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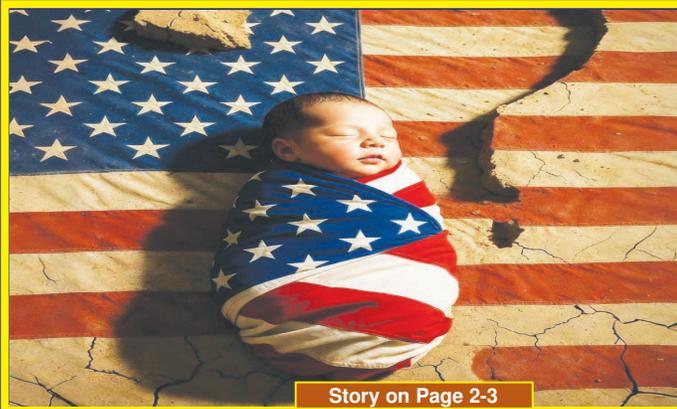
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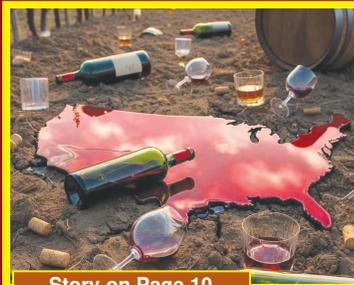
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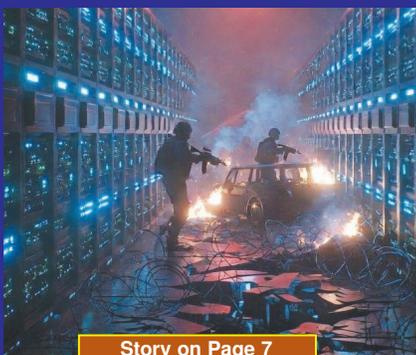
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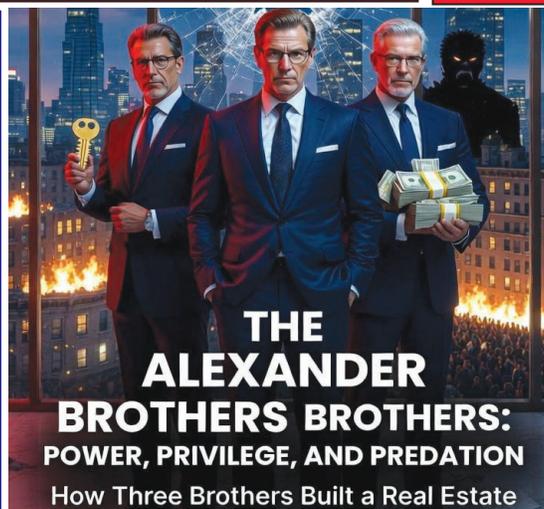
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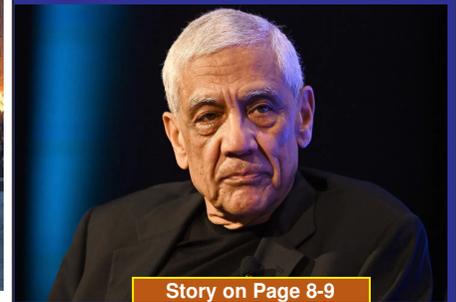
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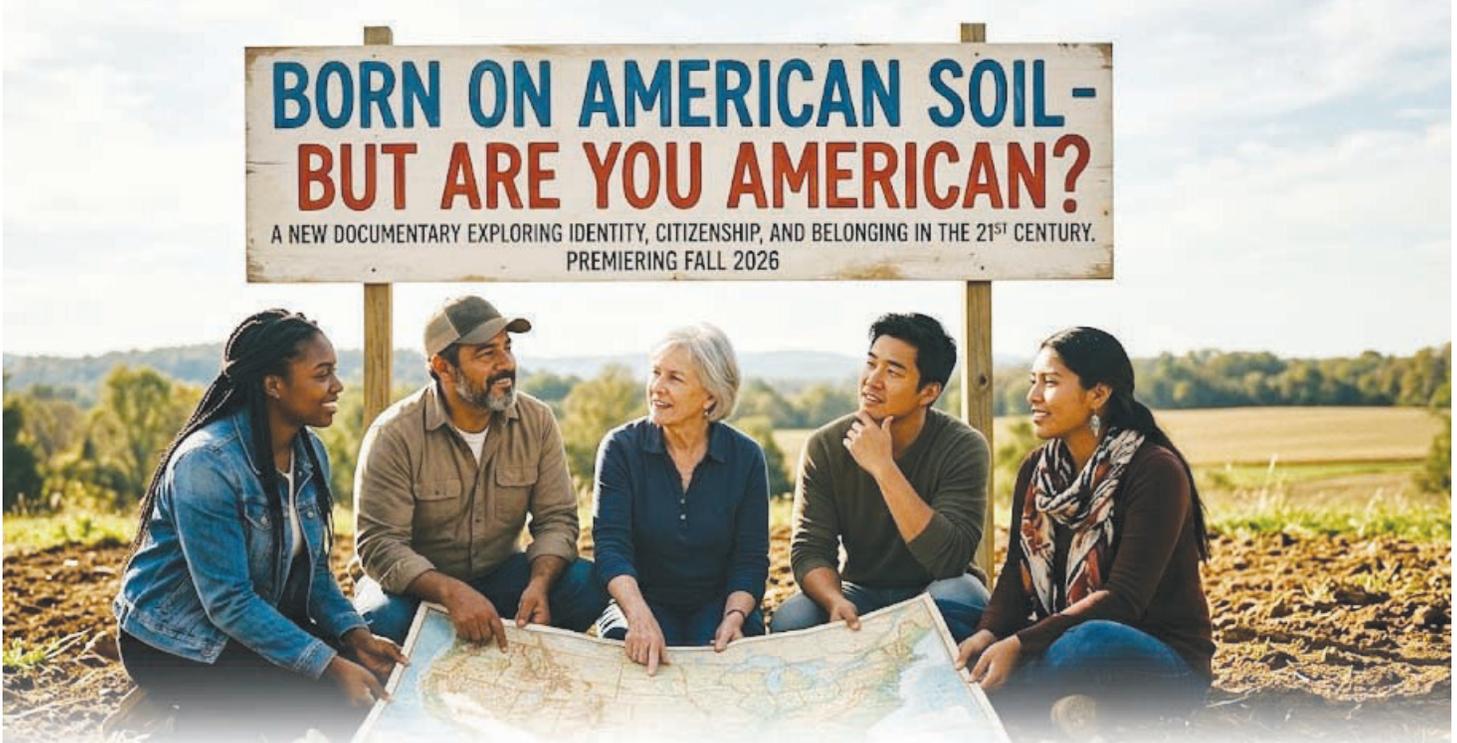
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The Birthright Citizenship Debate That Could Reshape American Identity

(By our staff reporter) On March 10, 2026, the marble halls of the Dirksen Senate Office Building buzzed with an urgency that felt almost constitutional in its weight. The Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution had convened a hearing with a blunt title: "Protecting American Citizenship: Birthright Citizenship for Illegal Aliens and Tourists." With the Supreme Court set to hear arguments in *Trump v. Barbara* on April 1, 2026 - the most consequential citizenship case in more than a century - senators, legal scholars, and policy experts clashed over a question that has quietly smoldered for decades: Does being born on American soil automatically make you an American?

The answer, it turns out, is far from simple. And the stakes could not be higher. The 156-Year-Old Clause at the Center of the Storm The United States Constitution's 14th Amendment, ratified in 1868 in the aftermath of the Civil War, opens with a deceptively straightforward sentence: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." For much of American history, this Citizenship Clause was treated as settled law - a bright line that made the U.S. one of the most

open countries in the world when it came to granting citizenship at birth. But five words have been at the heart of the current firestorm: "subject to the jurisdiction thereof." Who exactly falls under American jurisdiction? Does it apply to the child of a tourist who gives birth in a Miami hotel room? To the baby born to undocumented parents who crossed the Rio Grande three weeks earlier? To the son of a high-ranking Chinese Communist Party official whose wife flew to Los Angeles specifically to give birth on U.S. soil?

These are not abstract hypotheticals. They are happening right now - and the legal, political, and cultural battle over the answers is reshaping the American conversation about citizenship, identity, and sovereignty. What the Senate Hearing Revealed The March 10 Senate hearing - referenced in the YouTube video linked by our readers - featured an extraordinary lineup of witnesses representing sharply opposing views. Chaired by Senator Eric Schmitt of Missouri, the subcommittee session laid bare just how raw and unresolved this debate remains, even among constitutional scholars.

The Case Against Automatic Birthright Citizenship

Senator Schmitt opened the hearing with a declaration that set the tone for critics of the cur-

rent policy. He argued that for years, the American public had been told the Constitution requires the United States to grant citizenship to almost anyone born here, without regard for whether the parents were in the country legally. He called American citizenship "not a loophole."

Legal witnesses supporting that view pointed to a contested reading of the 14th Amendment. Their argument hinges on the phrase "subject to the jurisdiction thereof," which, they contend, the framers intended to mean complete political allegiance - not merely physical presence within U.S. borders. Under this interpretation, a foreign national who is here illegally, or even a tourist on a temporary visa, remains politically subject to a foreign government. Their children, therefore, would not satisfy the constitutional requirement for birthright citizenship.

Heritage Foundation scholars have long argued along similar lines: the 14th Amendment does not say that all persons born in the United States are citizens - it says those born here and subject to jurisdiction. That second phrase, they maintain, has been stretched far beyond what the framers intended, implemented not by any congressional act but by what they call an erroneous executive interpretation.

A striking data point also emerged at the hearing from Pe-

ter Schweizer, President of the Government Accountability Institute and author of the bestselling book *The Invisible Coup*. Schweizer raised what he described as a national security dimension: that up to 1.5 million Chinese nationals may now hold U.S. citizenship through birthright rules, among them the children of military officers, Ministry of Propaganda officials, and high-ranking members of the Chinese Communist Party. These individuals, he testified, can vote in U.S. elections, attend American universities, and receive government benefits - yet they were raised in China and owe their loyalties elsewhere. Customs and Border Protection agents, Schweizer noted, legally have the authority to turn away clearly pregnant foreign nationals who they suspect are entering for birth tourism purposes. However, under both the Obama and Biden administrations, agents were reportedly instructed not to do so.

