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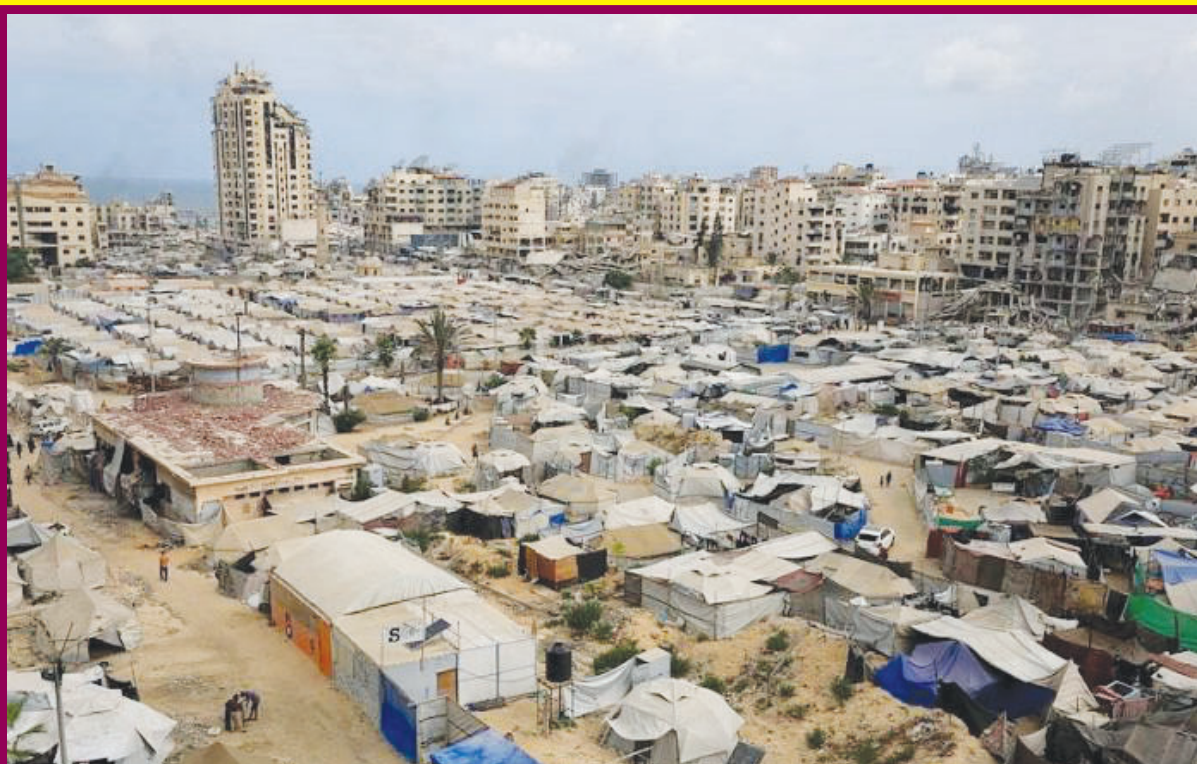
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Israel approves plan to take control of Gaza City amid global outcry over war



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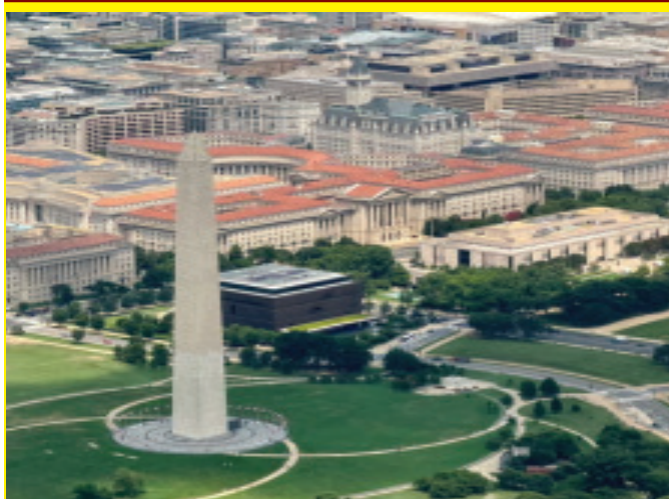
Trump-Putin summit could happen as soon as next week



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Trump threatens to 'federalize' DC after attack on Doge staffer

US president cites youth crime in call to strip the capital of local rule, despite declining violence and local opposition



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China Welcomes PM Modi For SCO Summit In Tianjin: 'A Gathering Of Friendship...'

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Trump threatens 50% tariffs on India over ties to Russia and Brics bloc



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Connecticut Officials Coming Together to celebrate India's 78th Anniversary

Flag Hoisting and India Festival will be held in Stamford on Sunday Aug. 10th



GOPIO-CT is one of the most active chapters of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO International) with 100 chapters worldwide in 35 countries. India got its independence from the British in 1947. To mark the 78th Anniversary of India's independence, the GOPIO's Connecticut chapter (GOPIO-CT) has joined with Stamford City and Mill River Park Collaborative to host India Festival in Stamford to commemorate Indian Independence, when the then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru raised the Indian flag at the

Red Fort in New Delhi on August 15, 1947.

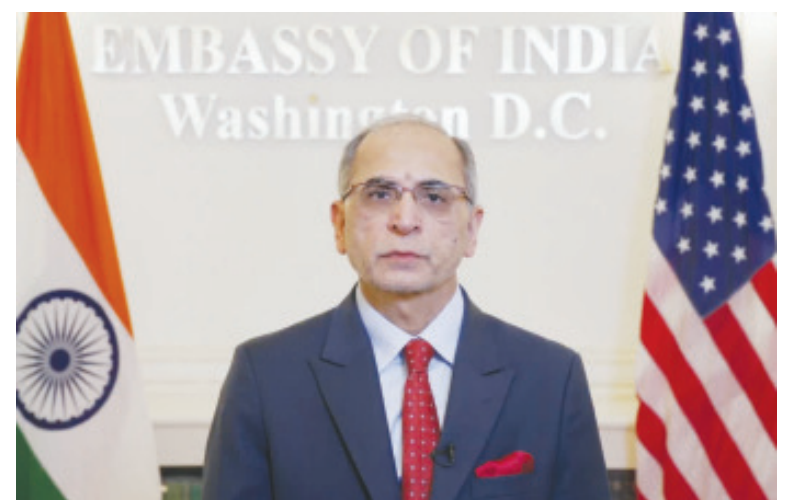
"The Indian American community has done very well in Corporate America and in the political arena too. In Connecticut, it is a growing community consisting generally IT and management professionals, healthcare workers and a large number of entrepreneurs in hospitality, Hedge Fund and small businesses,"

said Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chairman of GOPIO International and Trustee/Advisor to GOPIO-CT. Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, Stamford Mayor Caroline Simmons, Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling, CT Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff, Deputy Majority Leader Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox, State Representatives Hector Arzeno and Rep. Hubert Delany

Inauguration of eight new Indian Consular Application Centers across the U.S.A

Ambassador Vinay Kwatra virtually inaugurated eight new Indian Consular Application Centers (ICAC) across the United States of America on 01 August 2025. The new ICACs have been opened in Raleigh, Orlando, San Jose, Dallas, Detroit, Columbus, Edison, and Boston. One more ICAC will soon open in Los Angeles. 2. This expansion increases the total number of ICACs to 17, making consular services more accessible to Indian and American citizens in the United States. 3. In addition to the new centers, the Embassy of India is enhancing operational accessibility. All 17 ICACs will operate six days a week, including Saturdays, extending beyond the previous five-day schedule. This change accommodates those who prefer to access services on weekends. 4. To further streamline access, a number of miscellaneous consular and attestation services will be provided through the Indian Consular Application Centers, ensuring convenience and efficiency.

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Modi, Putin Hold Talks to Strengthen Strategic Ties as Trump's Tariffs Target India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin held an extensive phone conversation on Friday, discussing developments in Ukraine, reviewing progress in bilateral cooperation, and reaffirming their commitment to deepening the India-Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership. The talks came at a time of heightened global trade tensions following U.S. President Donald Trump's recent tariff measures against India. PM Modi, in a post on X, said he had a "very good and detailed conversation" with President Putin, thanking him for sharing updates on the Ukraine situation. He also reiterated India's long-standing position advocating a peaceful



resolution to the conflict. Modi added that both leaders reviewed their ongoing bilateral agenda and agreed to advance cooperation across key sectors, with the Indian Prime Minister

looking forward to hosting Putin in India later this year. The phone call took place less than a day after India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval met President Putin at the Kremlin.

The timing of these engagements is significant, coming immediately after Washington announced additional tariffs on India over its imports of Russian oil—a move

India has denounced as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable." New Delhi maintains that its energy imports are determined by market conditions and aimed at safeguarding the energy security of its 1.4 billion citizens. The India-Russia relationship has been marked by frequent high-level exchanges in recent years. President Putin last visited India in December 2021 for the 21st India-Russia Annual Summit, while PM Modi travelled to Russia twice last year—once in July for the 22nd bilateral summit and again in October for the BRICS Summit in Kazan. As geopolitical and trade pressures mount, both nations appear intent on reinforcing their strategic partnership.

Rupee Gains Slightly Against Dollar Despite Fresh US Tariff Hike

The Indian rupee opened marginally stronger against the US dollar on Wednesday, even as trade tensions with Washington escalated. In early trading, the rupee edged up by 3 paise to 87.69 against the greenback, defying concerns over newly imposed American trade penalties. A day earlier, US President Donald Trump announced an additional 25 per cent duty on Indian exports, pushing total tariffs to 50 per cent. The move was framed as a response to India's continued imports of Russian crude oil, with Trump warning that other nations buying Russian energy could face similar measures. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs condemned the decision, calling it "unfair, unjustified, and unreasonable." Officials stressed that energy imports are driven by market realities and the need to safeguard the

energy security of India's 1.4 billion citizens.

The government further expressed disappointment that the US had singled out India over an issue where "several other countries are also acting in their own national interest." The statement emphasized that New Delhi's position on Russian oil purchases had been communicated clearly to Washington in previous discussions.

Despite the mounting trade pressure, currency traders noted that the rupee's early gains reflected broader market sentiment and were not immediately impacted by the tariff hike. Analysts, however, cautioned that prolonged tensions could weigh on the currency in the weeks ahead.



Trump Defends Targeting India Over Russian Oil, Hints at More Sanctions



US President Donald Trump has justified imposing steep new tariffs on Indian imports by citing New Delhi's significant trade surplus with Washington and its close economic ties with Moscow. Speaking to reporters after signing an executive order that adds 25 per cent tariffs on Indian goods, on top of an existing 25 per cent duty, Trump warned that more "secondary sanctions" could soon be applied to other

Russian trading partners. When asked why India was being singled out while other nations such as China also purchase Russian oil, Trump responded that his administration had only just begun its latest round of measures. "It's only been 8 hours. So let's see what happens. You're going to see a lot more... You're going to see so many secondary sanctions," he said. The move has drawn sharp

criticism in New Delhi. The Indian government called the tariffs "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable" and accused Washington of double standards, pointing out that the US itself continues to import Russian uranium hexafluoride, palladium, and fertilizers. India also dismissed Trump's suggestion that it could purchase oil from Pakistan, saying the remark had not been well received.

India Defends Russian Oil Imports, Slams U.S. and EU for “Hypocrisy” Amid Trump Tariff Threat



India is pushing back against what it calls unfair treatment from the United States and the European Union over its continued import of Russian oil, following fresh threats from U.S. President Donald Trump to sharply raise

tariffs on Indian goods. In a strongly worded statement issued Monday night, India's Ministry of External Affairs argued that it is being singled out, even as the U.S. and EU maintain substantial trade ties with Moscow. Trump has

already imposed a 25% tariff on Indian exports and warned of further penalties, criticizing India for profiting from discounted Russian oil and allegedly reselling it on global markets. While he did not disclose how steep the next round of tariffs would be, his remarks have escalated tensions between the two countries.

India defended its oil purchases, stating that it only turned to Russia after traditional suppliers redirected oil shipments to Europe in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war. It pointed out that the EU's trade with Russia far exceeds India's, noting 2024 bilateral trade between the EU and Russia was valued at \$67.5

billion (\$78.1 billion), with \$17.2 billion more in services trade. In comparison, India's trade with Russia stood at \$68.7 billion in the year ending March 2025—surging from just \$10.1 billion before the pandemic. New Delhi also took aim at Washington's own transactions with Moscow, revealing that the U.S. imported uranium, palladium, fertilizers, and other chemicals from Russia, totaling \$5.2 billion in bilateral trade in 2024.

Despite these figures, the U.S. has not placed equivalent tariffs or penalties on Russia. India emphasized that its energy strategy was not only essential for domestic needs but also encouraged by the U.S. during a time of global

market instability. Citing former U.S. ambassador Eric Garcetti and Indian Energy Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, the country reminded observers that the U.S. had previously supported India's Russian oil purchases to help stabilize prices. India is now the top buyer of Russian crude, importing over 1.8 million barrels per day in 2023, up from just 100,000 before the war. India's rebuttal has drawn some international support.

Rachel Ziemba, a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, told CNBC that India's position was understandable, especially considering that the previous U.S. administration had established the oil price cap mechanism that rerouted trade.

Indian Refugee Claimant Wins Appeal After Canada Questions ‘Copy-Paste’ Asylum Narrative

An Indian man seeking refugee protection in Canada has been granted a fresh review of his case, despite authorities initially rejecting his claim on grounds that it bore “striking similarities” to hundreds of others submitted by migrants using the same immigration consultant. Parwinder Singh, who says he fled India after being framed for his friend's murder, saw his case dismissed by Canada's Refugee Appeal Division (RAD) before successfully appealing the decision in federal court.

Justice Guy Régimbald, in a ruling issued on July 11, criticized the RAD for focusing too heavily on narrative style and vocabulary rather than the substance of

Singh's claim. The judge stated that while it's reasonable to question multiple asylum applications that appear nearly identical, mere overlaps in phrasing or structure—especially when shaped by the same consultant—do not necessarily prove fraud. “Asylum narratives are not exercises in creative writing,” Régimbald wrote, adding that the RAD had prioritized form over substance. Singh's original testimony described a harrowing series of events beginning in 2019, when he witnessed a fatal stabbing during a group altercation in his hometown in Haryana. He alleges that the attackers included a politician's nephew and that police later coerced false statements, beat

him unconscious, and kept him in custody for days until a bribe secured his release. Fearing for his safety, Singh fled to Canada under the guise of attending a Tae Kwon Do tournament and later filed a refugee claim. Canadian authorities argued Singh's account mirrored those of five others who traveled with him and nearly 200 claims tied to immigration consultant Deepak Pawar. A Canada Border Services Agency analysis found that Singh's story shared 21 similar passages with another claimant who was on the same flight to Canada. Singh later amended his claim to include fear of persecution due to his support for the pro-Khalistan movement, a revision that initially



earned him protection status. However, immigration lawyers appealed the decision, and the Refugee Appeal Division reversed it, labeling the updated Khalistan claim another attempt at deception. Still, Justice Régimbald found flaws in the RAD's logic, noting a lack of direct evidence that Pawar used a narrative template and criticizing the panel for ignoring

alternative explanations for the overlaps. With the case now heading back for reconsideration, Singh's future in Canada remains uncertain. But for now, he has earned another chance to make his case—this time, under closer scrutiny and with more attention paid to the credibility of his individual experiences rather than the prose they were written in.



Despite mounting pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump, Indian officials have confirmed that the country will not halt its oil imports from Russia. The clarification comes amid threats of expanded U.S. sanctions on countries maintaining energy ties with Moscow and follows speculation

that India was preparing to scale back purchases of discounted Russian crude. Speaking to media earlier this week, Trump suggested India's potential withdrawal from Russian energy would be “a good step,” claiming he had heard such a decision was imminent. However, Indian government sources swiftly pushed back, stating no such directive had been issued. According to officials quoted by ANI, Indian refineries continue to operate based on economic factors such as price, grade, logistics, and supply inventories—not political

India Confirms Continued Oil Imports from Russia

pressure. The Trump administration had announced a new 25 percent tariff on all Indian goods, paired with additional penalties tied to India's continued arms and energy trade with Russia. Trump also set an August 8 deadline for Russia to halt its war in Ukraine or face even tougher global sanctions, including on its energy partners. While some international reports

hinted at Indian state-owned refiners pausing Russian imports amid tariff threats and declining discounts, Indian sources told the New York Times that no change in policy had occurred. One senior official emphasized that India's oil contracts with Russia are long-term and cannot be altered overnight. Officials noted that Russian crude is not directly sanctioned by the U.S. or EU, but

rather falls under the G7-EU price-cap framework. Indian purchases, they said, remain legal and within international regulations. They also argued that India's continued imports have helped stabilize global energy prices. Without India absorbing discounted Russian oil, officials claimed, prices could have exceeded the March 2022 high of \$137 per barrel, worsening inflation worldwide.

