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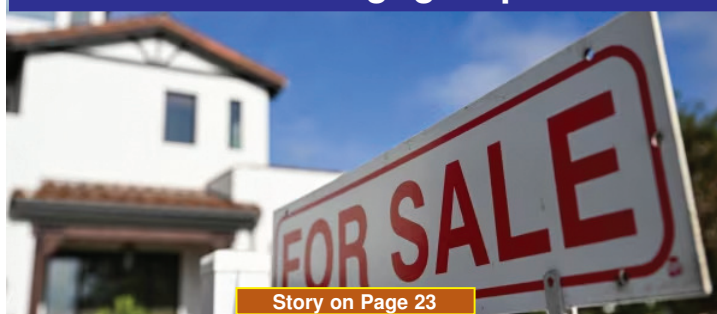
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“Americans4Hindus Week” in D.C.

(BY PRAKASH MSWAMY)

A National Call for Political Engagement and Representation of American Hindus Americans4Hindus (A4H), a national organization committed to political empowerment and representation of Hindu Americans, successfully hosted Americans4Hindus Week in Washington, D.C. from Nov 5–9, 2025. The week included a National Summit, Leadership Retreat, and Multi-Community Engagement Roundtables designed to elevate the voice of Hindu Americans in the American political landscape.

Delegates, presidents, trustees, and Karmayogis from 18 State Chapters traveled from across the United States to participate. Capitol Shutdown Becomes a Symbolic Statement of Resilience. Due to an unexpected shutdown at the U.S. Capitol, Americans4Hindus lost its pre-booked meeting room inside the Capitol. Rather than canceling or postponing, delegates gathered directly in front of the Capitol at the official Press Podium, delivering a united message to the nation.

“American Hindus are ready to participate and contribute to the political arena and governance—just as we have contributed to IT, medicine, business, education, and other leading sectors. We are prepared to participate from school boards to the Presidency, empowering democracy with our Hindu values. At present, our democracy seems to be in doldrums.” Says Dr. Romesh Japra, Founder & Chairman, Americans4Hindus. The press event highlighted that Hindu Americans are the highest per-capita income-earning community in the U.S., with decades of contributions to science, technology, health care entrepreneurship, and education—yet remain significantly underrepresented in government and public policy. Congressional Engagement and Policy Advocacy. In the afternoon session, Congressman Suhas Subramanyam addressed the delegates. He reinforced the importance of political engagement and encouraged Hindu Americans to take ownership of civic participation.



“If we want representation that respects our community, we must show up, organize, and lead.” A special strategic meeting was held to unite a broad coalition of Indian American associations across the nation—cultural, religious, social, professional, business, economic, political, and educational groups. This initiative was coordinated by Dr. Suvas Desai of Kentucky, with the goal of consolidating and amplifying the collective influence of the Indian diaspora in public policy and civic life. Delegates paid tribute to the late Krishna

Srinivasa, a visionary who spent four decades inspiring Hindu and Indian Americans to engage politically.

His life’s work planted seeds that are now growing through Americans4Hindus. Leadership Retreat & Strategic Roadmap. A transformative Leadership Retreat was held at the Art of Living Center in Washington, D.C. Participants brainstormed bold ideas and committed to scaling major national initiatives, including: Hindu Rajneeti Academy, Hindu Voter Guide, Hindu–Buddhist–Sikh–Jain Congressional Caucus (HBSJ



Caucus) Alliance Wings (women, youth, professional, business, interfaith, etc.) Raks?hak (Protection) Wing for Civil Rights Advocacy. Delegates pledged to invest their time, talent, treasure, and technology to advance these initiatives nationwide. •Launch of the National Hindu-Jewish Coalition of America (HJCA). Another milestone during A4H Week was the creation of the National Hindu-Jewish Coalition of America (HJCA) — a united platform for interfaith cooperation and shared democratic values. The coalition is being coordinated

by Nissim Reuben, who will serve as the organization’s inaugural Executive Director. Leaders from both communities will participate in policy, advocacy, and cultural initiatives promoting pluralism, civil liberties, and mutual support. Americans4Hindus is an independent, non-partisan, national grassroots organization dedicated to political education, empowerment, and representation of Hindu Americans. A4H is registered as a Super PAC, Hybrid PAC, and Multi-Candidate PAC with the Federal Election Commission.

‘US Doesn’t Have Enough Talent’: Trump Defends H-1B Visa Plan After Fee Hike

(By Our Staff Reporter) : US President Donald Trump appears to have softened his stance on his administration’s aggressive immigration reforms, saying America needs to bring in foreign talent for certain fields. The Republican leader acknowledged that long-term unemployed Americans cannot be tasked with complex roles in sensitive sectors like defence without extensive training, and the US needs skilled foreign nationals to fill such roles. Trump was speaking to Fox News’ Laura Ingraham when he was asked if his administration planned to deprioritise H-1B visas. He replied, “You do have to bring in talent.” When the host countered, “We have plenty of talent,” Trump said, “No, you don’t.” “You don’t have certain talents... And people have to learn, you can’t take people off an unemployment line and say, I’m going to put you into a

factory. We’re going to make missiles,” he said. Indian Trump, through a proclamation,



workers received over 70 per cent of the total approved H-1B visas in 2024, primarily due to a huge backlog in approvals and a high number of skilled immigrants from India. Trump’s Crackdown On The H-1B Visa Programme. The American President’s remarks came amid his administration’s criticism of the H-1B visa programme amid a wide-ranging immigration

crackdown. In September, Trump, through a proclamation, imposed a hefty fee of \$100,000 on new H-1B visa applications. Last week, the US Department of Labour (DOL) also launched at least 175 investigations into potential abuses within the H-1B visa programme. The initiative, dubbed ‘Project Firewall’, was launched to target companies allegedly exploiting the visa system, which allows US firms to hire

foreign workers in specialty occupations such as information technology, engineering, and healthcare. In October, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis announced that he was directing the state’s Board of Governors to end the use of H-1B visas across state universities, saying that positions currently held by visa holders should be filled by Florida residents. “Why are we bringing people in to assess our accreditation on an H-1B visa? We can’t do that with our own people?” DeSantis said, adding that the practice amounts to “cheap labour” and calling on university leaders to reassess hiring practices. Days later, the White House reiterated that President Donald Trump’s priority in reforming the H-1B visa programme is to put “American workers first” and vowed to fight lawsuits filed against the administration’s crackdown.

Man Charged With Killing Wife In UK Ran Shop In India Before Disappearing

Harshita Brella was found strangled and hidden in the boot of a car in Ilford, East London, on November 14, 2024.

(By Our Staff Reporter) : UK police have travelled to India as part of their ongoing search for Pankaj Lamba, the man accused of killing his wife, Harshita Brella, in the UK last year. He was seen running a shop in Delhi earlier this year, as per reports. Brella, 24, was found strangled and hidden in the boot of a car in Ilford, East London, on November 14, 2024. Investigators believe she was murdered days earlier, on 10 November, in Corby, Northamptonshire. Lamba fled to India soon after the crime and remains missing. The couple, both from Delhi, moved to the UK earlier that year. In March earlier this year, Northamptonshire Police charged Lamba with murder, rape, sexual assault and forceful behaviour, the BBC reported. Detectives travelled to India in July to meet Harshita Brella's family and return her belongings. According to ITV News, Lamba was seen running a snack and vegetable store near Delhi, close to his childhood home. He



Image on Left: Posted On Instagram By @harry.makovers, Right: Northampton Police

reportedly kept his face covered and was often seen with a woman and a young child. His former teacher, Sunil Saini, said he last saw Lamba in April when the store suddenly shut down. "He contacted me again in February or March. Before leaving town, he came to meet me and mentioned

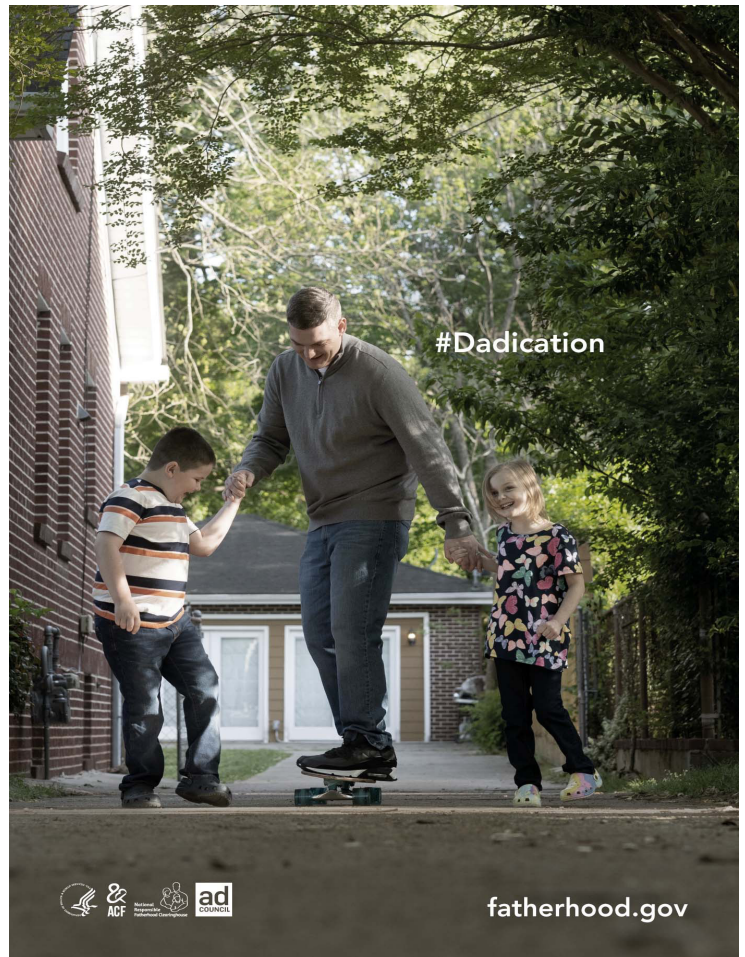
that he had some items from a restaurant," said Saini. "He said, 'If you're planning to open a restaurant, you can use them or if not, you can try to sell them.' This conversation took place around the 10th or 11th of April this year." The shop has since turned into an egg store, and locals believe

Lamba left the area when police began closing in. "Why has her killer not been caught yet?" Brella's mother, Sudesh Kumari, told the BBC. "Neither the UK government nor the Indian government are doing anything. I want justice for my daughter. Only then will I find peace."

Her sister Sonia Dabas says the family feels ignored by both governments. "We are very disappointed with the UK police. Maybe because we are not citizens of the UK, that's why they are not serious about this case." Weeks before her murder, Harshita Brella reported domestic abuse by her husband. Police arrested Lamba but released him on bail with restrictions that expired a month before her death. "That's when Pankaj figured out that the UK police are not really serious about this case, and he felt he could get away with murder," Dabas said. The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) is investigating four Northamptonshire Police officers over how they handled Brella's abuse complaint. The IOPC says its report has been completed and shared with the force, which has until mid-November to respond.

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Teen gets 65-year sentence in DUI crash that killed 6 members of Georgia family

The crash happened the day after Christmas 2023, killing almost everyone inside a minivan after it was hit head-on by an intoxicated driver.

(By Our Staff Reporter) : driver of the Odyssey tried to avoid the Silverado, but Resecker collided into the front part of the Odyssey. The Tuesday for the deadly December 2023 crash that killed six members of the same family. The Texas Department of Public Safety said the deadly wreck happened when 18-year-old Luke Resecker was driving a Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck and swerved into oncoming traffic, where he collided head-on with a Honda Odyssey. Everyone inside the Odyssey was from Alpharetta, Georgia, other than the driver, who was a cousin to the family. The crash happened a day after Christmas on U.S. 67 just south of Forth Worth, when investigators said Resceker, who was high under the influence of marijuana, tried to pass another vehicle in a no-passing zone and veered into the northbound lanes. The

occupants inside the vehicle were identified as Naveena Potabathula, 36, Nageswararao Ponnada, 64, Sitamahalakshmi Ponnada, 60, Kruthik Potabathula, 10, and Nishidha Potabathula, 9, all from Alpharetta, Georgia. Rushil Barri, who was driving the Honda minivan, was also killed in the crash. Resecker, who recently turned 19, pleaded not guilty to his charges on Oct. 21 but was convicted of all 14 charges on Oct. 27. Those charges include aggravated assault with a deadly weapon causing serious bodily injury, six counts of driving while intoxicated, six counts of manslaughter, and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. The maximum sentence Resecker faced for



his charges was more than 125 years in prison. A judge sentenced him to serve 65 years in prison. Alpharetta resident and 26-year-old Lokesh Potabathula was the only one who survived the crash but underwent several surgeries. He suffered a broken arm and ankles, as well as injuries to his neck and spine, which may result in him not walking again. His wife, two young children, father-in-law, mother-in-law and cousin were all killed

Former AOC staffer running for Pelosi's seat promises to root out corruption – and Trump's ballroom

(By Our Staff Reporter) : corruption of the billionaire class". "There's going to have to be this moment of reckoning in the whole country after this Trump administration where we actually call out everything that just happened," he said in an interview previewing the proposal, first shared with the Guardian. "We need to teach the history about how we got there and how we don't get there again." Chakrabarti, who previously served as the chief of staff to congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, is among the Democrats vying to represent the deep-blue district in her long-held San Francisco seat – says he would put it on display for every American to see. As part of his anti-corruption agenda, Chakrabarti says he would introduce legislation to turn Donald Trump's gilded White House ballroom into the "Smithsonian Museum on Corruption and Authoritarianism". Looking ahead to a post-Trump Washington, Chakrabarti envisions filling the 90,000 sq ft structure, to be built in place of the now-demolished East Wing, with exhibits dedicated to the "modern dangers posed by the current wannabe dictator, the ongoing threat of authoritarianism, assaults on the rule of law and the pervasive

re-election. Since launching his campaign in February, initially as a challenge to the 85-year-old Pelosi, Chakrabarti has positioned himself as a progressive disruptor, aiming to tap into the bubbling discontent

Valley experience and tech fluency, he says he would be well-equipped as a member of Congress to hold powerful tech leaders accountable, particularly those with business before the government. "I used to work as a programmer and so I actually have knowledge here," he said. "That means when a tech CEO comes in front of me at a congressional hearing and they try to bullshit me, I'll call their BS because I know that shit."



while the Trump administration's second-term actions have shocked ethics watchdogs, Chakrabarti argues that corruption in Washington, or the appearance of it, is a systemic problem facing both parties. Americans have long believed that there is too much money in politics and that major political donors and special

interests have too much power and influence over their elected officials. In surveys, Americans have pointed to government corruption as the biggest problem facing the US political system and named it as a major threat to democracy. "When you have a situation where people believe their politicians are corrupt, people believe the institutions are corrupt and there's a complete failure of faith in our institutions, I think that is what allows someone like Donald Trump to get elected, saying he's going to 'drain the swamp'," Chakrabarti said. "And so I think we have to reclaim the Democratic party as being a party that stands against corruption, especially in the face of a president who is probably the most corrupt president in our history, and certainly in my lifetime." The president's \$300m ballroom is, in Chakrabarti's view, just one symbol of the "rampant corruption" and abuse of power that has marked Trump's return to the White House.

American Punjabi Society Hosts Curtain Raiser, Media Briefing, and Global Punjabi Ratan Award Announcement for Annual Gala 2025



(By Our Staff Reporter) : Hicksville, NY - November 10, 2025: The American Punjabi Society (APS) hosted a successful Curtain Raiser and Media Briefing at the Pearl, Hicksville, officially announcing preparations for the APS Annual Gala 2025 to be held on December 10th at Pearl Banquet Hall.

Speakers & Presentations

Varinder P. S. Sikka, General Secretary, welcomed community leaders and media, sharing how APS began as an initiative between himself and Mr. Gary S. Sikka, later established under the leadership of seven Founder Directors: President Gary S. Sikka, Senior Vice President Mohinder Singh Taneja, General Secretary Varinder P.S. Sikka, Vice Presidents Ajayvir S. Sondhi, Paul S. Bindra, R.P.S. Narang, and Jaspal S. Arora.

Mr. Sunil Hali, Publisher of The Indian Eye, spoke about Sikhism and the values of unity, compassion, and service that define community life.

Pradeep Tandon, Director of Media & Public Relations, started the presentation "APS - Celebrating Culture, Service & Community." He shared: "APS was founded with a simple but powerful purpose - to unite the Punjabi community under the spirit of service and pride. Over the years, APS has become a bridge between generations, blending culture with compassion. We take pride in

celebrating our heritage while contributing to the welfare of our local and global communities. This evening is about celebrating community, culture, and compassion - the values that define APS".

Vice President Ajayvir S. Sondhi explained the structure of APS Councils, while Navneet Sikka Sondhi, Chair - Women's Council, highlighted the organization's community engagement and women-led initiatives.

Senior Vice President Mohinder Singh Taneja emphasized APS's ongoing collaboration with Police Commissioner Pat Ryder to promote law-enforcement awareness, safety education, and community outreach.

APS Achievements and Introduction of the Global Punjabi Ratan Award

President Gary S. Sikka outlined APS achievements across 2023-2025, including Vaisakhi celebrations, cancer awareness programs, blood donation camps, medical lectures, APS Picnics, and the Bermuda Cruise.

In recognition of APS's impactful Health Awareness Programs, NYC Mayor Eric Adams honored President Gary S. Sikka with the prestigious 'Health Achiever of New York' Award on June 9, 2025, at Gracie Mansion.

President Gary Sikka announced two global prestigious annual honors: "Punjabi Ratan", known as "The Jewel of

Punjab," which recognizes exceptional leadership, philanthropy, and service; and "Punjabi Virasat", the "Heritage Award", honoring those who preserve Punjabi culture, values, and global identity.

The Punjabi Ratan Award - meaning 'The Jewel of the Punjabi Community' - stands as APS's highest honor. It will be presented annually to an individual who embodies leadership, generosity, and an unwavering commitment to service. This award represents the true essence of being Punjabi - courage, compassion, humility, and community spirit. It is not merely a medal, but a symbol of gratitude from APS to those whose words, actions, and contributions inspire us all.

President Gary S. Sikka stated: "APS is not just an organization - it is a family bound by culture and service. Punjabi Ratan and Punjabi Virasat are honors that recognize the best of who we are. Our future lies in unity, and by bringing Indian-American associations together under one umbrella, we create strength, voice, and impact for all."

Special Guests at the APS Annual Gala

The Gala will be elevated by the presence of two extraordinary personalities who embody Punjabi pride on the world stage.

Neeru Bajwa, the international icon of Punjabi cinema, has carried Punjabi culture to global audiences through her

exceptional talent, grace, and artistic achievements. Her journey in film continues to inspire millions across the diaspora, making her presence a moment of pride for the wider community.

Joining her is **Miss Pooja**, one of the most beloved voices of Punjabi folk music. Her music carries the rhythm, soul, and heartbeat of Punjab-transcending borders, generations, and cultures. She remains a cultural ambassador whose songs unite Punjabis across the world. Together, these two cultural powerhouses bring prestige, warmth, and artistic depth to the

Press & Media Present

The Curtain Raiser was covered by leading Indian-American media representatives, including: Sunil Hali (The Indian Eye), Radio Zindagi, Nick Grasso (Newsday), Rajeev Bhambri (The New India Abroad), Sunil Tristar (IndiaLife TV), TV Asia, ITV Gold, Prof. Indrajit Saluja (The Indian Panorama), Jay Jasbir Singh (Hum Hindustani), Deepak Dhiman (Jus TV), Pardeep Gill (Global Punjab), Munish Byala (5aab TV), Neela Pandya (The Indian Eye), Preet (Preetnama), Varinder Bhalla (Bollywood Insider), Kripa Ranjan Prasad (ITV Gold), and Sridhar Chillara (Mana TV, TV24).

Vice President Paul S. Bindra thanked the press for their coverage and continued support of APS initiatives.

Delhi 10/11 Blast: Grief Pours In From Across World, UK And US Issue Advisories

(News Agency) Leaders across the globe expressed grief and shock after at least nine people were killed and several others injured in a car blast near the Red Fort in New Delhi. Several nations also issued security advisories to their citizens residing in India, asking them to exercise caution and avoid crowded areas.

The United States

The US Embassy in India took to X to condole the loss of life in the explosion and said, "Our hearts are with those affected by the terrible explosion in New Delhi. We continue to closely monitor the situation. Our sincere condolences to the families who lost their loved ones. Praying for the speedy recovery of those injured." The US Embassy also issued a security alert for its citizens living in India after a blast took place near Delhi's iconic Red Fort on Monday evening. "On November 10, 2025, a car exploded near the Lal Quila (Red Fort) metro station in central Delhi, India, with local media reporting multiple casualties. While the cause of the explosion is unknown at this time, the Government of India has placed several Indian states on high alert," it said in a statement. In the list of actions to take, the US Embassy asked its citizens to "avoid the areas surrounding the Red Fort and Chandni Chowk in Delhi and crowds; monitor local media for updates; be aware of surroundings; stay alert in



locations frequented by tourists."

The United Kingdom

Lindy Cameron, British High Commissioner to India, also expressed grief over the loss of life in the blast and said, "My thoughts are with all those affected by the explosion near the Red Fort in New Delhi today." She also shared an updated travel advisory and said, "If you are in the immediate area, please follow the advice of the local authorities."

Argentina

Mariano Caucino, Argentina's Ambassador to India, in a post on X, said, "On behalf of the people and government of Argentina, we convey our condolences to those who lost loved ones as a consequence of the Red Fort blast. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the deceased, and we wish a complete

and swift recovery to all those injured."

France

French Ambassador Thierry Mathou also took to X and said, "On behalf of the French people and government, I extend our deepest condolences to those who lost loved ones in the Red Fort blast. Our thoughts are with the families of the victims, and we wish a full and complete recovery to all those injured."

Sri Lanka

The High Commission of Sri Lanka said in a post on X, "The High Commission of Sri Lanka conveys its deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the tragic explosion in Delhi this evening and wishes a speedy recovery to the injured. Sri Lanka stands in solidarity with the people and government of India."

Morocco

The Embassy of Morocco said on X, "My colleagues join in expressing our most sincere condolences and deepest sympathy to the families who lost their loved ones following the Red Fort metro station blast. May the departed souls rest in peace. Our wishes also for prompt recovery to the injured."

Australia

Australia's High Commissioner to India, Philip Green, wrote on X, "Our deepest condolences go out to all those affected by the incident this evening near Delhi's Red Fort. Our thoughts are with the families who have lost loved ones, and we wish for the speedy recovery of the injured."

Iran

The Iranian Embassy in India also condoled the loss of lives, extending condolences to the government and the people of

India. "The Embassy also conveys its heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved families of the victims and wishes patience and comfort for them, as well as a speedy recovery for those injured in this tragic incident," it said in a statement.

The Blast

A car explosion near the historic Red Fort in Delhi on Monday killed nine people and injured at least 20 others. The blast, which triggered a fire that damaged several vehicles parked nearby, took place near gate no. 1 of the Red Fort metro station, the fire services said. The cause is being investigated, but probe agencies said it was a terror blast. New Delhi international airport, metro stations and government buildings were placed on a high security alert after the explosion, the government said. Images from the scene showed some shattered windowpanes and mangled pieces of vehicles, while plumes of fire billowed from the burning cars. Home Minister Amit Shah told reporters that a Hyundai i20 car exploded near a traffic signal close to the Red Fort. He said CCTV footage from cameras in the area will form part of the investigation. "We are exploring all possibilities and will conduct a thorough investigation, taking all possibilities into account," Shah said. "All options will be investigated immediately, and we will present the results to the public."