The Case For Birthright Citizenship

The opposing witnesses were equally forceful. Professor Amanda Frost of the University of Virginia School of Law, Director of the Immigration, Migration and Human Rights Program, argued that the Citizenship Clause is one of the least ambiguous provisions in the entire Constitution. Its text, history, and original public understanding, she told the

subcommittee, all confirm that it applies to everyone born in the United States - with the only meaningful exception being children of foreign diplomats, who genuinely operate outside American legal jurisdiction. Senator Dick Durbin, ranking member of the full Judiciary Committee, went further, calling Trump's executive order an attempt to "overturn black letter constitutional law" by executive fiat. He warned that restricting birthright citizenship would create what he called "a permanent underclass" of American-born children - people who would grow up, work, pay taxes, and contribute to their communities, yet be denied the fundamental protections of citizenship.

The documentation problem that Durbin raised was particularly striking. Professor Frost testified that if Trump's executive order went into effect, families would be required to provide "acceptable evidence" of their citizenship or immigration status at the time of their child's birth - but the implementing memos from the Social Security Administration, the State Department, and USCIS were vague on what exactly constitutes acceptable proof. For millions of immigrant families, this could mean a bureaucratic nightmare with enormous consequences. The Legal Battlefield: From 1868 to April 1, 2026 To understand the current moment, it helps to trace the le-

gal history. The 14th Amendment was passed in the wake of the Civil War primarily to grant citizenship to formerly enslaved people and free Black Americans, who had been denied that status by the Supreme Court's infamous Dred Scott decision of 1857. The framers were explicit: they wanted a broad guarantee, one that could never again be used to create a class of people born on American soil but denied the rights of citizens. The landmark case of United States v. Wong Kim Ark in 1898 established that the 14th Amendment's citizenship guarantee extends to the U.S.-born children of immigrants. Wong Kim Ark was born in San Francisco to Chinese parents who were lawful residents - and when he was denied re-entry to the United States as a young man, the Supreme Court ruled 6-2 in his favor. Justice Horace Gray's majority opinion held that the common law tradition of citizenship by birth was embedded in the Constitution. However, critics of the current broad interpretation point to a nuance: Wong Kim Ark's parents were lawful residents, not undocumented immigrants or tourists. They argue that the case does not resolve whether birthright citizenship extends to children born to those here illegally or temporarily. This is the precise question the Supreme Court will confront on April 1 in Trump v. Barbara, the case triggered by President Trump's Day 1 executive order limiting birthright citizenship. Five Serious Arguments Against Automatic Birthright Citizenship Here, drawing on the Senate testimony and the broader legal and policy debate, are the most substantive arguments made by those who believe the current interpretation of birthright citizenship needs to be reconsidered:

1. The Jurisdictional Argument: It's in the Text

The most foundational argument is textual. The 14th Amendment does not grant citizenship to everyone born on American soil - it grants it to those who are both born here and "subject to the jurisdiction thereof." Critics argue this second clause has been rendered meaningless by decades of expansive interpretation. Its original purpose was to exclude those who owe allegiance to a foreign power - and someone who is in the country illegally, or on a temporary visa, arguably remains politically subject to their home nation's jurisdiction.

2. The Framers Never Contemplated This Scenario

When Congress debated and passed the 14th Amendment in 1866, there was no such thing as "illegal immigration" in the modern legal sense. The concept of undocumented entry, visa overstays, and birth tourism simply did not exist. Opponents of broad birthright citizenship argue that it is therefore historically incoherent to claim the framers intended to grant citizenship to the children of people whose very presence in the

country would have been legally impossible to envision at the time. Applying the amendment to these modern scenarios, they contend, is not originalism - it is judicial invention.

3. An Incentive Structure That Encourages Illegal Entry

One of the most politically potent arguments is practical: if giving birth on U.S. soil guarantees a child American citizenship, it creates a powerful incentive for unauthorized border crossings and visa overstays. Critics argue that the prospect of an "anchor baby" - a U.S.-born citizen child who could eventually sponsor other family members for immigration - distorts decision-making in ways that undermine the integrity of the immigration system. Whether or not the data fully supports the scale of this incentive, the argument resonates with many Americans who believe immigration rules should be consistent and enforced.

4. The Birth Tourism Loophole

The birth tourism industry is real, well-documented, and operates in plain sight. Wealthy foreign nationals - particularly from China, South Korea, Russia, and other countries - travel to the United States specifically to give birth, paying operators thousands of dollars to arrange housing, hospital access, and logistics. Their children obtain U.S. passports, Social Security numbers, and the full rights of citizenship.

5. The Rarity of Unconditional Jus Soli

The birth tourism industry is real, well-documented, and operates in plain sight. Wealthy foreign nationals - particularly from China, South Korea, Russia, and other countries - travel to the United States specifically to give birth, paying operators thousands of dollars to arrange housing, hospital access, and logistics. Their children obtain U.S. passports, Social Security numbers, and the full rights of citizenship. As the Senate hearing revealed, some of these birth tourists are not ordinary families seeking a better life - they include officials with ties to authoritarian governments who could exploit their American-citizen children's future access to U.S. institutions. This scenario, many argue, was never what the Civil War-era framers had in mind.

The United States is an outlier in the developed world. While the principle of jus soli - citizenship by birth on the soil - is fundamental to American law, the vast majority of wealthy nations have moved away from unconditional birthright citizenship. Canada and Mexico grant it, but most of Europe, Asia, and Oceania do not. Germany, France, Japan, Australia, and the United Kingdom all require at least one parent to be a citizen or lawful permanent resident. Proponents of reform ask: why should the United States maintain a policy that most comparable democracies have

long since reconsidered?

The Counter-Arguments: Why Defenders Stand Firm

For every argument against birthright citizenship, defenders offer a response that deserves equal weight. The principle that every child born on American soil is equally American regardless of who their parents are has served as a cornerstone against the creation of a hereditary underclass. Harvard Law professor Gerald Neuman has called the Trump administration's reading of the 14th Amendment either "a crazy theory or dishonest interpretation." The Supreme Court, he notes, has already explained what "subject to the jurisdiction thereof" means in Wong Kim Ark - and it does not require parental citizenship.

There is also the profound practical concern about what happens to the hundreds of thousands of children who would be rendered stateless or citizenship-less under a narrower interpretation - children born in the United States, raised here, knowing no other home, yet legally excluded from the country of their birth.

The Road to April 1: A Nation Awaits the Supreme Court

The hearing on March 10 was, in one sense, a preview of the arguments that will be made before the nine justices of

the Supreme Court when Trump v. Barbara is argued on April 1, 2026. The outcome could determine whether President Trump's executive order - which attempts to end birthright citizenship for children of undocumented immigrants and those on temporary visas - is constitutional.

Lower federal courts have repeatedly blocked the order, with judges across the country finding it inconsistent with both the 14th Amendment and established precedent. A coalition of attorneys general from 22 states has challenged it, and civil rights organizations have lined up to defend the existing interpretation. Yet the current Supreme Court's conservative supermajority has shown a willingness to revisit precedent that some of its members view as incorrectly decided. Whatever the Court decides, the debate will not end on April 2nd. If birthright citizenship is narrowed, Congress will face immediate pressure to clarify who counts as a citizen. If it is upheld, the political push to amend the Constitution through other means - or to restrict birth tourism through vigorous enforcement of existing immigration law - will intensify. Either way, a 156-year-old question about who belongs to the American nation is forcing itself, once again, to the very front of the national conversation.

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THE ALEXANDER BROTHERS: POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND PREDATION

(By our staff reporter) How Three Brothers Built a Real Estate Empire - and a Criminal One Published: March 10, 2026 | Federal Conviction: March 9, 2026

The Verdict: Guilty on All Counts

On Monday, March 9, 2026, a jury of six men and six women sitting in the federal courthouse in lower Manhattan delivered one of the most consequential verdicts in recent New York legal history. After five weeks of often harrowing testimony and three days of deliberations, the jury found Oren Alexander, Tal Alexander, and Alon Alexander - three brothers who had cultivated a glittering image as titans of the luxury real estate world - guilty on all 10 remaining federal counts of sex trafficking, conspiracy, and sexual abuse.

The jury foreperson said 'guilty' 19 consecutive times as the verdicts were read aloud. All three brothers shook their heads. Tal Alexander dropped his face into his crossed arms. Their parents, Orly and Shlomo (known publicly as 'Shlomy') Alexander, sat motionless in the gallery. Alon Alexander's wife shielded her face with her hand and appeared to fight back tears. One juror later told reporters: 'It wasn't easy.'

The men now face up to life in federal prison. Sentencing is scheduled for August 6, 2026, before U.S. District Judge Valerie E. Caproni of the Southern District of New York. "These are chilling, reprehensible, and unacceptable acts. They bravely overcame the pain of reliving the abuses inflicted upon them." - U.S. Attorney Jay Clayton, March 9, 2026

Who Are the Alexander Brothers?

Tal Alexander

Born July 2, 1987. Age at conviction: 39. Tal is the older of the three brothers. He attended Hofstra University, where he played collegiate tennis, before pivoting to real estate. In 2009, while still in his early twenties, Tal launched a luxury rental company in New York City. By 2011, he and Oren had joined forces as 'The Alexander Team' at Douglas Elliman, one of America's most prestigious real estate brokerages. The duo quickly became one of the firm's most profitable partnerships, working deals across New York City, Miami, the Hamptons, and Aspen.

Oren Alexander

Born July 5, 1986. Age at conviction: 38 (twin of Alon). Oren graduated from the University of Colorado with a Bachelor of Arts in Finance. He joined Douglas Elliman in 2008 upon arriving in New York. In 2011, he was named to the

Key Names at a Glance

Defendants: Oren Alexander (b. July 5, 1986), Tal Alexander (b. July 2, 1987), Alon Alexander (b. July 5, 1986)

Parents: Shlomy (Shlomi) Alexander and Orly Alexander, Bal Harbour, Florida

Family Company: Kent Security Services (South Florida)

Former Employer: Douglas Elliman Realty

Former CEO, Douglas Elliman: Howard Lorber

Brothers' Firm (defunct): Official Partners (backed by Side)

Official Co-Founders (departed): Nicole Oge, Richard Jordan, Andrew Wachtfogel

Notable Team Member: Isaac Lustgarten (South Florida), Sara Goldfarb, Jared Schwadron

Named Civil Co-Defendant: Ivan Wilzig (music producer, Hamptons)

High-Profile Civil Plaintiff: Tracy Tutor, celebrity broker/TV personality

Prosecution Team: U.S. Attorney Jay Clayton (SDNY); AUSAs Andrew Jones, Elizabeth Espinosa

Defense Attorneys: Marc Agnifilo (Oren), Teny Geragos (Oren), Howard Srebnick (Alon and parents), Joel Denaro (also present for Alon)

Presiding Judge: U.S. District Judge Valerie E. Caproni, SDNY (Obama appointee)

Florida Judge (bail): Circuit Judge Lody Jean; Magistrate Judge Lisette M. Reid

Sentencing Date: August 6, 2026

Maximum Sentence: Life in federal prison

Forbes 30 Under 30 list for real estate - a milestone that cemented his status as a prodigy in the industry. Over the following decade, Oren would become one of the most photographed, profiled, and celebrated real estate agents in the country. He married model Kamila Hansen; their wedding was featured in Vogue magazine. His personal brand was one of glamour, success, and access.

