pertains to the deployment of armed forces in aid of civil power.

The decision comes days after a man linked to former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) opened fire on security forces and was shot dead in retaliation.

tory firing.

Citing security sources, state-run PTV News said the assailant was a resident of Khyber district and an "active PTI member". A PTI flag, bullets and weapons were also recovered from him, it added.

PTI distanced itself from

the incident, saying it had nothing to do with terrorism and that efforts were being made to link the party to it.

Rawalpindi is the seat of the army, where its head office, called the General Headquarters, is located. (PTI)

Protests erupt in Nepal over suspected rape, murder of three-year-old girl

KATHMANDU, AUG 23: The suspected rape and murder of a three-year-old girl in Nepal has triggered protests with locals obstructing the Birgunj-Pathlaiya road section of Simara for the fourth consecutive day today.

The girl, a resident of Bhaktinagar in Jeetpur sub-metropolitan city of Bara district of Madhesh province, was found dead near her house on August 18, three days after she went missing.

Locals staged a sit-in on the Birgunj-Pathlaiya section of Simara by installing a tent demanding justice for the girl, the police said. The police suspect that the girl was murdered after being raped.

The police have arrested two suspects in the case so



far.

A 16-year-old local youth, who had also been helping with the search for the missing girl, was arrested with the help of sniffer dogs deployed to search

the area, Kathmandu Post newspaper reported.

The teenager confessed to luring the child with chocolate before assaulting and killing her, according to the police.

Police later arrested 24-year-old Progres Chaudhary, the owner and driver of a local public transport vehicle, the newspaper reported. The 16-year-old suspect worked as a co-driver for Chaudhary.

Both suspects remain in police custody after a court granted a four-day remand for further investigation, the report said.

Various political parties and civil society groups have demanded stern legal action after a thorough investigation into the incident.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Sudan Gurung has assured strong action against the culprits. Expressing deep sorrow over the incident, he underscored the government's commitment to achieving justice. (PTI)

Gujarat CM meets industry leaders, diaspora in New York and New Jersey

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, AUG 22

A voluntary blood donation camp was organized today by the Health Department at District Hospital Kulgam as part of efforts to strengthen emergency healthcare services, replenish blood bank reserves and promote the spirit of community welfare.

Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, inaugurated the camp in the presence of officers and officials of the district administration.

Former DDC Chairperson Kulgam, Medical Superintendent District Hospital Kulgam, senior health officials, medical officers, administrative staff and local youth volunteers participated actively in the donation drive.

The camp was organized with the objective of replenishing blood stocks and raising public awareness about the critical importance of voluntary blood donation. The initiative also sought to en-



courage greater community participation in supporting patients requiring blood during emergencies, surgeries and trauma cases. Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the voluntary donors, including local youth, civil society members, government employees and healthcare professionals, for coming forward to support the noble cause.

He emphasized that voluntary blood donation is a significant humanitarian

service that can directly contribute to saving precious lives.

The Deputy Commissioner urged people across the district to participate regularly in voluntary blood donation drives and contribute towards strengthening the availability of blood for patients in need.

The Medical Superintendent briefed the Deputy Commissioner on the arrangements made to ensure that the donation process remained safe,

smooth and hygienic. Standard medical protocols were strictly followed, with preliminary health assessments and screening of each donor conducted before blood collection.

A significant number of blood units were collected during the day-long camp. As a gesture of appreciation, donors were presented with certificates in recognition of their selfless contribution towards public health and humanitarian service.

No rush for Bangladesh PM's India visit, national interest priority: Minister

DHAKA, AUG 23: Bangladesh has said there was "no rush" for Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to visit India and Dhaka would not compromise its national interests even though it wanted a positive relationship with New Delhi, according to a media report.



State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir made the remarks in Dhaka on Saturday, adding that Rahman's trip to India would take place at an appropriate time after sufficient progress in bilateral discussions, the state-run BSS news agency reported.

Kobir's remarks came amid continuing uncertainty over Rahman's visit to New Delhi. India has invited the Bangladesh prime minister for a bilateral visit as well as to attend the outreach session of the upcoming BRICS summit on September 12-13.