Indian-Mexican Man, Wife Smuggled People Into US From Several Countries: Cops

(News Agency) An Indian national, his wife, his organisation that smuggled people into the US from across continents along with at least 16 companies have been sanctioned by the US federal authorities. Officials claimed that Vikrant Bhardwaj and his Cancun, Mexico-based transnational criminal organisation Bhardwaj Human Smuggling Organisation (HSO) blended various transportation methods to facilitate the travel — by air and sea — of undocumented migrants from countries that pose national security concerns to the United States utilising its own yachts and marinas. Bhardwaj, his HSO, three other individuals, and 16 companies that have facilitated

and profited from the criminal activities have been sanctioned by the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). The transnational criminal organisation (TCO) smuggled thousands of illegal people from Europe, the Middle East, South America, and Asia into the United States. In addition to human smuggling, the criminal organisation is also involved in drug trafficking, bribery, and money laundering. Bhardwaj is a dual Indian-Mexican national and the leader of the Bhardwaj HSO. A self-identified founder and chief executive officer of several companies in Mexico, India, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bhardwaj collected and laundered

illicit money through his marinas and various businesses. He has been able to evade law enforcement authorities while continuing to profit from human smuggling and drug trafficking, the US Department of Treasury said in a statement Thursday. Bhardwaj's wife Indu Rani is also a dual Indian-Mexican national who is involved in her husband's financial operations and serves as a co-shareholder of several companies in India and Mexico. She is being designated for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Bhardwaj. In addition to exposing key individuals of the Bhardwaj HSO, OFAC designated India-based real estate company Veena

Shivani Estates Private Limited for being owned or controlled by, or having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Bhardwaj and Rani. The OFAC also designated eight companies based in Mexico, India, and the UAE for their roles in the scheme. These include a restaurant and bar in India Michigantap Hospitality and three companies engaged in real estate activities in India, and the UAE: VVN Buildcon, Bhavishya Realcon and VVN Real Estate. The Treasury Department is taking action to crack down on human smugglers at the direction of Secretary Scott Bessent and President Donald Trump, Under Secretary for Terrorism and

Financial Intelligence John Hurley said. "Today's action, in collaboration with our law enforcement partners, disrupts this network's ability to smuggle illegal aliens into the United States. The Trump Administration will continue to target and dismantle terrorist transnational criminal organisations to protect the American people," Hurley said. The Treasury Department described the Bhardwaj HSO as a "sophisticated" organisation that has blended various transportation methods to facilitate the travel — by air and sea — of undocumented migrants from countries that pose national security concerns to the United States.

The Politics of Anarchy

Socialists regard disorder as a means to an end: government control

Anarchists detonated a bomb in 1920 at J.P. Morgan & Co.'s headquarters at 23 Wall St., killing 38 and wounding more than 100. Scars from that bombing are still visible today. So are anarchists. So the little girl said in "Poltergeist II," "They're back."

Will new socialist New York City mayor Zohran Mamdani lead to disorder? Free party buses and no cops! Here's a hint: He tweeted in 2020, "Taxation isn't theft. Capitalism is." How about a 100% tax rate, comrade?

Anarchy is in the air. Alex Soros celebrated the New York mayoral result by tweeting, "The American dream continues!" His father's Open Society Foundations have a history of funding anarchy-producing criminal-justice reforms and anti police movements. Some American dreams.

Why anarchy and destruction of social order? Always ask: Who benefits? The breaking down of society is a means to an end—the long game of political control. Citizens scream, "Save me!" This isn't new. The Reichstag fire. Food shortages driving a Bolshevik uprising. Pandemic riots. Anarchy works. I have no love for czars, but control often passes to political systems that are much worse. Socialism. Communism. Authoritarian control. Only the new rulers are better off.

But wait, isn't society crumbling? Haven't you heard that costs are skyrocketing, jobs are hard to find, late-stage capitalism is failing and the source of all evil? Many youths think, "Socialism, save me!" But there's always economic upheaval. Unlike anarchy, economic chaos is driven by creative destruction, and productivity is a long-term plus. It generates societal wealth by breaking down a sclerotic status quo and bringing better living standards. Anarchy destroys wealth to grab power.

The 1970s were dismal. In 1976 the Sex Pistols released "Anarchy in the U.K.," which goes: "Don't know what I want, but I know how to get it / I wanna destroy passersby." In "God Save the Queen," Johnny Rotten sang, "No future, no future for you." It resonated. Jobs were scarce, inflation was roaring, unions ruled, schools failed to educate. Sound familiar?

Today undereducated (and economically illiterate) youths, along with a quieter illegal-immigrant popu-



lation, are complaining about no future. Will socialists and anarchy save them? Hardly. It wasn't anarchists that ended the '70s malaise. It was a different type of voter-frustration regime change that upended the status quo: free-marketers like Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. Constructionists, not anarchists.

Still, disorder sells. I've noticed the New York Times now labels the 2020 George Floyd riots as "broadly peaceful protests" because CNN's "mostly peaceful protests" was ridiculed so badly. Anarchy ruled in Seattle's Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone in 2020 and in the smelly Occupy Wall Street encampments of 2011. Add to the list the Jan. 6, 2021, mouth breathers who stormed the Capitol.

The recent (partially funded by Iran) campus protests and progressive support of Hamas terrorists in Gaza and further Middle East unrest is all about anarchy. Same for Greta Thunberg's Omni Cause of grievances. Europe was left behind because of green spending. Anarchy, especially during cold winters. Again, why? Who benefits?

Now New York, Chicago, Portland and gerrymandered California are headed in that direction. Statists and soft-on-crime weak-knees enable anarchy. Like Orwellian newspeak, they instill nonsense like pregnant men and an existential climate apocalypse until even Bill Gates calls bull hockey.

Open borders and sanctuary cities create more anarchy. Anarchists are anti education. Antigrowth. Anti Progress. Anticapitalist. Bring on a

new social order, it takes a village, we'll make the decisions, not you. Trump tariff chaos has a whiff of this. Maybe it's why the left hates him so much—he's executing their game plan better than they are.

It feels like the desired endgame is an overthrow of existing regimes for a more squishy communal paradise. That's been tried, and instead autocrats take over and crush dissent, boots on throats. Yes, we need change. Society always does. Progress never sleeps. But we need change driven by the next wave, which has its fits and starts. And those who were left behind: Luddites. Buggy-whip manufacturers. Local department stores. Phone operators and bank tellers. And now artificial-intelligence-threatened graphic designers,

coders, teachers, lawyers and doctors. Some confuse this for anarchy. It isn't. Instead of entropy (physicists' definition of disorder) you get productivity and enthalpy (more energy) in the form of societal wealth and progress. Anarchists want to tear society down and revert to a more feudal world. Will we see the equivalent of New York's early-1990s crack dens? Hope not. Instead, let entrepreneurs and capital markets thrive, build order and create opportunities for everyone from the lowest to highest rungs of the economic ladder, and move society toward a higher purpose. Health, wealth, happiness. Work hard, play hard instead of asking for free stuff. It's better than "No future for you."

(By Andy Kessler WSJ.Com)

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The Busan Bargain: Trump and Xi are quietly redrawing the Ukraine endgame

The handshake in Busan last month between President Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping looked, at first glance, like just another round of tariff haggling. They resulted in lower U.S. duties on Chinese goods, a one-year pause on Beijing's rare-earth squeeze, a vague promise to do something about fentanyl. Business as usual, the headlines said. But if you listen to what the two men actually said, and watch what they have already started to do, a different picture emerges. The real deal struck in South Korea was not about soybeans or semiconductors. It was about Ukraine. And the price tag was nothing less than a quiet American retreat from the old dream of dominating the Western Pacific.

For more than a decade, Washington's China policy rested on a single verb: contain. President Obama's pivot to Asia moved 60 percent of U.S. naval and air assets into the Pacific Command. The unspoken mission was to keep the People's Liberation Army bottled up behind the first island chain. Every administration since has repeated the same line: America must dominate the region to protect freedom of navigation, Taiwan, and the rules-based order. And the operative word is "dominate," not "balance." Trump has just scrapped that script. When reporters asked if Taiwan came up in Busan, he said no. When they asked about China's purchases of Russian oil, he waved the question away. A day later, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth met his Chinese counterpart in Kuala Lumpur and declared that Washington now seeks only a "balance of power" in the Pacific. Balance, not domination. In plain English, that is a U-turn. Why would Trump give up the old hawkish posture? Because he wants something bigger: an exit ramp from the war in Ukraine. He has tried the direct route with Russian President Vladimir Putin and come away empty. In Alaska this summer, Putin refused even to discuss a ceasefire. Trump admitted as much in public. So he has turned to the one capital that still has real leverage over Moscow: Beijing. China is Russia's economic lifeline. Bilateral trade hit \$244 billion last year, most of it Chinese purchases of discounted Siberian oil and gas.

Moscow's war machine runs on Chinese machine tools, microchips and bank transfers. Xi cannot force Putin to fold, but he can make life uncomfortable. A quiet word that future dual-use exports will be scrutinized, a hint that energy deals might be renegotiated, a slowdown in yuan liquidity — any of these would sting. Trump knows it. Xi knows he knows it. The Busan bargain is therefore straightforward. The U.S. dials back the military pressure in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. Regular military-to-military talks resume at every level, from theater commanders down to ship captains. Crisis hotlines stay open. Incidents at sea are managed, not escalated. In return, China leans on Russia to accept a frozen conflict in Ukraine: no formal peace treaty, perhaps, but a durable ceasefire along the current front line, with monitors on the ground and reconstruction money tied to neutrality guarantees. For Trump, the payoff is enormous. He ends a war he did not start and claims the title of peacemaker. He preserves NATO — weakened, yes, but intact — while forcing Europe to

spend more on American weapons. And he opens the door to energy deals with a post-war Russia that will need markets and capital. Soybeans and rare earths are nice, but they are the cover story. The real prize is a Europe that is no longer bleeding a trillion dollars a year into a black hole on the Donbas. Xi gains even more. With the Pacific quiet, China can pour money into its 15th Five-Year Plan: green steel, sixth-generation wireless, ultra-high-voltage grids, the industries that will define the next decade. Security competition costs treasure and focus. Trump has just handed Beijing a multi-year holiday from both. The People's Liberation Army can modernize without constant American shadowing. The Belt and Road Initiative can expand into a distracted Europe rebuilding Ukraine. None of this is guaranteed. Putin has spent three years proving that time is his ally. He may calculate that a few more months of attrition will collapse Ukrainian morale and fracture Western unity. European leaders — especially in Paris, Berlin and London — still dream of bleeding Russia the way the Soviets were bled

in Afghanistan. Yet the incentives line up. Trump wants a legacy before the midterms of 2026. Xi wants a stable periphery while he crushes domestic debt and tech bottlenecks. Putin wants sanctions relief and a face-saving pause. A frozen conflict gives each man something he can sell at home. Ukraine gets to live. NATO survives. The Pacific stays calm.

The old G2, floated informally by Zbigniew Brzezinski in 2009, was an American fantasy. It posited that China would police the world inside institutions built and run by Washington. Beijing listened, smiled and ignored it. Trump's G2 is different. It is a transactional understanding between two leaders who believe their countries are too big to be managed by anyone else. They will talk regularly — phone calls, letters, summits every year. They will keep the militaries on a leash. And they will try to solve problems that multilateral forums have failed to touch. If the Ukraine deal holds, the implications are wide-reaching. India and Pakistan, mentioned in passing in Busan, will watch to see whether great-power jawboning can freeze their own disputes. The Middle East,

exhausted by proxy wars, may find that American and Chinese envoys can impose truces where the United Nations cannot. Africa, courted by both powers, will measure the new global governance not by speeches in Davos but by who actually delivers electricity and railways. For now, the proof will come in small steps. Watch for a drop in People's Liberation Army Navy sorties near Taiwan. Watch for Chinese customs data showing tighter scrutiny of exports to Russia. Watch for a joint U.S.-China statement after the next phone call between the two presidents, something bland about "supporting de-escalation in Europe." Those will be the signals that the bargain is real.

History rarely announces its turning points with trumpets. Sometimes they arrive in the form of a handshake in a hotel ballroom in Busan, followed by two defense ministers using the word "balance" instead of "dominate." If Trump and Xi can pull this off, they will have done something no multilateral body has managed in three years: give Ukraine a livable future and the world a breather from great-power rivalry. That is worth more than any tariff cut.

Why The NDA's 2025 Election Victory Is Crucial For Bihar

In an election meeting in Bihar prior to voting, Prime Minister Narendra Modi predicted that it will be the biggest victory for NDA and the party must start preparing for celebrations after November 14. This was one man predicting the scale of victory that no pollster could.

Bihar is India's third most-populated state. People from the state are known for their hardworking nature and fan out across the country. Bihar is roughly 89 per cent rural. After Himachal Pradesh, it has the second-highest rural percentage in the nation. According to data on rural Bihar, while 44 per cent Dalits are landless, 2.9 per cent of upper castes are landless. The inroads that the NDA led by the PM Modi-CM Nitish Kumar combine made in this rural and Dalit vote bank is unmatched. The mix of HAM, led by Jitan Ram Manjhi; Chirag Paswan carrying his father's legacy; and Upendra Kushwaha ensured that votes of EBCs, Mahadalits and OBCs consolidated with the NDA.

Therefore, the verdict in 2025 makes

it amply clear that rural India is standing firmly with Narendra Modi.

Bihar Voted For Dignity And Self-Respect

INDIA bloc members routinely insult



Bihar for their selfish gains. Rahul Gandhi went to the extent of mocking Chhath Puja, calling it a drama. In contrast, PM Modi is ensuring Chhath Puja is part of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list, giving it global recognition. The people of Bihar have given a resounding mandate for Bihar's pride and dignity. Bihar has stood solidly with Narendra Modi, giving bumper support to BJP in five elections: 2014, 2019 and 2024 Lok

Sabha elections and 2020 and 2025 Vidhan Sabha elections. This shows the strong bond between PM Modi and Bihar.

From Jungle Raj to Zero Repolls

A quick look at the chronology of elections right from 1985 Bihar polls to 2025 proves how far Bihar has travelled in electoral politics. During elections in 1985, 63 deaths in poll violence and repolling in 156 booths. In the 1990 Bihar election, poll violence led to 87 deaths. In 1995, the then CEC TN Seshan postponed Bihar elections four times due to unprecedented violence and electoral malpractices. In 2005, repolling was done in 660 booths due to violence and malpractice. Now, in the 2025 Bihar elections, there has been zero repolling and zero violence. A new, violence-free Bihar has finally emerged after years of turmoil.

The victory will ensure that the BJP top brass now takes firm decisions to make changes in organisational structure. The confidence of the people of Bihar will instil confidence in the top BJP leadership to close the gaps in economy and decide what is good for them to ensure that they jump into the 2029 general elections with confidence.

Shein Sex-Doll Standoff Is A European Humiliation

Nothing epitomizes regulatory failure like the huge poster of Shein Ltd. Chairman Donald Tang at the BHV department store in Paris, where the Chinese e-commerce platform's first physical outlet opened this week. For years now, consumer watchdogs in Europe have been warning about cheap and unsafe knock-offs arriving by the planeload from Shein and PDD Holdings Inc.'s Temu. Governments have done very little in response, even as a test this week found that 70% of orders from the two platforms including chargers, toys and jewelry were defective.

Now that French authorities have moved to suspend Shein's website and asked the European Commission to open a probe following reports that weapons and childlike sex dolls were being sold on its platform, one could well ask: "What took you so long?" A plethora of third-party sellers and Shein's own controversial network of 7,000 factories (primarily in China) have raised red flags over weak controls and opacity. With the broader popularity of shop-til-you-drop e-commerce platforms delivering the equivalent of 145 parcels per second into the European Union last year, it was only a matter of time before drugs, weapons or something even darker turned up.

Shein says it's cooperating "100%" and that it has banned all sex dolls from its websites. But this is a systemic



issue. The problems stem both from Shein's business model and Europe's apparent inability to enforce its own laws. Packages are flying under authorities' noses largely because those worth less than €150 (\$173) are exempt from customs duties, a threshold that Shein and Temu's low prices easily avoid; this is similar to the "de minimis" treatment of low-value imports in the US that the Trump administration has suspended. While the EU has proposed reforms along the same lines, it will take years to come into force.

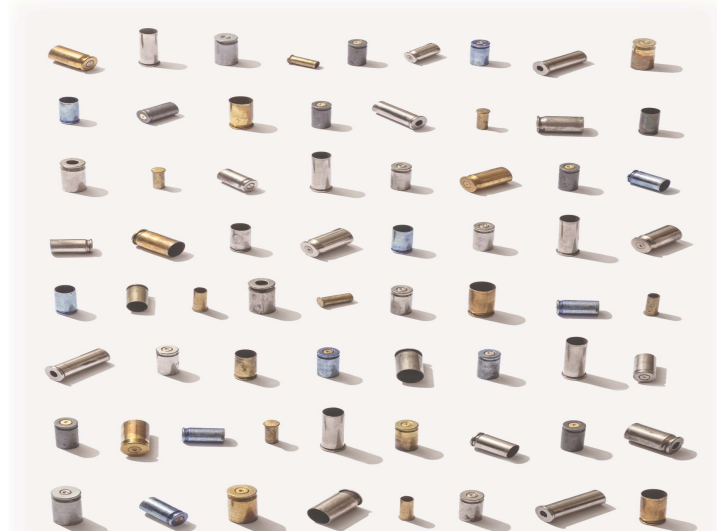
There's been too little urgency to

act. Politicians tend not to want to get in the way of a shopping craze that lets voters forget their purchasing-power blues. Especially when the craze might bring a stock-market listing, as was nearly the case for Shein in the UK, or bless the hallowed halls of a Parisian department store. The fact that a former French government minister advised Shein until recently shows the scale of its lobbying power in a country where ready-to-wear has lost 50,000 jobs over the past decade. Geopolitics is also likely at work, with France hesitant to give Beijing more reasons to

punish Louis Vuitton handbags and Remy Cointreau cognac.

With Paris now recognizing that the situation has become untenable, the path to better enforcement is clear. Customs reform is essential. So is regulation at platform level and knowing who to call when the rules are being broken. Again, these rules already exist. Back in June, European consumer group BEUC accused Shein of being in breach of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, pointing to alleged fake discounts and pressure-selling tactics like "low stock" messages.

The EU shouldn't expect France to handle these issues alone in a borderless market of 27 countries. As for the UK, which is neither inside the EU nor in the running for a Shein IPO, it has no excuse. None of this has to be fatal for the likes of Shein, which claims its cheap prices come from its efficient supply chain and which has been relaxed about governments cracking down on loopholes. It's eyeing a bumper \$2 billion in net income in 2025 and it is still upending the retail landscape, pressuring merchants from Asos Plc to Zara parent Inditex SA. But even if the e-commerce genie is out of the bottle, the need for a level playing field is essential - and if platforms can't play by the rules, then a ban has to be on the table. A lawless hole in the middle of the European single market is not sovereignty - it's humiliation.

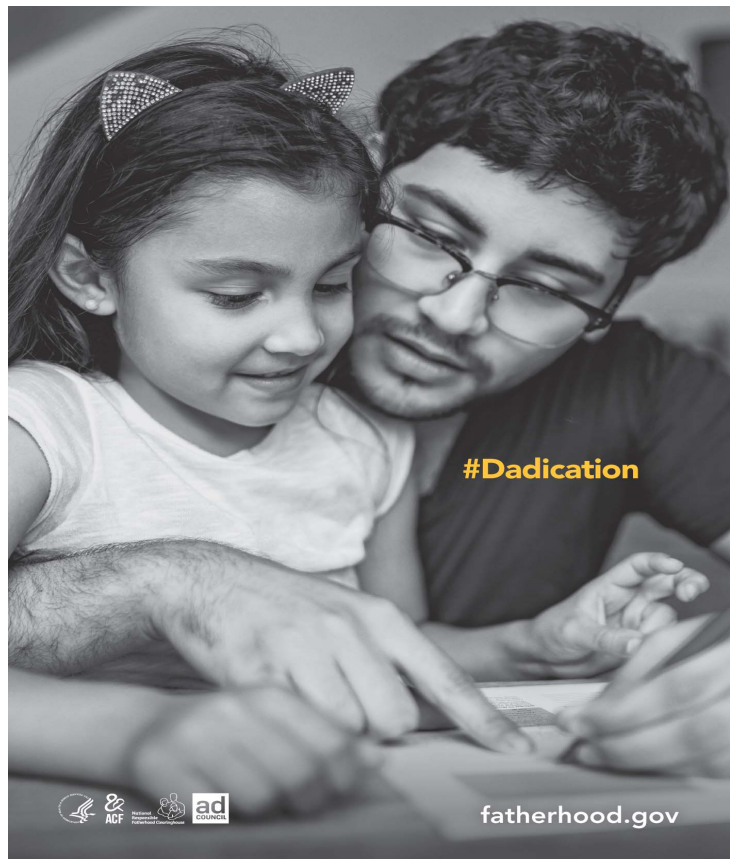


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Among America's allies, Israel is 'first among equals'



Which country is America's most important ally? Hands down, it is Israel. Israel is the only other genuine democracy on the planet that is a nuclear superpower with the will and ability to project hard power across vast distances and which provides the United States with a reliable ally in what has been the most turbulent area of the world since the end of World War II.

Israel, is, of course, not our only ally in the free world, or even our only ally in that region. Former Secretary of Defense General James Mattis has routinely referred to the United Arab Emirates, to cite the obvious example, as "little Sparta" for two decades, and the general is right to call attention to the UAE's reliable friendship and commitment to our shared interests. In the Pacific, we rely on Australia, India, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore and South Korea to help the U.S. maintain freedom of the seas and pose a balancing force to the hegemonic ambitions of

General Secretary Xi and the People's Liberation Army and Navy. Even communist Vietnam is tipping towards the status of "ally."

Our old allies remain, in theory at least, our partners in protecting freedom around the globe, but increasingly are limited by their growing anti-Israel and generally left-leaning populations when it comes to joining with the U.S. to project power anywhere outside of Europe.

Did you see any British or French fighter aircraft alongside our B-2s and fighter planes and the Israeli Air Force when it came time to demolish the imminent nuclear threat of Iran? Of course not, and not just because of the political pressures generated by waves of new immigrants from the devastated countries of Libya and Syria and the poverty-stricken countries of Africa.

Europe is changing before our eyes, and we should be happy that it can still summon the will to join with Ukraine on one "hot" front in the second Cold War. Both France and the United King-

dom will point to their efforts alongside ours in helping Israel protect itself against the missile assaults by Iran in 2024, but both nations were missing during the 12-day war of Israel and the United States against Iran in June of this year. All of Europe benefited from defanging the mullahs, but they were not there when Iran's nuclear capabilities were obliterated, even as Iran's ballistic missiles rained down on the Jewish state. Both then engaged in a "two-state theater" when the U.S. and its Gulf allies were imposing a ceasefire on Hamas, one which included the return of the last 20 living hostages from the tunnels of Gaza.

We have to hope that India grows closer to the U.S. and that Japan and Australia join South Korea in ramping up their defense spending. (South Korea expends 2.8% of its GDP on defense while the other two nations are below 2%.)

We don't have to "hope" for anything when it comes to Israel. Israel is spending 8.8% of its GDP on the IDF

in these years of war and is closer to 5% than 4% even in the most peaceful of years. Israel's high-tech defense sector also powers much of the innovation the free world requires to remain free. Even its critics recognize Israel as an "intelligence superpower," and its democracy as genuine as any Western nation.

When it comes to assessing America's allies, Israel is "first among equals."

Hugh Hewitt is host of "The Hugh Hewitt Show," heard weekday mornings 6am to 9am ET on the Salem Radio Network, and simulcast on Salem News Channel. Hugh wakes up America on over 400 affiliates nationwide, and on all the streaming platforms where SNC can be seen. He is a frequent guest on the Fox News Channel's news roundtable hosted by Bret Baier weekdays at 6pm ET. A son of Ohio and a graduate of Harvard College and the University of Michigan Law School, Hewitt has been a Professor of Law at Chapman University's

Fowler School of Law since 1996 where he teaches Constitutional Law. Hewitt launched his eponymous radio show from Los Angeles in 1990. Hewitt has frequently appeared on every major national news television network, hosted television shows for PBS and MSNBC, written for every major American paper, has authored a dozen books and moderated a score of Republican candidate debates, most recently the November 2023 Republican presidential debate in Miami and four Republican presidential debates in the 2015-16 cycle. Hewitt focuses his radio show and his column on the Constitution, national security, American politics and the Cleveland Browns and Guardians. Hewitt has interviewed tens of thousands of guests from Democrats Hillary Clinton and John Kerry to Republican Presidents George W. Bush and Donald Trump over his 40 years in broadcast, and this column previews the lead story that will drive his radio/TV show today.