Alon Alexander

Born July 5, 1986 (twin of Oren). Alon took a different professional path from his brothers. He graduated from New York Law School, after which he joined the family's private security company, Kent Security Services, as an executive. While Tal and Oren were the public faces of luxury real estate, Alon operated more behind the scenes. His role at Kent Security nonetheless placed him at the center of the brothers' social world and, prosecutors alleged, their criminal conspiracy.

The Alexander Family: Background and Associates

The Parents: Shlomy and Orly Alexander The Alexander brothers are the children of Shlomy Alexander (also spelled 'Shlomi' in some court documents), a prominent South Florida real estate developer, and Orly Alexander. The family is Israeli-American and Jewish; the parents were born in Israel and raised the brothers in the United States, primarily in the affluent enclave of Bal Harbour, Florida - a municipality on Miami Beach's northern tip known as one of America's wealthiest zip codes.

According to Fox Business and other outlets, the brothers 'got their start in real estate visiting construction sites with their father,' who built spec homes across South Florida. The family patriarch's success gave his sons both financial capital and a deep familiarity with the mechanics of high-end property markets. Both parents were present at the March 9, 2026 verdict, sitting in the gallery. After the conviction, the family issued a statement calling the result 'deeply disappointing' and vowing to continue fighting: 'We believe there are substantial problems with the evidence and the way this case was presented. The legal process does not end here.' Shlomy Alexander's real estate holdings became central to the bail proceedings. During the December 2024 federal hearings in Miami, Shlomy put up his Bal Harbour home as collateral to secure bail for Oren and Alon on state charges. The family also offered \$115 million in real estate holdings as collateral to secure Tal Alexander's bail - an offer that was rejected, with the judge finding Tal a significant flight risk. The parents, along with Kent Security, were later named as defendants in a civil lawsuit filed by five women in New York state court, which alleged that Orly and Shlomo 'created the opportunity' for their sons' alleged crimes and 'had a duty to stop' Alon's conduct.

Kent Security Services

Kent Security Services is the Alexander family's private security company. Alon Alexander served as a senior executive there before his arrest.

The firm is headquartered in South Florida. According to civil lawsuits, Kent Security had the resources and authority to supervise Alon's conduct and allegedly failed to act despite what plaintiffs characterized as clear warning signs. The company did not respond to multiple press requests. Through a representative, the company stated it received no allegations about Alon while he was employed there. Kent Security and its leadership - including its president, CEO, and a vice president - all declined to comment on pending litigation.

Key Professional Associates

Isaac Lustgarten - Oren Alexander's long-time partner on the Alexander Team in South Florida. Lustgarten was one of the few brokers who remained with Official after the allegations became public, even as peers departed. Sara Goldfarb - A member of the Alexander Team at Douglas Elliman. Jared Schwadron - A long-time collaborator who worked with the Alexander brothers from their Douglas Elliman days through the launch of Official. He departed Official in September 2024, joining Compass as the allegations mounted. Nicole Oge, Richard Jordan, and Andrew Wachtfogel - Co-founders of Official alongside Tal and Oren. All three ultimately departed the firm in 2024 after failed negotiations over the brothers' future at the company. The brothers had reportedly threatened legal action to prevent being removed.

John Hudak and Nicholas Lounsbury - New York brokers who left Official for Compass amid the controversy. Howard Lorber - Former CEO of Douglas Elliman, the brokerage where Tal and Oren spent a decade. Lorber was sued alongside Douglas Elliman by five women who alleged the firm failed to properly oversee the brothers and 'created the opportunity' for assault. Lorber and Elliman denied any wrongdoing. Lorber also appeared in the Jeffrey Epstein files - unrelated to the Alexander case - in connection with email correspondence about verifying a banker's identity. Ivan Wilzig - Music producer named as a defendant in two civil lawsuits by women who allege they were assaulted or raped at his medieval-style mansion in the Hamptons. Wilzig has not been accused of participating in any sexual violence. His attorney denied all claims, calling them '1,000 percent false.' The Real Estate Empire

Douglas Elliman: 2008-2022

Tal and Oren Alexander both moved to New York City in 2008 to begin their real estate careers. Oren joined Douglas Elliman Realty; Tal launched an independent luxury rental company. In

2011, the brothers formally united as 'The Alexander Team,' establishing their brand at Elliman with a focus on ultra-luxury residential properties in Manhattan, Miami, the Hamptons, and Aspen. The team's growth was extraordinary. By 2019, the brothers were managing a 10-person team and were involved in transactions totaling nearly half a billion dollars in a single quarter. That same year, they brokered one of the most expensive residential sales in American history: billionaire hedge fund manager Ken Griffin's acquisition of a penthouse at 220 Central Park South for \$238 million. The deal became a landmark moment in American real estate and featured prominently in the brothers' public profiles.

From 2012 to 2022, Tal and Oren were the top Douglas Elliman team by gross commission income and sales volume in both New York and Florida. They won the brokerage's National Award three consecutive years in the large team category. In 2021, the Alexander Team closed more than \$1.8 billion in sales - representing 3.5 percent of Elliman's total \$51.2 billion in business that year.

They were fixtures in the New York and Miami nightlife circuit. The brothers cultivated relationships with wealthy clients, celebrities, and socialites. Their social media presence - with approximately 82,000 combined Instagram followers - showcased their jet-setting lifestyle: private planes, beach clubs, high-end parties, and luxury properties. They were known professionally as 'The A Team.'

Official Partners: 2022-2024

In June 2022, after a decade at Douglas Elliman, the brothers departed to launch their own firm: Official Partners, backed by the venture-capital-funded white-label real estate platform Side (valued at \$2.5 billion). The new firm was co-founded alongside Nicole Oge, Richard Jordan, and Andrew Wachtfogel. Official quickly expanded, establishing offices across New York, Miami, the Hamptons, Aspen, and California. Side CEO Guy Gal described the arrangement as one where 'the back office is entirely ours while the front office is entirely the Alexanders' - they could effectively build their own brand while leveraging Side's

infrastructure. The firm's collapse was rapid once allegations became public. By fall 2024, nearly all brokers had resigned. The California outpost shuttered entirely. The Aspen office broke its lease just months after opening. The co-founders departed amid the crisis after the brothers refused to leave and allegedly threatened legal action against anyone who tried to force them out. Official, the firm, ultimately folded.

The Crimes: A Decade of Predation

The Conspiracy: 2008-2021 Federal prosecutors in the Southern District of New York laid out a systematic, years-long

the brothers would hand a woman a drink - often resulting in near-immediate incapacitation - then assault her.

Prosecutors presented text messages and emails recovered from phones and hard drives seized at arrest. The communications showed the brothers discussing 'recruiting' women for Hamptons share houses and Aspen ski trips. In one particularly damning exchange about a Hamptons property, the brothers discussed bringing women and informally floated an internal 'tax' on anyone who showed up without them. Prosecutors described this language as evidence of treating women as

force or intoxicant and sexual abuse of a physically incapacitated person - charges that directly reflect the dual methods alleged.

Timeline of Known Incidents

2008: Approximate start of the conspiracy as charged in the federal indictment. The brothers' network in New York and Miami begins forming.

April 2009: Oren Alexander allegedly records a video of himself sexually assaulting a 17-year-old girl who appears incapacitated. This incident forms the basis of his conviction for sexual exploitation of a minor.

2011: Lindsey Acree, an artist and gallery owner, alleges she

years old at the time. She identified herself at trial as the daughter of a billionaire. 'I don't want their money. I just don't want them to have it,' she told jurors.

2021: Approximate end of the conspiracy period as charged.

June 2024: The Real Deal, a real estate trade publication, becomes the first news outlet to report lawsuits against Oren and Alon. Two lawsuits allege rape. Within days, more accusers come forward. Dozens of women ultimately allege assault. The brothers step back from Official.

December 11, 2024: FBI agents arrest all three brothers at dawn in Miami Beach, Florida. January 20, 2026: Jury selection begins in Manhattan federal court. January 28, 2026: Trial testimony begins. January 30, 2026: The U.S. Department of Justice releases more than 3 million pages of Jeffrey Epstein documents. The Alexander brothers' names appear in the files. March 3, 2026: Prosecution delivers closing arguments. March 6, 2026: Jury deliberations begin. March 9, 2026: Jury returns guilty verdicts on all 10 remaining counts. August 6, 2026: Sentencing scheduled. The brothers face a potential life sentence.

The Charges and Convictions
Federal Charges - Southern District of New York

All three brothers were charged together in a three-count indictment by the Southern District of New York (SDNY). The case was assigned to U.S. District Judge Valerie E. Caproni.

Count 1 - All Three: Conspiracy to commit sex trafficking (maximum sentence: life in prison).

Count 2 - All Three: Sex trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion (maximum sentence: life in prison; mandatory minimum: 15 years).

Count 3 - All Three: Inducing a person to travel to engage in unlawful sexual activity.

Additional - Tal Alexander: Two additional counts of sex trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion; one additional count of inducing a person to travel; one count of sex trafficking of a minor.

Additional - Alon Alexander: Sex trafficking of a minor (charged jointly with Tal); aggravated sexual abuse by force or intoxicant; sexual



pattern of sexual violence spanning from approximately 2008 to 2021. The indictment alleged that the three brothers used Tal and Oren's fame, wealth, and social connections as tools to lure women to private gatherings, then used drugs and physical force to rape them. The prosecution's theory, outlined in closing arguments by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew Jones, was blunt: 'They used a consistent playbook to lure, isolate and rape their victims.' Prosecutors said the brothers 'masqueraded as party boys' while operating as calculating predators.