India Slams U.S. Tariff Threat, Cites Western Hypocrisy Over Russian Trade

In a strong rebuttal to U.S. President Donald Trump's latest tariff threat, India has firmly defended its continued oil trade with Russia, highlighting what it calls the "double standards" of the West. The Ministry of External Affairs issued a statement condemning what it called an unfair and unjustified attempt to single out Indian trade practices while turning a blind eye to similar or even greater transactions by the United States and Europe. The Indian government emphasized that its crude imports from



Russia are driven by necessity, especially after traditional energy supply routes were disrupted by the ongoing war in Ukraine. Officials further pointed out that when India first ramped

up purchases from Russia, the United States had actually encouraged such imports to stabilize the global energy market. The ministry's statement included detailed

figures illustrating how the European Union continues extensive trade with Russia across various sectors, including energy, chemicals, fertilizers, and industrial equipment. EU-

Russia trade in goods stood at over \$67 billion in 2024, with LNG imports alone hitting a record 16.5 million tonnes. The U.S., meanwhile, reportedly still imports strategic materials from

Russia, such as uranium hexafluoride for nuclear power and palladium for electric vehicles. New Delhi made it clear that India's actions are rooted in its own national interest and economic security. The government said it will not bow to external pressure and will take all necessary steps to protect its trade decisions. Trump's new tariff push, announced via a post on Truth Social, suggests duties could go as high as 100 percent on countries that continue to buy Russian oil. He has already imposed a 25 percent tariff on Indian goods starting August 7, escalating tensions between the two nations as they navigate an increasingly complex global trade landscape.

Trump Aide Slams India for Fueling Russia's War, Calls Oil Purchases 'Unacceptable'

The Trump administration has launched a fresh wave of criticism against India, accusing it of financially supporting Russia's invasion of Ukraine by continuing to purchase Russian oil. Stephen Miller, Deputy Chief of Staff at the White House and a close aide to President Trump, said in an interview with Fox News that India's ongoing energy trade with Moscow is "not acceptable" and directly contributes to the Kremlin's war chest. India has emerged as the second-largest buyer of Russian oil after China, with more than 30 percent of its fuel now

sourced from Moscow. Before the war in Ukraine began in 2022, India sourced only 1 percent of its oil from Russia. Trump's administration responded by slapping a 25 percent tariff on Indian products last week, citing both military and energy deals with Russia as the primary motivation. Miller warned of additional penalties if India continues its defense and energy cooperation with Russia. Despite the tough rhetoric, Miller emphasized that Trump maintains a "tremendous" relationship with Indian Prime Minister Narendra

Modi. However, the president's recent post on Truth Social sent



a harsher message, stating that India and Russia "can take their dead economies down together"

and criticizing India's participation in the BRICS alliance, which includes Russia and China. Indian officials have responded by reaffirming their stance.

Government sources told Reuters that India will continue to buy oil from Russia, stressing that the relationship is "time-tested" and dates back to the Soviet era. The Ministry of External Affairs also stated that India's defense and energy ties with Moscow should not be judged by any third country. Since Western nations imposed sanctions on Russia,

India has taken advantage of discounted rates, significantly increasing its oil imports. Data from Kpler shows that imports from Russia rose from 68,000 barrels per day in January 2022 to over 2 million barrels daily by mid-2023, at one point comprising nearly 40 percent of India's crude imports. Indian officials maintain that their oil imports remain legal under international law and argue that they have helped stabilize global fuel prices, even as geopolitical tensions grow between New Delhi and Washington.

Four Indian-Origin Seniors Found Dead in U.S. Car Crash After Days Missing



Four Indian-origin senior citizens who had been missing for several days in the United States

were tragically found dead in a car crash in West Virginia, authorities confirmed. The group, identified

as Asha Divan, Kishore Divan, Shailesh Divan, and Gita Divan, were traveling to a Hindu temple when their vehicle veered off the road and was discovered at the bottom of a steep embankment late Friday night. According to Marshall County Sheriff Mike Dougherty, the light green Toyota Camry they were driving was located around 9:30 p.m. on August 2, near Big Wheeling Creek Road in Marshall County.

The four were reportedly on a road trip from New York, heading toward Pittsburgh and then to Prabhupada's Palace of Gold in Moundsville, West Virginia, where they had reserved lodging for Tuesday night. Authorities say they never arrived or checked in at their destination. The last confirmed sighting of the group was at a Burger King on Peach Street in Erie, Pennsylvania, where surveillance footage

showed two of the individuals entering the restaurant. Their final credit card transaction was also recorded at that location. Cell phone activity placed the group near Moundsville and Wheeling around 3 a.m. on Wednesday, offering the only indication of movement before they were reported missing. Efforts to locate them began after family members filed a missing persons report in Buffalo, New York.

MORNING GLORY: President Trump and the United States' massive tariff haul in his first six months back

In June, the United States collected \$27 billion dollars in tariff revenue on goods imported into the country. That number is expected to increase this month—we will know for sure in a few days. Hold on to those numbers for a bit while considering the context in which they appear.

President Donald Trump ran and won in November, 2024 on a straightforward platform: Close the southern border. Prioritize the deportation of illegal migrants that are criminals or national security threats. Expand and extend the tax cuts that he initially pushed through in 2017 with the help of GOP majorities in the House and the Senate. Rollback the regulatory burden on American businesses. Rebuild the nation's defenses through much higher defense spending. Protect girls' and women's sports. End the era of "woke" by crushing "DEI" and "CRT." President Trump also repeatedly stated from the time he came down the escalator in 2015 that Iran would not be permitted to obtain nuclear weapons. His support for Israel has been greater than any previous president. Trump delivered on all of these promises already. In six months. It's a stunning and unprecedented record of achievements and of promises made and kept by a presidential candidate early in his term. President Trump also ran on upending the international trading system through the imposition of tariffs on almost every country doing business with the U.S. Skeptics of this set of claims were everywhere. June's tariff receipts in the U.S. set a monthly record of \$27 billion. July's number is expected to increase. "[W]e could expect that that could be well over \$300 billion by the end of the year," Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent declared earlier in July. (By contrast, total tariff revenue for the U.S. was \$77 billion in calendar year 2024.) Bessent added that he estimates tariff revenue to the Treasury to top "2.8 trillion over 10 years," "which we think is probably low." In January, the federal treasury collected approximately \$8 billion in tariffs. That number had more than doubled by April to \$16.3 billion. The president has since concluded new tariff and trade deals with the United Kingdom, Israel, Japan, Indonesia, Vietnam and—this week—the European Union. Negotiations with China are ongoing and more deals with more countries are expected as Trump's team on tariff negotiations ranges across the world accomplishing much, much more than most people thought could be accomplished this quickly. A decade ago the U.S. collected \$35 billion in tariffs annually. That's quite a contrast: \$35 billion into the U.S. treasury from tariffs in 2015; \$300 billion estimated in 2025. President Trump made no secret about

his intentions on trade. As with all the other campaign promises, he has delivered and indeed redone the vast global trading system. Thus far it has been all gain and very little pain as far as consumers and voters are concerned. Stock markets have soared in the same period with a big dip when the president announced the outlines of his ambitious trade agenda, a dip that was erased as new highs were recorded. Now the question is: Will the skeptics of Trump's trade policies at least consider that they were wrong? Like most commentators, trade and tariffs have rarely been a topic for me. I began work in government in President Reagan's administration and since then the GOP has been a "free trade" party. Almost every Reaganite called themselves a devotee of "the Chicago school" of economics even if they were not economists. This meant, in a general way, low taxes and low-to-non-existent tariffs, and a belief in free trade around the globe via open oceans patrolled primarily by the United States Navy with help from its allies. This post-World War II international trading system was built on "GATT." "GATT" stands for the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. It was a multilateral agreement established in 1947 to promote international trade by reducing or eliminating tariffs and other trade barriers between participating countries. There were eight "rounds" of GATT negotiations between 1947 and 1994, and they culminated in the creation of the World Trade Organization which came into being on January 1, 1995. In the 30 years since then, the "WTO" has set the rules and resolved the disputes among international trading partners. At home, the Constitution vested the power over tariffs in the Congress, but much of that power has been delegated to the president and his officials via Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, Sections 201 and 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, and International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) of 1977. Some critics of President Trump's big declarations and decisions on tariffs have questioned whether he has enough power under these delegations to so thoroughly transform the rules of international trade. Suits have been filed and it will be a question of first impression for the Supreme Court if it gets there. We don't know what tariffs will eventually come before the Court if it even agrees to take up the matter. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington, D.C., is scheduled to hear oral arguments today in *V.O.S. Selections v. Trump*, a case brought by five small business owners and 12 states who allege they have been harmed by President Trump's import taxes.

Trump Is A Phase: India-US Ties Are Bigger Than Him

I am going to begin this column with a joke. A man was being beaten in the public square of a town, but the more he was beaten, the more he kept laughing. Finally, someone watching the proceedings asked him why he was laughing. The man answered: "These people are beating me because they think I am Dhuru. But I am actually Viru." The joke may sound facetious, but it is both an illustration of the essence of Vedantic wisdom—that you are not what you (or others) think you are, *Tat tvam asi*—and of the principle that it is futile to beat the wrong person! My worry is that, in our reaction to Donald Trump's (DT) tantrums, we may lose sight of the fact that India has diplomatic relations with the United States of America, and not with a transient individual who will, within the next two years hopefully, become part of a short chapter of history that both Indians and Americans may wish to forget. I accept that it is tempting in today's age of 24-hour news cycles and Twitter-driven diplomacy to see history through the narrow prism of personality. But to reduce Indo-American ties to the temperament of one man is to profoundly misread both the long arc of history and the deeper convergences that bind the world's oldest democracy with its largest.

India and the United States are bound not merely by trade statistics or transient political postures. They are linked, at a deeper level, by a civilisational affinity that transcends regimes, rhetoric, and rogue leaders. This is not to deny the reality of immediate irritants—especially around trade imbalances, technology transfer, and intellectual property disputes—but to place them in their proper context: as negotiable issues within a long-term, strategic relationship. Trump, in the grand sweep of India-US relations, is, in my view, a transient nuisance, a temporary disruptor, not a permanent roadblock; an aberration, not an irrevocable defining force for all time. His leadership style is at odds with the strategic patience that true diplomacy demands. He has reduced alliances to

balance sheets, and friends to negotiable assets. Yet, despite his provocations, the structural foundations of the India-US partnership remain intact. Defence cooperation expanded, foundational agreements like BECA and COMCASA were signed, and strategic dialogues deepened. That such progress occurred even during Trump's erratic presidency is testimony to the resilience of the relationship. The goal of our diplomacy then must be not to throw the baby—which is the long-term perspective of Indo-American relations—out with the bathwater of a notoriously eccentric and unstable individual. How we do this will be the real test of our diplomacy. There are two aspects to this. First, our reaction to his unpredictable and often obnoxious behaviour. This should be responded to not with emotionalism but with a firmness infused with dignity, self-esteem and strategic autonomy. Dignity, because that befits our civilisational ethos; self-esteem, because we are not a pushover, nor are we at his mercy; and, above all, strategic autonomy because, as a sovereign nation, we shall not be dictated to by anyone—however powerful he may think he is—in deciding how we conduct our foreign policy and the choices we make in our national interest. Second, we should, through this temporary squall, continue to focus on the long-term convergences and mutually beneficial dividends that are the foundation of Indo-American relations. A substantive India-US trade agreement has long been awaited. Both countries have much to gain. The US is India's largest trading partner in goods and services, and India is a rising economic power with a rapidly growing consumer base and a sophisticated IT and pharma sector. A comprehensive agreement could address tariff barriers, ease investment flows, unlock supply chains, and enhance collaboration in sectors such as defence, hi-tech, clean energy, digital services, and healthcare.


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Kneel, Deal, Or Bleed: The Trump-enomics Wrecking The World

This is a national crisis, one not of India's making. In the wake of US President Donald Trump's latest outburst on Monday - his threat to further hike tariffs on Indian goods over its oil trade with Russia - it is essential that all Indians rally behind the government, regardless of their political leanings. This is not the moment for partisan sniping. Just as we stood united during the India-Pakistan military standoff after the Pahalgam terror attack and during the 2020 Galwan clashes with China, we must now close ranks again.

Why call it a crisis?

Because what unfolded yesterday (August 4) was pure Trump: theatrical, provocative and unfair. In a sweeping accusation, Trump charged India with profiteering from Russian oil while war rages in Ukraine, alleging that New Delhi resold Russian crude for a hefty profit. The implication was that India valued margins over morals. He threatened to slap even higher tariffs on Indian exports, higher than 25% that he imposed arbitrarily on August 1. For him, it was moral posturing. For India, it was a punch laced with hypocrisy. India responded with rare fire. In a sharp rebuttal, it called Trump's accusations both misleading and unjustified, defending its right to safeguard national interests. Indian officials pointed to America's own ongoing imports of Russian uranium, palladium and industrial chemicals - quiet deals that don't seem to rile Washington's moral compass. It was a deft move, exposing the duplicity in Trump's rhetoric and holding up a mirror to America's own contradictions. Let's be honest. India's oil trade with Russia is no secret arrangement hidden in some shadowy backroom. It is a transparent, market-driven strategy aimed at stabilising energy costs in a time of global volatility. When Western sanctions disrupted oil flows, India, like many other countries, stepped in to soften the blow, preventing a full-blown price shock. Indian refineries, both state-run and private, made commercial decisions based on cost, supply security and export needs. There was no geopolitical



agenda, only the economics of energy security. But in Trump's second act, facts matter less than theatre.

On A Rampage

His first presidency lit the fuse. The second is blowing up what remained. Since returning to the Oval Office in January, Trump has been on a tariff rampage. Seven months in, the global trading system is unrecognisable. Tariffs have become weapons, trade partners have been reduced to negotiators, and the World Trade Organization - already quite weakened - is now functionally comatose. The numbers tell their own dystopian tale. The average US tariff now exceeds 18%. For some countries, it's closer to 40%. Canada, the European Union, Mexico, India, Japan - even Taiwan - have all been hit. No economy is too friendly or too small to escape the Trump treatment. As August 1's all-out tariff expansion showed - targeting over 90 nations in one stroke - this isn't policy. It's punishment. There is no coherent strategy behind these tariffs - no roadmap, no mutually beneficial agreements. Instead, Trump offers threats and one-page handshake deals with vague promises to "Buy American" and "reinvest in US jobs". He bullies smaller nations into accepting lopsided trade conditions while larger economies are left floundering in uncertainty.

India Won't Beg Or Bow

India's case is emblematic. Despite not being among America's top-tier trade dependencies, it finds itself in Trump's crosshairs - partly for its growing alignment with Russia, and partly because it is an easy punching bag for domestic optics. Yet, unlike other US allies with vulnerable supply chains, India has leverage. Its economy is surging and its strategic importance - from Indo-Pacific security to chip manufacturing and pharmaceuticals - makes it harder to sideline. India may suffer tariff pain, but it's not begging at the table. It's negotiating with its own cards. That might be why Trump's attack on India's Russian oil imports feels more like performance than genuine concern. The reality is far murkier. The US itself continues to import vital Russian materials, often through quiet backchannels or third-party entities. If morality were truly the yardstick, America's own trade behaviour would need a full audit. Trump's tariffs aren't about correcting trade imbalances or defending American workers. They're about power projection. In April, when he threatened to "liberate" America from bad trade deals, it wasn't economic policy, but a flex. Some journalists have likened Trump's global tariff crusade to a protection racket, and the metaphor holds. His "deals" work like tribute systems: agree to arbitrary

terms or face economic punishment. In Trump's trade order, rules and treaties are for the weak. The cost is already visible. The WTO is a ghost of its former self - budget slashed, dispute resolution mechanisms hollowed out. Trade diplomacy, once driven by negotiation and multilateralism, has been replaced by intimidation. Economies have stopped planning for prosperity and begun bracing for the next tariff bombshell.

Consequences Come Knocking

It's August 2025, and the world is living in Trump's new economic jungle. In April, his dramatic tariff rollout sparked a market panic. Wall Street tanked. Governments blinked. Trump, ever the showman, walked it back, slightly. A few nations got sweetheart deals: the UK secured relatively lenient 10% duties, while the EU and Japan swallowed 15%. For others - Cambodia, Pakistan, even strategic partner South Korea - there was no mercy. Tariffs surged with no clear recourse. America's import duties have jumped from 2% in 2020 to nearly 18% today, bringing in over \$100 billion in revenue. MAGA loyalists cheer, seeing a flood of money into federal coffers and a resurgence of American pride.

But beneath the jingoism, the economic strain is beginning to show. Consumer prices are rising. Investment forecasts are softening. For the

middle-class American, patriotic slogans don't pay the grocery bill. In Washington, it is believed some lawmakers are already pushing back, proposing rebates for low-income households to cushion the tariff fallout - an irony given the GOP's usual disdain for government handouts. But Trump has never been beholden to ideology. His political identity is built on spectacle and exceptionalism. The bigger concern is structural. Trade partners are adapting - quickly and strategically. India, for instance, has begun filling the manufacturing void left by China in American smartphone supply chains. With Chinese goods now heavily tariffed, India's tech sector is outperforming. But even India knows this is a temporary high. Vietnam and the Philippines - favoured by Trump's trade hawks - may ultimately enjoy smoother market access. The message to the world is chilling. Trade with the US only if you are in favour. Otherwise, you are on your own.

New World Disorder

Germany, long dependent on auto exports, is reeling. Canada is exploring deeper integration with the EU and Asia. Latin American economies are tightening regional trade ties. And China, though wounded, is doubling down on its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) push, offering cash and credit where the US offers tariffs and threats. The new global order Trump is creating isn't one of American dominance - it is one of fragmentation. He may be winning tactical battles, but he is losing the war for global trust. If allies continue to retreat and trade routes reroute away from Washington, Trump's tariff empire could turn out to be a pyrrhic victory - loud and dramatic, but ultimately self-defeating. What the world needs now is collective defiance. A coalition of countries must step up in resolve and rise to build alternative frameworks.

Whether through strengthening regional trade blocs, launching new digital economies, or pushing legal challenges at whatever's left of the WTO, the time for appeasement is over.