The Indian Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2025

Why is it being termed as anti-farmer, anti-consumer, and anti-employee?



(By Jag Mohan Thaken)

Against the India Government's Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2025, strong waves of voices of protest have begun to emerge in the country stating it as anti-farmer, anti-consumer, and anti-employee. The resentment of Power employees, Engineers, Farmers and Consumers have started to come on the same page to oppose it.

From the dais of the National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers (NCCOEEE) in Mumbai on 03 November 2025, it has been decided that if the Government of India fails to listen to their voice, 2.7 million power employees and engineers across the country will be forced to launch a nationwide movement against the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2025 and the privatization of the power sector.

Acting on the strategy prepared for the nationwide agitation a united front with the leaders of the electricity employees, Samyukta Kisan Morcha, All India Trade Unions and common consumers will be formed and state-level joint conventions of NCCOEEE will be held in November, December, and January in all states to mobilize employees and engineers against privatization and the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2025, and a call will be given for "Delhi Chalo" on 30 January 2026.

All Haryana Power Corporations Workers Union, taking a lead and complying with the decisions of the National commit-

tee, organised a state-level convention on 5th November in Rohtak against the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, and accusing the power corporation management of ignoring the demands of the employees and promoting privatization, announced to protest at the Panchkula headquarters of ACS Power on November 26.

Now the questions arise- Why the NCCOEEE is opposing the bill? How will this bill affect the present scenario?

Explaining the ill effects, in a statement issued by Sudip Dutta, convenor on 4th November, quoted that the NCCOEEE leaders have shown their concern that through the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Central Government wants to privatize the entire energy sector of the country. After privatization, electricity rates will become so high that they will be beyond the reach of farmers and common consumers.

In the press conference attended by leaders of NCCOEEE - Shailendra Dubey, Comrade Mohan Sharma, Convenor Comrade Sudip Dutta, Comrade Krishna Bhoyar, Ratnakar Rao, Sanjay Thakur, Laxman Rathod it was explained how the bill has negative impact.

"Through Sections 14, 42, and 43 of the Amendment Bill, private companies are being given the right to use the network of government electricity distribution companies to supply power, and in return, they will pay only nominal wheeling charges to the government DISCOMs. This will mark the beginning of the end of electric-

ity distribution in the government sector" fears NCCOEEE.

Committee further explained that the entire responsibility for the maintenance and strengthening of the network will lie with the government distribution companies. The financial burden of this will fall on the government electricity distribution corporations, while private companies will be given the freedom to earn money through this network.

Under this Amendment Bill, private companies will not have the obligation of uninterrupted power supply. The adverse consequence will be that private companies will use the government company's network to supply electricity to profitable industrial and commercial consumers, while the responsibility of supplying power to farmers and poor domestic consumers will remain with the government electricity distribution corporations. As a result, government electricity distribution companies will become bankrupt and will not even have money to purchase electricity or pay salaries to their employees.

Strongly opposing the newly released Draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2025, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) alleges that despite repeated failures to implement various versions of the Amendment Bill since 2014, the Modi Government is again attempting to push through the same discredited exercise in the name of so-called reforms. "The 2025 version of the Bill, more aggressive than earlier drafts, aims to privatise,

commercialise, and centralise India's power sector. It threatens public utilities, consumer rights, federalism, and the livelihoods of lakhs of electricity workers. If implemented, it will dismantle the integrated and socially driven electricity framework built over decades, handing profitable areas to private corporations while burdening state DISCOMs with losses and social obligations", warns CITU.

What threat do the farmers face in the shadow of the new bill?

NCCOEEE stated that the Amendment Bill proposes to amend Section 61 (g) to eliminate cross-subsidy within the next five years. Along with this, the Bill provides that electricity tariffs should be cost-reflective, meaning no consumer should be supplied electricity at a price lower than the cost.

This means that farmers will have to pay at least Rs. 12,000 per month as an electricity bill for a 6.5 horsepower pump if it runs for six hours a day. Similarly, electricity rates for consumers below the poverty line will become at least Rs. 10-12 per unit.

Further, the Bill proposes to promote virtual power markets and market-based trading systems. This will destabilize long-term agreements and make the cost of power more volatile. Is the bill against the federal structure of the country? NCCOEEE cautions that presently the electricity is listed in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution under the Concurrent List, which means

that the central and state governments have equal rights in matters of electricity. But through this Amendment Bill, the Central Government is taking away the rights of the states in electricity matters, and there will be direct intervention by the Central Government in electricity distribution and tariff determination, which is against the federal structure and spirit of the Constitution. Farmers' unions have also jumped into the fray.

Participating in the convention at Rohtak, Haryana, National Vice President of All India Kisan Sabha, Comrade Inderjeet Singh announced that farmers will also strongly oppose the Electricity Amendment Bill being brought to privatize electricity and the installation of smart meters. Bharatiya Kisan Union Ekta Dakonda, Punjab has also come forward to support the agitation against the electricity bill.

Angrez Singh Bhadaur, State Press Secretary, informed our representative that in the meeting of the Kisan union, it has been passed that the Electricity Amendment Bill-2025 is being brought by the central government in violation of the promise made to the farmers and this is a ploy to implement privatization in the field of electricity distribution.

Therefore, the Electricity Amendment Bill 2025 will be opposed with full force. Bhadaur further stated that the Samyukta Kisan Morcha is scheduled to march towards Chandigarh on November 26 and a pre-march meeting will be held at Kisan Bhawan, Chandigarh on November 17 to make concrete plans for this march. The main demands of that march will include the demand for cancelling the Electricity Amendment Bill. Should the government remain so adamant and rigid while deciding such sensitive issues? A farmer leader suggests that it should always keep in mind the 13 months long farmers' agitation against three black agricultural laws wherein more than 700 farmers lost their lives and ultimately the central government had to repeal those laws.

Why the Farmer Policies of Indian Government Vex the Farmers?

Jag Mohan Thaken

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing in a special Krishi programme at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi, on October 11, 2025, emphasized the central role that agriculture and farming have always played in India's development journey. Reaffirming his commitment to empowering India's farmers, PM Modi recalled the long-standing neglect faced by the agricultural sector during the regime of previous governments. He noted that a rapidly developing 21st-century India required a robust and reformed agricultural system, and this transformation began after 2014 under his government, quotes PIB release.

"We broke away from the apathy of the past. From seed to market, we introduced comprehensive reforms in the interest of our farmers. These reforms were not just policy changes. They were structural interventions aimed at making Indian agriculture modern, sustainable, and resilient," Modi said.

Why the farmers of the nation always remain at loggerhead with the BJP led government, despite PM's claims that his government's policies are in the interest of the farmers?

Despite a passage of 120 days, why are the farmers of Bhiwani and Charkhi Dadri districts staging an indefinite dharna at Loharu Sub-Divisional Magistrate Office since July 16, 2025? Why is the government machinery keeping mum?

Dr. Balbir Singh, a farmer leader and one of the active members of Dharna Committee, alleges that this protest is mainly for the farmers' Rs 350 crore cotton insurance under Prime minister Fasal Bima Yojana(PMFBY) for the year 2023, which was claimed on the basis of crop cutting, but the insurance company in collusion with the government committed the insurance scam, against which the farmers in Loharu have been continuing their indefinite protest since July 16, 2025.

"Out of Rs. 350 crores, in Bhiwani district alone, the Kharif 2023 cotton insurance claim was made for Rs 312 crore on the basis of Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs), but was

reduced Rs 95 crore in the name of satellite photo (Technical Yield). Out of the Rs 217 crore deduction, Rs 190 crore was deducted from the villages of Loharu assembly constituency," states Dr. Singh.

Addressing on the 120th day, 12th November, of the protest of the indefinite sit-in



going on at the subdivision office Loharu on the call of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), farmer leaders also raised that though the farmers have deposited Rs. 3 lakh to 5 lakh for tubewell connection, but even after three to five years, the farmers are still waiting for the tubewell connection and due to the arbitrariness of the department's contractors, the farmers are deprived of the connection till date. Terming the PMFBY scheme as faulty and favourable only to the private insurance companies, Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), the largest umbrella of farmers' unions, demands the setting of a government undertaking insurance company on the lines of LIC.

"The flagship, pro-corporate scheme of Prime Minister Fasal Bima Yojana PMFBY has been proved a colossal failure in the context of the vast losses of crops, live stocks and life in various states due to the unprecedented flood and landslides. Since 2017, Rs. 2.83 lakh crore has been collected in PMFBY as subsidy from the governments and premium from the farmers but only 1.80 lakh crore has been disbursed making huge profit of one lakh crores to the corporate companies at the expenditure of the farmers. SKM demands scrapping the PMFBY and setting up an Insurance Corporation for crops and

livestock in the public sector in cooperation with the state governments like the successful model of LIC," SKM states in a press release issued on October 31, 2025.

SKM has raised other issues also related to the farmers -- Administrative Failure in Flood / Landslide affected

States, Meagre compensation for damaged houses during floods etc., Denying loan waiver to affected households and Harassment of farmers in the name of stubble burning.

SKM warns that it will unleash mass struggles, wherever necessary, to pressurise the state and district administration to conduct physical verification to assess the loss suffered by the people. In the states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttarakhand there prevails administration failure in uploading data in the public domain without which the victim households will never be compensated. SKM urged its member organisations to rally victims and affected people to demand immediate survey, ensure compensation equal to actual loss, reparation to the agricultural workers and tenant farmers also. Slamming the help extended for damaged houses, SKM states that Punjab has declared a paltry sum of Rs. 1.2 lakh and Uttarakhand Rs.0.95 lakh to fully damaged pucca houses reflecting the cruel and insensitive attitude of the respective state government while Himachal Pradesh has announced Rs.7 lakh. SKM demands holding public village panchayats supervised by the lekhpal and secretaries to submit

detailed reports of losses. SKM further adds that massive losses of crops, assets, and life are reported in the Mantha cyclone also.

The Modi Government is not ready to declare the vast, unprecedented natural calamity experienced by various states as a national

disaster. The amendments made in April 2025 to remove Section 13 and Section 12 of the Disaster Management Act to deny loan waivers for victims of severe natural calamities reveals the cruel mind-sets of the government. The amendments were aimed at evading the pressure of the High Court of Kerala that endorsed to provide loan waiver relief to the victims of the colossal tragedy of Wayanad landslides in Kerala that claimed 298 lives in July 2024. SKM demands immediately repeal the anti-people amendments and provide complete loan waivers / interest waiver for the next three years for the entire flood-and landslide affected households across India including in Wayanad, Kerala.

SKM has also reiterated the demand for a Judicial Enquiry under a sitting SC judge on the major causes of flood and landslides especially in the states in the sensitive Himalaya regions without any environment impact study and to propose remedial measures for protecting life and livelihood. Massive tree logging and real estate developments in hills, massive deforestation and loss of agricultural ridges in coastal areas should be addressed. The Union Government has to extend compensation of Rs. 1 lakh crore for all calamity affected

states including Rs.25000 crore for Punjab to rebuild social and economic life of victims. SKM will soon announce a People's Commission on flood and climatic change soon and ensure the preliminary report within three months.

SKM leader and All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) National Vice-President, Inderjeet Singh, interacting with the author of these lines, stated that delegations will meet the district collectors to give a memorandum to draw attention of the governments towards the grievances of the farmers and will also raise the demand to increase the moisture limit on paddy procurement from 17% to 22% across India.

The SKM memorandum will also raise the serious issue of harassment of farmers in the name of stubble burning as the respective state governments have the responsibility to ensure stubble bales are removed from the fields so that sowing for wheat will not be affected. SKM will not tolerate the arrest and harassment of farmers.

Punjab farmers union 'Bharatiya Kisan Union Ekta Dakounda' also has warned the government not to harass farmers who have to burn stubble out of compulsion. Referring to the decision of the union, Press secretary Angrez Singh Bhadour shared, "Meanwhile, farmers are being made aware by holding rallies in all districts of Punjab against the austerity imposed on farmers who are forced to burn stubble and against the lack of DAP. The organization is of the opinion that we will not encourage farmers to burn stubble, but if any farmer burns stubble in the absence of machinery or compensation provided by the government to the farmers, then the organization will strongly oppose any austerity being imposed against him." To resolve the grievances and facilitate the farmers of the country, the governments will have to listen to them sympathetically and frame the policies favourable to the food provider. The governments should follow Gandhiji philosophy wherein the Mahatma used to say that decisions should be made keeping in mind how the decisions would help the last man in the queue.

Are we living in an AI Bubble? Yes and no

The AI buzz in the world economy, but most notably in the US, has become so big that people have started asking the inevitable question: Are we living in the AI Bubble? The answer is both Yes and No.

Javed Anwer

Many people in the tech circles are nowadays sharing a chart on social media. It shows the wave of AI investments that certain companies have made in each other. In it, we see a handful of tech companies like Nvidia, a behemoth with a value of over \$4 trillion, and OpenAI, Meta, Google, Microsoft, Oracle, Amazon, and others. In recent years and months, they have all invested in each other, directly or through business deals. The effect of all this deal-making has been stupendous, at least on paper. There is a widely-talked about report that says the AI-related part of the economy is now responsible for almost 40 per cent of total US GDP. On Wall Street, stocks of AI companies have been responsible for 80 per cent of total growth this year. And a Harvard economist Jason Furman believes that if AI-related capex is excluded, the GDP growth in the US this year so far is close to 0.1 per cent. Or essentially no growth.

All of that is well and good if there is also the resultant revenue and productivity from all this investment. But so far it is not there, and likely won't be there for some time. Essentially all this AI boom and business associated with it looks like a big bubble, similar in shape to the Dot Com Bubble of late 1990s but much bigger in size. So much so that Michael J Burry — the bubble reader of the Big Short fame — has taken a financial position betting against AI.

So, is AI a bubble or not? Is the AI hype real or not? Will we get to see "hundreds of billions" of revenue through AI that OpenAI CEO Sam Altman is predicting by 2030? On many of these questions, while I have some vague ideas and intuitions, I am not qualified enough to assert them. But on the tech part of it, on the usability or promise of AI, I believe I can. And the way I see it, the current AI hype is indeed a bubble in many ways. Though, in some ways it is also not.

Easy money chasing El

Dorado

First of all it is clear that AI hype at the moment is fuelled by easy money. There was another tweet a few weeks ago that went viral. This was from 2016, and it was deleted along with the account from which it was made, after it went viral earlier in October. This tweet said, "Fed plan is to print till general AI is developed." The reason why it went viral is because what might have seemed a preposterous and absurd statement in 2016, at a time when ChatGPT wasn't even on the scene, looked uncannily prescient in 2025. The US government has indeed kept the printing press busy all these years, and much of this money after 2020 has gone into the tech industry. And as Edward Chancellor writes in *The Price Of Time*, a book on money and bubbles, "easy money encourages people to invest in projects whose returns lie in the distant future."

In that context, a lot of buzz around AI resembles the similar buzz around shipping and international trade of South Sea, railroads, Dot Com and housing. A lot of people and companies have money — easy money — and they need to put it somewhere. AI seems like the obvious place, more so considering that at the moment there is no pressure to generate corresponding returns. It is all about the future, and it has created a self-serving circle where doyens of Silicon Valley, with Sam Altman and Nvidia boss Jensen Huang in lead roles, are hyping AI to the moon. And this hype is then generating more investment, which in turn is hyping AI to Mars.

All bets have been placed on the future. It is remarkably good as a technology but not yet in a state where it can replace humans or remake our world in a way that justifies trillions of dollars of investment. In this way, AI is a bubble that is waiting to be popped. People are expecting too much from it. They are ascribing to it the qualities and powers it doesn't have. ChatGPT is not god-like. It is not alien intelligence. Not

yet. And might never be. This is a bubble that, barring a miraculous breakthrough in technology, will burst. This year? Next year? Two years later?



We don't know. After all, who knows when bubbles burst. Just that it will.

The AI tech hype is also real. This is one part of the AI story, the one that is playing out in the financial markets. There is another part to it. Just the way, the Dot Com Bubble had two parts to it. This is the technology part. And it is solid.

In a way — and I have written on these pages earlier — AI, as we see it in ChatGPT and Gemini, is still early in evolution. It is like the IBM Personal Computer from the early 1980s. That was a machine powered by Intel 8088, a chip running at mere 5 MHz, and used early Microsoft DOS software. Compare that to the iPhone you carry in your pocket, with its flashy voice-powered latest iOS software. The current iPhone is also, as far as performance goes, almost 100000X faster than the fastest supercomputers from the 1970s.

Or you can consider the current state of AI something like the early WWW of the 1990s. Compared to what we have now, the web was limited and basic in almost every way then.

In fact, the Dot Com Bubble hints at the trajectory of current AI tech. The Bubble burst, but Google did not. Instead, the technologies Google pioneered went on to dominate the world. Netscape and AOL might have faded away but WWW did not. It became the technology on which almost all of our modern world functions, from apps to all the digital services.

The AI is likely to turn out to be the same. But it is a story that is just now beginning and

it will take a few decades to play out. As a fundamental technology, the Large Language Models are utterly fascinating and unfathomably powerful. In

that will have to happen along the way before something can become a possibility, and some breakthroughs — like the way Fusion Energy has turned out — may prove elusive. But there is no doubt that in another 20 to 30 years, AI will be a key part of our lives.

In between, however, it is also easy to see that the current bubble will burst. Just like it has done throughout history. Railways might have remade the world, but it had its own bubble that burst. Same with WWW. And the same will happen with AI. But the bubble is not-technology related. It is a part of our financial world, which increasingly is a separate realm from the real world that regular people inhabit. As a fundamental technology, AI is real. Even if the story around it that we are being told nowadays will likely turn out a piece of fiction.



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With Islamists at the helm, can Bangladesh deliver free, fair elections?

Once hailed as a non-violent, student-led uprising for justice and fair elections, the quota reform movement now stands exposed as an armed conspiracy of Jamaat-e-Islami. The Islamists are trying for a new state structure, resembling the era of Pakistan rule. The current regime isn't neutral and does not intend to hold free and fair elections.

Ghulam Muhammed Quader

all levels of society participated in the anti-discrimination movement

harboured Jamaat-Shibir politics in their hearts.

ters, 44 police officers were killed on duty during the July movement,

protesters themselves orchestrated some of the mass killings.

The student-led quota reform movement transformed into a broader anti-discrimination movement of students and the masses. Regardless of political affiliation, nearly 99% of the country's population participated in this struggle, either directly or indirectly. From the people's side, the movement remained non-violent and limited to resisting armed aggression.

However, after the movement's success, some student coordinators and participants began to speak openly. Their statements revealed that the student movement was, in fact, neither unarmed nor non-violent. Instead, participants were involved in armed attacks, killings, and acts of sabotage.

King Sojol, a participant, admitted, "I played a key role in the student movement at the Banani Setu Bhaban. I led the attack on Setu Bhaban. Even after the police entered, I continued the assault." He also displayed footage of the attack on RTV and 71 Television.

Hasib Al Islam stated, "If we had followed the law, this revolution would not have happened. If we hadn't set fire to the metro rail, if we hadn't killed police officers, this revolution would not have been achieved so easily." The video clips are available on a social media page called Janatar News.

Additionally, on March 21, one of their key leaders and current advisor to the interim government, Asif Mahmud Sojib Bhuiyan, said in an interview with Dhaka Times Today, "If we had not succeeded on August 5, we were prepared to take up arms. Nahid Bhai had even prepared a video message. I also had my statement ready." The video footage of this, too, is available, and the statement was published in the daily newspaper Janakantha on March 21, 2025.

They made these revelations while claiming sole credit for the movement's success.

The need to claim sole credit arose because people from almost



with the demand for a fair election. They joined the movement to establish an accountable government through free and fair elections and ultimately, to build a discrimination-free society.

However, the coordinators of the movement did not limit their demands to fair elections. They claimed to have fought for the creation of an entirely new state structure.

For this reason, they demanded not only justice for the violence that occurred during the movement but also for past crimes against humanity. They sought reforms to the state structure according to their own views, and an election conducted on their terms.

The outline of the state structure described by the coordinators seemed to echo communal politics—similar to the kind seen during the Pakistan-rule era. Their ideology appeared to portray Bangladesh's liberation struggle as a conspiracy by neighbouring countries, freedom fighters as traitors, and the birth of independent Bangladesh as a mistake.

It has now become clear that Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir, were fully involved in this movement. They were part of the Student League's "helmet brigade", among the coordinators, and played an active role as the movement's foot soldiers.

From what is known about the backgrounds of these coordinators, most of them were indoctrinated in Islamic education and ideals and many secretly

The Naib-e-Ameer of Bangladesh's Jamaat-e-Islami, Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher, in an interview with BBC News Bangla said, "We played a fundamental role and were very cautious to ensure that it was not revealed as a Jamaat-Shibir movement. We wanted to give it a universal appearance."

In light of the demands made by the student coordinators, our perspective on the ongoing developments regarding trial, reforms, and elections is as follows:

WHO WILL DELIVER JUSTICE FOR BOTH STUDENTS AND POLICE? WHO USED 7.62MM RIFLES DURING THE PROTESTS?

Justice does not mean a mockery in the name of justice. If judges and lawyers are biased due to political ideology, fair justice cannot be expected. Punishing a person before being proven guilty undermines the rule of law and justice. These issues must be carefully considered.

We support the trial for the killings of students and the masses. However, justice must also be served for the police officers who were killed during the movement.

It is essential to investigate and determine how many police personnel were killed and injured in different situations.

The student coordinators claim that students used weapons, committed murders, and engaged in acts of sabotage. We believe these allegations should be thoroughly investigated.

According to police headquar-

ters, 44 police officers were killed on duty during the July movement, with 39 of them killed on August 4 and 5. We have heard from various sources that the actual number of police officers killed on duty is even higher. We demand the release of the exact number of deaths and detailed accounts of how they were killed. There should be a detailed investigation into the deaths of police officers on duty, and the real perpetrators should be brought to justice.

In many countries, police officers killed in the line of duty are honoured by the state. We believe that those who died or were injured while performing their duties should not be labelled as criminals without investigation. If they were on duty, they should be given due respect and compensation after proper investigation.

It is crucial to determine what weapons were used, under what circumstances, and against whom. Brigadier General Shakawat mentioned the use of 7.62mm rifles, which are not standard police firearms. Who, then, used these weapons?

Regarding the recovery of 7.62mm bullets from students' bodies, Brigadier General Shakawat made a statement. However, he was removed from the Home Ministry shortly after raising this question, which raises suspicions. It is necessary to investigate whether protesters used such weapons. In past movements, protesters have been known to employ tactics involving self-inflicted casualties to intensify their cause. Therefore, it is essential to verify whether the

DOES THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT HAVE THE RIGHT TO REFORM?

The so-called Consensus Commission is creating division rather than unity in the country.

The interim government or the commission has no legal authority to implement reforms. Only the next elected government and Parliament, under the Constitution, can legitimately carry out reforms. For any proposed reforms to be accepted by the next elected Parliament, they must have the consent of nearly all citizens.

Currently, reforms are being pursued without considering the opinions of 60% to 70% of the population, making these proposals unacceptable and unlikely to be implemented.

WILL BANGLADESH'S UPCOMING ELECTIONS BE TRULY INCLUSIVE?

The upcoming February elections, organised by the current interim government, will exclude the Awami League, one of the country's largest political parties. Efforts are underway to exclude the 14-party alliance and the Jatiya Party from the elections. Even if the Jatiya Party is allowed to participate—since it has not yet been banned—it is almost certain that they will not be given a level playing field or equal opportunities. Government-backed obstructions and violence are already being used to disrupt their rallies, gatherings, and public outreach, making the election neither free nor inclusive.

The current government is not neutral and does not intend to hold free, fair, and impartial elections. Their capability to do so is also questionable.

The country is moving towards destruction. Recovery is possible only if political stability is ensured. The first step toward achieving this stability is a free, fair, neutral, and inclusive election. Therefore, at this moment, the only solution is the formation of a neutral caretaker government and, under its supervision, free, fair and neutral elections with the participation of all political parties.