According to the government, the brothers met victims at nightclubs, parties, and dating apps. They invited women on trips to luxury destinations - the Hamptons, Aspen, the Bahamas, Caribbean cruises. They paid for flights and lodging. Once in private settings, prosecutors say, one or more of

commodities.

The Weapons: Drugs and Physical Force

A recurring element across victim testimony was the use of what prosecutors described as drugging. Time and again, women described accepting a single drink from one of the brothers and almost immediately feeling as though they had lost control of their bodies - unable to move, unable to speak clearly, paralyzed. Several said they lost consciousness and woke up to find themselves undressed, with one or more of the brothers in the room. The prosecution alleged that beyond chemical incapacitation, the brothers also used physical force, physically restraining victims, ignoring screams, and preventing escape.

In addition to convictions related to drugging, Oren and Alon were found guilty of aggravated sexual abuse by

was raped by Tal Alexander and another man at a home in the Hamptons after taking a drink that left her feeling paralyzed.

2012: A woman later known publicly in court testimony met the brothers at a party at actor Zac Efron's Manhattan apartment. She testified she had virtually no interaction with Efron - who was not accused of any wrongdoing - before going to a nightclub with the brothers. She later woke up naked with Alon Alexander standing over her.

2014: Celebrity broker Tracy Tutor - a star of Bravo's 'Million Dollar Listing Los Angeles' - alleges Oren Alexander drugged and sexually assaulted her in a restaurant bathroom during a Douglas Elliman real estate event in New York City. Tutor filed a civil lawsuit the week before the verdict, on March 6, 2026.

2017: A woman testifies she was raped by Alon Alexander in Aspen, Colorado. She was 17

abuse of a physically incapacitated person.

Additional - Oren Alexander: Aggravated sexual abuse by force or intoxicant; sexual abuse of a physically incapacitated person; sexual exploitation of a minor (for the 2009 video).

State and Florida Charges

In addition to the SDNY charges, the Southern District of Florida also charged all three brothers. The Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office filed separate state charges against Oren and Alon. Their Florida case was assigned to United States Magistrate Judge Lisette M. Reid. On the state level, Judge Mindy Glazer initially ordered Oren and Alon held without bond, though bail was subsequently granted by Circuit Judge Lody Jean - \$3 million for Oren and \$2 million for Alon - both secured by their father's Bal Harbour home as collateral. The state charges remain pending.

Total Scope of Alleged Victims

Eleven women testified at the federal trial. Prosecutors stated that more than 60 women claim to have been raped by one or more of the brothers. The brothers faced approximately two dozen civil lawsuits at the time of trial.

Victim Testimonies

The Woman from Alon's Apartment - 2012 One of the trial's most vivid testimonies came from a woman who met the brothers in 2012 at a party at actor Zac Efron's Manhattan apartment. The woman testified she had almost no interaction with Efron, who was not accused of any wrongdoing. She went to a nightclub later that night with the brothers. She said she was handed a drink and almost immediately felt incapacitated. 'I tried to get out of the bed a few times, but Alon kept pushing me back down,' she testified. When she finally managed to rise, she confronted Alon: 'I don't want to have sex with you,' to which she recalled him replying: 'You already did' - and then laughing in her face. The exchange left courtroom observers audibly disturbed.

Lindsey Acree - The Hamptons, 2011

Lindsey Acree, an artist and gallery owner who has spoken publicly, testified she was raped by Tal Alexander and another man at a home in the Hamptons in 2011 after taking a drink that left her feeling paralyzed.

Acree was direct in explaining her motivation for suing: 'If there's a kid with a stick who keeps hitting people, you take their stick away. Money is their stick, so you take it away so they can't hurt people anymore.' She told jurors she filed her civil lawsuit even though she would 'never need their money' - because the Alexanders had been 'calling us gold diggers, shake down artists, con artists.'

The 17-Year-Old in Aspen - 2017

A woman identified herself at trial as the daughter of a billionaire. She testified she was 17 years old when Alon Alexander raped her in Aspen, Colorado in 2017. Her statement to the jury was striking in its directness: 'I don't want their money. I just don't want them to have it.'

Witness 'Bela' - Cross-Examination

A witness identified publicly only as 'Bela' faced intense cross-examination by Oren Alexander's attorney, Teny Geragos, who pressed her on inconsistencies in her account - including a change in what she said she was wearing on the night of the alleged assault. Bela pushed back, stating that all details other than her being drugged and raped were insignificant. Geragos asked Bela whether she had previously told government investigators she felt 'hungover' the next morning; she denied having said that.

The 17-Year-Old Model - 2009 (Exploitation Charge)

The woman at the center of Oren's sexual exploitation of a minor conviction is now 34 years old. She testified that she had no memory of meeting Oren Alexander. Prosecutors showed the jury a video that Oren allegedly recorded of himself appearing to assault the incapacitated teenager. The conviction on that count represents one of the gravest findings against the brothers.

Tracy Tutor - Civil Suit Filed March 6, 2026

Tracy Tutor, a Los Angeles-based real estate broker and star of Bravo's 'Million Dollar Listing Los Angeles,' filed a civil lawsuit just days before the verdict. She alleges that Oren Alexander drugged and sexually assaulted her in a restaurant bathroom while she was in New York City for a Douglas Elliman recruitment event in 2014.

Tutor's lawsuit added a prominent public voice to the list of accusers and attracted considerable media attention in the final days of the trial.

The Epstein Files: An Additional Shadow

During trial, a development arose that threatened to derail proceedings and added a new dimension to the case. On January 30, 2026, the U.S. Department of Justice released more than three million pages of documents related to the Jeffrey Epstein investigation pursuant to the Epstein Files Transparency Act. Among those documents, the Alexander brothers' names appeared in an FBI National Threat Operations Center call log.

The log summarized a tip from a woman who described herself as a teenage model who had attended eight parties at Epstein's New York residence. She alleged that at one party, twin brothers Alon and Oren 'lured' her and a friend upstairs, though she said they escaped. She further alleged that Oren raped her best friend and that Tal raped a 14-year-old girl named 'Katie.' The same tip referenced 'big orgy parties' and named other prominent individuals as attendees - though the Epstein files document explicitly noted these were unvetted public tips, not verified allegations.

Defense attorney Marc Agnifilo, who represents Oren, moved for a mistrial citing the Epstein connection as prejudicial. Judge Caproni denied the motion, noting that jurors were unlikely to be searching specifically for the brothers' names amid millions of pages of documents referencing far more famous individuals. She did, however, order the Justice Department not to release any additional Epstein material mentioning the Alexander brothers by name until after the verdict. All 12 jurors were individually questioned and confirmed they had not seen any outside material about the defendants. The Alexanders' ties to former Douglas Elliman CEO Howard Lorber also received peripheral attention. Lorber's name appeared in Epstein files in connection with an unrelated email thread involving financier Ariane de Rothschild. Lorber had previously drawn scrutiny for his close relationship with the brothers during their time at

Elliman. None of these connections formed part of the criminal prosecution, and neither Lorber nor Douglas Elliman was accused of criminal wrongdoing by the government.

The Defense: Consent and Character Attacks

The defense strategy centered on two pillars: attacking victims' credibility and insisting all sexual encounters were consensual.

Marc Agnifilo, the high-profile attorney representing Oren Alexander - who also represents Luigi Mangione, accused in the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson - argued throughout trial that the government had overreached and that the evidence was built on faulty memories and financial motivation. He conceded the brothers were 'womanizers' but insisted no crime had occurred. Defense attorneys pointed to inconsistencies in witness accounts, particularly regarding peripheral details like clothing or drink counts. They argued that accusers were motivated by the brothers' wealth - noting the dozens of civil lawsuits. Prosecution pushed back forcefully, pointing out that only two of the 11 trial witnesses had pending civil lawsuits, and both were independently wealthy. Teny Geragos, representing Oren, conducted particularly aggressive cross-examinations. Geragos challenged witnesses on minute discrepancies while broader facts - women waking up naked and incapacitated - remained largely rebutted.

Following the verdict, Agnifilo told reporters outside the courthouse: 'We believe in our clients' innocence, and we will not stop fighting until we prevail.' He indicated he intended to raise 'many appeals issues.'

Civil Exposure: Lawsuits and Institutional Accountability

Beyond the federal criminal conviction, the Alexander brothers face approximately two dozen civil lawsuits - a number that continued to grow in the final days of the trial with Tracy Tutor's filing.

One of the most sweeping civil suits, filed in New York state court in March 2025, named not only the brothers but also Douglas Elliman Inc., former CEO Howard Lorber, their parents Orly and Shlomo Alexander, and Kent Security Services. Filed on behalf of five women, the complaint alleged

that Douglas Elliman failed to oversee its top brokers, that Lorber enabled their behavior, and that the parents and the security company provided financial resources and cover that made the crimes possible.

Douglas Elliman and Lorber denied all wrongdoing and stated the government did not accuse them of any crime. The parents' attorney called the lawsuit a 'desperate attempt at a payday.' Kent Security's attorney said the firm received no complaints about Alon.

The brothers also face separate state criminal charges in Florida, which remain unresolved regardless of the federal conviction.

The Fall: From Billion-Dollar Deals to Federal Prison The trajectory from luxury penthouse to federal detention cell was steep and swift. In 2021, the Alexander Team closed \$1.8 billion in real estate. By December 2024, the brothers were in FBI custody. Their once-gleaming professional firm had been abandoned by its co-founders, brokers, and clients. Their social media was dark. Their wedding features in glossy magazines now served as ironic footnotes to courtroom proceedings. The brothers' misconduct, when it finally became public in June 2024, was described by multiple former colleagues as an 'open secret' in the real estate world for years - whispered about but never formally reported, partly because of the brothers' power and connections and partly, advocates say, because of the culture around elite male behavior in luxury industries.

U.S. Attorney Jay Clayton offered perhaps the most sober assessment of that failure in his post-verdict statement: the sex crimes 'are all too prevalent in our society and all too often go unreported and unpunished.' He added: 'The truth is sex trafficking and other federal sex offenses are present in many walks of life and we have not done enough to root it out.' 'Their conduct was calculated, brutal sexual abuse that, unimaginably, the defendants celebrated.' - U.S. Attorney Jay Clayton More than 60 women allege they were victims of the brothers. Eleven testified at federal trial. The jury believed them. Oren Alexander, 38. Tal Alexander, 39. Alon Alexander, 38. Convicted on all counts. Facing life in prison. Sentencing: August 6, 2026.