The much-anticipated visit is seen as important for rebuilding India-Bangladesh ties, which witnessed a downturn after the ouster of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's government in August 2024.

Hasina fled to India after her government was toppled. Dhaka has since

sought her extradition, while New Delhi said the request is under examination in accordance with applicable legal procedures.

"We want a positive relationship with India. Why wouldn't we? They are our neighbours. We should have a working relationship," said Kobir, an adviser to the Bangladesh PM who was appointed as state minister on Friday.

"But it has to be done by prioritising Bangladesh's national interests," he said, adding that Dhaka would not compromise its interests in dealing with any country.

Asked about the timing of Rahman's possible India visit, Kobir was quoted as saying by the BSS that there was no need to rush a head-of-government-level meeting.

"If we reach an agreement

based on our national interests tomorrow, we can go [to India] next week, or the week after. There is no rush here," said the state minister, adding that such a visit required adequate preparation, substantive discussions and necessary groundwork between the two sides.

India-Bangladesh relations came under fresh strain after Hasina held a virtual media interaction in New Delhi on August 5, in which she said she is determined to return home in December to put the country on the "right track" by restoring democracy, notwithstanding the risk of facing the threat of imprisonment or a death sentence.

Hasina was sentenced to death in absentia by a special tribunal in Bangladesh in November 2025 over alleged "crimes against hu-

manity" during the crackdown on people who were part of student-led protests eventually leading to her ouster.

Bangladesh expressed outrage over the media interaction, saying the event had hurt the sentiments of its people and could adversely affect efforts to improve bilateral ties with India.

India, meanwhile, sought to distance itself from the event, saying New Delhi neither played a role in it nor endorsed Hasina's comments.

Following the August 5 event, Dhaka reiterated its demand for her extradition and even sought to link it with Rahman's planned trip to India.

Kobir on Saturday said Dhaka and New Delhi have an extradition treaty, and the issue of Hasina's extradition remained part of the ongoing engagement between the two countries.

His remarks came on the same day when External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that for any relationship to work, it must meet the test of "mutual interest", in an apparent reference to India's engagement with Bangladesh and other neighbouring countries. (PTI)

Moderate earthquake shakes Japan, injuring more than 30 people in Tokyo region

TOKYO, AUG 23: A moderate earthquake rattled eastern Japan, including the Tokyo area, early Sunday, injuring more than 30 people, most of them lightly, officials said. There was no danger of a tsunami.

According to the Japan Meteorological Agency, the quake had a preliminary magnitude of 5.9 and its epicentre was in the southern Ibaraki prefecture with a depth of 70 kilometres (42 miles). The US Geological Survey recorded a magnitude of 5.8.

At least 37 people were injured in five prefectures in the region -- 15 in Tokyo, nine in Saitama, eight in Kanagawa, four in Chiba and one in Ibaraki -- according to prefectural officials and the Fire and Disaster Management Agency. Most of the injured were



hurt when they fell down or hit themselves against furniture or doors as they were caught off guard by the quake while sleeping and got out of bed in a panic, officials said. Among them was a woman in her 80s who fell off the bed and suffered a serious hip injury in Yokohama, in the Kanagawa prefecture, the Yomi-

uri newspaper reported.

A 23-year-old man told the Asahi newspaper that he felt a vertical jolt seconds after his earthquake alert went off when he was shopping in Tokyo's eastern district of Taito. He said he feared getting hit by merchandise that fell from shelves as the building shook.

The quake caused delays to express trains serving Tokyo and Narita Airport and other local trains serving northeastern regions, but Shinkansen bullet trains were running normally, their operator East Japan Railway Co. said.

The government set up a task force to assess the extent of possible damage, Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said on X.

The Japan Meteorological Agency urged residents in the area to use caution against another possible moderate earthquake for about a week.

The tremor set off emergency quake alerts on mobile phones and also significantly shook Tokyo. NHK public television showed traffic on roads in nearby cities, including Mito and Saitama, seemingly normal.