What Mamdani Can Teach The Congress - And Rahul Gandhi

"The working people of New York have been told by the wealthy and the well-connected that power does not belong in their hands... And yet, over the last 12 months, you have dared to reach for something greater. Tonight, against all odds, we have grasped it. The future is in our hands. My friends, we have toppled a political dynasty."

These words, by now, have been heard by millions across the globe. They have leapt out of newspapers, televisions, and, perhaps most potently, Instagram. All this has happened because Zohran Mamdani, a 34-year-old migrant Muslim, a self-declared democratic socialist of mixed parentage - a man who might easily have been consigned to the margins of contemporary political economy - has become the new mayor of New York City.

Mamdani's success has signalled a system reset: a toppling of a political dynasty that sought legitimacy from the common people even as it worked to de-power them. Who was Mamdani fighting? On the road to New York's City Hall, he met with intense opposition from the business and financial community. Mamdani's progressive platform - freezing rent prices, taxing the city's wealthiest one per cent, and demanding corporate accountability - alarmed traditional Democratic donors and real estate magnates. Over 20 billionaires spent millions to back his opponents, including former Governor Andrew Cuomo. Figures like Michael Bloomberg, Bill Ackman, and Ronald Lauder funded an unprecedented campaign against him, terrified that his economic agenda would drive away corporations and destabilise the real estate market.

And yet, he won.

A 2019 meeting of right-wing donors - from Peter Thiel to J.D. Vance and Tucker Carlson - had sought to make the MAGA movement an enduring political machine. Mamdani confronted a similar corporate-political nexus in New York and beat it. He re-centred democracy around people rather than profit. The lesson from Mamdani is simple: dismantling this usurpation of people's power must be done by returning to the people.

If 104,000 volunteers could make 4.4 million calls for Mamdani, what can the Congress under Rahul Gandhi conjure in India? But, like Mamdani's Democrats, Rahul Gandhi has inherited a Congress that resists change - comfortable in its proximity to power,



even when out of office.

Perpetual Inaction

For decades, Congress's reflex after every electoral defeat has been to form a committee. The Committee Raj has become its comfort zone - a bureaucratic ritual that replaces action with analysis. In May 2022, Sonia Gandhi, who was then the party's interim president, established a high-profile Empowered Action Group (EAG) to address Congress's political challenges ahead of the 2024 elections. However, there is no record of the EAG holding deliberations between 2022 and 2024. Nor is there any proof of it formulating a strategy for the 18th Lok Sabha polls.

After the losses in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh in 2023, internal reports were filed, but not discussed. At 24 Akbar Road, volumes of introspection gather dust: Ram Niwas Mirdha's report on organisational polls, Manmohan Singh's on party funds, Sam Pitroda's on modernisation, Pranab Mukherjee's on structural reforms, and three of A.K. Antony's on electoral debacles.

All of them recommended bold change. None were acted upon. Mamdani, by contrast, didn't form committees. He built a movement.

Movement Over Machinery

Mamdani's campaign spoke in the language of the streets, not the boardroom. His visual identity - a hand-lettered logo inspired by vintage Bollywood posters, painted in MetroCard yellow and New York Mets blue - made a Muslim-South Asian face feel inseparable from New York's political imagination.

Every choice was deliberate. His

videos appeared in English, Urdu, Spanish, Hindi, Bangla, and Arabic. He interviewed halal-cart vendors about "halal-fiation", canvassed subway riders, and turned daily posts into collective storytelling.

It worked because it felt real.

Congress's branding, in contrast, remains sterile. When was the last time a Congress campaign stopped anyone mid-scroll? Rahul Gandhi tried to infuse freshness through the Bharat Jodo Yatra, an ambitious cross-country walk blending activism and outreach. He met farmers, artisans, and workers. He filmed conversations, livestreamed encounters, and opened the party to empathy. But what Mamdani achieved through participation, Congress tried to simulate through performance.

The result? Motion without movement.

The Authenticity Deficit Mamdani's strength was not charisma alone - it was also his credibility. His volunteers spent days and nights knocking on doors, having real conversations with everyday people. That human infrastructure made Mamdani and the promise he symbolised believable. Congress, meanwhile, suffers from a chronic authenticity deficit. The party's funding networks remain intertwined with the very business interests it critiques. The average voter hears the rhetoric but sees the contradiction. Mamdani won despite opposition from the Democratic establishment. Rahul Gandhi, in contrast, is surrounded by his own establishment - one that muffles every reform instinct in procedural layers. When Gandhi speaks of empowering the

poor, the message is often lost behind the family name and the party's inertia. Voters hear conviction but see privilege. Nehru's Spirit, Reclaimed in New York The most poignant moment of Mamdani's victory came when he quoted Jawaharlal Nehru's Tryst with Destiny: "A moment comes but rarely in history when we step out from the old to the new..." An Indian-origin politician in New York has kept Nehru's democratic soul alive more vividly than the Congress in India. Mamdani's agenda - rent freezes, free public transport, universal childcare, taxing the rich - is Nehruvian in spirit: economic justice as the foundation of political freedom. The Congress of today invokes Nehru, but no longer imagines like him. His legacy is defended, not advanced.

The Road Not Taken

Mamdani mobilised a generation dismissed as disenfranchised. His campaign saw New York's highest voter turnout since 1969, driven by those under 45. Rahul Gandhi has attempted to speak to India's young, often with sincerity and intellectual depth. Yet, such interventions, however well-crafted, remain isolated performances. They do not convert into a participatory movement because the Congress ecosystem still centralises power. India's principal opposition needs what Mamdani offered New Yorkers - a rupture with business-as-usual politics. The Congress must stop narrating nostalgia and start reclaiming moral imagination. Because in the end, as Mamdani reminded the world, democracy survives only when people, not corporations, hold power in their hands.

Inside The 'Amendment' That May Make Asim Munir Pak's Supreme Authority

Aishwaria Sonavane

The 27th Constitutional Amendment Bill, tabled by Pakistan's federal government and passed by the Senate on November 10, is far from a routine procedural adjustment. It represents a structural reconfiguration of the Pakistani state. The provisions, now awaiting final approval from the National Assembly, will effectively formalise Pakistan's foundational transition from a de facto hybrid military system to a constitutional framework in which the military establishment holds a legally codified and dominant position.

Among its key amendments pertaining to the judicial and security design, the bill critically proposes revisions to Article 243 of the Pakistani Constitution. Amendments to this article would establish the new position of Chief of Defence Forces while abolishing the existing office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC). This article defines the relationship between the prime minister, as head of government, and the President, as head of states in matters relating to the command and control of the defence forces. An alteration to this clause will trigger implications for civilian government in the country and a power shift to Pakistan's constitutional order.

Key amendments proposed under Article 243 would entail:

Abolishing the Office of CJCSC, effective from November 27

Establishing a new post of Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), a position that will be held concurrently by the serving Chief of Army Staff (COAS)

The amendments institute a Commander of National Strategic Command, who will be an army official appointed by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the CDF

The bill extends life-long constitutional protection to 5-star rank officers, including Field Marshal. This entails privileges, lifetime tenure, and legal immunity granted under Article 248 and protection from removal under Article 47 of Pakistan's Constitution

In essence, the amendment charts a new civil-military dynamic, heavily inclined to accommodate the whims, fancies, and megalomaniacal tendencies of one individual: General Asim Munir. Under the mechanisms, the sitting COAS, Munir, will automatically absorb the

new powerful post of CDF, enabling his exclusive constitutional authority to recommend who controls the nuclear arsenal, besides command over all three forces. The bill legitimises his recent promotion to Field Marshal, a rank that previously lacked constitutional basis. The most crucial of them all, this permanence is then fortified with unprecedented, lifelong immunity from all legal proceedings and protection from removal.

Prior to these constitutional alterations, the Pakistani military's influence in the country's politics, economy, and national psyche could not be overstated. But with the latest changes, the time-worn metaphor that 'Pakistan is not a country with an army; it is an army with a country', has found a new, more palpable meaning.

Echoes of Military Dictatorship?

There can't be any debate on claims that the entire Pakistani military institution already commands unprecedented power in the country. As such, the current move further fortifies the borrowed legacies of former military rulers like Ayub Khan, Zia-ul-Haq, and Pervez Musharraf. In its preliminary form, this resembles the personalist ambitions of General Ayub Khan, who was Pakistan's first Field Marshal, only to be followed by Munir. Following his 1958 coup, Khan anointed himself Field Marshal and subsequently amended the constitution in 1962. The new provisions were included to legitimise his autocratic rule by establishing a presidential system tailored for his personal power. In the creation of a lifetime Field Marshal post, Munir exhibits his desire to build a constitutional structure that concentrates power in one single officer rather than the institution.

Second, the bill follows the legalist route taken by General Zia-ul-Haq. After his coup in 1977, Zia faced pressure to 'restore democracy' in the country. He responded by holding a controversial 1984 referendum to secure a five-year presidential term, followed by non-party polls in 1985. A compliant parliament was also forced to pass the 8th amendment for lifting martial law; the amendment fundamentally legalised his past coup and installed measures to control future governments. Eventually, a parliamentary system was restored in 1997 by the 13th

amendment, and the presidential system was definitively abolished by the 18th Amendment passed in 2010.

Finally, the 27th amendment further imitates the 'dual-hat' structure of General Pervez Musharraf, who controversially held the posts of COAS and President. While Musharraf's dual arrangement was brief and constitutionally ambiguous, the 27th Amendment permanently fuses the COAS with the new CDF post, establishing a constitutionally protected command structure.

Internal Gamble, International Attention

As this bill moves toward its vote, there has been no alarm in Western capitals, particularly in the White House. This should come as no surprise. The US has long been comfortable engaging with Pakistan's military dictators - from Ayub Khan to Zia-ul-Haq to Pervez Musharraf - including the recent lunch between Asim Munir and US President

Donald Trump at the White House in June. The unstated US policy has been one of pragmatism where Washington acknowledges the military as the true centre of power, capable of ensuring security cooperation. The far more critical question is how this move will be perceived within the military establishment. The Pakistan Army's influence has not been in one-man rule but institutional in nature.

Both Khan and Musharraf's power collapsed when their own corps commanders acknowledged that the individual became a liability to the institution. This formalisation of military power is unlikely to alter New Delhi's Pakistan policy, which is already viewed through a highly securitised lens. Given that India considers the 'Military-Jihadi Complex', treating the Pakistani military and its proxy groups as a single entity, its official response will most certainly remain a quiet game of 'wait and watch'.

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We Did OK, Kid: A Memoir by Anthony Hopkins review – a legend with a temper

The Oscar-winning actor's autobiography combines vulnerability with bloody-mindedness and belligerence



It's the greatest entrance in movie history – and he doesn't move a muscle. FBI rookie Clarice Starling must walk along the row of cells until she reaches Dr Lecter's reinforced glass tank, where the man himself is simply standing, his face a living skull of satanic malice, eerily immobile in his form-fitting blue prison jumpsuit – immobile, that is, until such time as he launches himself against the glass, making that extraordinary hissing-slaving sound.

A billion true-crime documentaries have since revealed that actual serial killers are very boring, with nothing like Anthony Hopkins's screen presence. He was hardly an unknown when he got that Oscar-winning part in *The Silence of the Lambs* in 1989: a star wasn't born, but rather a megastar, a legend. His Dr Lecter was based, Hopkins cheerfully recalls in this new autobiography, on Bela Lugosi's Dracula, on Stalin as recalled by his daughter, and on his own icily exacting, gimlet-eyed Rada tutor Christopher Fettes. There was a

father-daughter dimension to these scenes as well; a painful subject for Hopkins, who also describes how his Lear was subconsciously influenced by an agonised guilt about Abigail, the estranged daughter from his disastrous first marriage in 1966 to Petronella Barker, who resented his absences and drinking.

The title comes from an old wartime photo of Hopkins as a toddler on the beach with his dad – the kid who maybe thought he would never do OK. He was a bewildered, lonely, vulnerable little boy from Port Talbot, son of Richard Arthur Hopkins, the scene-stealing supporting player here: a baker and man's man, a plain speaker who loathed the Bible-punching hypocrites of the chapel and didn't believe in showing his emotions, but had a streak of wistful, tearful romanticism.

It was Hopkins Sr who furiously resented the way they had to go cap-in-hand to their wealthy relations like Auntie Patty, whose husband knew Nye Bevan and could get young Anthony into a posh school: "Because

they're bloody rich!" he raves in the car on the way there. "We're all hoping for some pickings! Bloody rubbish, that's what it is!" The grovelling paid off, for a while. Hopkins was a hopeless student at his new school. But one day in an English lesson he had to recite John Masefield's poem *The West Wind* – sight unseen – and that voice came to life; he stunned the teacher and the other boys. He says quite plausibly that poetry, on its own, launched him.

This, and joining the YMCA drama club. Remarkably, he left school a no-hoper, went into acting, and to the astonishment of his parents was on stage with Laurence Olivier at the Old Vic within 10 years. He more or less did it on his own, although in those days there were grants to go to Rada – a way up for working-class actors. His dad remained in awe of Anthony's global success: on asking his son to recite the Yorick speech from *Hamlet*, Hopkins Sr listened attentively and then went into another room and burst into tears.

As for the hot-tempered, bloody-minded son, he quit the National Theatre company in a fit of pique – to Olivier's profound dismay and disapproval – but lucked into a great TV role as a suspected war criminal in Leon Uris's *QB VII*, which led indirectly to parts like that in David Lynch's *The Elephant Man* and a thriving starry career on screen, which he preferred to the stage. And he quit booze in 1975 having been a hell-raising alcoholic, and so survived into middle age to execute great performances, including Lecter, the butler Stevens in *The Remains of the Day* with Emma Thompson and the old man with dementia in *The Father* – his

second Oscar.

In the latter half of the book his personality becomes more opaque, more studied. Some of the anecdotalage doesn't quite come off. He recalls being taken out to lunch by his co-star in Oliver Stone's *Nixon*, the much-respected actor Paul Sorvino, who wanted to tell him his performance as Nixon wasn't working. Was this the moment for Hopkins to learn something from the legendary star of Scorsese's *Goodfellas*? Not exactly. Hopkins seems to go along with Stone's dismissal of Sorvino as being motivated by jealousy. Really? He repeatedly performs the tough, down-to-earth professional actor who believes it's your duty to get there on time, know all the crew's names and get on with it. Quite so. But he also recounts confronting an obnoxious director who'd made a young extra cry: "Apologise to her! And learn some manners. You ever do that again in front of me, I'll change the shape of your face!" Hopkins sounds like someone who gave up drink but maybe not the belligerence that went with it.

A Shakespearean like him must know Cornwall's lines on Kent from *Lear*: "He cannot flatter, he! An honest mind and plain – he must speak truth!" Hopkins concludes his book with a lengthy appendix composed simply of his favourite poems: an outrageous indulgence, perhaps, and yet it is the transcendental power of these works, and the discipline of learning them by heart, to which he owes his success. *We Did OK, Kid: A Memoir* by Anthony Hopkins is published by Simon & Schuster (£25). To support the Guardian, order your copy at guardianbookshop.com. Delivery charges may apply.



Bhutan: Where Spirituality, Sustainability, And Serenity Converge

Palestinian-American activist Linda Sarsour has claimed that the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), under congressional scrutiny for alleged Hamas ties, funded Zohran Mamdani's campaign for the New York City mayoral polls. Sarsour, who is Mamdani's political mentor, said CAIR gave him \$120,000, becoming its biggest funder.



There are few places in the world where spirituality, sustainability, and serenity coexist as effortlessly as they do in Bhutan. Here, life flows to the rhythm of prayer flags fluttering in the wind, and happiness is not an aspiration but a way of being. From ancient monasteries perched on cliffs to valleys where cranes dance in winter mist, Bhutan offers a rare harmony between nature, culture, and inner peace. For travellers seeking to experience this balance firsthand, journeys across the Kingdom often weave through its five key valleys, Thimphu, Punakha, Gangtey, Bumthang, and Paro, each revealing a different face of

Bhutan's spiritual and natural landscape. In these regions, lodges like Six Senses Bhutan curate immersive encounters that go beyond sightseeing, inviting guests to live and learn the country's mindful traditions. Each valley feels like a chapter in Bhutan's living story from Thimphu's "Palace in the Sky" and Punakha's "Flying Farmhouse" to Gangtey's "Birdwatching Bridge," Bumthang's "Forest in a Forest," and Paro's "Stone Ruins." Together, they tell the story of a land where well-being is both personal and collective.

1. Momo-Making and Bhutanese Culinary

Traditions Food is Bhutan's

warmest expression of community, and Six Senses invites guests to join its chefs in learning the delicate art of crafting momos. Soft dumplings filled with local vegetables and cheese. It's not just a cooking session but a cultural exchange, best enjoyed with a side of laughter, stories.

2. Printing Your Own Prayer Flags

In the heart of Paro Valley, family-run farmhouses keep alive the ancient art of hand-printing prayer flags. Guided by artisans, visitors can print their own flags, each symbol and mantra carrying personal intentions of peace and prosperity before releasing them into the Himalayan breeze.

3. Sipping Butter Tea and Sharing Stories

No journey through Bhutan is complete without the earthy comfort of suja, traditional butter tea. At Six Senses, guests can join locals for an authentic tea-making experience, learning the ritual of churning yak butter, salt, and tea leaves, before sitting down for intimate conversations about Bhutanese life and legends. Traditional Dotsho (Hot Stone Bath) Rooted in

Bhutanese healing wisdom, the dotsho is more than a bath; it's a meditative ritual. Heated river stones rich in minerals are placed in a wooden tub filled with water and medicinal herbs, believed to ease tension and rejuvenate the spirit. It's the perfect way to unwind after a day of exploring Bhutan's valleys and mountain trails.

5. Breakfast with Monks

High above the Punakha Valley, a trek through terraced rice fields leads to a 16th-century hilltop monastery. Here, visitors can share a simple yet soul-satisfying monastic breakfast beside young monks, the air alive with rhythmic chants that mark the start of their day, an experience that feels both grounding and deeply moving.

6. Visits to Ancient Monasteries and Dzongs

From Thimphu's imposing Tashichho Dzong to the sacred Tiger's Nest Monastery in Paro, Bhutan's sacred architecture reflects centuries of devotion. Guided visits often include lighting butter lamps, receiving blessings from resident monks, and listening to timeless stories that embody the nation's spiritual

identity. Black-Necked Crane Encounters in Gangtey In the serene Phobjikha Valley, nature and spirituality intertwine. Guests staying at Six Senses Gangtey can witness the graceful migration of the endangered black-necked cranes, revered in Bhutanese folklore as symbols of longevity and harmony. The experience captures the purest essence of Bhutan.

8. The Tiger's Nest Pilgrimage

Few experiences are as transformative as the hike to Paro Taktsang, or Tiger's Nest Monastery. The forested trail, lined with prayer flags, grows quieter as you ascend. And at the summit — where the monastery clings to the cliffside, the world below feels distant, and the moment transcendent. Whether it's lighting a butter lamp for blessings, sharing a homemade meal in a farmhouse, or stargazing from a mountaintop, Bhutan invites you to pause, reflect, and reconnect. Every encounter here becomes a quiet conversation between the self and the sacred — a reminder that happiness, when lived simply, is already enough.

Miniature horse can be a roommate in unusual Airbnb experience

A unique Airbnb in England offering the chance to spend the night in a barn with a miniature horse is available — for upwards of about \$230 a night, SWNS reports. Brittany Sparham, 28, started renting out her barn on the holiday site near Thurgarton, Nottinghamshire, during the pandemic due to an increase in the popularity of staycations. Since the rustic property would share its wall with the stables, the owner decided it would be fun to create a door so that visitors could see their equine neighbor, Basil. Now, the barn has become extremely popular with animal lovers who want to spend a night with the 12-year-old miniature Shetland pony. •The vacation spot, which is on the grounds of a 17th-century manor, is available for a minimum of two nights starting from £360, or about \$470.

•"At first we just had the idea to rent out the outbuilding, as there was a huge surge of people looking for staycations because of COVID," Sparham told SWNS.

But with Basil's stable directly next to it we thought why not do something really unique and open up the doorway between the two rooms, so guests could see Basil." After visitors began posting videos on social media, the stable stay took off in popularity, with Sparham saying the Airbnb is sometimes booked up a year in advance. "It works out well for Basil too, as he always has company and gets lots of fuss and attention," she says. according to Sparham, Basil is a "very chilled individual" who loves playing out with his friends in the field during the day and gets very excited about coming



into his stable at night. "We just open the gate from the field, and he runs right in on his own, he knows he gets lots of attention and all the hay to himself for the night." The barn is fitted with a kitchen, a bathroom, a double bed and bunk beds, which allow it to sleep four guests. Guests

have access to an open outdoor log fire with BBQ grill and an outdoor tiki hut, and can take a stroll across the bridge to look at the cows, sheep and horses. Guests aren't allowed to feed Basil, but his owners provide tools to brush him, and guests are welcome to help clear his

stables if they desire. Since guests will be living with a horse, there is a chance of noises and smells, which the Airbnb makes explicitly clear. "From strangers sometimes it's mixed reactions, people think it might smell or be too noisy, but everyone who stays loves it," Sparham says.

Why Did BBC Chief Resign? Controversy Behind 'Trump Documentary' Explained

(News Agency) Two of the top executives of the BBC have resigned following a report suggesting the British public service broadcaster misleadingly edited a speech by US President Donald Trump that preceded the January 6 Capitol riot for its flagship documentary programme. Tim Davie, the director general, and Deborah Tunness, the chief executive of BBC News, resigned abruptly days after The Daily Telegraph reported on a leaked internal memo, claiming that the BBC Panorama documentary had juxtaposed Trump's remarks in a misleading way to make it appear that he had explicitly encouraged the attack on the Capitol on January 6, 2021. Announcing his resignation, Davie said in a statement posted on the BBC website: "Like all public organisations, the BBC is not perfect, and we must always be open, transparent and accountable. "While not being the only reason, the current debate around BBC News has understandably



contributed to my decision. Overall the BBC is delivering well, but there have been some mistakes made, and as director-general I have to take ultimate responsibility."

The Daily Telegraph Report

The latest controversy followed a Daily Telegraph report last week that said concerns were first raised in the summer in a memo on impartiality by Michael Prescott, who, until June, was an independent external adviser to the BBC's editorial standards committee. In the leaked memo, former journalist Prescott claimed that in its documentary

called "Trump: A Second Chance?" that was broadcast by the BBC the week before last year's US election, the BBC, in one section, spliced together footage from comments that Trump made about 50 minutes apart. Trump has been accused of fomenting the mob attack on the US Capitol, seeking to keep him in power despite losing his re-election bid. Prescott said that the edit made it appear that Trump had told supporters he was going to walk to the US Capitol with them and "fight like hell". In

the unedited clip, however, the president urged the audience to walk with him, "and we're going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women." At the time, Trump was still disputing President Joe Biden's election victory, in a vote that saw him ousted after his first term in office. Prescott also claimed that the British broadcaster avoided stories that raised difficult questions about transgender rights and that BBC Arabic gave a platform to a journalist who had made antisemitic comments. With a strong 21,000 employees, the BBC is one of the world's leading public service broadcasters. It is funded mainly from a licence fee paid by TV-watching Britons, supplemented by commercial revenue. The broadcasters have global reach through their international broadcasting operations and

Reactions To the Daily Telegraph Report

The BBC's senior management came under fire after the White House press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, reacted to the leaked memo and accused the broadcaster of being "purposefully dishonest" over its depiction of the Capitol Hill insurrection. Trump also reacted to the news and said "corrupt journalists" had been exposed, adding, "These are very dishonest people who tried to step on the scales of a Presidential Election". Later, the UK Culture, Media and Sport Minister Lisa Nandy called the allegations "incredibly serious". She said the Trump edit was one of several concerns about editorial standards at the BBC.