Can Trump Take Over Strait Of Hormuz Passing Through Iran? Who Actually Controls It? Explained

(By our staff reporter) United States (US) President Donald Trump has explicitly threatened to take control of the Strait of Hormuz if Iran continues to disrupt global oil flows.

The waterway, which passes directly through the territorial waters of Iran and Oman, is currently in a state of "near-total collapse" regarding commercial traffic.

Following military strikes, Tehran has challenged this international right of passage and its Iran's Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) declared the strait "closed" and has issued warnings that any vessel attempting to pass will be attacked. Trump, meanwhile, has issued severe warnings and outlined specific military measures to reopen it. Can he take control?

THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ

It is a narrow, strategically vital waterway in the Middle East that serves as the only sea passage from the Persian Gulf to the open ocean. It links the Persian Gulf (to the west) with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea (to the southeast).

It is bordered by Iran on the North coast, the Musandam Peninsula (an enclave of Oman) and the United Arab Emirates on the South. It is about 21 to 33 miles (33–54 km) wide at its narrowest point. Due to the narrowness, ships must use two-mile-wide lanes (one inbound, one outbound) separated by a two-mile buffer zone to prevent collisions. Major islands within or near the strait include

Qeshm, Hormuz, Larak, and Hengam, most of which are controlled by Iran.

The Strait of Hormuz is the world's most critical oil chokepoint. It handles approximately 20% of global oil consumption (around 20 million barrels per day) and 20-25% of the world's liquefied natural gas (LNG), primarily from Qatar. Over 80% of the oil passing through the strait is destined for Asia, with China, India, Japan, and South Korea being the primary importers.

THE CLAIMS OF CONTROL

On March 4, the IRGC declared it had gained "complete control" over the strait, vowing to "set ablaze" any vessel attempting to pass. Trump and CENTCOM have dismissed Iran's claims of total control. The U.S. Navy has been ordered to prepare escort missions for commercial tankers to ensure the "free flow of energy". China has deployed a naval fleet, including the missile destroyer Tangshan, to the region to secure its own energy supplies. Pakistan has launched Operation Muhafiz-ul-Bahr on March 9 to escort its merchant vessels through the disrupted waterway. Russia is participating in joint naval exercises with Iran and China in the area, according to reports in foreign media and Al Jazeera.

WHO CONTROLS THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ?

Under international law, control is divided between the bordering nations, though navigation is theoretically protected by global treaties:

Iran: Controls the northern coastline and several strategic islands (Hormuz, Qeshm, Larak). Its territorial waters extend 12 nautical miles from its shore.

Oman: Controls the southern coastline (the Musandam Peninsula). Most major shipping lanes used by tankers are located within Omani territorial waters.

United Arab Emirates (UAE): Also borders the southern approaches and maintains a significant monitoring and coast guard presence.

International Law: The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) guarantees "transit passage" for all ships, meaning neither Iran nor Oman can legally block the waterway for international transit during peacetime.

While technically an international waterway, the strait is currently "effectively closed" for most commercial operators. Maritime traffic has plummeted by 90-95% since the conflict began on February 28, with major shipping lines like Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd suspending all transits, according to reports.

Iran has reportedly indicated it may allow passage to ships from countries it deems friendly, such as China.

WHAT TRUMP SAID ABOUT THE TAKEOVER

In a March 9 interview with CBS News, Trump stated he is considering "taking over" the waterway to secure energy supplies. He suggested the U.S. Navy would begin escorting oil tankers through the strait "if necessary" and

provided "political risk insurance" to encourage operators to resume travel. Trump warned that if Iran stops the flow of oil, the U.S. will hit them "TWENTY TIMES HARDER" than they have been hit so far. He threatened to destroy targets that would make it "virtually impossible for Iran to ever be built back" as a nation, using the phrase "Death, Fire, and Fury".

TRUMP'S MIXED RHETORIC

Trump has offered a mix of optimistic and escalatory rhetoric regarding the conflict that began on February 28. On March 9 and 10, Trump repeatedly claimed the war would be over "very soon". He described the conflict as a "short-term excursion" to "get rid of some evil". He claimed military objectives were "pretty much complete" and ahead of schedule. Despite predicting a quick end, he told Republican leaders on March 9, "We've already won in many ways, but we haven't won enough". Trump noted that the U.S. has intentionally left some "most important" targets, such as Iran's electrical grid, untouched for potential later strikes if needed. He expressed disappointment in the appointment of Mojtaba Khamenei as the new Supreme Leader but has sent mixed signals on whether he is seeking full-scale regime change. To combat surging oil prices, Trump announced he would waive certain oil-related sanctions on other countries to boost global supply. Trump held a "positive" phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin on March 9 to discuss both the Iran and Ukraine wars.

When Data Centres Become Battlefields: The New Frontline Of Physical War

(By our staff reporter) For over twenty years, we have treated digital security as a game of cat-and-mouse played on keyboards. Governments and corporations have poured billions into firewalls, encryption, and anti-malware, operating under a comfortable assumption: as long as the code is secure, the information is safe. We worried about the "invisible" threat—the hacker in a dark room or the state-sponsored trojan. But recent explosions in the Middle East have shattered that illusion. Reports of drone strikes targeting cloud data centres in the Gulf have exposed a jarring reality. In the high-stakes game of modern geopolitics, the "Cloud" is no longer an abstract digital ether; it is a physical, vulnerable target. What we once dismissed as the boring back-end infrastructure of the internet has moved from the server room to the strategic map. In the 21st century, the server farm is becoming as critical – and as vulnerable – as the oil refinery once was.

The New Kinetic Reality

In the last century, military commanders targeted oil refineries, shipping ports, and power grids to cripple an enemy. If you could choke a nation's energy or transport, you could win the war. Today, data has joined that list of "kinetic" priorities. Modern life doesn't just use data; it runs on it. A single hyperscale data centre handles the

lifeblood of a nation: tax records, banking transactions, airline logistics, and the AI models that increasingly govern our power grids. When a server farm goes dark, the impact isn't just a website timing out. It is a sudden, cascading paralysis of the real-world economy. A well-placed missile can do more damage to a modern economy than a year of sophisticated hacking. This represents a grim "shortcut" for adversaries. Hacking requires elite talent, months of infiltration, and the constant risk of being patched out. Physical sabotage, by contrast, uses old-school military tools to achieve 21st-century disruption. We are entering an era where kinetic warfare produces cyber-level results.

The Blurred Line of Defence

This development reflects a broader transformation in warfare. Military strategists now recognise that digital infrastructure underpins national power. These facilities host the computing capacity used by intelligence agencies, defence contractors, and surveillance systems. When a data centre is located in a country aligned with one side of a conflict, it becomes a high-value target. Furthermore, the boundary between civilian and strategic infrastructure has blurred. Many data centres belong to global tech giants that provide services to everyone from local banks to national defence ministries. If a single building hosts both a shopping app and a military

logistics hub, does that make the entire facility a legitimate target? This is a wake-up call for the "Big Tech" firms managing the world's information. Until now, data centre design was about efficiency: cooling, redundancy, and uptime. But "uptime" takes on a different meaning when you're defending against a loitering munition. We may soon see data centres built like bunkers—reinforced structures, anti-drone domes, and deep integration with national air defence networks.

The Stakes for India

For India, this is a pressing national security concern. India is currently witnessing an unprecedented expansion of its data infrastructure. Driven by the growth of UPI, e-commerce, and cloud computing. The sudden surge in large data-centre projects is also driven by cloud computing, AI, and data localisation policies. According to Blackridge Research, major upcoming facilities include projects by AdaniConneX with Google, Reliance's hyperscale data centre in Jamnagar, and several hyperscale campuses across Mumbai, Chennai, and Hyderabad. These projects involve multi-billion-dollar investments and aim to support India's rapidly growing digital economy and data storage demand. This growth is essential for our "Digital India" mission and our goal of data sovereignty. However, it also creates "concentrated

vulnerabilities." When we cluster massive amounts of national data in a few geographic hubs, those hubs become strategic magnets during a geopolitical crisis. India's national security planners must now integrate digital infrastructure into broader strategic planning. Protecting these hubs cannot be left solely to the private sector. It requires a unified strategy involving the military, law enforcement, and tech providers. We need rigorous physical security standards, integration with critical infrastructure protection frameworks, and enhanced monitoring of emerging threats like drone-based sabotage.

The End of the Virtual Shield

The greatest trick of the digital age was making us believe that information exists in a vacuum. It doesn't. It lives in wires, cooling pipes, and concrete buildings. The boundary between the virtual and the physical has finally evaporated. In the geopolitics of 2026, a nation's strength is measured not just by its firewalls, but by the thickness of its server room walls. If we continue to focus only on the software while ignoring the hardware, we are inviting a catastrophe we aren't prepared to handle. The defence of the digital economy now requires more than just coders; it requires the full weight of national defence.

"EVERYTHING UP FOR GRABS": VINOD KHOSLA, INDIA, AND THE AI REVOLUTION THAT WILL RESHAPE THE WORLD

(By our staff reporter) A deep-dive analysis of the most consequential technology moment of our lifetime — told through the lens of Silicon Valley's most visionary Indian-born investor

PART I: THE MAN BEHIND THE VISION — WHO IS VINOD KHOSLA?

To understand why Vinod Khosla's words about India and AI carry such extraordinary weight, you have to understand the man himself.

Born in Punjab, India, Khosla arrived at IIT Delhi with fire in his eyes and a dream to build something world-changing. He went on to Stanford, co-founded Sun Microsystems — one of the foundational pillars of the internet era — and then built Khosla Ventures into one of Silicon Valley's most respected and contrarian venture capital firms. He was an early backer of OpenAI, long before ChatGPT became a household name. He bet on clean energy, on AI, on fusion power, and on biotechnology when most of his peers were chasing safer returns.

He describes AI as "the largest opportunity I could have ever imagined, even 10 or 15 years ago."

That is not hyperbole from a man prone to caution. That is a seasoned, billionaire technologist who has seen the birth of the internet, the rise of mobile computing, and the genomics revolution — saying that what is happening right now with artificial intelligence eclipses all of it.

PART II: THE HISTORIC BACKDROP — INDIA AND THE AI SUMMIT OF 2026

In February 2026, something historic happened in New Delhi. India hosted the flagship AI Impact Summit — a five-day event with over 35,000 registrations from more than 100 countries, seeing participation from heads of government, ministers, top tech and AI company CEOs, policymakers, and civil society groups from around the globe.