Scapegoated and Silenced: America Turns on Indian Workers

There's an old American habit that resurfaces in times of uncertainty: the search for a scapegoat. And in the post-pandemic world of economic anxiety, rising inflation, and global trade realignment, a new favourite target has emerged — the Indian worker. It didn't start with the recent trade tensions between the US and India. It started just before that — when Donald Trump announced Sriram Krishnan as one of his new tech advisors for artificial intelligence. What should've been seen as a major win for Indian representation in tech quickly morphed into something uglier. Almost immediately, far-right activist Laura Loomer — a Trump ally with a verified platform and close ties to conservative media circles — launched a tirade. She criticised Krishnan's appointment and went on a venomous, public rant against Indian workers, calling us "third-world invaders", blaming H1B visa holders for the downfall of American jobs, and explicitly calling for an end to the visa program. Loomer may thrive in



the alt-right undercurrent, but she's appeared with Trump at events, had his support in multiple congressional bids, and has been actively courted by key MAGA influencers. What she said signalled a line of attack that others soon picked up. And make no mistake: Trump has institutionalised this rhetoric. From the start of his political rise, he's mocked outsourcing and global labour as threats to American sovereignty, painting immigrants not as contributors, but as competitors. He surrounds himself with voices who thrive on nativist resentment: from online trolls who openly peddle "white replacement" theories, to political influencers who treat H1B holders as parasites. When The Wall Street Journal revealed that Marko Elez — a staffer associated with Elon Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and linked to the

meme page "DogeDesigner" — had posted racist and extremist content targeting Indians, including the phrase "bring back Indian hate," Elez briefly resigned but was later rehired by Musk. It was a quiet reinstatement, but a loud message: this kind of rhetoric is becoming normalised. These are people now plugged into MAGA's digital strategy. Trump's playbook isn't just to stoke fear of the outsider — it's to turn that fear into loyalty. And Indian professionals have become the perfect punching bag. Not because we've done anything wrong, but because we're visible, vulnerable, and valuable — the exact traits demagogues like to exploit. Fast forward to today, and US-India trade tensions have exploded. Amid disputes over tariffs, currency policy, and geopolitical positioning, Indian professionals in America suddenly find

themselves caught in the crossfire. Social media is flooded with posts blaming Indian engineers for everything from unemployment to inflation. And once again, instead of addressing systemic issues, some in the political class found it easier to recycle the old lie: "They're taking your jobs."

And politicians followed suit

Marjorie Taylor Greene, in one of her most cynical performances yet, took to Twitter to declare that the Indian H1B visa program should be ended altogether. No data and nuance. Just a nationalist soundbite designed to stoke resentment and give angry voters an easy punching bag. And it works. Because Indian professionals don't have the same built-in political infrastructure that other communities have. We don't protest in the streets. We don't boycott en masse.

We don't own the media narrative. Most of us are here just to work, to build, to survive. But that silence has been mistaken for passivity — and it's being weaponised against us. You feel it in the workplace, where being too competent is seen as threatening. You feel it in politics, where even our so-called allies rarely speak up. And you feel it online, where we're called "code coolies" and "job stealers" with alarming regularity. We've become scapegoats in a country that relies on our labour but rarely respects our presence. We are engineers, doctors, researchers, entrepreneurs. Our productivity has helped fuel American innovation, yet we're treated like a threat. The contradiction is staggering: a system that demands our contributions but resents our existence. This country markets itself as a meritocracy, but when

we succeed, the goalposts shift. In the wake of economic anxiety, political instability, or election season desperation, we're trotted out like easy villains: "They're taking your jobs." "They're replacing you." The words change, but the hatred doesn't. And lately, it's gotten darker. More organised. More public. And yet we stay because we have families and hope things will change. But hope isn't enough. We have to start telling our stories — clearly, loudly, relentlessly. Because if we don't, others will do it for us — and they'll twist those stories into caricatures. This trade friction will pass. Visa caps may shift. But the coordinated, strategic scapegoating of Indian professionals will leave a mark on American society, and on us. If we don't confront it now, that mark becomes a scar. This is the slow dehumanisation of an entire community in the eyes of a nation. And history has shown where that road leads.

Indo-UK FTA -CETA: Why Does It Concern Indian Farmers?

By Jag Mohan Thaken -India

The governments of India and UK signed a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) on 24 July 2025. The BJP led Modi government has gone to the extent to claim that CETA will be of great benefit to Indian farmers.

All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), the largest segment of Indian farmers' unions, quotes that media reports based on the official versions have generated strong expectations that CETA will lead to robust economic growth in both the slowing economies.

But AIKS fears that experiences show that any benefits of such deals are cornered by few large players in the economy. The benefits to smaller players truly depend upon the capacity, cost competitiveness and readiness to harvest the so-called "new opportunities". Opportunities for enhanced trade due to the removal of tariff barriers on a range of product lines depends on extensive coordinated actions by the Indian government to build competitiveness of the economy through modern common infrastructure and facilitating technology absorption in the larger economy. So, AIKS demands suspension of the Indo-UK FTA -CETA- for domination of foreign agri-business on domestic trade as CETA will intensify the acute agrarian crisis as ASEAN FTA has devastated natural rubber farmers of Kerala.

The farmers' union alleges that the Modi government has destroyed the competitiveness of Indian farmers stating that the benefits of export in agriculture will be cornered by few large players and crony capitalists like Adani and Ambani.

AIKS adds that the policies of the Modi Government are, in fact, contrary to this required objective. By denying remunerative minimum support price to farmers, keeping small and marginal farmers under deep indebtedness, withdrawing subsidies on inputs and escalating cost of production thus eroding the profitability of agriculture, curtailing public investment in agricultural infrastructure, promoting corporate takeover of agricultural land and farm markets and not building an efficient supply chain, the Modi government has ruined the competitiveness of Indian farmers even as it has supplied selected benefits to crony capitalists like Adani in the agricultural sector. As a result, the benefits that might flow to Indian agriculture will be accrued by large players and crony capitalists and farmers will be further squeezed. The exuber-



ance on signing the deal that follows from these realities should displace attention from the real hard tasks, challenges and dangers ahead. The CETA per se is not going to solve the issues in India's large agricultural sector. Giving an example of tariff reduction, AIKS warns that reduction in tariff on exports does not guarantee remunerative prices to domestic farmers. It is required to recall the impact of India-ASEAN agreement of 2011 on the domestic rubber production sector that has devastated the economy of Kerala. The price of raw rubber sheets fell from Rs. 240 per kilo to just Rs.70 per kilo in 2011 and then got stabilised at Rs.110 for more than ten long years. The price crash of natural rubber caused an annual loss of a whopping Rs.7840 crore for rubber farmers in Kerala alone. The annual production of natural rubber in Kerala has dropped from 9.5 lakh tonnes to 5.5 lakh tonnes during this period. The ASEAN – FTA had given preferential access to the ASEAN markets. But India could not take advantage and increase exports. However, the ASEAN countries could exploit the preferential access given to India. That is why the trade gap between India and ASEAN widened after formalizing the FTA.

What fears AIKS?

In a press release issued on July 29, 2025, AIKS showed its concern that the U.K is known to export processed and value-added products based on primary products. The list of areas earmarked for phasing out tariffs does not augur well for India. There is a long list of manufactures and vehicles that are given tariff concessions to enter the Indian markets. Many of these products are luxury products consumed by the rich in India. Obviously, there will be a sustained increase in the imports from the

U.K but there could not be a matching increase in India's exports to the U.K in the context of the lack of competitiveness. The FTA may open the flood gate of processed food in the Indian market and the drain of agricultural products to Britain thus affecting the growth of domestic agriculture and industry and bring new forms of colonization.

The farmers' union further fears that the Western countries including the UK regularly use non-tariff measures to block or slow agricultural imports from countries like India. Such standards are always applied arbitrarily and to disproportionately benefit the Western countries. If this happens, all the potential gains from CETA will turn out to be its very opposite: net losses for India. It must be noted that agricultural trade between India and the UK is only a miniscule portion of their overall trade and agricultural imports from India constitute less than 1% of UK's total imports. Thus, while agriculture may be an area of major concern for India, it may not be so for the UK given the overall structure of trade flows between the two countries.

AIKS adds that for the last three decades, advocates of trade liberalisation have pushed their agenda by promoting the false promise that export opportunities would benefit Indian farmers. The CETA is yet another attempt in the same direction. The experience of the last three decades has shown that this is a false propaganda and is only used to progressively open Indian markets to agricultural imports from developed countries. This is clear from increased import dependence for edible oils, pulses, fruits, rubber and many other commodities. Even though some of these bilateral trade deals are being negotiated to keep out core agricultural products of India, the threat that

these deals pose must not be under-estimated. Once a trade agreement is signed and implemented, there will be pressure to expand the scope of these agreements to include other products. This is the hidden "chronology" that must be understood. Bilateral trade agreements may be designed to initially seem attractive as a ploy to blunt political opposition. This seems to be the strategy behind the CETA and the agreement being negotiated with the US. The dangers of these agreements go far beyond the specific terms of these agreements and can open many doors to large markets of countries like India they open for the developed countries.

The Indo-UK FTA has the potential to open the Indian economy to the vagaries of international trade and speculation and endangering peasantry and the entire working people to face the intensifying agrarian crisis and domination of foreign agri-business on the domestic industry.

Why are WTO rates favourable to India?

AIKS pleads that India's WTO bound rates are quite high in the case of most agricultural products. WTO negotiations take place taking bound rates as the base rates. But, in the UK India FTA base rates are not the WTO bound rates. Instead applied rates are generally lower than the bound rates. This is a problem India encountered in the case of the India-ASEAN FTA also. India is made to start the tariff cutting exercises from a point much lower than India's WTO bound rates. This aspect assumes importance because developing countries including India had to fight a tough battle in the WTO to maintain high bound rates for agricultural products.

The weakening of multilateralism

and increasing reliance on bilateral trade deals under pressure of developed countries must be resisted. The shift from rule-based multilateral system of governance of India should have rallied other less-developed countries towards this goal. On the contrary, the Modi government has completely succumbed to these pressures and is busy signing bilateral trade deals. AIKS has exhorted all the political parties to demand immediate suspension of the Indo- UK FTA.

Shouldn't Slow Agriculture Export Growth Concern the Indian Government?

The BJP led Indian government always claims very high growth in every field and compares its achievements inch-by- inch with the previous congress government's. Will the slow growth in agriculture export during its 10-year tenure in comparison to 10-year tenure of congress government concern the present government runners? During congress regime agriculture export rose up from \$7.5 billion to \$43.3 billion (477 percent) from 2003-04 to 2013-14 and thereafter during 10- year rule of BJP led central government its growth hardly increased 20 percent from \$43.3 billion \$52 billion, as reported by Indian Express, an esteemed Indian Daily.

Highlighting the slow growth in agriculture export during BJP rule, Indian Express in its editorial- 'Carry It Forward', writes that India needs a farm trade policy based not on import protection, but expanding and diversifying its exports. That happened during 2003-04 to 2013-14, when the country's agriculture exports soared from \$7.5 billion to \$43.3 billion and new markets were created in products from basmati rice and buffalo meat to frozen shrimps, guar gum meal, chilly and seed spices. Since then, exports have hardly grown to about \$52 billion from \$43.3 billion in 2024-25. Even worse have been shipment curbs — on rice, wheat, sugar or onion — clamped at the slightest indication of domestic supply shortfalls. CETA has been a refreshing departure, with India successfully negotiating duty-free access for its exports of seafood, processed foods, spices, fruit and vegetables to the UK, while simultaneously offering to cut tariffs on imports of whisky, chocolates, soft drinks and salmon from the latter. A similar confident approach of export proactiveness rather than import defensiveness is required in deals with other countries — the US included.

TCS layoffs show Indian IT giants have missed the bus, job loss and pain ahead

No one is willing to say it loudly, but it is clear that the nature of IT work is changing due to artificial intelligence. And it is changing in a way that may not turn out to be favourable for our IT giants.

Unless you are living a life without a smartphone, you must already be aware of it — TCS has announced that it will be reducing its headcount by 12,000 employees. The company is not explicitly saying that it is because of AI tools like Claude and Gemini, which are fairly competent at some of the work we do in our offices, but read between the lines and it becomes clear. The TCS layoffs mark the beginning of an era where tools like ChatGPT can do enough work to make teams after teams, and employees after employees, redundant and unnecessary. This does not mean that IT jobs will vanish.



It only means that we are in for a choppy ride. And by we, I mean people in India, the country that benefited greatly from the last three decades when the entire world turned into some sort of code and software. As a country, we have ridden an IT wave because of our familiarity with English, a culture of following instructions to the T, and the availability of millions of coders who are willing to work 60 hours a week at 1/10th the salary that someone in the US would demand. In other words, before there was Claude, ChatGPT and Gemini — AI tools that are familiar with English, can follow instructions, and are cheap to run — there was your average Indian coder, almost like a human AI who could be trusted to follow guidelines and libraries created by the cracked engineers in Silicon Valley, and then do boring and repetitive tasks. Now, the same coder is at the risk of losing their job. The real AI is here. It is even cheaper and more efficient. Back in the late 18th and 19th centuries, machines replaced manual work. This was catastrophic for skilled manual labourers — think weavers — and horses. To keep society intact, the world invented knowledge work, elaborate bureaucracies, and the service industry. In the

early 21st century, we are at a point where AI tools are good enough to replace knowledge work and disrupt the service industry. Again, it is going to be catastrophic for a lot of people, though horses will be spared this time. The Indian government, along with other governments, will soften the blow with new policies and probably more bureaucracy. But the hammer will fall in the coming years, and pain will be there. It is also the pain that, in some ways, TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCL, Tech Mahindra and their ilk deserve. Despite a huge opportunity open to them in the last 20 years, they have been happy doing the unimaginative and lazy work and have kept billing their rich or unsuspecting clients for it. Silicon Valley creates libraries, programming languages and products. Indian coders use and service them. Instead of building novel expertise, the biggest flex of Indian IT giants has been to hire coders from Pilani at a salary that is less than that of a Starbucks barista in San Francisco. In other words, they have focused on arbitrage instead of building something unique. Their profits have not been invested in R&D or product development. India has been synonymous with servicing the tech industry, but

only because the rest of the world, for whatever reasons, doesn't seem too enthusiastic about it. Europe, still flush with money from the colonial era and from intellectual property, doesn't want this work. Japan, Korea, China and Asian island nations until now did not have enough familiarity with English to do it on the scale India could. Skilled labour in the US is too pricey. The rest of the world just doesn't have enough knowledge, workers or stability to do what India managed in Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

It is a bit of luck that made India an IT powerhouse and not necessarily our abilities. Though, it can be argued that a degree of luck, whether we are talking about individuals or societies, is needed for any success. The tragedy of India is that, despite the initial luck, due to which it reaped rich rewards for several decades, the IT giants of our country have been completely vision-less and risk-averse. Instead of realising their good fortune and working to build on it, they believe in their fantasy of being the genius IT giants. And now, when the tide is turning, our IT industry doesn't have a good anchor that can stabilise it. Just compare it with China. In manufacturing, as the factories shifted from Europe and the US to Asia, a

number of Chinese and Korean companies quickly became large OEMs, somewhat like how Indian IT companies became support arms for the global IT giants.

In the 1990s, the Chinese took the IP, research and design from Western companies and made products for them. But they did not stay OEMs. In a few years, they became product companies in their own right, first domestically and then globally. From BYD to Oppo, they all started as makers of parts or products for others. But gradually they expanded, with a vision to be manufacturers of something original.

No Indian IT giant has made a transition like this. In a country famed for its supposed IT prowess, we don't have a proper operating system for phones or computers that we can call our own. In fact, in a country of IT giants, we don't have a locally-made media player, a chat app, a browser, even a proper video game, or maybe a file explorer that is as good as or better than its global counterparts. Even in the late 2010s, when it became clear that the next wave in tech is going to be around AI, Indian IT giants kept slumbering. It's not that they did not have money. They have plenty of profits coming in. But they had

no vision. They never had any vision beyond the arbitrage.

Now the chickens are coming home to roost. When you build an industry on the basis of arbitrage, sooner or later, it is going to be upended. This is what is happening in 2025 and will only gather pace.

In a week or so, OpenAI is expected to launch ChatGPT 5 and there is chatter that this one is specifically going to be great at coding, better than even the Claude Opus 4, which is already considered a coding tool as good as an entry-level software developer.

Give it another three to four years and the kind of work that our IT giants do will be manageable by AI systems. Humans will still be required, particularly for complex, challenging and novel work. But for that work, you may not need 10,000 employees.

It could be the kind of work that employees do at Nvidia, an almost \$4 trillion company, but with just 26,000 employees. In comparison, TCS has over 6 lakh employees. A lot of these employees are going to find that in the next two to three years, ChatGPT will be able to do their work faster, more efficiently and cheaper.

Why only someone very ignorant can think that Indian economy is dead



India's economic ascent in recent years has positioned it as a global powerhouse, standing tall amidst a turbulent world economy.

With a unique blend of robust GDP growth, stable macroeconomic fundamentals, and strategic sectoral advancements, India is not only the fastest-growing major economy but also one of the most resilient. There are several key drivers behind India's economic strength, supported by compelling data points and emerging opportunities that underscore its enduring momentum. An honest perusal of these key parameters will exorcise the farcical claim by India's Leader of Opposition (LoP) that the Indian economy is dead. What will emerge is a picture to the contrary.