What to know about Trump's plan to give Americans a \$2,000 tariff dividend

(News Agency) WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump boasts that his tariffs protect American industries, lure factories to the United States, raise money for the federal government and give him diplomatic leverage. Now, he's claiming they can finance a windfall for American families, too: He's promising a generous tariff dividend. •The president proposed the idea on his Truth Social media platform Sunday, five days after his Republican Party lost elections in Virginia, New Jersey and elsewhere largely because of voter discontent with his economic stewardship — specifically, the high cost of living. he tariffs are bringing in so much money, the president posted, that "a dividend of at least \$2000 a person (not including high income people!) will be paid to everyone."

udget experts scoffed at the idea, which conjured memories of the Trump administration's short-lived plan for DOGE dividend checks financed by billionaire Elon Musk's federal budget cuts. "The numbers just don't check out," said Erica York, vice president of federal tax policy at the nonpartisan Tax Foundation. •Details are scarce, including what the income limits would be and whether payments would go to children. Even Trump's treasury secretary, Scott Bessent, sounded a bit blindsided by the audacious dividend plan. Appearing Sunday on ABC's "This Week," Bessent said he hadn't discussed the dividend with

the president and suggested that it might not mean that Americans would get a check from the government. Instead, Bessent said, the rebate might take the form of tax cuts. •The tariffs are certainly raising money — \$195 billion in the budget year that ended Sept. 30, up 153% from \$77 billion in fiscal 2024. But they still account for less than 4% of federal revenue and have done little to dent the federal budget deficit — a staggering \$1.8 trillion in fiscal 2025. John Ricco, an analyst with the Budget Lab at Yale University, reckons that Trump's tariffs will bring in \$200 billion to \$300 billion a year in revenue. But a \$2,000 dividend — if it went to all Americans, including children — would cost \$600 billion. "It's clear that the revenue coming in would not be adequate," he said. Ricco also noted that Trump couldn't just pay the dividends on his own. They would require legislation from Congress.

Moreover, the centerpiece of Trump's protectionist trade policies — double-digit taxes on imports from almost every country in the world — may not survive a legal challenge that has reached the U.S. Supreme Court. In a hearing last week, the justices sounded skeptical about the Trump administration's assertion of sweeping power to declare national emergencies to justify the tariffs. Trump has bypassed Congress, which has authority under the Constitution to levy taxes, including tariffs.

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Taliban Sets 3-Month Deadline For Traders To End Reliance On Pakistan Routes

At a press conference Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar told that the change is to protect the dignity of the country, as Pakistan has repeatedly blocked routes for their trade.

(News Agency) Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs of Afghanistan, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar has told traders to reduce business with Pakistan and use other routes for the transit of goods. At a press conference he told that the change is to protect the dignity of the country, as Pakistan has repeatedly blocked routes for their trade. The directive also aims to safeguard trade, industry and the rights of Afghans. Traders are also instructed to redirect imports that currently come from Pakistan to alternative markets and countries. Apart from that, all medicines should be imported from other countries. Setting a three-month deadline to establish alternative trade routes, the Taliban has said that

after that, the Ministry of Finance will neither tax nor allow medicines being imported from Pakistan. Border points between the two South Asian countries have been closed since October 11 as clashes broke out, causing casualties on both sides. Meanwhile, traders in Pakistan urged the government to open the border points as it is "causing severe disruption to the supply chain of perishable goods". At a press conference, All Pakistan Markets Federation central president Malik Sohni said that the closure has rendered thousands of labourers jobless and inflicted heavy financial losses on both traders and the national exchequer. "Hundreds of trucks loaded with fruits, vegetables, and other agricultural produce are stranded at the



border, and much of the produce has already perished," Malik said. He expressed frustration and said, "In many parts of the world,

even hostile countries keep trade routes open in the interest of their people". Pakistan exports cement, medicines, flour, steel,

textiles, fruits, and vegetables to Afghanistan, while it imports coal, soapstone, dry fruits, and fresh fruits from across the border.

Kazakhstan Parliament Passes Russian-Style Anti-LGBTQ Law

(News Agency) Kazakhstan's parliament on Wednesday passed a bill to ban the promotion of what it calls "non-traditional sexual orientation" in public spaces and the media, a copycat of Russia's anti-LGBTQ laws. Rights groups described the measure, which needs to be approved by the upper house, as

statement. Located between Russia and China, the vast former Soviet republic rich in natural resources, is trying to balance between its superpower neighbours and the West. Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev is currently on a state visit to Moscow, where he is expected to sign a strategic partnership agreement with Russian leader Vladimir Putin. Earlier this year Tokayev slammed the rise of what he called LGBTQ values. "For decades, so-called democratic moral values, including LGBT, were imposed on many countries," he wrote on social media. Echoing language used by Moscow, he added that various NGOs and foundations had used



discriminatory and said it would increase the vulnerability of LGBTQ people in the Central Asian Muslim-majority country, an ally of Russia. The legislation would ban "information containing propaganda of paedophilia and/or non-traditional sexual orientation in public spaces, as well as in the media." Numerous rights groups urged MPs to reject the law, saying adopting it "would blatantly violate Kazakhstan's international human rights commitments," the International Partnership for Human Rights said in a

that as a facade for meddling in other countries' internal affairs. Russia adopted its own anti-LGBTQ law in 2013, initially banning what it called the "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships" among children. It expanded the measure to adults after it invaded Ukraine in 2022 and has ramped up a campaign targeting LGBTQ groups and people. Several other countries, including EU members Hungary and Bulgaria have also passed anti-LGBTQ "propaganda" laws that critics say are inspired by Russia's.

Sheikh Hasina Says Her Return To Bangladesh Hinges On These 3 Factors

(News Agency) Ousted former Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina has said her return home hinges on the restoration of "participatory democracy", lifting of the ban on the Awami League and the conduct of free, fair and inclusive elections. In an exclusive email interview to PTI from an undisclosed location in India, Hasina also accused the unelected Yunus administration of "endangering ties with India and empowering extremist forces". Contrasting her foreign policy with that of the current interim government, she said the "broad and deep" relationship between Dhaka and New Delhi should be able to withstand the "foolhardiness of the Yunus interlude". Hasina thanked the Indian government for providing her refuge and said she was "immensely grateful to India's government and its people for their kind hospitality". "The most important condition for my return to Bangladesh is the same condition that the Bangladeshi people require: a return to participatory democracy. The interim administration must rescind its ban on the Awami

League and allow elections that are free, fair, and inclusive," she told PTI. Hasina, Bangladesh's longest-serving prime minister, left the country on August 5, 2024, after weeks of violent anti-government protests. The massive agitation forced her resignation and eventual move to India, paving the way for the Yunus-led interim administration. Asked whether her government mishandled the protests, the 78-year-old leader said, "Obviously, we lost control of the situation and that was regrettable." "There are many lessons to be learned from these terrible incidents, but in my view, some of the responsibility is also on the so-called student leaders (actually seasoned political firebrands) who whipped up the crowds." Hasina also rejected reports that she had called for a boycott of the polls, scheduled for February next year, and insisted that any election excluding the Awami League would lack legitimacy. "Tens of millions of people support us... That would be a huge missed opportunity for our country, which badly needs a government ruling with the people's genuine consent."

Khawaja Asif's "War" Threat To Kabul After Pak Taliban Claims Islamabad Attack

Asif dismissed Afghanistan's condemnation of the terror attack as "political drama", claiming that most of the terrorists that were killed during confrontations with Pakistani forces have been Afghans.



(News Agency) Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has warned Kabul of "war" following recent terrorist attacks in Islamabad. Accusing the Afghan Taliban regime of harbouring terrorists responsible for violence in Pakistan, Asif threatened that Islamabad was "compelled" to carry out strikes on Afghanistan. Asif's statement came after 12 people were killed and 36 were injured in a suicide blast in Islamabad on Tuesday. The Pakistani Taliban (TTP) has claimed the suicide bombing. Speaking in an interview with Geo News, the Pakistani minister said attacks on "terrorist sanctuaries" in Afghanistan "could not be ruled out" and war with Kabul "could definitely happen" after Tuesday's attack. Asif also dismissed

Afghanistan's condemnation of the terror attack as "political drama", claiming that most of the terrorists that were killed during confrontations with Pakistani forces have been Afghans. He said that Pakistan was "compelled" to act after Tuesday's attacks. "All these terrorists have come from there (Afghanistan), and their formations have penetrated into Pakistan over many months. They've been slowly stationing these groups here for the past year; they've sent around 2,500-3,000 people in the past year, and they're present in various areas... Around 55 per cent of terrorists killed were Afghans," he said. Asif further alleged there was no "united government" in Kabul and claimed the Taliban regime was composed of various

groups and factions with different interests and agendas. "Some are linked with India, and some have their strings being pulled from elsewhere, so both of these incidents, I think, are a prelude to a coming aggression that could happen from the Afghan side, actually, it will be Indian aggression that is being waged in our country through the route of Afghanistan," he said. He warned India and Afghanistan against any misadventure,

saying Pakistan would "pay back in the same coin." "Pakistan will never initiate any military adventure; however, we will not let any act of aggression go unanswered; we will respond forcefully," he said. In his earlier interviews, Asif, without any evidence, has claimed that Kabul was fighting "India's proxy war" along the Durand Line.

'Increased Temperature Of War'

In another interview

circulating online, Asif claimed, "By attacking Islamabad, Afghanistan has increased the temperature of war." When the reporter mentioned that the TTP had claimed responsibility for the Islamabad blast, he seemed genuinely surprised and replied, "Is it?" Later, in a post on X, the Pakistani minister said that Islamabad was in a "state of war", without directly naming anyone. "We are in a state of war."

Apple Drops Gay Dating Apps 'Blued', 'Finka' From China On Government Order

(News Agency) Apple said it has pulled two of China's biggest gay dating apps, Blued and Finka, under pressure from Chinese authorities, in the latest sign of a tightening grip on the LGBTQ community. An Apple spokesperson said in a statement that the company removed the two dating apps from China "based on an order from the Cyberspace Administration of China", without further elaborating. "We follow the laws in the countries where we operate," the spokesperson told The Associated Press. A check by The Associated Press on Tuesday found that the two apps are not available on Apple's app store in China, although an "express" version of Blued could still be found. It was unclear what the difference is between the full and express versions or if an Android version might be available. Blued was available "only in China," Apple said. Finka's

developer "elected to remove the app" outside of China earlier this year, the company added. Another popular gay dating app, Grindr, was pulled from Apple's app store in China in 2022. China's LGBTQ community and advocacy groups are under intensifying pressure from authorities, even though the country decriminalized homosexuality in 1997. Some LGBTQ groups have been forced to cease operations in recent years in China and activism has been constrained. Blued and Finka have the same parent company, BlueCity, a China-founded company that focuses on the LGBTQ community in China and abroad. BlueCity was delisted from the Nasdaq in 2022, when it was taken private. Last year, Apple also reportedly removed apps including WhatsApp and Threads from its app store in China under an order by the Cyberspace Administration of China.

China's 'Cryptoqueen' Jailed In UK Over \$6.6 Billion Bitcoin Scam

(News Agency) A Chinese woman who was found with 5 billion pounds (\$6.6 billion) in Bitcoin after defrauding more than 128,000 people in China in a Ponzi scheme was sentenced by a UK court on Tuesday to over 11 years in prison. Police said the investigation into Zhimin Qian, 47, led to officers recovering devices holding 61,000 Bitcoin in the largest cryptocurrency seizure in the UK. Qian, dubbed "cryptoqueen" by British media, was arrested in April 2024 after spending years evading the authorities and living an "extravagant" lifestyle in Europe, staying in luxury hotels across the continent and buying fine jewelry and watches, prosecutors said. Police said she ran a pyramid scheme that lured more than 128,000 people to invest in her business between 2014 and 2017, including many who invested their life savings and pensions. Authorities said she stored the illegally obtained funds in Bitcoin assets. When she

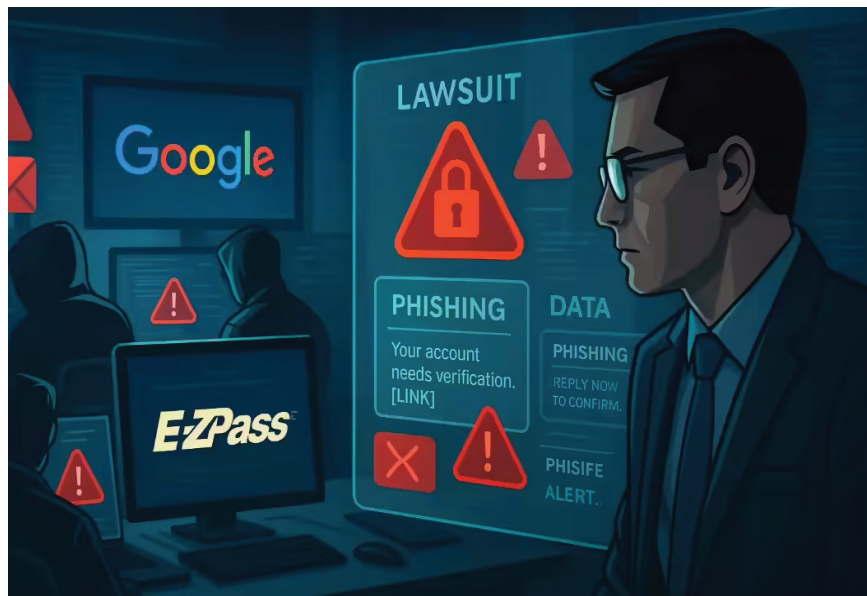
attracted the attention of Chinese authorities, Qian fled to the UK under a fake identity. Once in London, police said she rented a "lavish" house for over 17,000 pounds (\$23,000) per month. Investigators found notes Qian had written documenting her aspirations — including her "intention to become the monarch of Liberland, a self-proclaimed country consisting of a strip of land between Croatia and Serbia." The businesswoman, who had pleaded guilty to money laundering offenses and transferring and possessing criminal property, was sentenced Tuesday to 11 years and eight months at Southwark Crown Court. She was sentenced alongside her accomplice Seng Hok Ling, 47, a Malaysian national who was accused of helping Qian transfer and launder the cryptocurrency. Ling was jailed at the same court for four years and 11 months after he pleaded guilty to one count of transferring criminal property.



Image credit: x.com/@liannmiles

Google sues cybercriminal group behind E-ZPass, USPS text phishing scams

(By Our Staff Reporter) : filed a lawsuit Wednesday against a foreign cybercriminal group behind a massive SMS phishing, or "smishing," operation. Dubbed by some cyber researchers as the "Smishing Triad," the organization, which Google said is largely based out of China, uses a phishing-as-a-service kit named "Lighthouse" to create and deploy attacks using fraudulent texts. The crime group has amassed more than a million victims across 120 countries, Google said in a release. "They were preying on users' trust in reputable brands such as E-ZPass, the U.S. Postal Service, and even us as Google," Google general counsel Halimah DeLaine Prado told CNBC. "The 'Lighthouse' enterprise or software creates a bunch of templates in which you create fake websites to pull users' information." Google brought claims under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations, or RICO, Act, the Lanham Act, and the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, or CFAA, and is seeking to dismantle the group and the Lighthouse platform. The texts usually contain malicious links to a fake website designed to steal victims' sensitive



financial information, including Social Security numbers, banking credentials and more. The messages can often appear in the form of a fake fraud alert, delivery update, unpaid government fee notification, or other seemingly urgent texts. The crime group has stolen approximately between 12.7 million and 115 million credit cards in the U.S. alone, Google said. "The idea is to prevent its

continued proliferation, deter others from doing something similarly, as well as protect both the users and brands that were misused in these websites from future harm," DeLaine Prado said. The Alphabet-owned company said it has found more than 100 website templates generated by Lighthouse using Google's branding on sign-in screens to trick victims into thinking the sites were

legitimate. Internal and third-party investigations found that around 2,500 members of the syndicate were corresponding on a public Telegram channel to recruit more members, share advice, and test and maintain the Lighthouse software itself, DeLaine Prado said. She added that the organization also had a "data broker" group, which supplied the list of potential victims and

contacts, a "spammer" group, responsible for the SMS messages, and a "theft" group that would coordinate their attacks using the procured credentials on public Telegram channels. Google said it's the first company to take legal action against SMS phishing scams and is additionally endorsing three bipartisan bills intended to protect against fraud and cyberattacks. "While the lawsuit is one potential vector in which we can disrupt it, we also think that this type of cyber activity requires a policy-based approach," DeLaine Prado said. The trio of bills includes the Guarding Unprotected Aging Retirees from Deception, or GUARD, Act, the Foreign Robocall Elimination Act, which would establish a task force targeting foreign illegal robocalls, and the Scam Compound Accountability and Mobilization Act, which targets scam compounds and supports survivors of human trafficking within the centers. The litigation is part of Google's broader strategy to bring cyber protection awareness to users. The company recently rolled out more safety features, including a Key Verifier tool and artificial intelligence-powered spam detection in Google Messages.

Paris Jackson admits drugs 'ruined' her life as she reveals hole in her nose



(By Our Staff Reporter) : Paris Jackson is getting brutally honest about the damage her past drug use caused. The 27-year-old daughter of the late Michael Jackson stunned fans after she showed off a "perforated septum" in a candid TikTok video. "I have a really loud whistle when I breathe through my nose," Jackson said in the clip as she pointed her phone's flashlight up her nose. "And that is because I have what is called a perforated septum," she explained, noting it's "slightly different from a deviated septum." "That is from what you think it's from," Jackson said, before adding, "Don't do drugs, kids" and pointing directly at the camera. The "American Horror Stories" actress admitted that her past drug use "ruined my life." She said she "didn't recommend" taking drugs. Jackson told fans she's now six years sober but still lives with the consequences. She further explained she has no plans to undergo surgery to fix her nose because "you have to take pills when you have a surgery that gnarly." Jackson said she's had the condition since she was 20 — and

that it can interfere with her music career. The musician added that she could "thread a spaghetti noodle through" the hole in her septum. The "Gringo" actress has been vocal about self-acceptance and resilience in recent months. Fox News Digital has reached out to reps for Jackson. In September, she hit back at critics who mocked her sheer dress during Paris Fashion Week. "I don't really understand why the human body is a driving force for such discomfort in so many people," she stated. "It's just a body. It's just a body on a human, which is an animal." Jackson, a longtime animal advocate and practicing vegan, has previously shut down critical comments on social media after followers called her "old" and "haggard." But Jackson didn't let the criticism stop her from a cheeky response afterward. In a video at the time, appearing without makeup and with her hair in a messy bun, Jackson wrote, "this is no filter no makeup and regular lighting for the people that wrote really s----- comments about how old and haggard I look in my last video."

Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac Explore Portable Mortgage Options

(By Our Staff Reporter) : Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are studying new ways for homebuyers to take over existing mortgages or move loans between properties, according to Federal Housing Finance Agency Director Bill Pulte. "Fannie, Freddie eyeing assumable or portable loans," Pulte said in a post on X. The two government-backed mortgage enterprises currently allow fixed-rate loan transfers only in limited cases, such as death or divorce. Mortgage Professional America reported that if broader transfers are approved, the change could help more homes sell in a market where many owners have lower-than-market rates. It could also create new risks and reduce profits for lenders. An assumable loan lets a buyer take over the seller's mortgage. In Canada, borrowers can "port" their loan to a new home instead. That is a key distinction. "Assumability



stays with the house. Portability stays with you," said Emmanuel Santa-Donato, senior vice president and chief market analyst at Tomo Mortgage. He said Canada's model works partly because that country enforces strict prepayment penalties, while the U.S. allows borrowers to refinance into lower rates without

such limits. Many lenders may hesitate to expand assumable loans because they would retain older, lower-rate mortgages instead of originating new ones. Sellers may also want compensation for giving up the benefit of a cheaper mortgage. In strong markets, assumable mortgages might not make

homes more affordable for buyers. "I do think this thread can get lost in the conversation around assumable mortgages," Santa-Donato said. Supporters say the change could still improve affordability for many buyers. About 70% of current borrowers have mortgage rates below 5%. Allowing \$9 trillion in existing

loans averaging 3% to transfer could save a typical buyer about \$700 a month, or more than \$200,000 over the life of a mortgage, said Raunaq Singh, CEO of Roam, a brokerage that focuses on assumable loans. Servicers could also benefit. "They can collect 25 basis points per payment and retain their servicing rights instead of having them paid off," Singh said. Lenders might issue a second mortgage to cover the gap between the existing loan and a higher sale price. Borrowers would still need to meet underwriting standards, said Kara Snow, senior regulatory counsel at Covius. If housing prices continue to soften and Pulte's plan advances, assumable or portable mortgages could become a new option for U.S. homeowners and buyers. There are no solid indications of when or if the portability option may broadly develop for U.S. homebuyers.

Families Across Northern India Mourn Victims of Red Fort Blast

(By Our Staff Reporter) : The powerful explosion near Delhi's Red Fort not only shattered the capital's calm but also brought devastation to families hundreds of kilometres away, who are now struggling to cope with the sudden loss of their loved ones. From the quiet villages of Shravasti and Deoria to the bustling towns of Meerut, Amroha, and Shamli, the victims of the deadly car blast were ordinary people — taxi and e-rickshaw drivers, cosmetic shop owners, and bus conductors — all striving to support their families and build better lives. Among them was 32-year-old Dinesh Mishra of Ganeshpur village in Shravasti district, who worked at a printing press in Delhi's Chawri Bazar to provide for his wife and three children. His father, Bhure Mishra, recalled Dinesh's recent visit home for Diwali. "He was a hardworking man. He wanted to give his children a good education. We still can't believe he is gone," Bhure said, his voice breaking as neighbours gathered to console the family. District Magistrate Ashwini Pandey confirmed that Dinesh's body was being brought back to Shravasti and would arrive by Tuesday evening. "We have spoken to the family and assured them of all possible assistance," he told PTI. In Meerut, grief was compounded by discord as the family of 32-year-old Mohsin — an e-rickshaw driver who had moved to Delhi two years ago — disagreed over



his burial. While his wife Sultana wanted him laid to rest in Delhi, where they had made a home and their children studied, his parents insisted on burying him in Meerut. Neighbours tried to mediate as emotions ran high. "The blast took Mohsin away, but now even the family is divided," said a neighbour. After hours of tension and police involvement, Sultana ultimately took the body for burial. Eighteen-year-old Nauman Ansari from Shamli was in Delhi to buy cosmetics for his shop when the explosion cut his life short. "Nauman was killed on the spot while his cousin Aman sustained injuries and is undergoing treatment at Lok Nayak

Hospital in Delhi," his uncle Furkan told PTI. Sonu, a relative working near New Delhi Railway Station, said, "Early this morning, I got a call from my uncle saying Nauman was no more and asked me to reach LNJP Hospital." Ashok Kumar, a 34-year-old DTC conductor from Hasanpur in Amroha district, was another victim. He supported his family and parents through his job in Delhi. He is survived by his wife Sonam and three young children — daughters Aarohi and Kavya, aged 8 and 5, and son Aarav, aged 3. "Ashok was the sole breadwinner for the family," panchayat member Pintu Bhati said. Also among the deceased was 58-year-old Lokesh

Kumar Agarwal, a fertiliser dealer from Hasanpur, who had gone to Delhi to visit a relative at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. "Lokesh was a kind-hearted man who helped everyone in need," said his neighbour Yashpal Singh. In Deoria, 22-year-old Shiva Jaiswal, who ran a small garment shop in Bhaluani, was among those injured. He had gone to Delhi to buy new stock for the festival season. His sister, Purnima Jaiswal, recounted that he had called earlier that day. "Then we heard about the blast on TV and his phone went unreachable. Later, we found out he was admitted to LNJP Hospital," she said. Shiva's mother, Maya Jaiswal, a local BJP Mahila Morcha worker, said she was grateful her son had survived. "He was lucky this time," she said softly. Another victim, 22-year-old Pankaj Sahni from Bihar, drove a taxi in Delhi to support his family. His uncle, Ramdev Sahni, received the tragic news from Kotwali Police Station. "He drove a taxi for three years. We were told the back of his head was blown off. The car, a WagonR, was completely damaged," Sahni said while waiting outside the mortuary. According to Delhi Police, 12 people were killed and over 20 injured in the November 10 blast, which is being investigated by the National Investigation Agency as a possible terror attack. Delhi and neighbouring states, including Uttar Pradesh, remain on high alert.