The summit drew over 20 heads of state and more than 500 AI leaders from over 100 countries, making it the largest conference of its kind ever held in the Global South. India put forward its own organising idea: sovereignty over data, inclusion by design, and accountability by default.

This was not just another tech conference. It was a geopolitical statement. India — the world's most populous nation, a rising economic power, a democracy of extraordinary complexity — was planting its flag in the AI era and saying to the world: we are not here to follow. We are here to lead.

The Khosla Doctrine: Disrupting the Status Quo India: The Digital Proving Ground The Economic Earthquake Geopolitics and the Sovereign AI Race Risks, Ethics, and the Human Element

Prime Minister Narendra Modi set an audacious national goal: India should be among the top three AI superpowers globally by 2047.

It was against this backdrop that Vinod Khosla took the stage — and delivered what many described as the most impactful keynote of the entire summit.

PART III: KHOSLA'S THREE-PILLAR ROADMAP FOR INDIA

Pillar One: AI Tutors for Every Child
Khosla identified AI-based personal tutors as his first critical priority, noting that millions of children in rural India lack adequate academic support, and that in rural areas, teachers often don't show up. He argued that AI tutors could bridge this gap for children who currently have no meaningful path to quality education.

The scale he envisions is breathtaking. He spotlighted the free 24/7 AI tutor platform ck12.org — run by his wife, the CK-12 Foundation — which is already CBSE-compatible, multilingual, and currently benefiting 4 million students in India. Khosla made a provocative claim about quality: "I would venture to guess that a student learns better with AI than if they had a personal tutor. Rich people can afford personal tutors. They won't do as well as people who have access to this AI."

He also revealed that his team is working with Sarvam AI — an Indian AI startup he has invested in — to upgrade the government's existing digital learning platform DIKSHA into an AI-first system called DIKSHA 3.0, which would include a teacher development curriculum.

His ambition: "Almost certainly every kid in India before 2030 can have very affordable free personal tutors."

Pillar Two: AI Doctors Available Around the Clock

India faces a catastrophic shortage of medical professionals. Rural areas can go without a doctor for hundreds of miles. Mental healthcare is almost entirely inaccessible to the poor. Khosla's response: build an AI doctor. Not assist a doctor. Build one. He said these systems could provide primary care, chronic disease management, and mental health therapy, and would be

smart enough to triage up to human experts when necessary.

He proposed round-the-clock AI doctors available at minimal or no cost, and suggested integrating this service into India's Aadhaar digital identity infrastructure, the same way UPI was integrated into everyday payments.

His claim is as bold as it is controversial: "Almost certainly the right systems can provide much better care than human doctors. Even if I have access to the best doctors, it's still — AI is the best doctor."

Pillar Three: PhD-Level Agronomists for Every Farmer

India has approximately 150 million farming households. The overwhelming majority make decisions about crops, pests, irrigation, and fertilizer based on tradition, word of mouth, and guesswork. The cost of a bad call can be a family's entire livelihood.

Khosla proposed a voice-first, AI-powered agronomy assistant that requires no literacy — farmers simply speak, observe, and take photographs. He said: "They don't even need to know how to read and write. Just speak, and look, and take pictures."

The tool could offer photo-based crop and pest diagnosis, weather-linked advisories using India Meteorological Department data, crop calendar guidance, irrigation and nutrient recommendations, and escalation to human experts when necessary.

PART IV: THE BIG WARNINGS — DISRUPTION, JOBS, AND THE COMING SHOCK

Khosla is not only an optimist. He is also a prophet of disruption — and he did not spare India from his hardest truths.

The Death of IT and BPO

India's \$283 billion IT outsourcing sector employs millions and has been the engine of the country's modern middle class. Khosla delivered a blunt assessment: its current form is finished.

"BPO as a business will disappear," Khosla said. "Software IT services will mostly disappear. Disappear means transform pretty radically. Whether some of those companies can transform or not will determine whether they

survive."

He told IT firms they must undergo a fundamental transformation by 2030 if they want to remain relevant, saying "by 2030, they will have to do something dramatically different."

This is already happening. India's largest IT firm, TCS, recently announced its largest-ever workforce reduction, cutting over 12,000 roles, citing skill mismatches — a move analysts view as a signal of AI-driven restructuring. Over the next two to three years, automation could displace up to half a million jobs in coding, testing, and customer-support functions.

The 80/80 Prediction

Khosla has predicted that AI will be able to perform 80% of 80% of all jobs very soon — a staggering claim that, if even half-true, represents the most significant labor market disruption in human history.

He also made the extraordinary prediction that by 2050, people may not even need jobs as AI continues to advance, adding that by 2025 it would already be evident that traditional employment structures are changing dramatically.

College Degrees Are Obsolete

In discussions with Indian entrepreneur Nikhil Kamath, Khosla argued that the single most important skill for young workers is not specialization, but the ability to learn rapidly and adapt continuously, reasoning that "ChatGPT can teach you any new areas," rendering traditional academic paths increasingly obsolete.

He went further: "If every child in India has a free AI tutor, it would be better than the best education a rich person can buy."

PART V: INDIA'S ACTUAL AI INFRASTRUCTURE — WHERE THINGS STAND

Khosla's vision doesn't exist in a vacuum. India has been building aggressively.

The Stanford AI Index now places India among the top four countries in AI skills, capabilities, and policies.

India is also the second-largest contributor to AI projects on GitHub, highlighting the strength of its developer

community. The government's IndiaAI Mission is backed by a Rs 10,300 crore budget and includes 38,000 GPUs being deployed to power sovereign AI computation.

AI is expected to contribute an estimated \$1.7 trillion to India's economy by 2035. In June 2025, BharatGen AI launched as India's first government-funded, homegrown multimodal large language model, supporting 22 Indian languages and integrating text, speech, and image understanding.

On the private investment side, the numbers are staggering. Microsoft alone announced a \$17.5 billion investment over four years to advance India's cloud and AI infrastructure — described as its largest investment in Asia.

India's AI sector is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 45% to reach \$28.8 billion, with the country ranking among the top five fastest-growing AI talent hubs globally alongside Singapore, Finland, Ireland, and Canada.

PART VI: INDIA IN THE GLOBAL AI RACE — THE GEOPOLITICAL DIMENSION

The AI race is not just a technological competition. It is a contest for global power, economic leadership, and civilizational influence.

The three primary players are the United States, China, and — increasingly — India.

India's digital foundations — Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker, and India Stack — are what Khosla calls a decisive advantage. "India's already done the hard work," he said, calling them the backbone upon which AI-enabled essential services can be built.

He frames the US-India AI relationship as a strategic necessity, not just a commercial arrangement, and says India is uniquely positioned because AI removes traditional barriers to entry that have historically disadvantaged developing nations.

Khosla expressed strong support for the concept of sovereign AI — countries developing their own AI systems for sensitive areas like cybersecurity and defense, rather than depending on foreign models. He pointed to his investment in Sarvam AI as an expression of this belief.

PM Modi echoed this,



articulating India's approach as: "sovereignty over data, inclusion by design, and accountability by default" — a formulation that deliberately positions India as an alternative model to both Silicon Valley's libertarian capitalism and Beijing's authoritarian surveillance state.

PART VII: THE CRITICS AND THE CAUTIONS

Not everyone is celebrating. India's AI ambitions face serious structural challenges that enthusiastic summits and keynote speeches cannot paper over.

The connectivity problem: Vast swaths of rural India still lack reliable broadband. An AI doctor is useless without a signal. An AI tutor cannot run on a 2G connection. The infrastructure preconditions for Khosla's vision remain unmet for hundreds of millions.

The data privacy problem: Critics of linking AI health services to Aadhaar have raised serious concerns, with commentators noting: "The AI doctor idea is brilliant, but only if the data privacy is ironclad. Linking it to Aadhaar makes me nervous. We need guarantees that health data won't be

misused."

The language and bias problem: PM Modi himself acknowledged this: "An AI system trained primarily on English data or urban contexts may perform poorly for rural users or speakers of regional languages.

Our diversity — linguistic, cultural, regional — means that AI bias can manifest in ways that might not be obvious in Western contexts."

The job displacement problem: The same AI that promises to give every Indian child a free tutor will simultaneously eliminate the call center and IT jobs that gave the previous generation of Indians their first foothold in the modern economy.

The transition timeline is brutal — disruption comes in years; reskilling takes decades.

PART VIII: THE 2050 VISION — UTOPIA OR CATASTROPHE?

Khosla ends with his most expansive and controversial claim. By 2050, he believes, the world will be fundamentally unrecognizable — and potentially far better.

He predicted a world where

AI has driven the cost of living down so dramatically that "\$10,000 might buy more goods and services than \$50,000 does today," and where services like education, medical expertise, and legal advice become "almost free."

By 2040, he argues, education, healthcare, and legal services will all be free AI-powered services — available to a subsistence farmer in Bihar as readily as to a Manhattan hedge fund manager.

But he is emphatic that this future is not automatic. "What it mostly needs is good policy," he says. "The technology development will happen. This won't happen on its own. It'll be made to happen, especially in a country like India."

CONCLUSION: EVERYTHING UP FOR GRABS

The title of Khosla's famous talk says it all. Everything up for grabs is not a warning. It is an invitation. For India, the AI moment is the most consequential opportunity in its modern history — bigger than the Green Revolution, bigger than the IT outsourcing boom of the 1990s, bigger than the smartphone revolution. A nation

of 1.5 billion people, with the world's largest young population, a deep well of mathematical and engineering talent, and a digital infrastructure that is already the envy of the world, stands at the threshold of a transformation that could lift hundreds of millions out of poverty and project Indian power and Indian ideas onto the global stage for the first time in centuries.

As Khosla put it with characteristic bluntness: "Unless AI benefits the bottom half of the Indian population, we are not going to see any real impact. If we don't do this, it is a massive opportunity lost for us." The window is open. The technology exists. The infrastructure is being built. The capital is flowing. The question that will define India's next chapter is not whether AI will transform the country — it will. The question is whether India will be the architect of that transformation, or merely its subject. Vinod Khosla, the boy from Punjab who went to Silicon Valley and helped build the internet age, is betting — with his money, his influence, and his extraordinary credibility — that India will choose to lead.

'Bloodbath' hits wine country as millennials and boomers abandon alcohol

(By our staff reporter) America's wine industry is grappling with one of its most painful downturns in decades as younger consumers cut back on drinking and baby boomers age out of the market—reshaping alcohol habits nationwide.