Unmatched GDP Growth and Global Standing

India's GDP growth has consistently outpaced that of other major economies, cementing its status as a global economic leader. In FY24, India's real GDP grew by an impressive 8.2%, surpassing the growth rates of major economies like the United States (2.5%), China (5.2%), Japan (1.9%), and Germany (0.3%). For FY25, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects India's growth at 6.5–7%, revised upward from 6.6% due to strong rural demand

and government infrastructure spending. This makes India the fastest-growing major economy, with projections indicating it will maintain this position through FY26, with GDP growth expected between 6.3–6.8%. By 2027, India is forecasted to overtake Germany to become the world's third-largest economy, with a projected GDP of \$5.2 trillion. By 2030, this figure is expected to reach \$7.3 trillion, driven by robust domestic demand, a young demographic, and sustained economic reforms. India's contribution to global economic growth is projected to be 12.9% over the next five years, surpassing the United States' 11.3%. This trajectory highlights India's ability to thrive despite global headwinds, such as geopolitical tensions and trade uncertainties.

Manufacturing PMI: A Beacon of Industrial Strength

India's manufacturing sector is a cornerstone of its economic resilience, as evidenced by the S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI). In August 2023, the PMI stood at 58.6, reflecting robust expansion driven by strong demand, competitive pricing, and increased new orders—the fastest upturn since January 2021. For FY24, manufacturing growth reached 9.9%, significantly contributing to Gross

Value Added (GVA) growth of 7.2%. Most recently, the PMI showed robust growth, with a high of 59.2 in July 2025, marking the highest reading in nearly 17.5 years, reflecting strong demand and output. This performance underscores India's growing industrial capacity, bolstered by initiatives like the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, which has attracted investment in pharmaceuticals, electronics, and automobiles.

Despite global supply chain disruptions, India's manufacturing sector has shown remarkable adaptability. The sector's contribution to GDP, though currently at 13%, is poised for growth through policies like "Make in India," which aims to elevate it to 25%. Companies like Apple are shifting production to India, with iPhone manufacturing for the U.S. market increasingly moving from China. This trend signals India's emergence as a global manufacturing hub, enhancing its economic stability.

Low Inflation: A Pillar of Economic Stability

India's ability to maintain low inflation amidst global volatility is a testament to its prudent monetary policies. In March 2025, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rate was 3.34%, down from 4.85% the previous year. This decline, driven by stable food prices and lower

crude oil costs (projected at \$65/barrel in FY25), has bolstered purchasing power and economic stability []. The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) steady interest rate policy and potential rate cuts of 25 basis points in FY25 further support growth by encouraging credit and investment. Compared to advanced economies grappling with high inflation—such as the U.S. (3.0% in mid-2023) and the Eurozone (5.3%)—India's low inflation rate provides a competitive edge, fostering consumer confidence and sustaining domestic demand []. This stability is crucial for long-term economic resilience, especially in a global environment marked by inflationary pressures.

High FDI Inflows: A Vote of Global Confidence

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows into India have surged, reflecting global confidence in its economic potential. Between April 2000 and December 2024, cumulative FDI equity inflows reached \$1.05 trillion, with \$71 billion recorded in FY24 alone. Key sectors like finance, banking, insurance, and R&D have been major recipients, with Maharashtra (31%) and Karnataka (21%) emerging as top destinations. Singapore, Mauritius, and the U.S. account for significant shares, with 25%, 24%, and 10% of inflows, respectively. India's liberalised FDI regime, allowing 100% foreign investment in sectors like construction and renewable energy, has been a game-changer. The rise of Indian unicorns—108 by mid-2023, with 44 achieving unicorn status in 2021—has further attracted global investors. However, a dip in net FDI to \$0.35 billion in FY24 due to increased outward investments highlights the need for sustained policy efforts to maintain inflow momentum. Nonetheless, India's ability to attract substantial FDI underscores its appeal as a stable and lucrative investment destination.

Economic Opportunities in Tier 2 and Tier 3 Cities

India's economic growth is not confined to metropolitan hubs; Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities are emerging as vibrant centers of

opportunity. Cities like Jaipur, Indore, Surat, and Coimbatore are witnessing rapid infrastructure development, driven by initiatives like the UDAN regional airport scheme, which plans to build 20 new airports, and the Ganga Expressway, enhancing connectivity in Uttar Pradesh. These projects are unlocking economic potential by improving logistics, boosting tourism, and attracting businesses. The Smart City Mission and Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation are fostering sustainable urban development in these cities, creating jobs and stimulating local economies. For instance, Hyderabad's tier-4 data center, with 1,600 racks and 18MW capacity, highlights the growing digital infrastructure in Tier 2 cities. The public cloud services market in India is projected to reach \$13 billion by 2026, with a CAGR of 23.1%, driven by demand in these regions. This decentralization of economic activity reduces regional disparities and enhances India's overall economic resilience. Green Shoots: Renewable Energy and Space Technology India's focus on green shoot sectors like renewable energy and space technology is propelling its economic transformation. In renewable energy, India is targeting 100 GW of solar capacity by 2025, alongside investments in wind, hydropower, and green hydrogen. The India Green Energy Corridor and Green Hydrogen Mission align with the goal of net-zero emissions by 2070, positioning India as a global leader in clean energy. Two-thirds of new energy consumption is expected to come from renewables, reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels and creating jobs in manufacturing and infrastructure. In space technology, India's achievements, such as the Chandrayaan-3 lunar mission and the upcoming Gaganyaan human spaceflight program, have elevated its global standing. The Indian space sector is projected to grow from \$8 billion in 2023 to \$44 billion by 2033, driven by private-sector participation and government support.

Trump's Dilemma: Why US Wants India To Be Strong, But Not Too Strong



What the tariff episode makes abundantly clear is that the US-India relationship is bounded not just by temporary irritants but by structural competition. Both nations are democratic, diverse, and ambitious. But their visions of global order differ. Washington still sees itself as the indispensable power. India, meanwhile, sees itself as an indispensable alternative especially for the Global South, which it increasingly seeks to represent in global fora.

A Blunder In The Making?

In this context, punitive trade measures are not just poor policy but they are strategic miscalculations. They risk alienating one of the few partners with the capacity and legitimacy to balance China in Asia. They may also accelerate India's determination to shape global rules rather than simply follow them - from digital governance to payments infrastructure to climate negotiations. India's efforts to build sovereign technology stacks, resist foreign data colonialism, and push for multipolar norms in international institutions are all part of this broader arc.

As the architecture of international order shifts, India will neither be contained nor co-opted. It will contest the terrain, assert its priorities, and demand equal footing. And that, ultimately, is what the quadripolar world demands of every great power: the ability to live with others who do not think, act, or align exactly as one would wish. The faster Washington comes to terms with this, the more fruitful the US-India partnership can become.

But if it continues to treat rising powers as strategic dependents rather than equals, it risks not only losing a partner but pushing India closer to its rivals. Not out of ideological affinity, but out of pragmatic necessity. In today's world, that is more than a diplomatic misstep. It is a geopolitical failure.

US President Donald Trump's recent announcement of a 25% tariff on Indian exports coupled with the threat of additional and substantial penalties for importing energy and defense systems from Russia has reignited tensions between the world's two largest democracies. Although framed as a protectionist gesture designed to revitalise American manufacturing, the move is far more than a bilateral trade dispute. It reflects a deeper and more structural friction between two global powers navigating a new era of multipolarity - one in which India is no longer a junior partner in someone else's order but a strategic pole of its own.

A Quadripolar World

What makes this episode significant is not its short-term economic impact - though that, too, is considerable - but the way it underscores the evolving fault lines of a world increasingly defined not by a single superpower, but by four competing centres of influence. In this emerging "quadripolar" configuration of power captured in recent scholarship examining the distribution of global authority between the United States,

China, the Russia, and India - the very notion of global leadership is diffused; consensus is the exception, not the rule. Within this framework, Trump's tariff regime signals the limits of transactional diplomacy and the persistence of hegemonic instincts in American foreign policy. For India, the tariffs and associated penalties land at the intersection of strategic autonomy and economic resilience. New Delhi has long refused to be drawn into binary alignments whether through military blocs, digital alliances, or trade regimes dominated by any one power. Its decision to continue purchasing discounted Russian oil and advanced military systems, such as the S-400, is rooted not in ideological preference but in sovereign necessity. This refusal to yield to American pressure is not unique to the current moment; it has defined India's foreign policy posture for decades, from its stance during the Cold War to its leadership in the Global South today. The recent statement delivered by the Ministry of External Affairs of India on the United States and the European Union's continued trade with Russia in critical

commodities, and energy despite publicly backing Ukraine in its war further highlights the hypocrisy of the West and India's independent posture.

Not Just A Partner

That very strategic independence is precisely what grates on US policymakers. Whether it is Trump or any future or previous administration, Washington increasingly views India not just as a partner in containing China but as a potential challenger in its own right. The contradictions are hard to ignore. The US wants India to be strong, but not too strong. It seeks partnership but under its own terms. Yet India is unwilling to play second fiddle.

That is one reason it has refused to purchase F-35 fighter jets, apart from financial and technical considerations. Buying into that ecosystem would entail long-term dependencies that sit uneasily with India's vision of indigenous defense development and diversified procurement.

This underlying tension, exposed so clearly by the latest tariffs, is likely to prompt India to reassert its foreign policy autonomy even

more firmly. In the short term, it may lead to pragmatic cooperation with Russia and China not as an alliance of shared values, but as a tactical arrangement born of mutual interest in resisting US overreach.

The trilateral cooperation also called Troika is visible in forums like the BRICS, and recent energy and payment infrastructure discussions reflects this logic. Even in its recent engagements with ASEAN and African partners, India is laying the groundwork for a more diversified and less US-centric global economic posture.

A Strategic Pivot

It would be naive, however, to interpret this as India pivoting fully eastward. New Delhi remains deeply invested in its strategic partnership with Washington particularly in the areas of defense interoperability and technology transfer. But it is also making clear that this partnership cannot be predicated on obedience.

The world has moved beyond the 20th-century frameworks of alliance and alignment. Today, India seeks convergence without dependence, cooperation without compliance.

The Trumpian paradox: For India, its riskier being his friend than rival

Trump threw a curveball at India by announcing a 25% tariff on merchandise exports plus an undisclosed penalty. On the other hand, Trump keeps extending the deadline for China, a noted adversary.

Imagine your father has a kirana shop, and you are manning the counter. Suddenly, a friend comes over to your shop, smiles at you and takes a fistful of toffees from the jar kept on the counter-top, and says, "it's fine in friendship" and moves on. You are left speechless.

Now imagine an adversary in your friend's place. He would dutifully pay the amount and buy the toffees. But when you tell your friend that he cannot take free stuff, he is enraged and acts even worse than the enemy. It's a familiar story playing out in geopolitics.

Donald Trump thinks his friendship with allies is a leverage he can use to extract more from them, as compared to an enemy whom he treats as an equal to negotiate with. Such friends are the most difficult.

The context is Trump throwing a curveball at India by announcing a 25% tariff on merchandise exports plus an undisclosed penalty. We aren't alone.

Trump wrote warning letters to its staunchest allies like Japan and South Korea by announcing 25% tariffs earlier this month. The nations were visibly disturbed by such a letter, while Trump keeps extending the deadline for China, a noted adversary.

Henry Kissinger once famously said, "It may be dangerous to be America's enemy, but to be America's friend is fatal".

Those Afghani interpreters who helped the US army against the Taliban found this out the bitter way when they were left behind on the tarmac as the last plane flew out.

Nevertheless, Nehruvian idealism is dead, every country looks after themselves, every decision is taken with self-interest. India is no stranger to this. With its oil procurement policies, we are well served by this doctrine.

Now, the questions that



come to mind are two:

What changes for the common person if the current number stays? Did we fail to play Trump the right way? Could we have assuaged his ego (read: buy his crypto) to steer his focus away from India?

Given Trump's proclivity towards a Mexican dish where you fold a tortilla and put some fillings in it, we aren't yet sure if his tariff number will stand. But even if this number stays, it's not exactly doomsday.

Merchandise export to the US is 1.85% of the GDP. Pharma is a major part of it, which is so far exempt. So the exposure comes down even further.

Other big ones are jewellery, iPhones (and other electronics) and garments.

Once all the tariff numbers are fixed, it will be interesting to see which imports are relatively

attractive for the US consumer base. But it will surely affect a lot of employment hubs, which depend on such exports.

THE MODI GOVERNMENT'S DILEMMA

What the US wanted in return was very electorally sensitive access to the dairy and agri-products market. Owing to low productivity, it employs a significant percentage of our working population. Going by its 11-year record, the Modi government overindexes electoral sensitivity above its ideology. Hence, they sometimes appear like cutthroat capitalists, and the moment a state election nears, they turn into a welfarist party.

Basically, whatever wins the elections. And they have been successful at that. The same government took back the three farm laws in 2021, but covertly implemented

them across the country.

Now, the same is happening with the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). Symbolic resistance but covert implementation. Hence, they would never be part of a headline that shows them as selling out their farmers. The opposition is waiting with bated breath.

THE TRUMPION PARADOX

But to answer the second question is an exercise in hindsight.

It is like analysing the POTUS like a customer. What does he want? It's his last term, he is clearly very rich, he wants to get richer. But more than that, he is chasing a legacy.

He hates Obama since the day he roasted him that night at the White House correspondents' dinner. Obama is a Nobel laureate,

and Trump wants one of his own too. He thinks he doesn't get the respect he deserves. So, he makes it known.

He has repeated the claim of brokering the India-Pakistan ceasefire 30 times. India and Prime Minister Modi, his friend, has never acknowledged his role.

On the other hand, Pakistan has nominated him for a Nobel Prize. And invested in his crypto fund. Thereby ticking both boxes of the Trump wishlist. But it is a Trumpian paradox. PM Modi had announced his open support for his candidature, an unprecedented gamble.

It paid off when Trump became President.

But did it really pay off? As the closer you get, the chances of getting hurt are higher.

This is the Trumpian paradox we are living in. So when you see him coming to your shop, hide your toffee jars.

A Year Later: Did Bangladesh Trade One Crisis For Another?



A year has passed since the Sheikh Hasina government was ousted in Bangladesh. The end of a near-permanent administration, ruled by the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's iron fist, left a power vacuum with no obvious incumbent and domestic chaos erupting across the country. Yet, within a month, an interim government was nominated to power by the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement, to tide over the crisis and pave the way for the next national referendum. Under Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus and his Council of Advisers, the country has since been taking a course distinctly different from the established trajectories of the 'Hasina past'. The implications for Dhaka are significant, as the new dispensation seeks a new identity for the country that sits at odds with its past but aligns with its priorities of the moment.

The immediate cause of Hasina's ouster had been the government's violent crackdown on the students' protests against the quota

reforms. However, public resentment had been brewing in the country for years for several reasons. Naturally, one of the first tasks of the interim government had been to restore the fractured democracy. Accordingly, it appointed the National Consensus Commission to reach an all-party consensus to draft the procedures for future governance.

The July Charter That Was To Be

The July Charter, as it has been named, was released on August 5, 2025, to mark the first anniversary of the revolution. However, it is still in the draft stage. While agreements have been reached on some of its terms, such as the revival of the caretaker government system and the formation of the Election Commission, the parties remain divided on other fronts, including the separation of powers between the Prime Minister, Head of the ruling party, and the Head of Parliament. Some of the political parties have also expressed their reservations about the draft, terming it "incomplete" and requiring

further discussions before formalisation. Moreover, the drafting process of the July Charter has not been inclusive, with the Awami League (disbanded in May 2025) and the Jatiya Party supporters of the former left out of the process.

It will be important to ensure that the July Charter is free of political prejudices, including those of the interim government, as the promised polls approach in 2026. Beyond constitutional reform, the interim government is also facing challenges of communal harmony and social inclusion.

In Bangladesh's new era, secularism is also a question that needs deliberation.

The aftermath of Hasina's ouster witnessed a reportedly significant rise in violence against the Hindus, the largest minority community in the country.

The arrest and imprisonment of the Iskon leader sparked further communal tensions, creating uncertainty about their fate under this new regime. While the interim government maintained that the

aggression had been essentially against senior Awami League members, who happened to be Hindus, and not necessarily against the faith, Yunus called for communal harmony.

Yet, in a country where the political future is uncertain, a secular party has been disbanded, and political parties with reports of religious intolerance are at the electoral forefront, the fate of the marginalised will be tested.

Rewriting Its Destiny

The regime change has not only left its imprint on domestic politics but has also shaped foreign policy.

Breaking its past mould of maintaining a diplomatic balance between India and China, Dhaka's relations have strained with New Delhi. This detriment can be attributed to various factors, namely, Hasina's continued shelter in India, the minority attacks in Bangladesh, and Dhaka's unstinted outreach to Pakistan and China, insensitive to India's strategic considerations. For the first time since its inception in

1971, Dhaka has sought active cooperation with Islamabad, which has been well reciprocated. As India's developmental projects remain halted, there is also more room for Beijing to strengthen its foothold in Bangladesh and thereby in the Bay of Bengal region. However, these strategic shifts cannot be interpreted as representative of Bangladesh's popular views, since the interim government is not an elected choice.

A year into the regime change, Bangladesh stands at a crossroads between reawakening and regression. Dhaka is in transition, with the interim government balancing internal expectations, external interests, and mounting pressures to hand over to an elected administration. The student protests that led to the political upheaval offered an opportunity for the country to reinvent itself.

However, the way forward is marked by positive initiatives that need fruition and pitfalls that must be navigated.

In the process, the

Putin and Trump Envoy Exchange 'Signals' on Ukraine in High-Stakes Kremlin Meeting

Russian President Vladimir Putin met with U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff in Moscow on Wednesday for what the Kremlin described as a "constructive" three-hour discussion centered on the war in Ukraine and the broader state of U.S.-Russia relations. According to Kremlin aide Yury Ushakov, the meeting involved a confidential exchange of "signals" between Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump, with Witkoff acting as the primary channel of communication.