US Ambassador Sergio Gor Arrives in India, Meets S. Jaishankar

(By Staff Reporter) Sergio Gor has officially taken charge as the new United States Ambassador to India, expressing gratitude and enthusiasm for the role during his swearing-in ceremony at the Oval Office. Gor, 38, said he was "deeply grateful" for the opportunity and looked forward to strengthening the strategic partnership between Washington and New Delhi. His appointment, confirmed by the U.S. Senate in October, underscores the growing importance of Indo-US relations across trade, security, and regional cooperation. He will also serve as Special Envoy for South and Central Asian Affairs, expanding his diplomatic portfolio to include broader regional engagement. Gor emigrated to US via Malta and became a US citizen in 1999.



He quickly embedded himself in the political circles and worked with the Republican National Committee. Gor also served as the spokesperson for far-right lawmakers. In 2020, Gor joined Donald Trump's campaign and managed fundraising operations. He eventually became of Director

of the White House Oval Office, Trump said, "It's great, going good. He (Prime Minister Narendra Modi) stopped... Largely he stopped buying oil from Russia." The US president added that Modi had invited him to India and that he was considering the trip. "He's a friend of mine, and we speak... He wants me to go there. We'll figure that out. I'll go. I had a great trip there with Prime Minister Modi, he's a great man. And I'll be going," Trump said. When asked whether his visit would take place next year, Trump responded, "It could be, yeah." India is set to host the next Quad summit in New Delhi, which will bring together leaders from Australia, Japan, and the United States. The 2024 edition of the summit was held in Wilmington, Delaware, though dates for the upcoming meeting in India are yet to be confirmed.

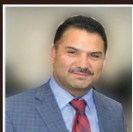
The Beginning

MAD MEN

OF

NU WAY ADVERTISING

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



MAD MEN

OF

NU WAY ADVERTISING

The truth viral sleep trends are telling us: We're all exhausted

'Potato bed' to 'sleepmaxxing', there are several trends that claim to help fix the sleep cycle. So, while the internet keeps growing one trend at a time, experts believe that it has more to say about how exhausted humans really are.

(News Agency) Some light music (maybe white or pink noise?), a cup of herbal tea, a nighttime skincare routine with melatonin in the lead role, a bit of meditation, and maybe an aromatic candle on the weekend too. What's all this? Just ways human beings try their best to create a DIY, calm environment to sleep better. While some people are still taping their mouths to sleep, the latest sleep hack on the internet is the 'potato bed.'

It is all about arranging a cosy, comfy space for a deep sleep cycle. You can thank TikTok, yet again, for this. •But ever wondered why these social media-fuelled trends that spring up left, right, and centre are focused on fixing sleep?

hort answer — everyone's sleep-deprived or struggling with it. Speaking of 'potato bed', it is not the only sleep-related trend that we have come across. Let's have a quick look at the out-of-the-box, borderline bizarre hacks the internet has in store.

that's hot? Sleep struggle fixes

From cocoon-like beds to dimly lit showers, the internet's got a sleep fix for everyone. Some are calming, some are pretty much backed by science, while a few are tasty too. Here's what's trending in the world of sleep hacks:

Potato Bed

This is the latest term on the block. All one needs to do is tuck pillows and some cute plushies under a fitted sheet to make a cocoon-like nest. TikTok users say it mimics a cuddle and helps the brain relax by triggering happy hormones.

Military sleep method

This relaxation technique was originally developed for soldiers to fall asleep quickly despite being in high-stress environments. You progressively relax your muscles, focus on slow breathing, and visualise calm — such as floating on a lake or lying in a velvet hammock — or repeating the phrase "don't think" to prevent racing thoughts.

Science says that it may help by lowering heart rate, boosting melatonin production, and reducing blood pressure.

Dark showering

Showering in darkness or preferably dim light helps your body wind down by reducing sensory stimulation. According to the trend, one must practice before bedtime as it quiets your mind, cuts screen distraction, and signals the brain it's sleeptime.

Mouth taping

Another self-explanatory trend involves taping the mouth horizontally just before bed. This is supposed to encourage nasal breathing instead of mouth breathing. The claim? It improves sleep quality and reduces the risk of dry mouth or snoring. Sleepy girl mocktail This is no herbal tea, but a viral non-alcoholic beverage dubbed as a 'natural sleep aid'. The concoction blends tart cherry juice, magnesium powder, and

sparkling water. Sounds weird, but it is supposed to relax and improve melatonin production; all the necessary ingredients for a good night's slumber. While scientific evidence isn't always conclusive on these trends, the mood on the internet is all about sleepmaxxing your way to perfect sleep. But experts say these aren't just harmless internet fads. They point to something deeper, a collective exhaustion that is palpable yet is not being addressed as it should. Dr. Bipan Kumar Sharma, consultant neurology, Kailash Deepak Hospital, Delhi, says, "These viral sleep hack trends are not random. They are symptoms of a widespread sleep crisis in society, reflecting a collective experience of chronic tiredness and difficulty falling asleep that we are facing today. And again, people are looking for quick fixes instead of working on

actual lifestyle changes. That's why these viral sleep hacks keep popping up now and then." People are aware their sleep is suffering, but aren't ready to make sustainable changes.

Case of sleep deprivation

One India-based study found that nearly one-third of Indians experience severe dyssomnia — a term for various sleep difficulties, including insomnia, trouble falling or staying asleep, waking up tired, or needing excessive sleep. In fact, 61 per cent of Indians get less than six hours of uninterrupted sleep a night. Pretty relatable, right? Dr Sharma recalls a case of a young woman working night shifts for three months who came to the OPD with chronic daily headaches. "Poor sleep can trigger or worsen migraines. But once she worked on her sleep hygiene and lifestyle, her headaches subsided without any medication." And it's not just

adults losing sleep, the crisis is slowly seeping into the routines of children as well. While every age group faces unique sleep challenges, a common problem is excessive screen time. We are all guilty of scrolling ourselves to sleep or checking our phones in the middle of the night. Dr. Puja Kapoor, paediatric neurologist and co-founder of Continua Kids shares, "Once, a three-year-old with mild autism spectrum disorder was brought to me who struggled to fall asleep for hours every night. Despite following all the right sleep hygiene rituals — calming music, a cool room, a clean routine — nothing worked until we introduced melatonin syrup. Within weeks, the child's sleep onset time dropped from three hours to 30 minutes, and soon, his body began producing melatonin naturally again," the paediatric neurologist shares, hinting at a rising sleep crisis.

When your brain doesn't have your back, it pains

(News Agency) Every other person in the room is either dealing with or has already dealt with back pain, neck problems, or poor posture. The harsh reality is that hunched backs and tilted necks have become a common sight wherever you go. While it's easy to blame the tech neck issue and tensed-up muscles on a sedentary lifestyle, long screen hours, and endless scrolling, what if that's not the only problem you should be looking at? Maybe it's not always about that non-ergonomic chair or how you sit, but more about how you feel. Your thoughts may also lead to back pain and spine issues. And that's called stress, the psychological one. There's a spine—stress connection that often goes unnoticed, mostly because we tend to focus only on the physical causes. But it turns out your mental health plays an important role too.

•Experts break down what happens to your back when your brain stays stressed for too long.

Brain and backbone connection

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), lower back pain has already affected over 619 million people across the globe. The numbers are expected to rise, reaching about 843 million cases by 2050. Yes, the situation is grave.

But let's take a moment to understand how your stressful thoughts can be the culprit too. Why? Because the nervous system has a lot to do with emotions. Psychological and musculoskeletal health are strongly interconnected. "When you are stressed or anxious, your body releases stress hormones like cortisol. Muscles, especially those in the neck, shoulders, and back, stay in constant tension. This leads to reduced spinal stability, pain, and stiffness," Dr Ashish Agrawal, director - physiotherapy, CK Birla Hospitals, Jaipur, tells India Today. •Dr Amitabha Chanda, director - neurosurgery, CMRI Kolkata, agrees and explains why this

happens: "Stress-induced cortisol and adrenaline prepare us for action, but when stress lingers, the body forgets to relax. Muscles of the neck, shoulders, and lower back remain in guarded tension, pulling the spine into distorted alignments. Over time, this tension may translate into chronic neck or back pain, stiffness, or postural fatigue." And it's not limited to this. When under constant stress, it's natural for the body to

stoop and hunch forward. This posture, in turn, sends a signal to the brain, a physical message of defeat or helplessness, reinforcing low mood. And that's how poor posture slowly alters the curvature of the spine over time. Due to this, the chest muscles get compressed, leading to shallow breathing. It's all like a vicious circle, an endless chain reaction. Stress can cause you to hunch, hunched posture

affects your breathing further. According to Dr Agrawal, "When you're stressed, your breathing becomes shallow, which means less oxygen reaches your muscles. This lack of oxygen causes fatigue, tightness, and pain. At the same time, the brain becomes more sensitive to pain signals, amplifying even minor discomfort." Hence, your emotions and thoughts take a scientific route, taking a toll on your posture. But how can one really differentiate between back pain caused by chronic stress and regular muscle pain? Emotion-induced physical pain is more diffuse in nature and shows a different pattern than musculoskeletal pain, which is usually associated with a specific movement or posture.





Kim Kardashian slams psychics after bar exam setback: Pathological liars

Kim Kardashian has criticised psychics in a new TikTok video after failing the California Bar Exam, despite predictions she would pass. The reality star earlier reflected on her legal journey and expressed her determination to continue pursuing law.

Kim Kardashian expressed her frustration in a recent TikTok vlog over psychics who assured her she would pass the California Bar Exam, only for her to receive disappointing results. The update follows Kardashian's recent Instagram post, where she revealed she had not cleared the mandatory state bar exam. The reality TV star, who sat for the exam in July 2025, shared that she fell short by a narrow margin and directed strong criticism towards the psychics who confidently predicted her success. While preparing for her mother, Kris Jenner's 70th birthday celebration, Kardashian addressed the reliability of these predictions. "All of the f*cking psychics that we have met with, and that we're obsessed with, are all f*cking full of s**t," Kim told someone while getting ready for the soire, as per Entertainment Weekly. She further noted the repeated assurances she received from several psychics. "They all collectively, maybe four of them, have told me I was gonna pass the bar, so they're all full pathological liars," the Skims co-founder said, adding, "Don't believe anything they say."

Earlier this month, Kardashian addressed her followers on social media about her progress. "Well, I'm not a lawyer yet — I just play a very well-dressed one on TV (sic)," she wrote. "Six years into this law journey, and I'm still all in until I pass the bar. No shortcuts, no giving up — just more studying and even more determination (sic)," she added. Kardashian previously cleared the California First-Year Law Students' Exam, commonly known as the "baby bar," on her fourth attempt in 2021. Since then, she has been working toward the full bar, which is recognised as one of the most difficult exams in the United States, with a pass rate slightly above 50 per cent. Despite this setback, Kardashian described the experience as a motivator rather than a discouragement. "Thank you to everyone who has supported and encouraged me along the way. Falling short isn't failure — it's fuel. I was so close to passing, and that only motivates me even more. Let's go (sic)!" she wrote. Kardashian's interest in law comes from her late father, Robert Kardashian Sr., who was a member of OJ Simpson's defence team.

Gal Gadot honoured with Israel's Genesis Prize for her wartime activism

Gal Gadot was honoured with Israel's Genesis Prize for her wartime support towards her home country. She has been a vocal advocate demanding the release of hostages, ever since the Israel-Hamas conflict escalated.

Actor Gal Gadot has been awarded Israel's Genesis Prize in recognition of her wartime support for her home country. The prestigious 2026 honour is in recognition of her "steadfast defence of Israel at great personal and professional risk".

Describing herself as a "proud Jew and a proud Israeli," the 'Wonder Woman 1984' (2020) actor pledged to donate her \$1 million prize to organisations committed to helping Israel recover from the trauma of its two-year war against Hamas, as reported by the Associated Press. This act of advocacy has, at times, led to her facing personal backlash. In a statement released by the prize organisers on Tuesday, Gal Gadot said that "Israel has endured unimaginable pain." She emphasised the need for recovery, saying: "Now we must begin to heal — to rebuild hearts, families and communities." The Genesis Prize, dubbed 'the

Jewish Nobel' by Time magazine, is presented annually to an individual recognised for their professional achievements, significant contributions to humanity, and dedication to Jewish values. Historically, recipients have dedicated the award funds to support causes vital to them, which have ranged from combating antisemitism and advancing women's rights to fighting for economic justice. On October 7, 2023, Hamas militants launched an attack that killed around 1,200 people in southern Israel and took over 250 hostages, immediately escalating into the war in Gaza, according to the Associated Press. After the war escalated with Hamas, which led to civilian casualties in both Israel and Palestine, Gal Gadot came forward to support her country. Before making modelling and her acting debut, the 40-year-old served in the Israeli military. She campaigned for the

release of hostages held by Hamas and also met with hostage families and released hostages. The actor helped promote the screening in Los Angeles of a graphic film documenting the Hamas attack. Stan Polovets, the co-founder and chair of the Genesis Prize Foundation, praised Gadot's "moral clarity and unwavering love for Israel," saying it had come at great personal and professional risk.

The prestigious award has previously been granted to figures across various fields including former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, actor Michael Douglas, and legendary violinist Itzhak Perlman. Other notable winners include sculptor Anish Kapoor, the director of the film 'Schindler's List' Steven Spielberg, sports owner Robert Kraft, former Soviet political prisoner Natan Sharansky, Pfizer chair Albert Bourla, and actor-singer Barbra Streisand.



After Twinkle's viral cheating remark, Kajol says marriage should have expiry date

In the finale of 'Two Much With Kajol and Twinkle', Kajol sparked a debate by suggesting marriages should have an expiry date and renewal option.

In the season finale of 'Two Much With Kajol and Twinkle', Vicky Kaushal and Kriti Sanon will appear as guests. Before the release, the episode has stirred discussion. In one of the segments, Kajol suggested that marriages should come with an expiry date and an option for renewal.

As the segment began, host Twinkle asked, "Should marriage have an expiry date and a renewal option?" The question brought out divided opinions from the guests. Kriti, Vicky, and Twinkle stood together in disagreement, while Kajol supported the concept and moved to a green box area to indicate her agreement. Twinkle responded humorously to the idea, saying, "No, it's marriage, not a washing machine." Kajol, however, provided her reasoning in support of the proposal, saying, "I definitely think so. What guarantees that you'll marry the right person at the right time? A renewal option would make sense and if there's an expiry date, no one has to suffer for too long." She

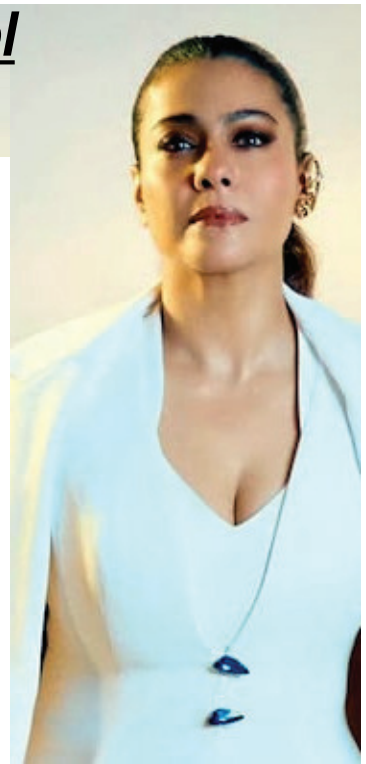
attempted to convince Twinkle to join her position during the exchange. Following this, the conversation also touched upon the topic of wealth and happiness. The statement "Money can buy happiness" was posed to the group. This time, Twinkle and Vicky moved to the side, indicating agreement, while Kajol disagreed and remained apart from them. Explaining her viewpoint, Kajol said, "No matter how much money you have, it can actually become an impediment. It numbs you to the true idea of happiness." Kriti considered the question further and acknowledged that money could provide happiness to some extent. The show's segment also addressed the issue of friendships and romantic relationships. When asked, "Best friends shouldn't date each other's exes," Twinkle affirmed her agreement, explaining, "My friends are more important to me than any man. Woh toh kahi pe bhi mil jayega. (That can be found anywhere)." Twinkle then

looked at Kajol and remarked, "We have an ex in common, but we can't say," prompting Kajol to respond, "Shut up, I beg you," which elicited laughter from everyone present.

This is not the first time a comment made on the show has stirred a debate. In an earlier episode in which Janhvi Kapoor and Karan Johar were guests, they were asked: "Whether emotional infidelity is worse than physical infidelity."

Kajol, Karan Johar, and Twinkle Khanna agreed on the issue, while Janhvi Kapoor stood alone in disagreement. Karan Johar said, "Physical infidelity is not a deal breaker," to which Janhvi replied, "No, the deal is broken." Twinkle reflected on generational differences, saying, "We're in our 50s, she's in her 20s, and she will get into this circle soon. She hasn't seen what we have. Raat gayi baat gayi (What's happened, has happened)."

The finale of 'Two Much With Kajol



and Twinkle' featuring Vicky Kaushal and Kriti Sanon will stream from Thursday on Prime Video.

Priyanka Chopra goes guns blazing in saree: 1st look from Rajamouli's Globe Trotter

SS Rajamouli shared Priyanka Chopra's first look as Mandakini from 'Globe Trotter'. The actor is seen in a fierce appearance, aiming a pistol while wearing a yellow saree.

Director SS Rajamouli into his chair literally shared Priyanka Chopra's first look from his much-anticipated film - 'Globe Trotter'. He introduced her action-packed look in a yellow saree.

Rajamouli captioned, "The woman who redefined Indian Cinema on the global stage. November 15th at the Welcome back, Desi Girl! @priyankachopra... Can't wait for the world to witness your myriad shades of MANDAKINI!... #GlobeTrotterGlobe Trotter' also features Mahesh Babu and Prithviraj Sukumaran in pivotal characters. Recently, Prithviraj's look from the movie was also released. While revealing Prithviraj's look on his Instagram handle, Rajamouli captioned, "After canning the first shot with Prithvi, I walked up to him and said you are one of the finest actors I've ever known. Bringing life to this sinister, ruthless, powerful antagonist KUMBHA was creatively very satisfying. Thank you @therealprithvi for slipping

#GlobeTrotter... (sic)." The 'Globe Trotter' director also shared Mahesh Babu's glimpse from the film, depicting sunset, while the actor stood in the shadow and wrote, "Just dropped a small thing for you all See you on November 15th at the #GlobeTrotter event (sic)." Apart from first looks of Prithviraj and Priyanka, the makers have now released the film's first single, featuring vocals by Shruti Haasan. Composed by Oscar-winning musician MM Keeravaani, the track titled 'GlobeTrotter' (from 'GlobeTrotter') was released on YouTube. The emotionally charged number blends Shruti Haasan's distinct vocals with Keeravaani's signature grand orchestration. As the 'GlobeTrotter' event draws closer, the team has intensified its promotional activities. The makers have confirmed that the first-ever event will be held on November 15 at Ramoji Film City, Hyderabad.



Why Guillermo del Toro's *Frankenstein* is the adaptation every classic deserves

Guillermo del Toro's 'Frankenstein' is a masterful adaptation that brings alive the true spirit of Mary Shelley's novel, focusing on the Creature's humanity rather than horror. It beautifully explores themes of loneliness, rejection, and the complex bond between creator and creation.

Every generation gets the 'Frankenstein' it deserves, but rarely the one it needs. For decades, the name has reminded us of the lumbering monster from old black-and-white films. But with Guillermo del Toro's 2025 version, he doesn't just retell the story – he restores the heart of Mary Shelley's novel. His film shows what a true adaptation should be: one that understands the soul of the original work rather than just its plot and one that stays true to the heart of the novel while making it feel new and alive.

The Creature, Not the Monster

The beauty of del Toro's 'Frankenstein' lies in how it refuses to see the Creature as a villain. True to his filmmaking style, del Toro finds humanity in the outcast. His story isn't about horror or science gone wrong. It's about loneliness and rejection. It focusses on the Creature's pain, his wish to be loved, and the cruelty of being abandoned by his maker, Victor Frankenstein. Del Toro reminds us that Shelley's real theme was never creation, but abandonment. The cast gives the film its depth and emotion. Jacob Elordi's performance as the Creature anchors the film. He captures exactly what Shelley imagined – tall, beautiful, smart, and



heartbreakingly misunderstood.

He isn't a brainless beast but a thinking, feeling being – intelligent, graceful, and deeply tragic. You can see his pain in his eyes, his movements, and his voice. When he finally turns against his creator, it doesn't feel evil, it feels heartbreaking. Oscar Isaac, as Victor Frankenstein, is equally compelling. His Victor isn't a mad scientist, but a man terrified of death and obsessed with control. Isaac plays him with quiet intensity, showing us how grief and fear can twist even the brightest minds. His pride and guilt make him as human as he is flawed.

When Elordi and Isaac share the screen, their scenes spark with raw emotion. Their conversations become a battle between creator and creation – between love and fear. These moments give the film its soul.

Del Toro's Vision on Screen

Visually, 'Frankenstein' is breathtaking. Every frame feels like a painting: moody, rich, and layered with meaning. The cold colours, dim candlelight, and detailed sets pull us into a world that feels both magical and real. Del Toro uses the camera like a storyteller, turning ideas about God, morality, and power into images we can feel. The

film's look is gothic, but its heart is tender.

Staying True to the Spirit of the Novel

What makes this adaptation special is how del Toro honours Shelley's message while making it his own. He doesn't copy the book word for word; instead, he captures what it means. His story makes Victor the real monster – a man broken by pride and fear – while showing the Creature as a mirror of our own search for love and belonging.

By focusing on the bond between Victor and the Creature, del Toro turns 'Frankenstein' into a story about parenthood, emotional neglect, and the cost of ambition. It feels timeless yet painfully relevant.

The Modern Classic

In the end, del Toro's 'Frankenstein' is not just another remake. It's a lesson in how to adapt a classic. It treats Shelley's work with care and honesty. It doesn't just repeat the past; it brings out the truth that still matters.

By finding humanity in horror, del Toro has given us a 'Frankenstein' for today, one that sees the monster as a man, and reminds us that the real tragedy is how easily we turn away from what we create.

De De Pyar De 2 advance booking: Ajay Devgn's rom-com off to promising start

Ajay Devgn's 'De De Pyar De 2' is all set for a strong start at the box office. The romantic comedy sequel has earned over Rs 19 lakh in advance bookings and could see a solid opening weekend.

'De De Pyar De 2' is gearing up to hit the screens this weekend. The Ajay Devgn starrer is expected to have a good opening on Friday, and the advance booking suggests it may just be able to do just that.

The film's advance booking opened on Tuesday, and as per the trade website Sacnilk, it sold around 5382 tickets for its opening day. As of 10 am on Wednesday, 'De De Pyar De 2' grossed around Rs 19.13 lakh for its Day 1, and Rs 1.37 crore with block seats.

The film, a romantic comedy sequel to the 2019 film, has a



strong cast, including R Madhavan, Rakul Preet Singh, Javed Jaaferi and Meezan Jafri. The trailer of 'De De Pyar De 2' was received well, and therefore, the film is likely to wrap up a good total during its first weekend. 'Haq' is already running in theatres, but it is nearing its complete run, and that would give a better chance to 'De De Pyar De 2' to begin on a strong note. If the film receives good word-of-mouth, it will help boost its run towards the first week.

'De De Pyar De 2' is directed by Anshul Garg and is scheduled to release on November 14.

Warren Buffett signs off: Key takeaways from his final letter to shareholders

The 95-year-old investor, who has led Berkshire for nearly six decades, announced he will no longer write the company's annual reports or address shareholders at the annual meeting.

Warren Buffett has written what he calls his final letter to Berkshire Hathaway shareholders, and it's as much about life as it is about business. The 95-year-old investor, who has led Berkshire for nearly six decades, announced he will no longer write the company's annual reports or address shareholders at the famous annual meeting. "As the British would say, I'm going quiet," Buffett wrote. His note, titled *A Few Final Thoughts*, was a rare mix of humility, reflection, and humour. He confirmed that Greg Abel will take over as CEO by the end of the year, describing him as "a great manager, a tireless worker and an honest communicator." Buffett said he will continue writing short Thanksgiving messages each year to stay connected with Berkshire's loyal investors. Buffett's announcement marks the end of one of the most iconic eras in corporate America. For over six decades, his annual letters were studied by investors worldwide, often blending financial wisdom with moral clarity. In his final note, Buffett didn't discuss market forecasts or stock strategies, instead, he left behind reflections on humility, kindness, and living a meaningful life. "I will no longer be writing Berkshire's annual report or talking endlessly at the annual meeting. As the British would say, I'm going quiet," he said, before adding with his characteristic humour: "Sort of."

'IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO IMPROVE'

Looking back on his long career, Buffett said he feels better about the second half of his life than the first. His advice: don't let regrets weigh you down. "Don't beat yourself up over past mistakes, learn at least a little from them and move on. It is never too late to improve," he wrote. He also reminded readers to find inspiration from the right people. "Get the right heroes and copy them. You can start with Tom Murphy; he was the



best." Buffett used his final letter to define what true greatness means, and it had little to do with wealth or fame. "Greatness does not come about through accumulating great amounts of money, great amounts of publicity or great power in government," he wrote. "When you help someone in any of thousands of ways, you help the world. Kindness is costless but also priceless." He ended that

thought with a reminder of equality and humility: "Keep in mind that the cleaning lady is as much a human being as the Chairman. Buffett also shared a story about Alfred Nobel, the founder of the Nobel Prize, who changed his life after reading his own mistaken obituary. Using that as a metaphor, Buffett advised readers to decide early what they want their legacy to be: "Don't count on a newsroom

mix-up. Decide what you would like your obituary to say and live the life to deserve it." In what reads like a farewell, Buffett thanked his shareholders, employees, and America itself for the opportunities he enjoyed. "I wish all who read this a very happy Thanksgiving. Yes, even the jerks; it's never too late to change," he wrote, ending with his signature mix of humour and grace.

Kim Kardashian's Skims valued at \$5bn after raising new funding

Skims, founded by reality TV star and entrepreneur Kim Kardashian along with CEO Jens Grede, said on Wednesday it had raised \$225m in new capital, valuing the shapewear label at \$5bn. Kardashian's ventures, including her cosmetics brand SKKN, have attracted young shoppers and benefited from her vast social media following. Similarly, other celebrity-backed brands have also drawn venture capital investment, as firms bet on the marketing power and built-in audiences of high-profile founders to drive consumer demand. Elf Beauty agreed to buy Hailey Bieber's makeup and skincare brand, Rhode, for about \$1bn earlier this year, while Rihanna-backed Fenty Beauty and Khloé Kardashian's Good

American have also drawn venture capital funding. Skims said it plans to use the new capital to

wait to take Skims to the next level as we continue to innovate and set the standard for our



broaden its intimates and shapewear lines, expand further into apparel and activewear and enhance its retail presence and international growth. "We can't

industry," Kardashian, who serves as chief creative officer, said in Wednesday's press release. "This milestone reflects continued confidence in our long-term vision

and coupled with disciplined execution, positions Skims to unlock its next phase of growth," Grede said in a statement. Skims, founded in 2019, said it was on track to exceed \$1bn in net sales in 2025. Earlier this year, Coty sold a 20% stake in Kardashian's beauty brand to Skims, consolidating the two businesses under a single brand. The company, known for its focus on inclusive sizing, now operates 18 retail stores in the US and two franchise locations in Mexico. Skims said it was laying the groundwork to be a predominantly physical business over the next few years. The company has also forged a partnership with sportswear giant Nike to launch activewear for women. After the latest fundraising, Skims is now

larger than its competitors, Victoria's Secret and Under Armour, combined. Victoria's Secret has a market capitalization of \$2.86bn, and Under Armour is worth \$1.98bn. The latest fundraising in the apparel company was led by investment giant Goldman Sachs Alternatives with participation from BDT & MSD Partners' affiliated funds. Jens has said that Skims "deserves" to be a public company. But in an interview with WWD late last year he suggested that plans for a sale were not imminent. "We might make that position in the future, but that's not what I'm thinking about," he said. After the latest fundraising, Kardashian, 45, is now worth \$1.9bn, according to Forbes, with the deal adding \$200m to her fortune.

Why Is Pneumonia 'More Serious' Than the Common Cold And Ways To Prevent The Infection

Although pneumonia affects around 450 million people worldwide, the level of discussion and awareness about it remains far below what such a widespread illness deserves.

Pneumonia contributes to an alarming global death toll of 4 million people each year, representing 7% of all deaths worldwide. In an age when humanity is exploring outer space, the fact that millions continue to die from pneumonia every year is a profound tragedy and a stark reminder of global health inequities. It is important to remember that, in many cases, a flu vaccination could have prevented a significant portion of these pneumonia cases and related complications.

On the eve of World Pneumonia Day, it's the right time to understand why this illness deserves special attention and how we can all help prevent it. Dr. Sujith Varghese Abraham, Specialist, Department of Respiratory Medicine, KIMSHEALTH Thiruvananthapuram, shares all you need to know. Pneumonia is an infection that affects one or both lungs, where the air

sacs called alveoli become filled with fluid or pus, impairing breathing and oxygen exchange. This can lead to serious complications such as



respiratory failure, sepsis, prolonged hospitalization, and even death if left untreated.

It can be caused by bacteria (like Streptococcus pneumoniae), viruses (including influenza and COVID-19), or, rarely, fungi. Anyone can develop community-acquired pneumonia, but infants under 5 years, older adults, and individuals with chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, chronic kidney disease, or those taking immunosuppressants are at a higher risk of complications.

Why Pneumonia Is More Serious Than a Cold

The presence of respiratory symptoms alone should not be assumed to indicate pneumonia.

The common cold is the most frequent cause of acute-onset respiratory symptoms, typically affecting only the upper airway. Common symptoms include sneezing, a stuffy nose, and a mild cough, which usually resolve within a week or two.

Pneumonia, in contrast, affects the lung parenchyma (the spongy lung tissue) directly, leading to high-grade fever, chest pain, chills, and shortness of breath. Patients often describe a deep, heavy cough producing green or yellow phlegm, along with

fatigue and weakness. The primary reason it is important to distinguish the common cold, most often caused by viruses from other infections is to ensure that antibiotics are used appropriately. Many respiratory infections, such as the common cold, do not benefit from antibiotics since these medications target bacteria, not viruses. Unnecessary antibiotic use can lead to side effects and contribute to the growing problem of antibiotic resistance.

Unlike a simple cold, pneumonia can progress to respiratory failure requiring ventilator support if not treated promptly. It may also deteriorate quickly and cause widespread infection through the bloodstream, known as sepsis. In older adults, confusion or altered mental status may be the only early sign of illness. These distinctions emphasize that pneumonia is far more serious than a "bad cold," representing a potentially life-threatening condition that demands timely medical attention.

How to Prevent Pneumonia

Pneumonia is largely a

preventable disease through healthy practices, good nutrition, and timely vaccination.

Get vaccinated: Vaccination is one of the best preventive measures. Pneumococcal and influenza vaccines protect against common bacterial and viral causes of pneumonia. These are strongly recommended for children, seniors, and anyone with chronic medical conditions. In the current era, where even minor health events are sometimes wrongly attributed to the COVID-19 vaccine, vaccine confidence among adults has declined. Growing misinformation and exaggerated fears about side effects have contributed to reduced acceptance of routine adult immunizations and booster doses. Maintain good hygiene: Wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your face, especially after being in public spaces or around sick individuals. Practice cough hygiene, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when coughing or sneezing to prevent spreading infection to others.

From Sugar Rush To Sugar Crush: Gen Z's Fun Guide To Decoding Diabetes

Honestly, medical jargon can sound more complicated than a Gen Z group chat. Terms like HbA1c or glycemic index can be confusing, yet understanding them could change the way we view our health and that's where The Diabetes Dictionary steps in. Decoding strict medical terms into fun, relatable language helps people understand them better and build awareness about diabetes. When it comes to preventing diabetes, awareness isn't just boring science, it's your ultimate hack to a healthy, diabetes-free life.

Why Decoding Diabetes Is Necessary

India is witnessing a sharp rise in diabetes across all age groups, with many cases going undiagnosed until complications set in. According to recent reports, there are currently over 100 million people living with diabetes in India. The condition is rising not only among older

adults but also in children, teenagers, and young adults in their 20s and 30s. Early awareness and testing can prevent or delay the onset of diabetes but first, people and caregivers (including parents of young children) need to understand what the terms mean. Most adults and young adults lose interest when they hear complex medical language, missing critical cues about their body's warning signs. The Diabetes Dictionary bridges that gap by

turning scientific jargon into everyday, simple, and relatable language. Gen Z's Crash Course in Sugar Awareness Think of this as your cheat sheet to decode the numbers that matter: HbA1c: This reflects your average blood sugar levels over the past 2-3 months, showing how well your body has been managing

glucose. Think of it as your long-term report card, not just a one-day test.

Insulin Resistance: This happens when your body stops responding properly to insulin, the hormone that helps use sugar for energy. Even with enough



insulin, sugar stays in your blood instead of fueling your cells, slowly raising your risk of diabetes. Glycemic Index (GI): The GI measures how quickly a food raises your blood sugar after eating it. Foods with a low GI keep your energy steady, while high-GI foods cause quick spikes and crashes in blood sugar.

Fasting Blood Sugar (FBS): Fasting blood sugar is your body's early-morning status update. It reveals how effectively your body manages blood sugar after several hours of fasting. Prediabetes: Prediabetes means your blood sugar is starting to creep up, not diabetes yet, but your body's giving you a gentle nudge to pay attention. It's the perfect stage to turn things around with small, healthy changes. Beyond the Lingo: Why Knowing the Terms Matters Today's Gen Z culture celebrates skincare routines and clean diets, but the real deal behind all this is preventive health. Knowing your HbA1c or fasting sugar levels can help you catch problems early, make smarter food choices, and protect your long-term health. Regular check-ups, balanced nutrition, and staying active are

the simplest ways to keep your sugar story calm and composed. Simple steps such as consuming low-GI foods (=55) regularly can help regulate blood sugar levels and prevent sudden spikes. These include oats, lentils, apples, milk, yogurt, green vegetables, and sweet potatoes. High-GI foods like white bread, white rice, cornflakes, potatoes, pastries, sugary drinks, and fried snacks should be limited or avoided. Beyond diet, regular exercise, brisk walking, and stress management can all help in maintaining healthy blood sugar levels. The Diabetes Dictionary isn't just a fun take on medical language, it's a reminder that awareness is the first step toward prevention. When health terms become relatable, action becomes instinctive. After all, understanding the terms today is what keeps the "sugar rush" from turning into a "sugar crash" tomorrow.



Crime Without Punishment

The system protects those who commit caste violence while blaming victims for asserting dignity

By Anand Teltumbde

Within the span of days, two incidents have laid bare the entrenched caste realities of contemporary India and the impunity that the Hindu-tva regime has institutionalised. On October 6, 2025 a 71-year-old lawyer hurled a shoe at Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, a Dalit, inside the Supreme Court, defiantly shouting "Sanatan ka apmaan nahi sahaga Hindustan" (India will not tolerate insult to Sanatan Dharma). He was released without charges, his shoe returned, facing no consequences for attacking the country's highest judicial authority. The very next day, October 7, Additional Director General of Police Y. Puran Kumar, also a Dalit, died by suicide at his Chandigarh residence, leaving an eight-page note describing years of caste humiliation and harassment by senior officers. Despite huge public outrage, nothing has been done to the perpetrators.

These two events, occurring within 24 hours, are not aberrations but revelations of a deeper malaise—the normalisation of caste violence and Brahminical supremacy under a majoritarian Hindutva order that has erased accountability for crimes committed in the name of Sanatan Dharma or Hindu honour. One incident reflects physical assault on a Dalit constitutional authority without reprisal; the other, psychological persecution that drove a senior officer to death. Together, they expose an ecosystem where Dalits—irrespective of office, achievement, or rank—remain vulnerable to humiliation and violence sanctioned by ideological impunity.

These are not isolated tragedies but logical outcomes of the Hindutva project that the ruling regime has consolidated over the past decade—an order that

weaponises religion to defend caste and punishes dignity itself.

The Shoe That Revealed Everything

The attack on Chief Justice B.R. Gavai was unprecedented in audacity and deeply revealing in consequence. In a packed Supreme Court room, a lawyer hurled his shoe at the bench headed by CJI Gavai, defiantly shouting a slogan sourced from the Hindutva playbook. He later claimed he was enraged by the CJI's quip—"ask the deity itself to do something"—while dismissing a frivolous plea to restore a Vishnu idol at Khajuraho. Such verbal retorts by judges, right or wrong, are not uncommon. However, the Hindutva networks seized on the remark as an "insult to Sanatan Dharma", manufacturing the outrage that fuelled the assault.

What followed laid bare the regime's moral collapse. The assailant was released within hours. He boasted to the press, "I have no regrets...I was hurt." The Prime Minister's bland condemnation avoided any commitment to legal action. The Bar remained silent; the media soon moved on. By contrast, when a Mumbai lawyer threw a shoe at CJI A.S. Anand in 1999, aggrieved by the verdict in his property matter, he was convicted of contempt and sentenced to four months imprisonment and a fine.

Kishore's act was graver because it was ideological. His slogan invoked Sanatan Dharma—a euphemism for Brahminism that sanctifies caste hierarchy—asserting that religious sentiment trumps constitutional authority. It claimed the right to assault a Dalit Chief Justice in defence of "Hindu honour," confident that society would understand, perhaps even celebrate, the act. This confidence of impunity is no accident. It is the product of a decade-long Hindutva campaign that

has normalised upper-caste violence under the banner of faith. When cow vigilantes lynch Muslims, interfaith couples are attacked, or homes are bulldozed without due process, the same message resounds: violence in the name of Sanatan Dharma enjoys state protection. The online abuse of CJI Gavai was overtly casteist, mocking his intelligence and legitimacy. The hate spewed against him as a Dalit on social media is criminal, but the entire state machinery has been silent. The outrage over "insult to Sanatan" was merely a polite mask for fury at a Dalit occupying the highest judicial office and dismissing an upper-caste petitioner. In the Brahminical logic encoded in Sanatan Dharma, a Dalit exercising authority represents an inversion of the natural order that must be violently corrected. Kishore's attack—and the regime's indulgence—thus revealed everything about Hindutva's compact with caste: that in the new India, religious offence is punishable, but caste violence is not.

The Suicide Note That Indicts a System

On October 7, 2025, Additional Director General of Police Y. Puran Kumar, a 2001-batch Dalit IPS officer from Andhra Pradesh serving in Haryana, shot himself at his Chandigarh residence. In his suicide note, he named several IPS and IAS officers, accusing them of sustained mental harassment, humiliation, and caste-based discrimination.

Kumar detailed how he was sidelined despite seniority, denied postings he deserved, and targeted through fabricated charges. His note spoke of a systematic campaign of humiliation, including attempts to implicate him in a fake bribery case. His wife, Amneet Kumar, an IAS officer, filed a complaint

holding the named officials responsible for his death and demanding their suspension and arrest. What has emerged from Kumar's note reveals the pervasive caste bias that Dalit officers continue to face in "meritocratic" institutions. Kumar wrote of years of "mental harassment and humiliation", of being denied recognition and opportunities his upper-caste peers enjoyed. His decision to end his life after naming his tormentors was both an act of despair and an indictment—a demand that the system confront its casteist rot. Kumar's death demolishes the myth that rank or merit protects Dalits from caste oppression. Here was an officer one step below the state's top cop, yet, even his uniform and authority could not shield him from institutionalised caste prejudice. If an ADGP could be hounded to suicide, what hope remains for Dalit constables or sub-inspectors, not to speak of ordinary Dalits?

The tragedy underscores that caste hierarchy persists beneath the veneer of equality. Despite constitutional safeguards and diversity mandates, India's police forces remain dominated by upper castes, reproducing social hierarchies within the bureaucracy. Dalit officers are routinely marginalised, denied postings, discredited for success, and reminded that—whatever their rank—their caste defines their place. Kumar's final note stands as a searing testament: in caste India, even power wears the badge of humiliation.

The Hindutva Regime's Enabling of Caste Impunity

The current regime has strategically elevated a few Dalits such as Presidents Kovind and Murmu and select ministers—to project inclusiveness.

(Contd. on next page)

This token representation offers aspirational symbols, deflects charges of casteism, and lets the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) claim empowerment while tightening caste hierarchies.

The experiences of CJI Gavai and ADGP Kumar expose the emptiness of this gesture. Symbolic elevation without structural reform offers no protection. When Dalits in high office act independently—as CJI Gavai did when dismissing the Khajuraho petition—they face violence that goes unpunished. When they rise by merit—as Kumar did—they face relentless humiliation the system refuses to address. Visibility masks vulnerability; caste remains the invisible law of power. No wonder, atrocities against Dalits in NCRB reports show a sudden spurt: the average yearly number of cognizable offences against Dalits shooting up from 32,494 to 45,622 during the nine years preceding and succeeding the BJP's takeover of power at the Centre in 2014.

This impunity is not incidental but ideological, rooted in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS's) worldview. From Golwalkar onward, the RSS has glorified varna dharma as a divinely ordained social order. Caste hierarchy, rebranded as cultural harmony, is central to its conception of Hindu civilisation. Once this ideology captured

state power, caste violence became governance by other means—seen in the dilution of SC/ST protections, rise in atrocities, and appointment of upper-caste loyalists across institutions.

The shoe thrown at CJI Gavai and Kumar's suicide expose the same reality: the regime showcases Dalits for legitimacy while preserving Brahminical dominance through systemic impunity.

Both incidents expose a clear pattern: impunity for perpetrators, vulnerability for Dalits—no matter their rank. Kishore assaults the Chief Justice and walks free; officers named in ADGP Kumar's suicide note continue in service despite his wife's complaint. FIRs and inquiries follow, but accountability never arrives.

This impunity is structural, not accidental. With investigative agencies subservient to the regime, judges intimidated, media complicit, and civil society silenced, the system protects those who commit caste violence while blaming victims for asserting dignity. It is an order designed to shield perpetrators and punish resistance.

The episodes of Gavai and Kumar lay bare caste as the enduring grammar of Indian society, unbroken by constitutional promises. From the files hurled at Ambedkar in Baroda to the shoe thrown at CJI Gavai in the Supreme Court, from the historical humiliation of Dalit officials

to Kumar's final note, the continuity is chilling.

Neither constitutional office nor professional merit offers real protection. Upper castes still resist Dalit authority, respond to assertion with violence, and rely on a state apparatus that ensures impunity. Formal equality exists only on paper; Brahminical hierarchy has been reinstalled beneath the veneer of democracy under the current regime.

The lesson for Dalits is stark: individual success within a casteist order cannot secure collective liberation. A few elevated figures—CJI Gavai or ADGP Kumar—do not signal emancipation; they mask continuing subjugation. Kumar's suicide exposes how token inclusion becomes another form of violence when institutions remain Brahminical at the core.

A lawyer assaults the Chief Justice and walks free; officers accused of harassing a Dalit ADGP remain in office. This is not democracy but rule by impunity. The regime has crippled institutional independence—investigative agencies serve power, courts face intimidation, and media functions as propaganda. When even the highest offices offer no protection, ordinary Dalits are left entirely exposed.

Accountability must begin with prosecuting Kishore and the officers named in Kumar's note. Justice demands

independent institutions and sustained political struggle, not momentary outrage. Dalits must reject the BJP's tokenism and pursue Ambedkar's unfinished task—the annihilation of caste, not its reform. The assaults on Gavai and Kumar show that no Dalit is safe while impunity reigns; only solidarity across caste, religion, and region can challenge this authoritarian caste order.

Two Incidents, One System

The shoe hurled at CJI Gavai and Kumar's suicide spring from the same source: a regime that sanctifies caste hierarchy under the banner of Hindu nationalism. Kishore's audacity, Kumar's despair, and the state's silence expose a society where Brahminical ideology thrives behind democratic facades.

These are not isolated tragedies but symptoms of a designed order—one that rewards perpetrators and punishes assertion. Resistance must mean more than mourning; it must mean naming the system, organising against it, and refusing the normalisation of caste violence. Until caste hierarchy is dismantled, until Sanatan Dharma's caste core is unmasked, until impunity is replaced with justice, the shoe will be thrown again, and another suicide note will appear. The task before us is to ensure it need not.

(Views expressed are personal)

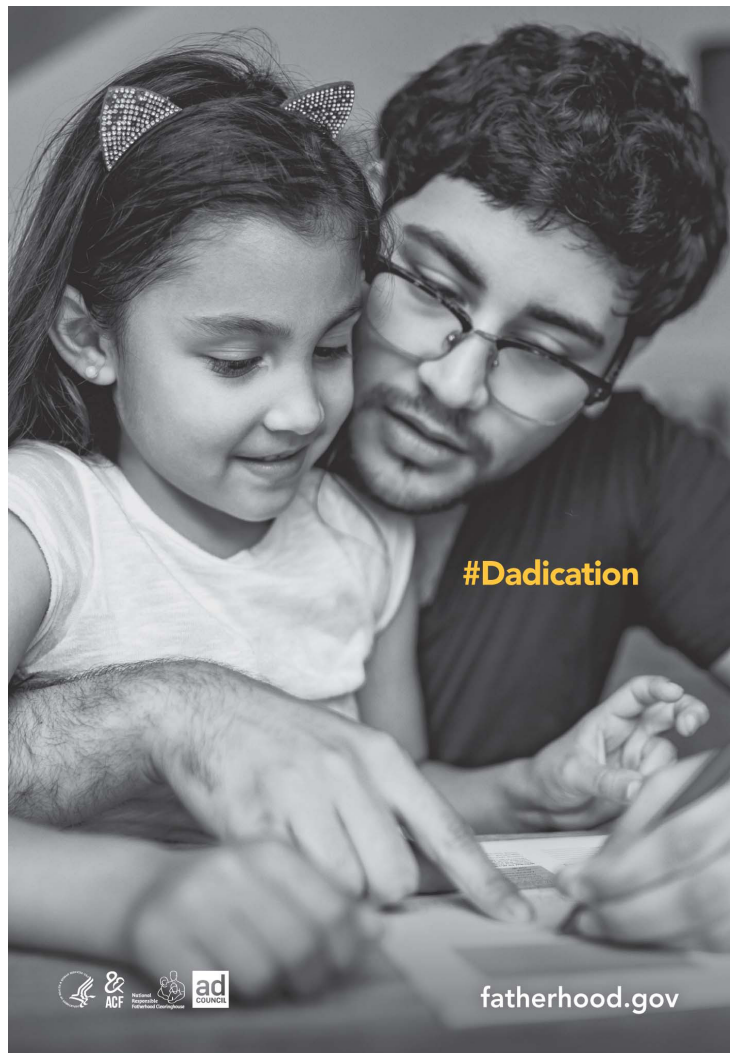


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A refugee's deportation rattles a deeply conservative town: 'What Trump has done is not Christlike'

Binod Shah, a refugee from Bhutan, went to church, got married and started an auto shop in Twin Falls, Idaho. But an arrest record got him caught in the ICE dragnet

Stephanie Shah kept her eyes on the winding road as rain streaked across the windshield. Her husband, Binod Shah, sat in silence beside her, staring out the window. It was late evening in Washington state on 23 March, and they had been driving all day, trading shifts, barely speaking, while their nine-month-old son dozed beneath a blanket in the backseat. The sky hung low and gray, and evergreens, soaked and still, stood witness along the road. Inside the car, a Nepali-Christian folk song played quietly on repeat. At some point, Binod reached over and rested his hand on Stephanie's leg. It wasn't reassurance. It felt more like a final touch.

When the baby started to cry, Stephanie pulled over and together they changed his diaper, working without words. Then Binod leaned down, kissed his son's forehead, and began to cry.

As they got back on the road, Stephanie's mind raced with thoughts she did not dare say out loud: "What if I just turned around? What if I drove him to Mexico and we disappeared?"

She tried to picture this alternative life on the run. But she had grown up in a strict, conservative Christian household. Obeying the law wasn't just a rule – it was a commandment of the Lord.

"That's what I'd always been told: that if you follow the rules, things work out," she said.