The trend has contributed to more than \$1 billion in lost U.S. wine revenue last year and a roughly 6 million-case drop in production, according to industry data and reports. Across California in particular, major producers and family-run wineries are shuttering facilities, laying off workers and even ripping vineyards out of the ground amid oversupply and falling demand, the New York Post recently reported.

Jackson Family Wines ceased production at its Carneros Hill facility in Sonoma in February, resulting in 13 layoffs, while E&J Gallo shuttered its Ranch Winery in St. Helena and cut nearly 100 jobs across Napa and Sonoma counties. Mission Bell Winery in Madera is set to close March 31, laying off more than 200 employees—while smaller producers such as Subject to Change Wine Company and Valley Farm Man-

agement have shut their doors as well. The crisis extends be-



yond individual closures. The weakest-performing wineries saw sales fall by about 10% in 2025, while the top-performing group still managed to grow, according to Silicon Valley Bank's 2026 State of the U.S. Wine Industry Report. California's total vineyard footprint was estimated at 477,475 acres in 2025, according to the California Association of Winegrape Growers, down from about 600,000 acres in recent years, based on earlier state estimates.

At least 20% of California's wine grape production from bearing vines was not harvested and crushed in 2025, Forbes reported in November.

"It's a bloodbath for all grape growers across California,"

Stuart Spencer, executive director of the Lodi Wine Grape Commission, told Forbes. "It is the worst market condition growers have seen in their lifetime." Shifting drinking habits are largely to blame. Older wine enthusiasts are aging out of the market and are not being replaced at the same rate by millennials and Gen Z, experts say.

"The mid-20s to late-30s demographic has historically been a very important dining and drinking segment," Andrew Principe, a James Beard-recognized restaurateur and co-owner of Pulcinella in New Orleans, told Fox News Digital.

"A significant slowdown of al-

cohol consumption within this group has been noticeable."

Broader cultural shifts are also reshaping behavior, he said. A recent Gallup poll shows the share of U.S. adults who drink alcohol has fallen to 54%, the lowest level in decades. It reflects growing health concerns about even moderate drinking. "Younger generations are prioritizing health and wellness," Principe said. He added that guests are dining out less frequently and often ordering fewer courses and fewer drinks. "Someone who may have ordered an appetizer, entrée and several glasses of wine may now only have one," he said. Principe said there's "emerging evidence" that GLP-1 medications may reduce cravings for alcohol, though he believes the broader change is behavioral. GLP-1 drugs can help reduce alcohol consumption and cravings, research has shown. Experts caution that more data is needed to determine the broader impact that weight-loss drugs are having on the alcohol industry.

Babak Hafezi, an adjunct professor of international business at American University

who has worked with wineries in California and on the East Coast, told Fox News Digital he's not seen scientific data proving GLP-1 drugs are materially impacting wine consumption. "This is not an industry recession but rather a demographic shift," Hafezi said, pointing to generational changes, competition from hard seltzers and THC-infused beverages, and a general decline in alcohol consumption. In addition to environmental issues, economic pressure and inflation, the downturn is also tied to a post-pandemic correction, experts say. Wine sales surged during COVID-19 lockdowns before beginning to decline again, contributing to excess inventory, according to reports. "As the owner of two restaurants and a cocktail bar, I had hoped for a 'Roaring Twenties' after COVID, but that hasn't been the case," Principe said. "Like many in hospitality, we've had to adjust our strategies around alcohol as consumer habits continue to evolve." Survival may hinge on how quickly producers adapt, experts say.

"Wineries that pivot and add other vehicles to deliver their wines will be the winners," Hafezi said, emphasizing direct-to-consumer sales, wine clubs and tasting room experiences.

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

Bill to roll back Trump's H-1B restrictions introduced by Democrats

A bill was introduced in the US House of Representatives to reverse restrictions placed on the H-1B visa programme by the Trump Administration in the US. The WISA Act, if passed, would roll back some measures of Donald Trump's presidential proclamation, including the \$100,000 sponsorship fee for new H-1B applicants.

(By our staff reporter) An immigration bill has been introduced in the US House of Representatives that seeks to roll back some of the restrictions imposed on the H-1B visa programme during US President Donald Trump's second term in office. This comes amid a continued debate on how Washington DC should manage high-skilled immigration, including from India.

The legislation titled, Welcoming International Success Act (WISA) was introduced on Friday by Democratic Representative, Bonne Watson Coleman. If the Act is passed, it would nullify the September 2025 Presidential Proclamation by Donald Trump which had imposed rigid wage level requirements and a \$100,000 sponsorship fee for new H-1B applicants. The Presidential Proclamation in question is currently the subject of multiple lawsuits, including one from the US Chambers of Commerce, and a coalition of Democrat-ruled states led by California, which have called the action unconsti-



tutional and detrimental to the quality of public services like education and healthcare in those states.

WHAT IS THE WISA ACT THAT COUNTERS H-1B VISA RESTRICTIONS?

In a press release by the office of Coleman detailing the WISA Act, it argued that the H-1B programme encourages talented workers from abroad to work in industries in the United

States that experience labour shortages, including technology, engineering, healthcare, and education. "Trump's short-sighted proclamation has created significant barriers for U.S. employers, universities, hospitals, and research institutions that rely on highly-skilled professionals," said Coleman, according to the press release. "The H-1B program does not replace the domestic workforce; it serves as a

bridge between U.S. talent and global talent that fuels U.S. economic growth." According to Coleman, "A combination of an ageing workforce, Covid-related burnout, restrictions on H-1B visas, and the Trump Administration's recent limitations placed on federal student loans for nursing degrees has created a perfect storm for a nursing shortage in the coming years. The Welcoming Interna-

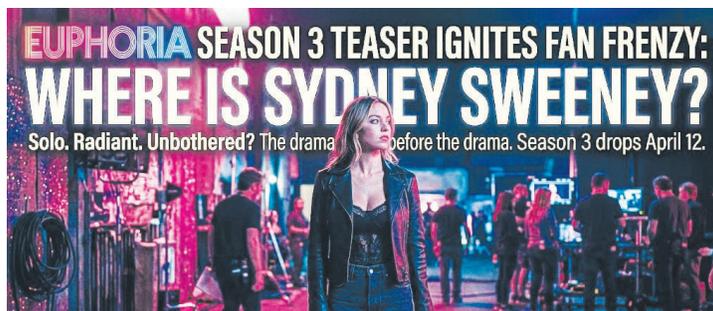
tional Success Act (WISA) would ease this burden as demand for qualified healthcare professionals increases." The proposed legislation has drawn support from several Democratic lawmakers, including Yvette Clarke, Lois Frankel, Seth Moulton and Hank Johnson, who have signed on as co-sponsors. Coleman's legislation comes at a time the H-1B visa programme, used by the US to attract skilled professionals in sectors like technology, healthcare, information services, among others, is under severe strain.

WHY IS THE H-1B VISA PROGRAMME UNDER STRESS IN THE US?

The H-1B visa programme had hitherto been a pathway for skilled professionals to be able to come and work in the US, with Indian professionals in particular benefiting. According to research by the Pew Research Foundation, Indians accounted for nearly three-quarters of the roughly 400,000 H-1B approvals in 2023, with many working in STEM roles, software developers, engineers and others.

Euphoria Season 3 Teaser Ignites Fan Frenzy: Where is Sydney Sweeney?

(By our staff reporter) HBO's recent release of a steamy Euphoria Season 3 teaser has ignited a wave of speculation among eagle-eyed fans. While the group shot featuring Zendaya, Hunter Schafer, Alexa Demie, and Maude Apatow, appearing to be the best of friends, captivated many, the noticeable absence of Sydney Sweeney from this collective frame has generated intense online discussion. "The Solo Frame and the 'Missing' Member" Sweeney's distinct solo shot, featuring her smiling but distinctly separate from the rest of the main cast in the group photo, has led to numerous questions and theories across the internet. Fans are questioning why she was excluded from the communal laugh and embrace, prompting queries about scheduling conflicts, potential oversights, or something more. HBO's silence on the matter has only fueled the speculative fire, with some gossip enthusiasts interpreting it as a potential confirma-



tion of behind-the-scenes drama. "Fueling the Feud Rumors" The timing of this separation is particularly striking given the lingering rumors of a feud between Sweeney and Zendaya. These whisper network reports, which have circulated for months, seem to find new ground in this visual distinction. Although Sweeney does appear in the teaser, her isolation has amplified these ongoing narratives. "Season 3 and the Unfolding Drama" As fans eagerly await

the April 12 premiere of Season 3, the dynamics between these two central figures are now under intense scrutiny. Whether Cassie and Rue will share scenes, glances, or palpable silence remains to be seen. However, it's clear that the drama surrounding their off-screen relationship has become a significant talking point, potentially overshadowing the show's actual plotline. "The Impact of Silence and Speculation" HBO's decision not to address the fan specula-

tion has left a void that is being filled with various interpretations and rumors. This situation highlights the power of fan observation and the impact that even subtle changes in promotional materials can have on public perception and the overall conversation surrounding a highly anticipated television series. "Conclusion" The Euphoria Season 3 teaser has effectively set the stage for intense anticipation, not only for the show's narrative but also for the underlying dynamics between its leading stars. The question of Sydney Sweeney's position within the ensemble cast, both on and off-screen, has become a central point of interest, ensuring that the lead-up to the premiere will be filled with speculation and debate. Whether this drama will be reflected on-screen or remain a matter of public fascination remains to be seen, but it has undoubtedly generated significant buzz for the upcoming season.