While the exact content of those messages remains undisclosed, Ushakov confirmed that Ukraine was a central focus and described the overall dialogue as "very useful." "This



was a meaningful discussion. Some signals were transmitted on the Ukrainian issue, and corresponding signals were also received from President Trump,"

Trump on the conversation. Witkoff's visit comes at a tense moment in U.S.-Russia diplomacy, as Trump pressures Moscow to agree to a peace deal with Kyiv. The U.S. president has warned that failure to make progress could result in sweeping secondary tariffs—up to 100 percent—targeting Russia and its trading partners.

However, Russia has pushed back against this approach, welcoming the dialogue but rejecting threats and ultimatums.

The Kremlin has repeatedly stated it remains open to a negotiated peace, but insists any agreement must reflect on-the-ground realities and address the deeper causes of the conflict.

Netanyahu Declares Full Gaza Occupation Plan Amid Internal Rift and International Alarm



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has officially announced a plan for the full military occupation of the Gaza Strip, escalating tensions within Israel's leadership and drawing renewed international scrutiny. In a video message posted online, Netanyahu claimed the mission is to liberate Gaza from what he called the "tyranny" of Hamas. He insisted that many Gazans are

seeking Israel's help in freeing themselves from the militant group, asserting that Israeli forces would continue operations even in areas where hostages are reportedly being held. The decision, however, has deepened divisions within the Israeli government. According to reports from Israeli Army Radio, tensions between Netanyahu and Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir have reached a boiling

point. The Prime Minister's Office even went as far as telling Zamir that if he disagreed with the direction of the campaign, he should resign. The announcement follows months of unproductive negotiations in Qatar between Israel and Hamas, with mediators struggling to secure a ceasefire or hostage release agreement. As humanitarian conditions worsen in Gaza, Netanyahu's push for continued military engagement appears to be overriding diplomatic efforts. Details about Israel's long-term strategy for post-war Gaza remain vague, though a 32-page plan titled "Gaza Security and Recovery Program" has surfaced. Authored by the Israel Defence and Security Forum and the Jerusalem Centre for Security and Foreign Affairs, the proposal outlines steps for economic reconstruction, infrastructure rebuilding, and ideological reformation, including what it controversially describes as a "de-Nazification" of Hamas supporters. The plan excludes any future Palestinian sovereignty, rules out involvement by the Palestinian Authority, and rejects the role

Ukraine Targets Key Russian Facilities in Escalating Drone War

Ukraine's military has claimed a series of high-impact drone strikes deep inside Russian territory, hitting a major oil refinery, a drone airfield, and a military-linked electronics factory, as the war between the two nations intensifies.

In a statement released on Telegram, Ukraine's Unmanned Systems Forces reported successfully striking the Ryazan oil refinery, located roughly 180 kilometres from Moscow. A fire reportedly broke out at the site.

The Ukrainian forces also said they targeted the Annanefteprodukt oil storage facility in Russia's Voronezh region and the Primorsko-Akhtarsk airfield, which has been linked to long-range drone attacks on Ukraine.

Russia has yet to formally acknowledge damage to these critical infrastructure points. However, the Russian Defence Ministry stated it intercepted or destroyed 112 Ukrainian drones across eight regions and Crimea overnight. Separate regional reports noted civilian casualties from drone-related debris, including one death in Rostov, block hit.

another in Samara, and a fatality in Penza, where falling wreckage also injured two others. Ukraine's SBU intelligence service claimed responsibility for the Penza electronics facility strike, asserting that the factory is part of Russia's military-industrial supply chain. In response, Russia launched a wave of drone and missile attacks against Ukraine. Kyiv was once again a primary target, with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stating that at least 16 people were killed in recent strikes. The Ukrainian Air Force reported intercepting 45 out of 53 Russian drones launched during the same period. Eleven people were wounded in the Kharkiv region alone due to overnight drone strikes.

These reciprocal attacks follow a particularly deadly Russian missile strike on Kyiv earlier in the week, which left 31 civilians dead, including five children, and injured over 150. Rescue efforts continued in the capital as emergency workers searched through debris for survivors in the aftermath of the devastating apartment block hit.



Russia Ends Missile Treaty Commitment, Warns of Escalation as U.S. Repositions Nuclear Submarines

response to the policy change. Blaming NATO's "anti-Russian policy," Medvedev declared on social media that this development marks a "new reality" that adversaries must prepare for, and hinted at unspecified "further steps."

The announcement comes as the U.S. intensifies its posture in the face of Russian aggression.

Just days ago, President Donald Trump stated he had ordered the repositioning of two American nuclear submarines in response to Medvedev's previous remarks

about the potential for a direct war with Washington.

The Kremlin has downplayed Trump's submarine orders, with spokesperson Dmitry Peskov urging caution and restraint in nuclear rhetoric. Russia's decision reflects what Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov described months earlier as the diminishing viability of the moratorium.

He accused the U.S. of deploying weapons in disregard of previous warnings and of contributing to an increasingly hostile military environment. Lavrov had

already signaled that Moscow would likely abandon the missile ban if provoked. The move marks a definitive break from the spirit of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which originally banned land-based nuclear missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers.

Although the U.S. withdrew from the INF agreement in 2019 under Trump's first term—citing Russian violations—Moscow had, until now, upheld its side of the moratorium.

Russia has officially withdrawn from its self-imposed moratorium on deploying short- and medium-range nuclear missiles, a move that escalates global security concerns and deepens tensions with NATO and the United States.

The Russian Foreign Ministry confirmed the shift on Monday, citing the growing presence of U.S. land-based missile systems in both Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, now deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, issued a stark warning in

Israeli Minister Ignites Tensions by Praying at al-Aqsa Mosque Compound

Israel's far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir has triggered strong backlash after openly praying at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem, defying a decades-old agreement that forbids non-Muslim worship at the contested holy site. His actions, captured in widely shared images and video, show him conducting Jewish prayers at the compound, which is revered by Jews as the Temple Mount and regarded as Islam's third holiest site. The visit has sparked outrage across the

region. Jordan, which serves as custodian of the site under a longstanding status quo, condemned the act as "an unacceptable provocation."

Palestinian Authority officials accused Ben-Gvir of crossing "all red lines," while Hamas described the visit as an escalation of "ongoing aggressions" against Palestinians. Despite the backlash, the Israeli Prime Minister's Office issued a statement affirming that there

has been no change to the policy barring non-Muslim



prayer at the site. Ben-Gvir, a controversial ultra-nationalist figure who oversees Israel's police forces, was accompanied by officers as he

entered and toured the site. The Islamic Waqf, the religious authority managing the compound, reported that he was among over 1,200 Jewish visitors on Sunday morning. While this is not Ben-Gvir's first visit to the compound, local media noted it marked the first time he has openly conducted prayers there. In remarks made during the visit, Ben-Gvir referenced distressing videos of Israeli hostages released by Hamas, calling for their return and doubling down on his hardline

stance. He reiterated his demand for Israel to fully reoccupy Gaza and promote what he termed the "voluntary emigration" of Palestinians—a proposal experts warn could constitute forced displacement and potentially amount to a war crime. Ben-Gvir is currently under British sanctions for past inflammatory rhetoric and alleged incitement of violence against Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank. His latest actions at al-Aqsa have only deepened concerns over growing religious and political tensions in the region.

After Trump's 35% Tariff Spike, Canada Eyes CUSMA Renewal Over Retaliation



Despite U.S. President Donald Trump's surprise move to raise tariffs on select Canadian goods to 35 percent, experts and officials alike agree that Canada's real priority should be preserving its largely tariff-free access to the U.S. market through the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). While the

tariff hike has sparked concern, many economists note that the overall impact on Canadian exports remains relatively small, thanks to the bulk of goods still entering the U.S. duty-free under CUSMA. Trump's decision to exempt other trading partners like Mexico from immediate penalties while targeting Canada appears, to many, as a tactic to gain leverage in the upcoming CUSMA renewal process.

Though Canada can't claim this episode as a win, economists stress that the so-called "effective tariff rate" Canada faces is still lower than most of the U.S.'s

major trading partners. This reinforces the view that Prime Minister Mark Carney's government should stay focused on long-term strategy rather than short-term retaliation. Astute observers like Business Council of Canada CEO Goldy Hyder and trade expert Inu Manak suggest that Trump's actions are part of a calculated attempt to reset trade dynamics ahead of the 2026 CUSMA review. While some politicians and former advisors like Brian Clow favor retaliation in principle, there is growing consensus that unilateral moves by Canada could backfire without

broader global support. Clow noted that Canada currently stands alone, and firing back without coordination may not serve the country's best interests. Instead, pressure is mounting for the Carney government to extract concessions in sectors hit hardest by tariffs—steel, aluminum, and auto manufacturing. Carney's administration appears to be adopting a cautious, strategic posture, with Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc confirming continued dialogue with U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick.

Trump threatens to 'federalize' DC after attack on Doge staffer

US president cites youth crime in call to strip the capital of local rule, despite declining violence and local opposition

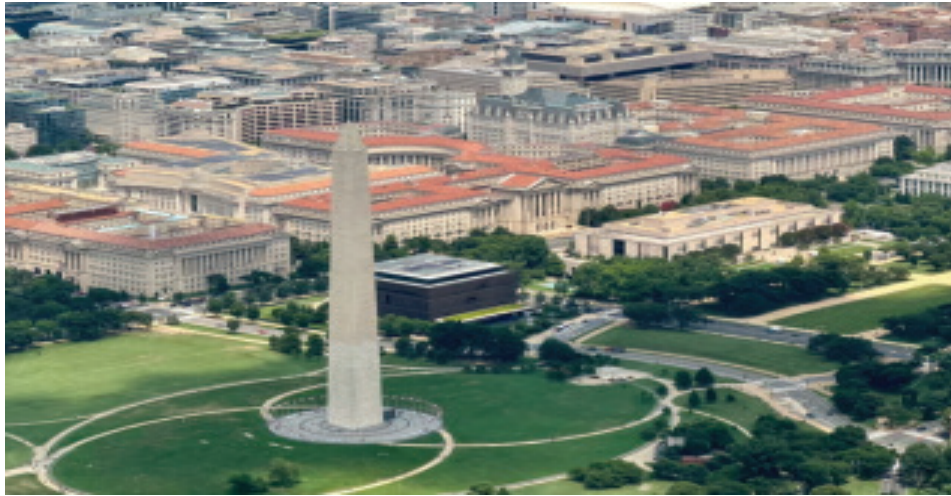
Donald Trump is threatening to strip Washington DC of its local governance and place the US capital under direct federal control, citing what he described as rampant youth crime following an alleged assault on a federal employee who worked for the so-called "department of government efficiency" (Doge).

In a post on his Truth Social platform, the president said he would "federalize" the city if local authorities failed to address crime, specifically calling for minors as young as 14 to be prosecuted as adults.

"Crime in Washington, D.C., is totally out of control," Trump wrote. "If D.C. doesn't get its act together, and quickly, we will have no choice but to take Federal control of the City, and run this City how it should be run."

The threat received backing from Elon Musk, after the billionaire described an incident in which a member of the Doge team was allegedly "severely beaten to the point of concussion" while defending a woman from assault in the capital.

"A few days ago, a gang of about a dozen young men tried to assault a woman in her car at night in DC," Musk posted on X. "A @Doge team member saw what was happening, ran to defend her and was severely beaten to the point of concussion, but he saved her. It is time to federalize DC."



The victim was identified by friends and the police as Edward Coristine, a 19-year-old known as "Big Balls", one of Doge's most recognizable staffers who joined Doge in January. He reportedly left in June, and is currently employed at the Social Security Administration. According to a police report obtained by Politico, Coristine was assaulted at approximately 3am on Sunday by about 10 juveniles near Dupont Circle. Police arrested two 15-year-olds from Maryland, a boy and a girl, as they attempted to flee the scene, and charged them with attempted carjacking. A black iPhone 16 valued at \$1,000 was reported stolen during the incident.

Trump's post, which included images of a bloodied and shirtless Coristine,

concluded: "If this continues, I am going to exert my powers, and FEDERALIZE this City. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

Washington DC currently operates under "home rule", established in 1973, which grants the city an elected mayor and council while maintaining ultimate congressional oversight. No president has attempted to revoke this arrangement since its creation.

Trump's threat could theoretically take several forms. The constitution grants Congress broad authority over the federal district, though completely suspending local governance would probably require congressional legislation. Trump could also deploy federal law enforcement officers or national guard troops under executive

authority, as he did during 2020 protests when federal forces cleared Lafayette Square outside the White House over local officials' objections. But fully stripping the city's home rule would probably face fierce Democratic opposition in Congress. Any such move would require congressional legislation that Democrats could block or attempt to challenge in federal courts. The president targeted DC's juvenile justice system specifically. "The Law in D.C. must be changed to prosecute these 'minors' as adults, and lock them up for a long time, starting at age 14," he wrote, referring to alleged attackers he described as "local thugs" and putting the word "youths" in quotation marks.

Washington DC, with a population of about 700,000, has seen violent crime decline in the first half of 2025 compared with the previous year, and 2024 marked a 30-year low, according to a pre-Trump January report by the Department of Justice. The Democratic-controlled city has frequently clashed with Trump over federal interventions and has long sought statehood, which would grant it full self-governance and congressional representation – which Republican lawmakers have opposed. The office of the DC mayor, Muriel Bowser, declined a request for comment.

The Beginning

MAD MEN

OF

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About the Author



Sharanjit Thind Singh, for more than 29 years has spent his career immersed in the world of advertising, marketing, and media. His professional journey includes working with well known Media, FMCG and Telecom Companies in India and the US.

Hailing from a small postal stamp size city in Punjab, Thind's academic background reflects his drive for excellence. After completing a Bachelor of Commerce degree, he pursued an MBA. He further strengthened his expertise with a Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication. This combination of business knowledge and media insight became the foundation of his career.

He founded and, is CEO of Nu Way Advertising in Manhattan now known as Nu Way Media Group Inc. He has served as a Commissioner of the Nassau County Human Rights Commission in New York.



The Beginning

MAD MEN OF NU WAY ADVERTISING

Sharanjit Thind Singh

The Beginning

A True Story of the iconic rise of an Indian American Advertising Agency in Manhattan, New York in early 2000

Sharanjit Thind Singh



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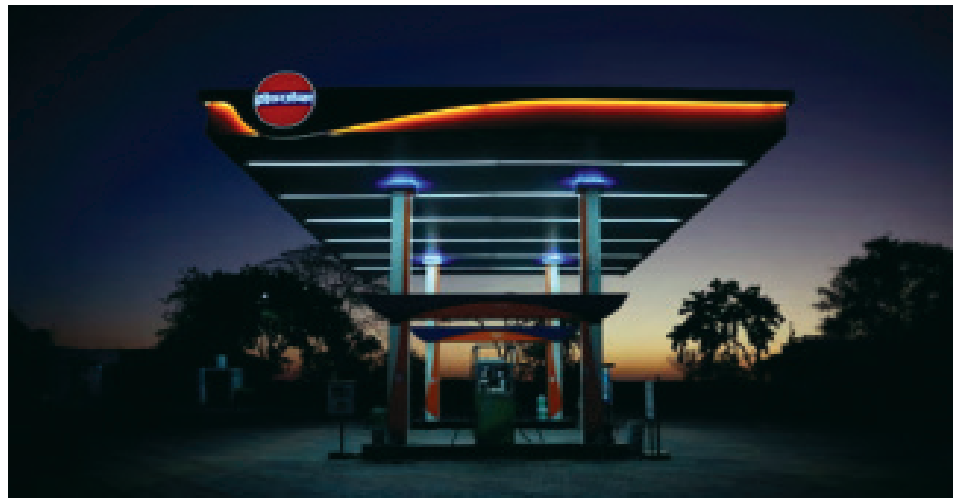
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Trump threatens 50% tariffs on India over ties to Russia and Brics bloc

White House move follows India's oil purchases from Russia and comes amid broader Trump push for trade 'reciprocity'

The White House is placing an additional 25% tariff on imports from India, bringing total tariffs up to 50%, in retaliation for the country's purchase of oil from Russia, according to an executive order signed on Wednesday morning. India has 21 days to respond to the potential tariffs before they go into effect. The tariffs will be tacked on to a 25% tariff on India Donald Trump set last week as a "penalty" for the country's trading relationship with Russia. Last week, the president wrote on social media that India had "always bought a vast majority of their military equipment from Russia, and are Russia's largest buyer of energy". "I don't care what India does with Russia. They can take their dead economies down together, for all I care," he wrote. Trump had signaled on Tuesday that he would imminently announce new tariffs, telling CNBC that the country was "fueling the war machine" against Ukraine.

India has said that it feels unjustly singled out for its trade relationship with Russia. In a statement on Wednesday, the country's ministry of



external affairs said that its imports "are based on market factors and done with the overall objective of ensuring the energy security of 1.4 billion people in India". "We reiterate that these actions are unfair, unjustified and unreasonable. India will take all actions necessary to protect its national interest," the statement read.