After hours of driving, and a futile stop at the Canadian border, the road narrowed. Ahead, floodlights lit up a chainlink fence, and a gray concrete building came into view – the quiet machinery of a government at work. Google Maps' robotic voice broke the silence, confirming they had arrived at the Northwest ICE processing center in Tacoma, just outside Seattle, Washington.

Stephanie parked the car and kissed Binod goodbye. His deportation to his country of birth, Bhutan, triggered by a criminal conviction, complicated by his refugee status and enabled by an aggressive anti-immigration machine, would shatter their life and shake the political convictions of Christian conservatives in Twin Falls, Idaho.

Making a new life in Idaho

Stephanie, 35, grew up in Blackfoot, Idaho, where her father was a minister and her mother homeschooled the children. Most of her neighbors were Mormons, while her family belonged to a small evangelical congregation. "You don't think of someone like me as a religious minority, but I was," she told



me in one of multiple phone interviews. Binod, already in hiding in south Asia, was only able to speak to me through Facebook Messenger.

At 18, Stephanie joined a Christian ministry that took her to Uganda and later Indonesia, where she taught English for two years among Indigenous communities and at an orphanage. When she returned to Idaho, she enrolled at Aletheia Christian college, about 10 miles north of Twin Falls. There, the college's founders, Pastor Randall Davis and his wife, Dr Diane Davis, who is also a professor at the college, introduced her to the growing Bhutanese refugee community in Twin Falls, including a young man named Binod Shah.

Binod's upbringing was nothing like hers. Binod, now 40, was only four when Bhutan expelled more than 100,000 Nepali-speaking Lhotshampa in the early 1990s under its "one nation, one people" campaign. The policy stripped many ethnic minorities of their citizenship, banned the Nepali language in schools, and criminalized dissent, with brutal military crackdowns against those who spoke out. Human Rights Watch and other international groups later described the expulsions as a form of ethnic cleansing.

Like most Bhutanese refugees, Binod's family spent years in camps in eastern Nepal, living in bamboo huts behind barbed wire, with rationed food and water and no electricity. After years of failed repatriation talks, in 2007 the United

States began a resettlement program and by 2016 had accepted more than 86,000 Bhutanese refugees. While most ended up in Ohio and Pennsylvania, some went to Twin Falls.

Twin Falls sits in Idaho's southern Magic valley, a city of more than 50,000 that is about 75% white. Conservative and deeply Christian, the town has consistently voted Republican, backing Donald Trump in both 2016 and 2024. Yet since the 1980s, it has been one of only two cities in Idaho, along with Boise, to accept resettled refugees: first south-east Asians, then eastern Europeans from the former Soviet bloc, Bosnians in the 1990s, and later families from Africa and the Middle East. In 2008, Bhutanese families like Binod's joined this stream of newcomers, drawn by Twin Falls's affordable housing, agricultural jobs and schools that offered an ESL program to refugee students; about 150 Bhutanese refugees live there now.

For years, the system worked: adults found steady jobs on dairy farms, and children settled into local classrooms. But in 2016, as Trump's first presidential campaign stoked fears about immigrants and Muslims, Breitbart and other rightwing news outlets exaggerated reports that refugee boys had raped a young girl in Twin Falls, igniting protests, militia activity and a wave of anti-refugee sentiment across the city. The outrage quieted during the Biden years, but resentment never fully disappeared. In the lead-up to the 2024 election, a small group of Trump supporters demonstrated

outside the refugee center.

Binod took on multiple jobs after his arrival in Twin Falls, and was on the path to permanent residency: under US law, refugees can apply for a green card after one year in the country and citizenship after five. "Binod was always working," Randall remembered. "Washing dishes at a Chinese restaurant one day, working in a gun shop the next. He was sharp and relentless."

When Stephanie pursued a master's degree in intercultural communication, focusing her thesis on Bhutanese Hindu communities in Twin Falls, Binod became her translator. His ease with people drew her in, and their conversations often stretched long after the work ended. They spoke about their childhoods: Stephanie grew up in a tight-knit community, yet often felt out of place; Binod had come of age in a refugee camp, stateless and uncertain of his future. Faith also tied them together. Stephanie had been raised Christian, while Binod came to it later, eventually joining a church in town where Randall and Diane held leadership roles and many refugee families attended service.

Sometimes, the conversations turned to politics. Stephanie, a conservative, says her moral compass was set by belief in scripture, strong borders and opposition to abortion. "Binod liked playing devil's advocate when we talked about politics," she recalled. "He did agree with some of Trump's policies, especially on the economy."



Then one snowy day in January 2020, Binod surprised her. “We should make this official,” he said. It wasn’t a question about dating. It was a proposal. Stephanie had prayed since she was 14 for a husband who was hardworking, charismatic, unafraid, relentless, devoted. “Binod had all of them,” she said.

Her father, who had met Binod in ministry trips to Twin Falls, gave his blessing quickly. He told his daughter: “I’m way more OK with this than I thought I would be.”

Caught in Trump’s dragnet

However, Stephanie did not go into the engagement blind, and Binod’s past was no secret. In May 2017, Binod was arrested in Twin Falls after an altercation with his first wife, who told police he had threatened her with a knife, according to reporting from East Idaho News and available court documents. Binod denied holding a weapon but pleaded guilty to felony aggravated assault the following year, by which time the couple had filed for divorce. At sentencing, the judge called the incident “disturbing” and ordered five years of probation along with 90 days in jail.

“They said, if you go to trial, you’ll get 10 years, but if you take the plea bargain, you’ll get 90 days,” said Stephanie. In the US, an estimated 98% of criminal convictions come through guilty pleas, according to the American Bar Association, a system critics say disproportionately harms immigrants, the poor and those with limited access to legal counsel.

Even though Binod had been here for a decade, his English was still rough. He didn’t fully understand what pleading guilty meant,” Stephanie said.

Randall put it in starker terms: “The attorney told him to take a plea deal without explaining that he was walking straight into his life sentence.”

Binod’s public defender and the district attorney who tried his case did not respond to requests for comment.

Binod’s criminal conviction triggered deportation proceedings, and he lost his green card. In 2019, an immigration judge ordered him removed from the US. “If you’re undocumented, you can be

arrested at anytime – regardless of whether you have a criminal record or even if you’ve performed heroic service,” said Miriam Hayward, a retired immigration judge from San Francisco. “Refugees are different. They came here legally, and the US government determined they had a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country. They’re on a pathway to citizenship. But that doesn’t mean they can’t be deported.”

Major and minor convictions alike, such as shoplifting or driving under the influence, are grounds for deportation, including for green card holders and refugees, says Dr Julia Gelatt, associate director of the US Immigration Policy Program at the Migration Policy Institute. Gelatt also stressed that under US law, “people shouldn’t be sent to a country where they face a credible fear of persecution or torture,” as would be the case for many refugees.

Binod was detained by ICE for nearly nine months, but Bhutan, which had long denied repatriation requests, refused to accept him. ICE eventually released him under supervision. In October 2020, Stephanie and Binod married.

“I looked up his record. I prayed. I talked to my parents. I spoke with mentors and people I trust,” Stephanie said. “I knew the risk, but I also knew that we were called to be together.”

Before meeting Stephanie, Binod had been learning to fix cars in his sister’s garage. Upon release, he began volunteering his mechanical skills around town, often helping those who could not afford repairs. Diane Davis remembered one winter night when a tourist got stranded in the snow while driving to Las Vegas, and a police officer towed the car to Binod’s garage. “Binod not only fixed it,” Diane said, “he stayed up all night working on it and never charged a cent.”

In January 2021, Stephanie and Binod registered Shah Automotive in Idaho. “We were a good team,” Stephanie said. “Binod was incredibly skilled, and I enjoyed handling the administrative side.” But trouble returned. In 2022, Binod was arrested for felony DUI and sent to North Idaho correctional

institution in Cottonwood. He was released in April 2023, and though his parole officer recommended early discharge for good behavior – “Binod had maintained sobriety and demonstrated a positive lifestyle,” wrote the officer – his probation was extended to 2027.

Back in Twin Falls, Binod and Stephanie bought a house, went to church, and began talking about having a child together. They cared for Binod’s two children from his previous marriage, while expanding their auto shop, hiring local mechanics and offering special discounts to refugees and veterans.

That is how Jackson Stewart, 25, came to know Binod. His parents’ car broke down in town, and when they told Binod their son was looking for mechanic experience, he offered an internship without hesitation. “He took a chance on me,” Stewart said. It paid little, but Stewart learned a lot. “He was a great teacher and a great leader. He always made jokes and made us feel comfortable.” In October 2024, Stewart proudly posted on Facebook that he had completed his second engine removal. Weeks later, Trump was elected president again, after campaigning on the promise of ruthless mass deportation of undocumented people in the US, particularly those with a criminal background. In Idaho, he won 67% of voters, including members of Stephanie’s family (Stephanie declined to say how she voted). Randall and Diane voted for Trump, as did Stewart and many of Binod’s customers and co-workers. In spite of the looming deportation order, they did not think Binod, a refugee, would be caught in Trump’s anti-immigrant dragnet.

Within hours of taking office in January, Trump signed executive orders halting refugee admissions. His administration moved to end birthright citizenship and vastly expanded anti-immigration enforcement. Soon, ICE raids spread beyond workplaces and homes into restaurants, courthouses and even hospitals.

In early March, the Shahs received a phone call from an ICE agent ordering Binod to appear for removal proceedings. Binod, believing his cooperation might make a difference, got ready to make the drive to the ICE center in Tacoma. Stephanie, meanwhile, hoped that the immigration judge would take the letters of support from Twin Falls neighbors and community leaders – 16 had been written on Binod’s behalf – and the parole officer’s positive report into consideration and see that “he deserved a second chance.”

“He always did what the court asked of him,” Stephanie said, her voice firm. “The law can be strict, but we have to remember the human condition. We have to have compassion.”

But before they left, Binod broke down, telling Stephanie that he feared never seeing her or their son again – the

situation in Bhutan was dangerous. Stephanie’s mind whirled. Tacoma was close to the border. If Binod could “self-deport” and seek asylum in Canada, there was a chance he could avoid being sent back to Bhutan. They detoured their drive to try but were refused at the crossing by Canadian officers, who walked Binod back into the US, where border patrol officers processed him. Behind the wheel, Binod by her side once again, Stephanie pointed the car towards Tacoma.

On 3 June, more than two months later, the worst happened. Binod called Stephanie from an ICE agent’s phone: he was at the New Delhi airport, about to board a flight to Bhutan. ICE had begun deporting resettled Bhutanese refugees – a move Bhutan briefly complied with, only to immediately expel them to the Indian border.

“Watching the current administration’s mass deportation strategy has been damaging to refugee protection,” said Kelly Ryan, president of Jesuit Refugee Service USA, who formerly worked at the state department’s bureau of population, refugees and migration. “US law does recognize that people who commit crimes can be subject to removal, and we’re not disputing the wisdom of that law. What we’re saying is that people are being sent back to situations where they can’t work, integrate locally, gain citizenship or access territorial rights – effectively rendering them stateless after having held status in a first country of asylum.” ICE confirmed to the Guardian in a statement that Binod was removed from the US on 31 March due to his criminal record. “Let me be clear, illegal aliens who commit heinous crimes in this country will be swiftly removed from American communities,” said Emily Covington, assistant director in the ICE office of public affairs. ICE did not respond to questions regarding the safety of sending refugees back to countries from which they were expelled. According to Pew, nearly 97% of Americans support deporting those who have committed violent crimes; it is a bipartisan policy. It is also a process that turns one sentence into two: people serve their time, only to be handed over to ICE for deportation. Justice advocates call it a “double punishment” that treats immigrants as disposable even after they have paid their debt to society, and argue for limited cooperation between state prisons and jails and federal immigration authorities.

Stephanie could hear the noise of the terminal behind Binod, the heaviness in his breathing, as he prepared to return to the same country that had uprooted him and tortured and imprisoned thousands, including his father. “He loved this country, America, more than anyone else,” she said, “but he’s the one who was deported.”

Stakes rise as Trump deploys world's largest aircraft carrier to the Caribbean



By Tom Phillips

When Donald Trump started sending warships, marines and reaper drones to the Caribbean in August to torment Nicolás Maduro, Venezuela's president, the US's former ambassador in Caracas, James Story, suspected the deployment was largely for show: a spectacular flexing of military muscle supposed to force the authoritarian leader from power.

But in recent days, as the world's largest aircraft carrier and its strike group powered towards the region and the US president continued to order deadly airstrikes on alleged narco-boats, the diplomat's thinking has shifted.

"Facts on the ground have changed tremendously," Story said as the USS Gerald R Ford headed west amid the US' largest military buildup in Latin America in decades. Two months ago Story, who was Washington's top diplomat for Venezuela from 2018 to 2023, saw only a 10% chance of some kind of US attack on Venezuelan soil and an 80% chance that Trump's gambit would come to nothing. Now, he said he is 80% sure things would evolve into some kind of military action and sees only a 20% chance the status quo would hold.

"I'd say [something is] imminent, without a doubt," Story predicted as observers in Venezuela and around the world battled to forecast what the unpredictable US president's next move might be.

Maduro, a strongman political survivor who has overcome a torrent of dramatic crises and challenges since being elected in 2013, has tried to put a brave face on Trump's maneuver, which has rekindled memories of the 1989 US invasion of Panama to topple its dictator, Manuel Noriega.

"I'm more famous than Taylor Swift ... I'm more famous than Bad Bunny! I even feel like recording an album!" Hugo Chávez's 62-year-old heir joked last week.

But those who know the former union leader believe he is undoubtedly feeling the heat despite previously weathering assassination attempts, mass protests, an economic meltdown and punishing sanctions.

"I think he is nervous ... None of [the top leaders] are relaxed ... They see a real threat to their lives ... Maduro is probably sleeping in one of those bunkers that Chávez built," said Andrés Izarra, a former Chávez minister who now lives in exile.

Few believe a Panama-style US invasion of Venezuela will happen, despite the massive display of military might, which includes the deployment of the same special forces helicopter unit used to ferry Noriega into US custody nearly four decades ago. Many experts still suspect Trump's deployment is a negotiating tactic to force Maduro to make economic concessions or relinquish power.

"We are both on the verge of war and on the verge of total normalisation of diplomatic ties. You would almost never say that about any conflict," said Benjamin Gedan, the director of the Latin America programme at the Stimson centre in Washington.

After returning to power in January, Trump sent his special envoy, Ric Grenell, to meet Maduro in Caracas prompting speculation about a rapprochement – and back-channel negotiations are widely believed to have continued, despite some reports to the contrary.

Gedan, who was the South America director at the national security council during the Obama administration, thought it possible

that "the whole thing is a psyop ... designed to spook Maduro into resignation and exile or provoke a palace coup, a military uprising [or] some sort of transition without ever having to fire shot on Venezuelan territory".

But Gedan could also not rule out that the US might stumble into war or launch military attacks, with highly unpredictable results. "[On one hand you have] a country that you so seriously disagree with, that you are tempted to attack. And then at the same time your alternative policy is full normalisation. But I really think that's what we're pivoting on right now ... Those are the options."

Many observers believe the most likely next phase of Trump's campaign – which, officially, has been ordered to fight a "narco-terrorist" drug cartel the US accuses Maduro of running – will be some kind of air strike, perhaps targeting a military installation or guerrilla base.

Story said he believed one of the best ways to force Maduro from power would be by targeting one of the Venezuelan's closest and most "malevolent" political allies with "a Soleimani-style attack" similar to the 2020 US drone strike that killed Iran's second-most powerful man.

Another option was a devastating aerial blitz. "In just a couple of hours we could take out their air force, their navy, their surface-to-air missile systems and we could decapitate the government very quickly with what we [have] in theatre," Story said.

The prospect of a US military intervention in South America's fifth most populous nation has delighted some of Maduro's political enemies, who consider it the only way of breaking his 12-year grip on power. In a recent interview with Bloomberg, the opposition leader

Maria Corina Machado, who has lived in hiding since Maduro was accused of stealing last year's presidential election from her movement, said her team had made plans for what to do after his fall. "We are ready to take over government. We have the teams, we have the plans – the first 100 hours, the first 100 days," she said.

But there are also profound fears about the possible consequences of overthrowing Maduro's regime and further destabilizing an already impoverished, politically divided and often lawless country.

Eliás Ferrer, the founder of the Venezuela-focused advisory firm Orinoco Research, said one concern was the potential for a "Libya scenario", recalling how the North African country slipped into civil war in the years after the 2011 killing of its leader, Muammar Gaddafi.

Neighbouring Colombia, which has spent decades battling guerrilla groups, offers another cautionary tale. Those Colombian insurgents were never strong enough to seize control of major cities such as Bogotá, Cali or Medellín. "But you can't get rid of them either. They just keep lurking around?," Ferrer said, warning that, post-Maduro, a similar conflict could grip Venezuela, where many regions already resembled "the wild west".

Gedan believed that while some Venezuela hawks were rooting for a repeat of the 1989 invasion of Panama, they would be better served studying the US's 20-year quagmire in Afghanistan. "The reality is that [Venezuela] has a lot more in common with Afghanistan than with Panama."

Toppling Maduro would not be a simple task, Gedan warned. "And it certainly would be enormously complex to put Venezuela back together."



Duffy: Newsom 'Caught Red-Handed' on 17,000 Illegal Trucking Licenses

The Biden-era sanctuary state policies in California foisted on the state and Americans by Democrat Gov. Gavin Newsom have once again collided with federal law — this time on America's highways.

The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has admitted to illegally issuing 17,000 commercial driver's licenses (CDLs) to foreign nationals who were not legally eligible to hold them, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy announced Tuesday.

"After weeks of claiming they did nothing wrong, Gavin Newsom and California have been caught red-handed," Duffy wrote in a statement. "Now that we've exposed their lies, 17,000 illegally issued trucking licenses are being revoked."

"This is just the tip of the iceberg. My team will continue to force California to prove they have removed every illegal immigrant from behind the wheel of semitrucks and school buses."

A spokesperson for Newsom responded in a statement to Newsmax:

"Once again, the Sean 'Road Rules' Duffy fails to share the truth — spreading easily disproven falsehoods in a sad and desperate attempt to please his dear leader."

The federal crackdown requires the state to revoke the licenses or face steep financial penalties.

According to Duffy, the exposure came after an audit by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) found systemic violations in California's licensing

process — violations that allowed non-domiciled, and in many cases undocumented, individuals to obtain credentials to operate heavy commercial vehicles, including semitrucks and school buses.

The Department of Transportation confirmed official notices have been sent to all 17,000 holders, warning them their licenses no longer meet federal standards and will automatically expire within 60 days.

California is also being required to submit a full audit of its non-domiciled CDL program so federal regulators can verify that every illegal license has been canceled — and to ensure the same policy failures do not recur.

The FMCSA's investigation uncovered "systemic policy, procedural, and programming errors" in California's non-domiciled CDL system. These lapses allowed licenses to be issued to individuals whose legal stay in the U.S. had expired — or in some cases, who had no verified legal status at all.

The audit found more than 25% of CDL records sampled in California failed to comply with federal law, including instances where licenses extended far beyond the driver's work authorization period.

Critics have long accused Newsom of using state agencies to shield illegal immigrants from federal enforcement.

California remains one of the few states openly granting standard driver's licenses to illegal residents — but now the DMV appears to have gone even further, handing out commercial licenses that allow operation

of 40-ton trucks on interstate routes.

This latest violation compounds California's growing conflict with federal regulators. In October, the Department of Transportation announced it was withholding \$40 million in federal funds after finding that the state had failed to comply with mandatory English language proficiency (ELP) standards for commercial drivers.

The agency has now warned Sacramento that up to \$160 million in federal highway funds could be pulled unless the state brings its licensing programs into full compliance.

The report also noted the California Highway Patrol publicly declared in July that it had "no intention" of enforcing the federal English-language requirement for truckers — a position Duffy slammed as reckless.

In May, he ordered stricter nationwide enforcement of ELP rules, emphasizing that any commercial motor vehicle operator who cannot communicate in English will be placed out of service.

With 17,000 illegal CDLs now revoked, Duffy says the Department's mission is clear: hold California accountable and restore integrity to the nation's transportation system.

"This isn't about politics," Duffy said. "It's about safety — and about the rule of law." Duffy's investigatory exposé comes as the Democrat-forced government shutdown has kept him busy dealing with air traffic control crisis nationwide, showing the self-admitted Democrat obstruction has been flooding the zone against the Trump administration in many different ways and industries.

St. Jude Imagine Academy Helps Care for the Whole Child

School Program at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Celebrates 25 Years of helping patients keep up with their academic development while receiving treatment



St. Jude Children's Research Hospital leads the way the world understands, treats and defeats childhood cancer and other life-threatening diseases. While treating children for catastrophic diseases like cancer and sickle cell disease, St. Jude strives to care for the whole child. For 25 years, the St. Jude school program has helped patients continue their education while undergoing treatment. Known today as St. Jude Imagine Academy by Chili's, the program provides both instruction and school advocacy, ensuring that learning remains a part of each child's journey.

Families never receive a bill from St. Jude for treatment, travel, housing or food, so they can focus on helping their child live, regardless of the duration of care. Education is an important part of a child's life, and Imagine Academy is part of the child's care team. Patients are encouraged to get back to school as soon as possible because it's a normal childhood activity that increases their

sense of well-being and reassures them about the future. "Part of advancing long-term health and well-being is ensuring that patients are able to continue to grow academically while undergoing treatment at St. Jude. We know that education is a cornerstone of a healthy future and we want all of our students to be able to fulfill their dreams," said Alli Leslie, School Program Head at Imagine Academy at St. Jude. Accredited by the nonprofit Cognia as a Special Purpose School, Imagine Academy does not grant academic credits or diplomas. Instead, students remain enrolled in their community schools while receiving instruction and advocacy support tailored to their needs. Every new patient at St. Jude is offered a consultation to assess their educational situation and determine the best level of support.

The 23 full-time employees

of the Academy see up to 150 patients per day. Imagine Academy also has a lot of additional support from



**St. Jude Children's
Research Hospital**
Finding cures. Saving children.

volunteers. There are 16 community-based volunteers who support students in Imagine Academy on a weekly basis. In addition, over 90 St. Jude employees from other departments serve as lab helpers in the STEM lab throughout the school year. Instruction is offered three times a week for K-12 students and twice a week for preschoolers. Beyond the classroom, the school coordinator team helps families navigate their children's educational needs, working directly with schools when necessary to ensure appropriate accommodations.

so when they get back to

school and ultimately transition to college, work or other postsecondary environments, they feel better prepared to ask for those accommodations," said Leslie.

For many students, the relationships built at Imagine Academy last well beyond their time at St. Jude. Teachers often hear from former students who return to visit, grateful for the support they received.

"The school program is amazing," said St. Jude cancer survivor Archie. "They give you one-on-one time. When I went back to school, I was still up-to-date, and actually ahead in some ways. I thank St. Jude for that because I got to graduate on time."

"One of our proudest accomplishments is when our students come back and see us when they're here for a checkup," said teacher Kaci Richardson. "Our student-to-teacher ratio gives us the

chance to connect with the kids we teach. It means a lot when the kids want to come back and maintain a relationship with our program."

Graduations at Imagine Academy are particularly meaningful, celebrating milestones that may have once seemed out of reach.

"For a lot of kids, there are challenges academically along the way, so reaching this milestone is a big deal," Leslie said. "Our students follow different pathways after high school which may include college, vocational rehab or a job, and we love celebrating the culmination of high school with them before they pursue those goals and dreams. It's a great way to honor them and their families." For 25 years, Imagine Academy has provided patients with the tools and support they need to keep learning, no matter the challenges they face. Through instruction, advocacy, and lasting relationships, it continues to be a source of hope and opportunity for St. Jude families.

Fearless Voice of the Community

The South Asian Insider

23 Glorious Years, Always a Step Ahead

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For Trump, the entire Western hemisphere is America's
The U.S. president's "Donroe Doctrine" represents a deep break from modern national security thinking.



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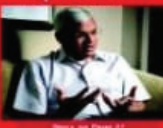
NYC Mayor Elect Zohran Mamdani announces transition team



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