Previous trade talks between India and the United States collapsed over disagreements about opening up India's vast agriculture and dairy sectors. On

Thursday, India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, said he would not compromise the interests of the country's farmers even if he had to pay a heavy price for it, in his first comments since the threat of higher tariffs. Modi did not directly refer to the US tariffs or trade talks. Trump has also been critical of India's role in the Brics trading bloc formed among some of the US's trading partners and competitors, including Brazil, Russia, China and India. Trump has called the group "anti the

United States". In 2024, Indian imports into the US were estimated to be worth \$129bn (£97bn). India now faces the highest tariff rate along with Brazil, which also has 50% tariffs in response to the country's arrest of its former president Jair Bolsonaro, a Trump ally. A slate of Trump's "reciprocal" tariffs are set to go into effect this Friday, including the 50% tariff on Brazil, a 35% tariff on Canada and a 25% tariff on Mexico. In recent weeks, Trump has set his sights on ending Russia's war on Ukraine, which he had said he would end in his first 24 hours in office. Trump set a 10-day deadline for this Friday for Russia to make a peace deal with Ukraine. The US special envoy Steve Witkoff visited Moscow on Wednesday to hold talks with the Kremlin. Trump claimed "great progress was made" during the three-hour talks. When Trump was asked on Sunday what would happen if Russia does not end the war by his Friday deadline, he said: "Well, there will be sanctions, but they seem to be pretty good at avoiding sanctions."

What Happens If India Stops Buying Russian Oil? The World Could Feel The Jolt

A sudden stop would hit India's energy security, disrupt global refining, inflate shipping costs, and squeeze already tight fuel markets



In 2022, the Ukraine war didn't just redraw Europe's security map; it also rewired the global oil trade. One of the biggest shifts was in New Delhi. India went from buying almost no Russian oil to making Moscow its top supplier, cushioning itself from global price spikes and keeping pump prices stable at home. That pivot helped India secure affordable energy while much of the world battled soaring inflation. But today, the same

policy is under fresh strain. US President Donald Trump has doubled tariffs on Indian goods to 50 per cent, tying the move directly to Delhi's continued purchases of Russian crude. On top of that, the White House is weighing secondary sanctions, penalties on other countries and companies doing business with Russia, which could hit Indian refiners, shippers, and banks. What if these pressures force India to cut back,

or even stop, its Russian oil buys? The effects would go far beyond Delhi.

From Barely A Trickle To India's Biggest Oil Stream

Before the Ukraine war, Russian crude accounted for less than 2 per cent of India's imports in 2021, according to the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC). By mid-2025, that share jumped to 35-40 per cent, roughly 1.7-2 million barrels a day. As per Reuters, in June 2025, imports from Russia hit an 11-month high of 2.08 million barrels a day, making up 44 per cent of India's total crude intake. DW reports that between 2021 and 2024, India's Russian oil purchases grew nearly 19-fold, from 0.1 to 1.9 million barrels a day, as Western sanctions on Moscow created room for new buyers. Petras Katinas, an energy analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), told DW that these discounts saved India up to \$33 billion between 2022 and 2024, calling the decision part of India's long-standing foreign policy of balancing ties with Washington, Moscow, and Beijing

while prioritising "energy security and affordability." Why India Can't Just Swap Suppliers Overnight Oil is not a one-size-fits-all commodity. Refineries are configured to process specific crude grades. Russian medium-sour grades, like Urals, are well-suited for India's complex refineries, especially for making diesel, the fuel that powers trucks, trains, and farm equipment. If those supplies stopped suddenly, India would have to compete for similar barrels from the Middle East, West Africa, or the US Gulf. That would mean: This is why even a willing buyer can't simply "flip a switch" on suppliers without ripple effects at home and abroad.

Why The World Would Feel It Too

India is not just a major oil importer; it's a refining powerhouse. Some of the Russian crude it buys is turned into petrol, diesel, and jet fuel for export to Asia, Africa, and even Europe. In 2023-24, India supplied around 15 per cent of Europe's imported diesel, according to industry tracking data.

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US president cites youth crime in call to strip the capital of local rule, despite declining violence and local opposition

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"Crime in Washington, D.C., is totally out of control," Trump wrote. "If D.C. doesn't get its act together, and quickly, we will have no choice but to take Federal control of the City, and run this City how it should be run."

The threat received backing from Elon Musk, after the billionaire described an incident in which a member of the Doge team was allegedly "severely beaten to the point of concussion" while defending a woman from assault in the capital.

"A few days ago, a gang of about a dozen young men tried to assault a woman in her car at night in DC," Musk posted on X. "A @Doge team member saw what was happening, ran to defend her and was severely beaten to the point of concussion, but he saved her. It is time to federalize DC."



The victim was identified by friends and the police as Edward Coristine, a 19-year-old known as "Big Balls", one of Doge's most recognizable staffers who joined Doge in January. He reportedly left in June, and is currently employed at the Social Security Administration. According to a police report obtained by Politico, Coristine was assaulted at approximately 3am on Sunday by about 10 juveniles near Dupont Circle. Police arrested two 15-year-olds from Maryland, a boy and a girl, as they attempted to flee the scene, and charged them with attempted carjacking. A black iPhone 16 valued at \$1,000 was reported stolen during the incident.

Trump's post, which included images of a bloodied and shirtless Coristine,

concluded: "If this continues, I am going to exert my powers, and FEDERALIZE this City. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

Washington DC currently operates under "home rule", established in 1973, which grants the city an elected mayor and council while maintaining ultimate congressional oversight. No president has attempted to revoke this arrangement since its creation.

Trump's threat could theoretically take several forms. The constitution grants Congress broad authority over the federal district, though completely suspending local governance would probably require congressional legislation. Trump could also deploy federal law enforcement officers or national guard troops under executive

authority, as he did during 2020 protests when federal forces cleared Lafayette Square outside the White House over local officials' objections. But fully stripping the city's home rule would probably face fierce Democratic opposition in Congress. Any such move would require congressional legislation that Democrats could block or attempt to challenge in federal courts. The president targeted DC's juvenile justice system specifically. "The Law in D.C. must be changed to prosecute these 'minors' as adults, and lock them up for a long time, starting at age 14," he wrote, referring to alleged attackers he described as "local thugs" and putting the word "youths" in quotation marks.

Washington DC, with a population of about 700,000, has seen violent crime decline in the first half of 2025 compared with the previous year, and 2024 marked a 30-year low, according to a pre-Trump January report by the Department of Justice. The Democratic-controlled city has frequently clashed with Trump over federal interventions and has long sought statehood, which would grant it full self-governance and congressional representation – which Republican lawmakers have opposed. The office of the DC mayor, Muriel Bowser, declined a request for comment.



Russia, China are trying to seize control of the Arctic. We can't let them succeed

Should China and Russia manage to dominate the Arctic, its sea lanes, and its natural resources, we will be far less free as a country

In April, the Russian Navy completed testing a powerful new warship: a "combat icebreaker." Armed with a 76mm cannon and with room for eight anti-ship cruise missiles, the Ivan Papanin is the world's first surface warship purpose-built to fight in the frozen waters of the Arctic. Russia knows that the Northern Hemisphere is the world's next great frontier. Lucrative sea lanes are opening for commercial shipping, and new technologies have unlocked access to the abundant untapped mineral and energy resources lying under the ice. In fact, some estimate that the Arctic holds as much as 22% of the world's untapped reserves of fossil fuels. Russia, recognizing this, has launched a major military buildup in the Arctic. China, too, is rapidly growing its presence in the



region. The United States, however, is lagging behind, leaving our northern flank dangerously exposed. As the great American statesman Henry Clay pointed out long ago: our national security, and our sovereignty, hinges on our economic independence. Should China and Russia manage to dominate the Arctic, its sea lanes, and its natural resources, we would be far less free as a country. We are already dependent on China's shipbuilding and critical minerals industries, and the international scramble for the Arctic has opened the door for China to seize control of even more of the world's mineral resources — i.e. minerals we need for everything from weapons systems to advanced technologies to rebuilding our industrial base. Meanwhile, Russia has begun shipping natural gas and oil directly to China and Asia through the newly-

opened Northern Sea Route, threatening to undermine demand for our own energy exports. Our adversaries dominate the region. Russia deploys more than 30 diesel-electric icebreakers and seven nuclear-powered icebreakers, in addition to its combat icebreakers. As of 2024, it operates 32 military bases in the region and is rapidly building more. China, which doesn't even have territory in the Arctic, operates five icebreakers. By comparison, the U.S. Coast Guard, our only armed service that uses icebreakers, is still reeling from years of neglect under the Biden administration. It only operates three icebreakers right now; one of them is nearly 50 years old, and construction on the third was only completed earlier this year. While it can patrol the north from its largest base in Alaska, the service still has to rely on a Canadian base to conduct operations in the

eastern Arctic. Thankfully, President Trump is turning the tide. Under Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem's leadership, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is overseeing the largest-ever Arctic maritime investment in American history. And the president has proven that this is a top priority: his efforts to expand U.S. presence in the Eastern Arctic region, especially near Greenland, is proof of that. Already, President Trump's Big Beautiful Bill has allocated enough funds for 17 new icebreakers: \$4.3 billion for up to three new heavy Polar Security Cutters, \$3.5 billion to build new medium Arctic Security Cutters, and \$816 million for light and medium icebreaking vessels. And, to close the icebreaker gap even further, the United States signed the ICE Pact with Finland and Canada last year. It creates a shipbuilding consortium between our three nations,

allowing us to share expertise, train our domestic workforce, and begin the work to fulfill President Trump's commitment to build a grand total of 40 new icebreakers. This is the Coast Guard's effort to build a cutting-edge icebreaker fleet that can give American military and commercial vessels continued access to the Arctic region and directly compete with Russia and China. These powerful new ships will cut through the Arctic Sea ice, opening the way for America to dramatically expand its presence in the Northern Hemisphere. Every time one of these cutters launches from an American shipyard, our nation becomes that much more secure. President Trump and Secretary Noem clearly understand why all this is necessary — and needed right away. Some of the first trips Secretary Noem made after her appointment were to Alaska,

underscoring the importance of the Coast Guard presence there to America's national security. The Coast Guard Authorization Act has also been passed by both the House and the Senate. Once signed by the president, it will not only expand our historic investment in the Coast Guard but will create a Secretary of the Coast Guard which will report directly to the White House and Congress, bringing the service in lined with its fellow branches of the military and eliminating multiple layers of unnecessary and cumbersome bureaucracy.

Thanks to President Trump and Secretary Noem, the Coast Guard will be rebuilt into the finest maritime fighting force in the world. It will help secure our northern flank against our adversaries — protecting American sovereignty, security, and economic prosperity for generations to come.

Israel approves plan to take control of Gaza City amid global outcry over war

By Alexander Cornwell, Nidal al-Mughrabi and Charlotte Greenfield

JERUSALEM/CAIRO (Reuters) - Israel's security cabinet approved a plan on Friday to take control of Gaza City, a move expanding military operations in the shattered Palestinian territory despite growing criticism at home and abroad over the almost two-year-old war. Far-right allies in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition have been pushing for a total takeover of Gaza as part of his vow to eradicate Hamas militants, though the military has warned this could endanger the lives of remaining hostages held by the group. Israel, at war in Gaza since Hamas' deadly attack on southern Israel in October 2023, is planning the expanded campaign after failed attempts to mediate a ceasefire and as it faces a rising international outcry over a deepening humanitarian disaster. Netanyahu's office said in a statement the military "will prepare to take control of Gaza City while providing humanitarian aid to the civilian population outside the combat zones". While Netanyahu said on Thursday Israel intended to take military control of the entire Gaza Strip, the plan approved on Friday focused specifically on sprawling Gaza City, the territory's largest urban centre, located in its north. In a statement, Hamas called Netanyahu's moves "a blatant coup" against the negotiation process.

Israel's cabinet is expected to endorse the Gaza City plan

Israeli media have said 900,000 people now live in Gaza City, which has been the focus of major ground and air attacks. They include many of those who were forced to leave towns in the northern edge of the enclave under army evacuation orders and ground operations. Before the war, Hamas' most powerful fighting units were believed to operate in northern Gaza, including Gaza City. It is not clear if that is still the case because Israel has killed the group's top leaders and many of its commanders and militants. Asked if Israel, whose forces say they already hold about 75% of the coastal strip, would occupy all of it, Netanyahu told Fox News Channel's Bill Hemmer in an interview on Thursday: "We intend to." He said Israel did not want to keep the territory, but to establish a "se-

curity perimeter" and to hand over the territory to Arab forces to govern it. He did not elaborate on the governance arrangements or which Arab countries could be involved. Netanyahu, who has said there will be no end to the war until Hamas is completely destroyed, has come under pressure from Israelis to do whatever it takes to bring home hostages held by the militant group, though many want the war to stop. "Well, basically, I think it's a death sentence to all the hostages that are still being held there. And it's the wrong decision to do it at this time," said Danny Bukovsky, a hotelier in Tel Aviv. There are 50 hostages still held in Gaza, of whom Israeli officials believe 20 are alive. Most of those freed so far emerged as a result of diplomatic negotiations. Talks toward a ceasefire that could have seen more hostages released collapsed in July. Amjad Iraqi, senior analyst at International Crisis Group, said that Israel's government believes the solution is to "be more aggressive in carving Gaza's geography and demographics" because it has faced no real consequences despite an international outcry. "It's no wonder Israel is ready to do the same to the strip's de facto capital, even amid a spiral into famine," said Iraqi. A global hunger monitor has said a famine scenario is unfolding in densely populated Gaza, where nearly all the territory's more than 2 million people have been displaced, often repeatedly.

PHASED TAKE-OVER

Among the scenarios considered ahead of the security meeting was a phased takeover of areas in Gaza not yet under military control, a government source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Evacuation warnings could be issued to Palestinians in specific areas of Gaza, potentially giving them several weeks before the military moves in, the person added. In its statement on Friday, Netanyahu's office said the vast majority of the security cabinet believed that "the alternative plan presented in the cabinet would not achieve the defeat of Hamas nor the return of the hostages". "It just doesn't seem like there's any clear plan moving forward. So unless

there's a clear plan, we should end the war, bring the hostages home and stop so many soldiers from dying", said Tel Aviv university student Talya Saltzman. A full occupation of Gaza would reverse a 2005 decision in which Israel withdrew thousands of Jewish settlers and its forces, while retaining control over its borders, airspace and utilities. It was unclear whether Netanyahu was foreseeing a prolonged takeover or a short-term operation. In a statement, Hamas called the approval of plans to occupy Gaza City and displace its residents "a new war crime".

Israel has rejected accusations of war crimes and genocide as it pursues the military campaign. Last month, two leading Israeli rights groups accused Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. Arab countries will "only support what Palestinians agree and decide on," a Jordanian official source told Reuters, adding that security in Gaza should be handled through "le-

gitimate Palestinian institutions". Netanyahu's government has ruled out a return to Gaza of the Western-backed Palestinian Authority, which exercises limited autonomy in parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank under 1990s interim peace accords. Hamas insists any deal must lead to a permanent end to the war. Israel says the group has no intention of fulfilling promises to give up power afterwards. (Reporting by Alexander Cornwell in Jerusalem and Nidal al-Mughrabi in Cairo Additional reporting by Steven Scheer in Jerusalem, Suleiman Al-Khalidi in Amman, Doina Chiacu and Kanishka Singh in Washington and Hatem Maher in Cairo and Rami Amichay in Tel Aviv and Charlotte Greenfield in Jerusalem, Sam Tabahr in London, Christine Chen in Sydney Ahmed Elimam and Tala Ramadan in Dubai Writing by Michael Georgy Editing by Lincoln Feast, Stephen Coates, Raju Gopalakrishnan and Frances Kerry)



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China Welcomes PM Modi For SCO Summit In Tianjin: 'A Gathering Of Friendship...'

China said the Tianjin summit will be a gathering of solidarity, friendship and fruitful results, and the SCO will enter a new stage of high-quality development

China welcomes Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Tianjin, a Chinese Foreign Ministry official said. PM Modi will visit China for the SCO summit on August 31, his first trip to the neighbouring country since the violent clashes between Indian and Chinese soldiers in 2020. "China will host the SCO Summit in Tianjin from August 31 to September 1 this year... China welcomes Prime Minister Modi to China for the SCO Tianjin Summit. We believe that with the concerted effort of all parties, the Tianjin summit will be a gathering of solidarity, friendship and fruitful results, and the SCO will enter

a new stage of high-quality development featuring greater solidarity, coordination, dynamism and productivity," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Guo Jiakun. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had earlier attended the SCO ministerial meetings in June. Jaishankar had also met Xi in Beijing and briefed him on recent developments in India-China relations while emphasising the importance of continued leadership guidance in advancing bilateral ties.

India-China Relations: From Confrontation To Re-engagement

Tensions between India and China reached a historic low in May 2020

following a deadly confrontation in the Galwan Valley of eastern Ladakh—the first such violent clash between the two nations since the 1962 war. The skirmish claimed the lives of 20 Indian soldiers, with unconfirmed casualties reported on the Chinese side, triggering a prolonged period of diplomatic freeze and military standoff. After more than four years of strained ties, a diplomatic breakthrough emerged on October 23, 2024, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping met on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan. This high-level engagement signalled the beginning of a thaw in relations

between the two Asian powers. During the meeting, both leaders welcomed the agreement for complete disengagement along the contested border areas and a resolution of the issues stemming from the 2020 standoff. Prime Minister Modi emphasised the critical need to manage differences constructively and avoid actions that could undermine peace and stability along the border. Get breaking news, in-depth analysis, and expert perspectives on everything from geopolitics to diplomacy and global trends. Stay informed with the latest world news only on News18. Download the News18 App to stay updated!

Trump-Putin summit could happen as soon as next week



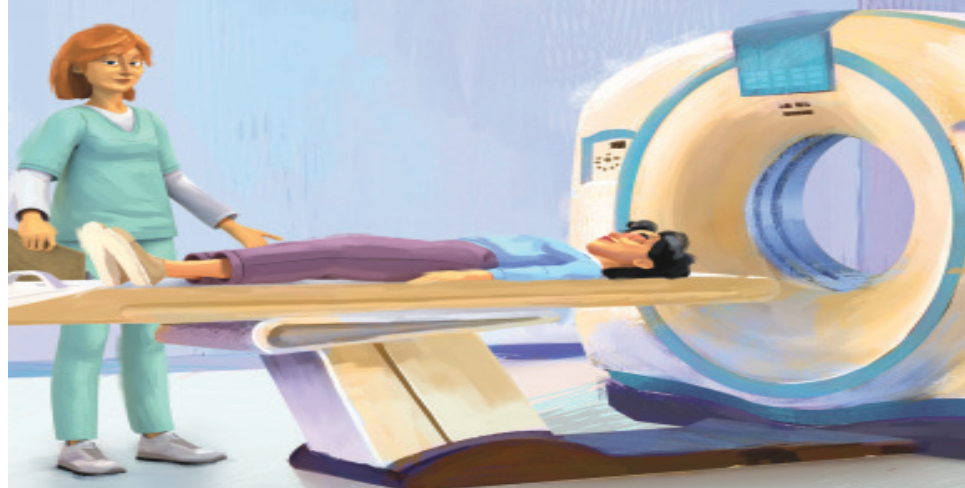
A summit between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Trump could be happening as soon as next week. Fox News can report that officials are tentatively planning for a Trump-Putin summit at the end of next week, according to a source familiar with the planning. The location is still up in the air but Hungary, Switzerland, Rome and the United Arab Emirates are in the mix, Fox News is told. The summit could still ultimately fall apart as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy informed officials of the terms of the

Ukrainian Constitution which mandate a national referendum for any territorial concessions. A meeting between Putin and Trump would be their first since Trump returned to office this year. It would be a significant milestone in the 3-year-old war, though there's no promise such a meeting would lead to the end of the fighting since Russia and Ukraine remain far apart on their demands. Trump, appearing before reporters later at the White House, didn't answer questions about a potential location for a meeting but when asked about a summit

with Putin and Zelenskyy, said "there's a very good prospect that they will meet. The president declined to predict

how close he was to reaching a deal to end the fighting, saying, "I've been disappointed before with this one."

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India's Energy Fortress: Defending Russian Oil Ties Amid Trump Tantrums, EU Hypocrisy & Pak Perils

Picture this: A bombastic American president, fresh off a controversial re-election, struts into the White House claiming he single-handedly averted a nuclear apocalypse between India and Pakistan. His cheerleader? None other than Pakistan's Army Chief General Asim Munir, who, in a June 2025 White House lunch schmooze, personally endorsed Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize. "I stopped the war," Trump boasted, crediting himself with brokering a ceasefire during the tense India-Pakistan standoff earlier that year. Sounds like a script from a high-stakes Bollywood drama, complete with shadowy alliances and ego-driven plot twists. But in the real-world theatre of 2025 geopolitics, this "bonhomie" isn't just bizarre – it's a red flag for India. As New Delhi fortifies its borders against Islamabad's perennial provocations, energy security emerges as the unsung shield in our arsenal. Russian oil, discounted and dependable, isn't a luxury; it's the fuel keeping India's economic engine roaring and its defences primed. Yet, as Trump threatens tariffs and the West lectures us on morality, India's stance is clear: We'll safeguard our interests, hypocrisy be damned. This isn't hyperbole. On August 4, 2025, India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson delivered a masterclass in diplomatic rebuttal, targeting the United States and European Union for their selective outrage over India's Russian oil imports. The statement, issued amid escalating US pressure, reminded the world that India ramped up these imports post the Ukraine conflict because traditional Middle Eastern supplies were diverted to Europe. Far from a sneaky manoeuvre, this shift was actively encouraged by the US back in 2022 to stabilise global energy markets. Remember those days? When Western leaders, including then President Joe Biden, quietly nodded as India scooped up discounted Russian crude to prevent skyrocketing prices worldwide. Fast-forward to Trump 2.0, and the tune has flipped: Now, India's purchases are labelled as "financing Russia's war," with Trump's top aide Stephen Miller declaring it "not acceptable."



Trump himself vowed to "substantially raise" tariffs on Indian goods – potentially slapping 50 per cent duties on everything from steel to textiles – unless India halts the flow.

But let's peel back the layers of this American about-face. Trump's contradictions on India and Russia are as glaring as his golden escalator rides. During his first term, Trump hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "great guy" and a "true friend," even coining the "Howdy Modi" spectacle in Houston. He praised India's economic might while pushing for stronger ties against China. Yet, on trade, he branded India the "tariff king," accusing us of "obnoxious" policies and imposing duties on our exports. Fast-forward to 2025: Despite India's strategic pivot toward the US – evidenced by the Quad alliance and billions in American arms purchases – Trump's threats expose the fragility of that "friendship." Analysts estimate that shifting away from Russian oil could hike India's import bill by \$9-11 billion annually, squeezing refiners' margins and fuelling inflation at home. Why the flip-flop? Trump's "America First" mantra, now turbocharged, sees India as a convenient scapegoat to project toughness on Russia while ignoring his own administration's past encouragements. Trump's ammo drawer is full of such self-contradictory zingers. Take his 2019 claim of mediating Kashmir: "If I can help, I would love to be a mediator," he announced alongside Pakistani PM Imran Khan, re-hyphenating India-Pakistan in a way that irked New Delhi. India

swiftly rebuffed it, insisting on bilateral talks only. Trump backed off, chickening out as usual when confronted with complexity. Or consider his Afghan withdrawal fiasco in 2021, where he negotiated with the Taliban but left chaos for Biden to inherit – another bold promise, zero delivery. On Russia, Trump's admiration for Vladimir Putin is legendary: "He's a genius," he said of the Ukraine invasion in 2022. Yet now, he's punishing India for buying Russian oil while floating ideas of a quick Ukraine peace deal that could ease sanctions on Moscow. This isn't statesmanship; it's a man chasing headlines, always ready to crow about victories but vanishing when the heat intensifies. As one Indian commentator quipped on X, Trump's foreign policy is like a Diwali firecracker – loud, flashy, and over in a puff of smoke. Europe's double standards add another layer of irony to this farce. The MEA statement didn't mince words: The EU's 2024 bilateral trade with Russia hit •67.5 billion in goods, plus •17.2 billion in services the prior year – eclipsing India's total trade with Moscow. While Brussels bans Russian coal and seaborne crude, loopholes abound. EU LNG imports from Russia surged to a record 16.5 million tonnes in 2024, up from 15.21 million in 2022, as countries like Germany and France reroute supplies via third parties. Pipelines like Nord Stream may be sabotaged, but Russian gas still flows through Ukraine and Turkey, with the EU paying billions. In June 2025 alone, the top five EU importers shelled out •1.2 billion for Rus-

sian fossil fuels and it's not just energy: Fertilisers, chemicals, iron, steel, and machinery keep pouring in, sustaining Russia's war machine. Critics in the European Parliament have lambasted this as "double standards," with Russian oil slipping through via shadow fleets and refined products from India – ironically, the same oil the West once urged us to buy. Why the hypocrisy? Europe's energy transition is a work in progress; renewables cover only 40 per cent of needs, leaving a gaping hole filled by Russian imports. The EU's 18th sanctions package in July 2025 tightened the oil price cap to \$47.6 per barrel, but enforcement is patchy. Meanwhile, they preach to India, where Russian crude accounts for 40 per cent of imports, saving us \$13 billion in 2024 alone. From January to June 2025, India imported 1.75 million barrels per day from Russia, a modest 1 per cent rise year-on-year, keeping pump prices stable and inflation in check. For a nation of 1.4 billion, where energy demand grows 7 per cent annually, this isn't indulgence – it's survival. As MEA noted, our imports ensure "predictable and affordable energy costs" for consumers, compelled by global market dynamics. Now, weave in India's security concerns, amplified by the Trump-Munir Nobel saga. The India-Pakistan conflict isn't a dusty relic; it's a simmering cauldron. In May 2025, during "Operation Sindoor," Indian forces targeted terror camps across the LoC, prompting Pakistani retaliation and global jitters. Trump inserted himself, claiming credit for

the ceasefire while Munir, the ex-ISI chief who oversaw operations during Osama bin Laden's hide-out days, nominated him for the Nobel. This isn't peace; it's PR. Pakistan's army, under Munir, still harbours anti-India militants, with cross-border incursions up 20 per cent in 2024. Trump's endorsement ignores this, potentially emboldening Islamabad. Remember his 2018 tweet blasting Pakistan for "lies and deceit" while giving them billions? By 2025, he's hosting their chief and accepting Nobel nods. Classic chicken-out: Tough talk, then cosy deals. For India, energy security dovetails with defence. Russian ties provide not just oil but S-400 systems, Sukhoi jets, and BrahMos missiles – critical against Pakistan's threats. Diversifying to US or Middle Eastern oil would cost dearly, diverting funds from military upgrades. Trump's penalties could force a pivot, but as officials affirm, India won't budge. We're investing \$500 billion in renewables by 2030, but until then, Russian crude is our bridge. The US isn't innocent either. Despite sanctions, America imports Russian uranium hexafluoride for nuclear plants, palladium for EVs, and fertilisers – vital for its industries. Trump's threats ring hollow when his own country skirts the edges. As for Europe, their "unprecedented" sanctions in July 2025 promise a faster Russian gas phase-out from 2026, but past promises have fizzled. Opinion pieces decry the West expecting India to "pay for its own Russia fiasco." In this multipolar maze, India's playbook is pragmatic: Balance Russia, the US, and Europe while prioritising self-reliance. Trump's contradictions – praising Modi one day, tariff-bombing the next – underscore why we can't bet on fleeting alliances. The Munir endorsement? A stark reminder that Pakistan's gamesmanship, backed by Trump's ego, demands vigilance. As tensions simmer, India's energy fortress stands firm – affordable, secure, and unapologetic. Targeting us is "unjustified and unreasonable," as MEA put it. Like any major economy, India will take all measures to safeguard national interests and economic security.

How a 30-year-old frozen embryo became the world's oldest baby

A medical feat has made headlines around the world as a healthy baby boy was born in the US, using an embryo that had been frozen for over three decades. Believed to be the longest-known interval between embryo freezing and birth, this event not only showcases the advances in fertility science but also opens up fresh possibilities for couples struggling with infertility. The embryo, originally frozen in 1992, along with three others, by Linda Archerd, had remained in deep freeze. The original donors undergoing in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) in 1994, didn't use all of them, and instead of discarding the remaining embryos, they chose to donate them for use by other families. For many years, those embryos stayed in frozen storage.



Then, in 2023, a different couple, Lindsey and Tim Pierce, who had difficulty conceiving on their own, chose to receive one of those donated embryos. Doctors carefully thawed the embryo and transferred it into the new mother's uterus, at Rejoice Fertility, a Christian non-profit IVF centre based in Tennessee

that facilitates embryo adoption. The embryo was implanted successfully, and months later, a healthy baby, Thaddeus Daniel Pierce, was born - now being called the world's oldest baby.

The story raises an important question: can an embryo that's been frozen for so

long truly result in a healthy child? We spoke to IVF specialists to understand the procedure and how this medical advancement takes place.

According to experts, yes. The key lies in how well the embryo was preserved over the years and the integrity of the storage conditions. "An embryo frozen 30 years ago can still result in a healthy pregnancy, thanks to advancements in cryopreservation—especially vitrification.

At this ultra-low temperature, all cellular activity comes to a standstill, which prevents any degradation or ageing," Dr. Jyoti Tripathi, Fertility Specialist at Nova IVF Fertility, Indore, explains.

There is no biological "expiry date" for embryos as

long as they are kept under ideal conditions. "Medically, embryos can be preserved for decades without risk. What matters is maintaining consistent storage conditions. In India, however, the ART (Assisted Reproductive Technology) law allows storage for up to 10 years, after which renewed consent is required," Dr. Tripathi adds.

The successful birth proves that time doesn't necessarily diminish the viability of a frozen embryo, as long as all scientific protocols are carefully followed.

Unlike egg or sperm donation, embryo donation allows the receiving mother to carry the pregnancy herself, creating a powerful emotional connection. It also presents a more affordable path for many families.



Lung cancer, mostly caused by smoking tobacco, has become the top reason for cancer-related deaths around the world, and even in India. What makes it more dangerous is that it often goes unnoticed until it reaches a serious stage. Symptoms like a long-lasting cough or chest pain usually appear late, which means treatment options become limited. In India, one in nine people

is expected to get cancer during their lifetime, and lung cancer is becoming more common every year. The number of lung cancer cases in India is rising, from about 63,700 cases in 2015 to a projected 81,200 cases in 2025. Around 100 million adults in the country smoke, which puts a huge population at risk. Every year, nearly 60,000 people in India die because of lung cancer.

India's lung cancer burden in numbers

Globally, in 2020, lung cancer was the second most common cancer and the leading cause of cancer deaths. These numbers highlight the urgent need for awareness, early detection, and strong efforts to reduce tobacco use. According to the Population Based Cancer Registries Report 2016, lung cancer cases are highest in India's northeastern states.

Data from the National Cancer Registry Programme shows that lung cancer rates among men range from 4.6 per 100,000 in Wardha to 38.8 in Aizawl. Among women, the rates range from 1 in Barshi to 37.9 in Aizawl. In comparison, the western and central parts of

India have fewer lung cancer cases. This difference may be due to the varying smoking habits in different regions. Overall, about 18.9% of India's population smokes, but the numbers differ widely — from 16.2% in Kerala to as high as 72% in Mizoram. Lung-cancer patterns in India look a lot like those in other Asian countries such as China. Fewer people here get the disease than in Western nations, yet they tend to be diagnosed about ten years earlier.

Sadly, more of them die from it: many discover the cancer only after it has spread, arrive at clinics or hospitals in poorer health, and often cannot access the newest treatments.

Smoking is a main driver. The latest Global Adult Tobacco Survey shows that 28.6% of Indians aged 15-24 smoke regularly, and the country has about 253 million tobacco users overall - one of the highest totals in the world. In India, lung cancer is more common in males than in females. In 2020, an estimated 71,788 men and 26,490 women were diagnosed with the disease. By 2025, the number of cases is expected to rise, with projections showing 81,219 cases in men and 30,109 in women.

This growing trend highlights the need for stronger prevention, early detection, and awareness efforts, especially among high-risk groups.

That 'stress' cigarette is a gamble your lungs will lose. Here's why

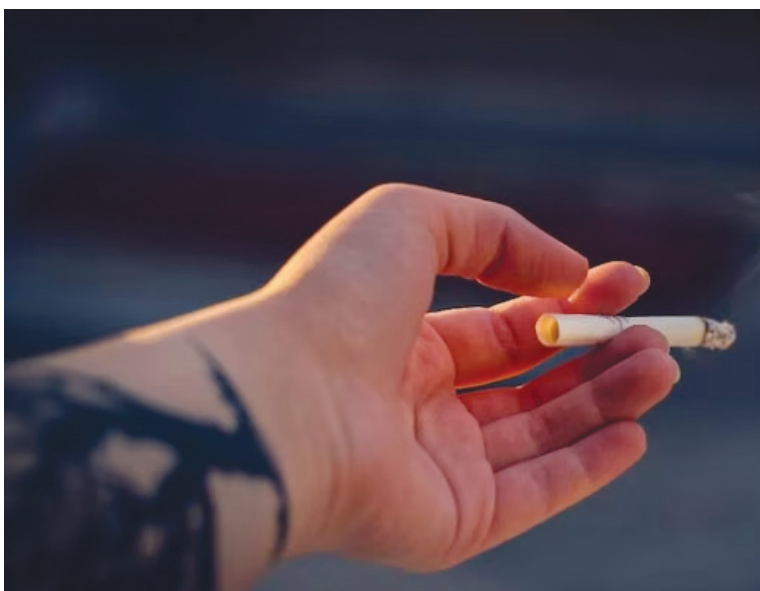
It's a scene nearly everyone has seen, or lived. A terrible day at work, tension at home, or even a mounting to-do list.

Shoulders tighten, thoughts race, and you hear it in your mind: "Just one cigarette, it'll calm me down." You step outside, light it up, and breathe in.

For a moment it feels like relief. But here's the truth: that cigarette isn't helping. It's a trap.

THE ILLUSION: SMOKING HIJACKS STRESS

Despite being marketed as



stress-busters, cigarettes exploit the brain's chemistry

and keep you in a damaging loop. First comes the nicotine rush, a puff that floods your brain with dopamine, creating brief pleasure.

Then there is the withdrawal phase wherein your body quickly returns to a nicotine-deprived state, triggering irritability, restlessness, and anxiety. And thus kicks off the cycle of stress.

You feel compelled to light up again. But be mindful, the stress relief you feel is only temporary and self-generated by the previous cigarette. It's not your job or

bills causing the stress — it's nicotine withdrawal.

SMOKING MAY END UP INCREASING STRESS

"The apparent relaxant effect of smoking only reflects the reversal of the tension and irritability that generally develops during nicotine depletion," notes.

American Psychologist, highlighting findings that smokers experience higher average stress levels than non-smokers and feel notably calmer only because each cigarette immediately relieves the withdrawal it caused.

India's alarming animal bite cases highlight urgent need for rabies control

India has seen a worrying surge in animal bite cases, especially those caused by stray dogs. Experts and authorities are raising alarms about the link between these bites and rabies, a deadly disease that can almost always be prevented with timely action.

The Rise in Animal Bite Cases

In 2024 alone, India recorded over 22 lakh (2.2 million) dog bite cases and more than 5 lakh cases involving other animals like monkeys. Reports indicate that nearly 20% of bite victims are children under the age of 15, making this a serious public health concern. The trend is especially visible in urban areas, but rural regions are also heavily affected. Some cities and states have seen dramatic



jumps in reported bites. For example, Noida witnessed a 31% increase in cases in a single year, and Ludhiana's numbers have more than doubled since 2021. Across the nation, cases have jumped by nearly 70% from 2022 to 2024. With millions of reported bites each year and the numbers still climbing, the risk of rabies exposure has sharply increased.

Why Is This Happening?

The main culprits behind human rabies are stray dogs, which account for about 96% of cases in India. Several challenges make the problem worse: Unchecked stray animal population, especially dogs. Inadequate animal birth control and vaccination pro-

grams. Lack of public awareness of how to prevent bites and seek help after exposure. Poor access in some areas to anti-rabies clinics and life-saving treatments.

The Danger of Rabies

Rabies is nearly always fatal once symptoms set in, but it is entirely preventable if treated immediately after an animal bite. On average, dozens of people die from rabies every year in India, with children and the elderly at higher risk. The real number could be higher, as not all cases get reported.

What Can Be Done?

Experts and health authorities are calling for urgent, coordinated measures: Mass dog vaccination: This is the most effective way to control rabies at its source. States like Goa have shown that targeting dog

vaccination and population management can lead to a sharp drop in human rabies cases. Stray animal population control: Animal Birth Control (ABC) programs are being expanded and are essential for long-term solutions. Better public awareness: People need to know that washing animal bite wounds with soap and seeking medical help immediately can save lives. Free and accessible anti-rabies treatment: More anti-rabies clinics are being set up, and vaccination and immune globulin are provided free through national programs like the National Rabies Control Programme (NRCP). Rapid response for bite cases: Prompt administration of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) and, in some cases, rabies immunoglobulin.

What is hepatitis D, the deadly viral disease now given a cancer tag by WHO?



dominal discomfort, dark urine or yellowing of the skin. Many people ignore these signs or confuse them with other illnesses. There isn't a separate vaccine for hepatitis D. The only way to stop it is by getting the hepatitis B vaccine, which protects against both viruses. WHO says 147 countries now offer newborn vaccinations, but testing and treatment for existing cases still lag far behind.

When it comes to the treatment of hepatitis D, medications are still evolving. However, the full benefit of reducing liver cirrhosis and cancer deaths can only be realised through urgent action to scale up and integrate hepatitis services – including vaccination, testing, harm reduction, and treatment – into national health systems.

Health experts say better awareness, early screening and wider access to treatment could save millions of lives by 2030.

For now, the key advice is simple: get vaccinated, get tested, and don't ignore liver health.

Hepatitis D is now tagged as a cancer-causing infection by the World Health Organisation. The health agency's cancer arm, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, called hepatitis D a carcinogen as the little-known virus can silently raise the risk of liver cancer, just like hepatitis B and C.

Hepatitis is a viral infection that inflames the liver. Of the five main types – A, B, C, D and E – the B, C and D strains are the most dangerous because they can stick around for years, damaging the liver slowly. WHO estimates that over 300 million people live with chronic hepa-

titis B, C, or D infections, and 1.3 million die each year from related diseases. Most don't even know they're infected until the damage is already done.

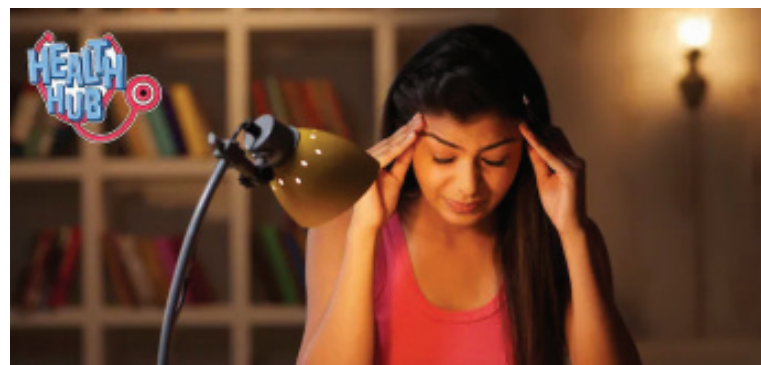
Hepatitis D is different from the others. It only infects people who already have hepatitis B, but together, the two viruses are far more harmful.

According to WHO, having both increases the risk of liver cancer two to six times compared to hepatitis B alone.

The virus spreads through infected blood, unprotected sex, unsafe injections, or occasionally from mother to child during birth.

Symptoms, if they appear, are usually vague and include fatigue, nausea, ab-

Are women more prone to headaches, and why are their symptoms often dismissed?



It often starts as a dull ache behind the eyes or a sudden throb on one side of the head. For many women, this is not just another headache, it is the onset of a migraine that may last for hours, even days, often accompanied by nausea, blinding light sensitivity, and an all-consuming fatigue. Despite the intensity of these symptoms, their complaints are frequently brushed off in clinics. Their pain, even in modern medical settings, is too often deemed "stress-related" or "emotional." Yet the science is clear: women suffer more from headaches than men. A study in The Lancet revealed that women are two to three times more likely to suffer from migraines than men after puberty. And the reason is far more complex and deeply

physiological than we've been led to believe.

HORMONES: THE SILENT AGITATORS

Neurologists have long noted a stark difference in migraine prevalence between the sexes. "Most doctors, if not all, have come to accept that estrogen, and especially its withdrawal before menstruation, is a significant factor in migraine causation," says Dr. Girish Soni, neurologist at Lilavati Hospital in Mumbai. "Migraines are infrequent in girls before puberty but become common after menarche, which strengthens this hormonal hypothesis." Dr. Bhaskar Shukla, consultant neurologist at PSRI Hospital, agrees, pointing to estrogen fluctuations as one of the strongest triggers.

Experience the World Digital Premiere of Tehran on ZEE5 Global – A Maddock Films Production starring John Abraham, streaming this Indian Independence Day weekend

Premiering on 14th August exclusively on ZEE5 Global, Tehran is a gripping geo-political spy thriller about one man who is hunted by Iran, abandoned by Israel and deserted by India

(By our staff reporter) ZEE5 Global, the world's leading streaming platform for South Asian content available globally across 190+ countries, brings viewers Maddock Films' Tehran — a taut geo-political spy thriller starring John Abraham, Manushi Chhillar, Neeru Bajwa, and Madhurima Tuli this 14th August 2025. The film is a fictionalized version inspired by true events and unfolds against the simmering global tension between Israel and Iran. Directed by Arun Gopalan, Tehran dives into the shadowy world of international espionage where one man's allegiance could tip the balance between loyalty and betrayal.

As seen in the trailer, the story draws inspiration from the 2012 bomb explosion near the Israeli Embassy in Delhi, a real-life incident that spiraled into complex diplomatic ripples. As ACP Rajeev Kumar (John Abraham) is pulled into a covert operation that spans continents, ideologies, and fractured alliances, the lines between right and wrong begin to blur. Is Rajeev India's ultimate patriot, silently shaping the nation's future from the shadows—or a rouge officer playing by his own rules?

Also featuring Neeru Bajwa,

Manushi Chhillar, and Madhurima Tuli, Tehran is far more than a globe-spanning thriller—it's a psychological and political minefield. The film doesn't just trace espionage operations — it dissects international politics, deception, and mind games.

Kaveri Das, Business Head – Hindi ZEE5, said, "At ZEE5 Global, we believe in telling stories that don't just entertain but provoke thought and reflect the pulse of our times. This Indian Independence Day, we're proud to bring viewers Tehran — a high-stakes geo-political thriller that dives deep into the murky world of espionage, patriotism, and moral conflict. It's a gripping narrative about the unsung heroes who serve from the shadows, and one man whose mission raises a powerful question: is he defending the nation — or betraying it? In partnership with Maddock Films, we're excited to present a story that challenges black-and-white definitions of loyalty and sacrifice."

Producer Dinesh Vijan adds, "Tehran focuses on what's at stake behind the headlines - the people. The film is about a man's conscience, about how even a single human life can change the

course of international relations. It's a genre we rarely do in India. But, at Maddock Films, we have always focused on storytelling with a heart and soul. And Tehran is such a story that we are sure viewers worldwide will enjoy." Director Arun Gopalan said, "Tehran, to me, is a mirror held up to a fractured world. A story about shifting loyalties, blurred identities, and the human cost hidden in the shadows of global politics. We approached it with honesty and restraint because the truth it draws from is far from fiction. Every decision these characters make carries weight; every silence, every betrayal leaves a mark. I'm thankful to John, Manushi, and the cast for stepping into this world with such courage and authenticity. More than a spy thriller, Tehran is a tense, adrenaline-charged ride that forces you to ask: whose truth do you believe?"

John Abraham said, "Tehran is a truly global film—rooted in real events but resonating far beyond borders. Playing ACP Rajeev Kumar in Tehran has been one of the most intense and layered roles of my career as he is not your conventional patriot. He's a man constantly torn between duty and conscience, and that



moral conflict is what makes this story so compelling. This film isn't about good versus evil—it's about navigating the grey. I'm proud to be part of a project that dares to explore these complexities, and I can't wait for audiences to experience it this Indian Independence Day on ZEE5. I am also thankful to ZEE5 Global for giving a platform to this film because in all honesty, Tehran is India's first international film".

Neeru Bajwa said, "Tehran is unlike anything I've done before—a gripping narrative that's as emotionally charged as it is politically complex. What drew me to this story was the strength and clarity of my character. She's someone who holds her ground and chooses integrity, even when the world around her is falling apart. It's a proud moment for me to represent a woman who is morally grounded and unafraid to stand up for what she believes in, in a story as intense and far-reaching as this. Tehran is a story that doesn't just entertain—it provokes thought, and I'm proud to

be part of a film that's bold, timely, and unapologetically real".

Tehran will premiere exclusively on ZEE5 Global on 14th August

ZEE5 is India's largest home-grown video streaming platform and the global destination for South Asian content, reaching viewers across 190+ countries. As the streaming platform of ZEE Entertainment Enterprises Ltd., a leading content and technology powerhouse, With a focus on 'Apni Bhasha, Apni Kahaniyan' (multiple languages, infinite stories), ZEE5 drives a language-first platform approach, delivering hyper-local content, language specific packs and deeply personalized experiences in seven languages, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, Malayalam, Kannada, and Marathi. With a vast library spanning Originals, Indian and international films, TV shows, kids' content, news, live TV, and bite-sized micro dramas, ZEE5 is the destination for diverse, multilingual content for Indians everywhere.



Triptii Dimri's emotional scene from Dhadak 2 goes viral, fans say she's back



A scene of actor Triptii Dimri from her latest film 'Dhadak' went viral on Wednesday. The scene featured her character Vidhi responding to a casteist remark when a man accused her of dishonouring her family. Several social media users praised Dimri's strong performance. Vidhi responded to the comment by saying, "Mujh par kyun hain ghar ki izzat? Mujhse poocha kisi ne?... Baal khule theek hain, ki baandh du? Izzat nahi jaani chahiye naa aap logo ki (Why does the honour of the house depend on me? Did anyone ask me? Is it okay if my hair is open, or should I tie it? Your honour should not be lost, right?)" When another character tries to calm her, she responds, "Agar aapne kabhi thodi himmat dikha ke baat ki hoti naa, toh aaj mere baat karne ki naubat nahi aati (If you had shown some courage and spoken up, then it wouldn't have been necessary for me to talk)."

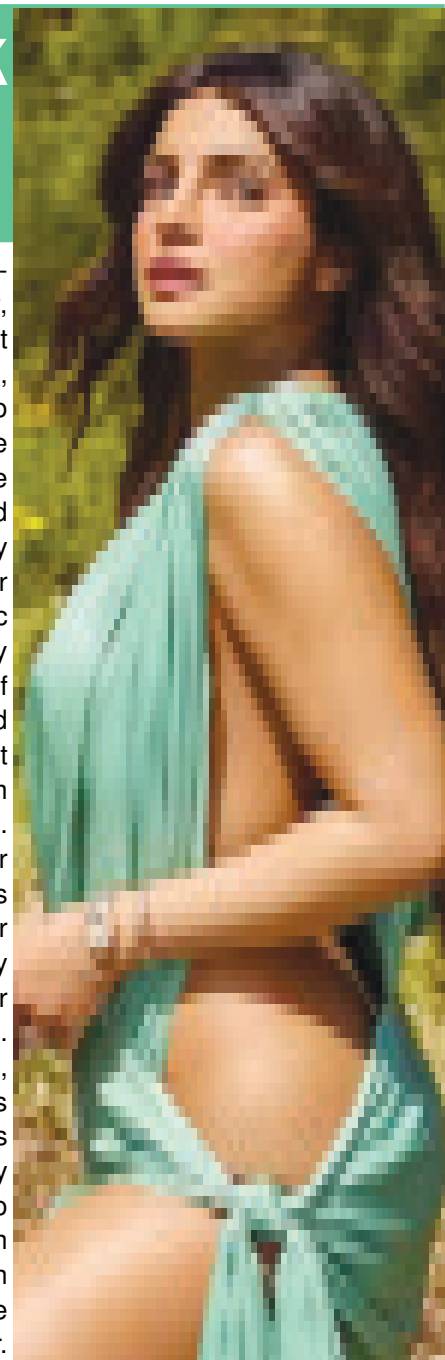
One fan commented on Instagram, "She is a good actor, finally she's got a good script to deliver (sic)". A second user wrote, "Finally she is back. I loved her in qala, Bulbul, and Laila Majnu. She is always so good (sic)." A third user commented, "The last scream said everything (sic)." Featuring Triptii Dimri and Siddhant Chaturvedi in the lead roles, 'Dhadak 2' is a socially relevant love story. It is directed by Shazia Iqbal and backed by Dharma Productions. India Today gave a 3-star rating to 'Dhadak 2'. "The Shazia Iqbal-directed film attempts to tackle caste-based atrocities with courage, but not conviction. Unlike the original 'Pariyerum Perumal', it holds back from making the kind of sharp, fearless commentary the subject demands. What could have been a powerful political statement became a diluted narrative, seemingly softened to dodge censorship or controversy. The re-dubbed climax dialogues only add to the unease," read the review. The film clashed with Ajay Devgn's 'Son of Sardaar 2' in theatres on August 1.

Priyanka Chopra Eyes Bollywood Comeback with Bhansali's Love & War, Says Insider

Priyanka Chopra may be gearing up for a fiery return to Bollywood, and if reports are to be believed, it could be with none other than Sanjay Leela Bhansali. The global star, who has stayed away from Hindi cinema since her last appearance in *The Sky Is Pink* (2019), might be planning a grand re-entry—possibly with a dazzling dance number in Bhansali's upcoming period epic *Love & War*. On Friday, fans were quick to take notice when Priyanka shared a nostalgic Instagram post dedicated to her iconic

performance in *Ram Chahe Leela* from *Goliyon Ki Raas Leela Ram-Leela*. With a lengthy caption praising Bhansali's creative brilliance and the unforgettable choreography by Vishnu Deva, the post set off a wave of speculation. Many questioned whether the tribute was simply sentimental or a subtle hint at something brewing behind the scenes. Now, according to a source speaking to *Hindustan Times*, the speculation may hold weight. While nothing has been officially confirmed, insiders suggest

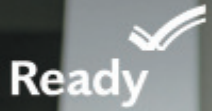
Priyanka is indeed in talks for a high-voltage appearance in *Love & War*, potentially recreating the magic of her past collaborations with Bhansali. If finalized, it would mark her long-awaited return to Hindi cinema and potentially one of the biggest Bollywood moments of 2026. *Love & War* is currently under production and stars Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, and Vicky Kaushal. Described as a lavish period war drama, the film is being crafted on an epic scale, with Bhansali reportedly choreographing a massive face-off between Ranbir and Vicky that could be one of Indian cinema's most elaborate action sequences. The film is set for release on March 20, 2026. While Bhansali's film could mark her return to Bollywood, Priyanka is already attached to another major Indian project: *SSMB29*, a highly anticipated collaboration with director SS Rajamouli and actor Mahesh Babu. Also featuring Prithviraj Sukumaran, the film is still in early stages and is expected to release in 2027. Whether it's through an explosive item number or a key role, Priyanka Chopra's homecoming to Bollywood seems closer than ever. With *Love & War* on the horizon, fans may soon see the desi girl reclaim her place on the big screen in signature Bhansali grandeur.



Parineeta trailer: Vidya Balan-starrer restored in 8K ahead of re-release

The makers of the film 'Parineeta' surprised fans by re-releasing a new trailer for the film. This time, it has been restored in 8K to elevate its cinematic appeal. The new trailer came ahead of the film's re-release in theatres after 20 years since it first hit theatres. 'Parineeta' marked actor Vidya Balan's debut in the Indian film industry. It also featured Saif Ali Khan and Sanjay Dutt in pivotal roles. Even after two decades, the trailer retains the original charm of the film with its music, powerful performances and strong narrative. In a statement, Balan earlier spoke about

the film's hit song, 'Piyu Bole'. She said, "I remember listening to 'Piyu Bole' for the first time; even then, I knew it was something special. There was a softness to it, a kind of innocence that I guess mirrored how I was feeling at the time - new, unsure, and quietly hopeful." The actor shared her thoughts on the trailer and said, "Watching the trailer now, that melody brought back memories...shooting the scenes with (Dada) Pradeep Da, screaming instructions from behind the monitor and how he'd act out moments and expect us to follow."



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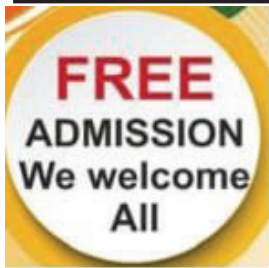
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