THE SAVANI EMPIRE FALLS: Pennsylvania Dentists Convicted in Decades-Long \$32M Fraud Scheme

THE SAVANI EMPIRE FALLS: PENNSYLVANIA DENTISTS CONVICTED IN DECADES-LONG \$32M FRAUD SCHEME

RACKETEERING CONSPIRACY
SYSTEMIC EXPLOITATION
DANGEROUS MALPRACTICE
MAXIMUM SENTENCES

GUILTY: Bhaskar & Arun Savani
 CONVICED ACCOMPLICE
 \$32M+ SIPHONED FROM MEDICAID
 MEDICAID BILLING
 WAGE KICKBACKS FROM INDIAN IMMIGRANTS
 H-1B VISA FRAUD
 USED UNAPPROVED DENTAL IMPLANTS
 NOT FOR HUMAN USE PROTOTYPE DEVICE
 BHASKAR SAVANI 420 YEARS
 ARUN SAVANI 415 YEARS
 SENTENCING SET FOR JULY 2026

(By our staff reporter) PHILADELPHIA — A federal jury has dismantled the "Savani Group," a sprawling criminal enterprise led by brothers Bhaskar Savani (60) and Arun Savani (58). Following a high-profile trial that concluded

SHOCKING "WATER-FOR-MEDICINE" SCAM: Bihar Man Jailed for Trafficking Counterfeit Cancer Drugs

BIHAR MAN JAILED IN FAKE CANCER DRUG SCHEME: SANJAY KUMAR SENTENCED

INDIAN NATIONAL GETS 43 MONTHS IN US PRISON FOR 'WATER' INJECTABLE

SENTENCED
THE SCAM
PROFITS & IMPACT

43 MONTHS PRISON
 LAB CONFIRMED NO ACTIVE INGREDIENTS
 "It's just like water..." - His admitted to undercover agents
 \$89,268 TOTAL PROFITS
 Investigated illicit gains
 CRITICAL PATIENTS EXPLOITED USELESS DRUGS
 FEDERAL PROSECUTION MEDICATION FRAUD IMMUNOTHERAPY KEYTRUDA DOJ INVESTIGATION

(By our staff reporter) HOUSTON, TX — A federal judge in Houston has sentenced Sanjay Kumar (45), an Indian national originally from Bihar, to 43 months in federal prison for orchestrating a cold-blooded international scheme that sold fake cancer medications to critically ill patients.

The sentencing, handed down on March 5, 2026, marks the end of a multi-year investigation into a conspiracy that federal prosecutors described as "particularly depraved." The Fugazi Drug: Hope Sold as Water "The investigation revealed that between August 2018 and June 2024, Kumar and his co-conspirators trafficked counterfeit versions of Keytruda, a high-cost immunotherapy drug used to treat life-threatening conditions like lung cancer and melanoma. Laboratory tests by federal authorities confirmed the vials contained no active ingredients. Instead, they were filled with fillers and adulterants that served zero medical purpose." "Key Revelations from the Case: "The "Water" Admission: During a sting operation, Kumar was recorded telling undercover agents that the drugs he was selling were "junk" and "just like water," acknowledging they would never work to treat cancer." "The Lure: Kumar was arrested in June 2024 after being lured to Houston by federal agents posing as business partners interested in expanding his distribution network. The Profits: The scheme netted approximately \$89,268 from sales to undercover operatives alone, though the total impact on the patient population is still being assessed." "International Ties: The fake drugs were shipped from India using counterfeit Merck Sharp & Dohme trademarks to bypass customs and deceive buyers.

this week, the siblings were convicted on a litany of charges including racketeering, Medicaid fraud, and visa fraud that spanned over a decade.

Once prominent figures in the Pennsylvania business community—often seen in social media circles alongside high-ranking officials like FBI Director Kash Patel—the brothers now face a combined maximum of 835 years in federal prison.

“### A Decade of Deception” The investigation, led by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, unraveled a “complex web” of illegal activity designed to enrich the Savani family at the expense of taxpayers and vulnerable immigrants.

Key Crimes Uncovered at Trial: “\$32 Million Medicaid Fraud: After their original dental practices were terminated from Medicaid contracts, the brothers used “nominee owners” (frontmen) to keep billing the program.

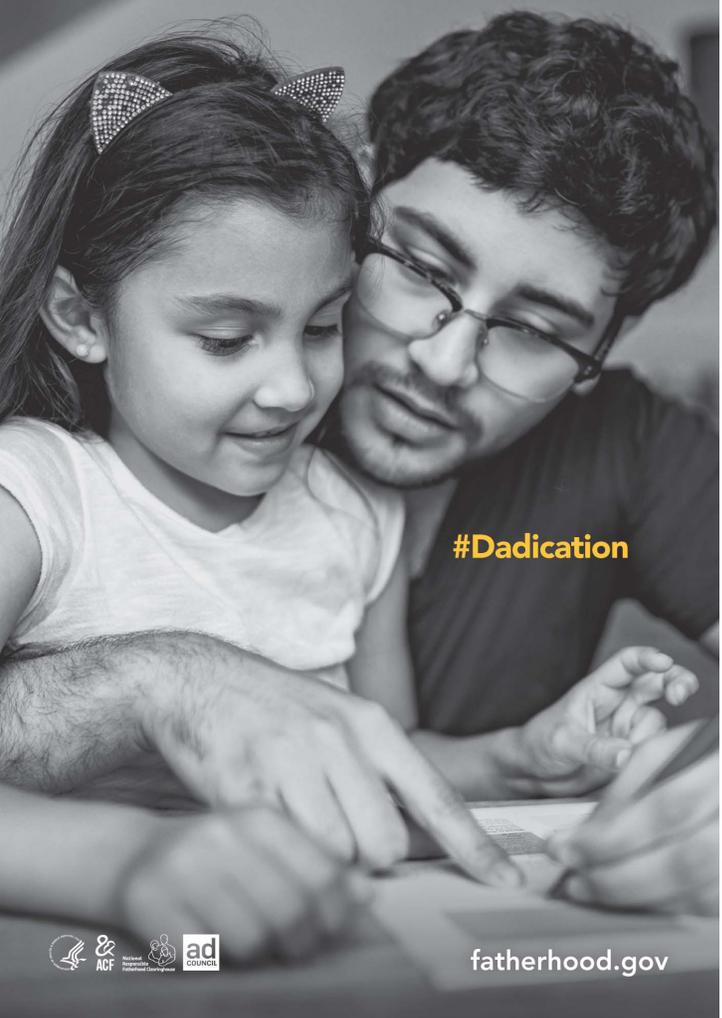
They also billed for services performed by uncredentialed staff and used

a different dentist’s ID to bill for procedures while that dentist was out of the country. “H-1B Visa Exploitation: The Savani Group recruited foreign workers, primarily from India, but forced them to pay “kickbacks” from their salaries and fees back to the brothers to maintain their employment status.

Dangerous Malpractice: In a shocking revelation, Bhaskar Savani was convicted for his role in implanting prototype dental devices into patients.

These devices were explicitly labeled “Not For Human Use” and had never been cleared by the FDA.

Tax Evasion & Money Laundering: The brothers used corporate accounts to pay for personal luxuries—including college tuition, pool maintenance, and personal property taxes—while failing to report over \$2.7 million in income. The Verdict and Sentencing “The jury delivered a crushing blow to the brothers and their executive accomplice, Aleksandra “Ola” Radomiak (48), who was also convicted for her role in facilitating the Medicaid fraud.



#Dadication

Opposition fears AAP's return: Bhagwant Mann on Rs 1,000 a month aid for women



(News Agency) Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday claimed that opposition parties were rattled by his government's announcement of a monthly financial assistance scheme for women, saying their criticism reflects fear of the Aam Aadmi Party returning to power in the 2027 Assembly elections. Speaking in the Punjab Assembly during the Budget Session while replying to the debate on the motion of thanks to the governor's address, Mann said his government had treated its election manifesto as a "sacred commitment" and fulfilled the promises made to people. He accused the Shiromani Akali Dal, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Indian National Congress of repeatedly betraying the public by failing to deliver on their electoral assurances.

RS 1,000 SCHEME FOR WOMEN

Defending the newly announced financial support programme for women, Mann said it was aimed at giving dignity and

economic support to families. Under the Mukh Mantri Mavaan Dhian Yojna, women aged above 18 from the general category will receive Rs 1,000 per month, while women from the Scheduled Caste category will receive Rs 1,500 per month. "For ordinary people, especially the poor, Rs 1,000-Rs 1,500 is a significant amount. This amount is a mark of respect for mothers and daughters, and the smile on women's faces due to this scheme gives me great satisfaction," Mann said. He announced that registration for the scheme will begin on April 13.

WELFARE SCHEMES AND JOBS

The chief minister said the state government had launched several welfare initiatives, including free electricity, free bus travel and health coverage for families. e also referred to the recruitment of 63,943 youths over the past four years. "There was a time when no one even read election manifestos because traditional par-

ties released them merely as a formality a few days before elections," Mann said. "Traditional parties used to talk about religion and caste in their manifestos, but AAP's national convener Arvind Kejriwal made a historic initiative by including

quality health and education for the common people in the manifesto," he added.

Mann also spoke about the Meri Rasoi scheme aimed at easing the burden on families struggling with rising prices.

Northeast people not safe in Delhi: Arunachal BJP MP's sharp remark on own party

(News Agency) BJP MP from Arunachal Pradesh Tapir Gao on Monday raised concerns over the safety of people from the northeastern states in Delhi, saying incidents of racial discrimination and attacks continue to surface. He said the issue would be raised in Parliament and urged the government to consider a stronger legal framework to protect citizens from the region. Notably, BJP, the party to which Gao belongs, is in power in Delhi and at the Centre.

The remarks come amid renewed concern following a recent assault on a woman from Manipur in Delhi's Saket area. Speaking in front of Parliament, Gao said people from the Northeast often feel unsafe not just in the national capital but in metropolitan cities across the country.

"People from the northeastern states are not secure in Delhi. Not only in Delhi, but people from the northeast are also facing racial discrimination, fights and killings in all metropolitan cities across the country," the BJP leader said. He added

that the matter would be taken up during Zero Hour in Parliament, and that a delegation would also meet the Union Home Minister. Gao further suggested that the Centre should consider bringing a law similar to an Atrocity Act to prevent discrimination and violence against people from the Northeast.

"This is a huge issue; we will take this up in Parliament. We will also meet the Home Minister over this. There should be a secure law for the northeastern states," he said.

FRESH ASSAULT CASE SPARKS OUTRAGE

The remarks come amid renewed concern following a recent assault involving two people from the Northeast in south Delhi.

According to police, the incident took place on Sunday evening near a park close to the Saket District Court complex, where a woman from Manipur and her friend from Assam were walking.

Fake news factory at it again: BJP slams Mamata over 'President standing' photo

(News Agency) The Bharatiya Janata Party on Monday hit back at West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee over her claim that President Droupadi Murmu was made to stand while Prime Minister Narendra Modi remained seated during the presentation of the Bharat Ratna to veteran BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani, accusing the Trinamool Congress of spreading misinformation and manufacturing outrage.

In a post on X, the BJP said the photograph circulated by the Trinamool Congress was being misrepresented and insisted that the ceremony had followed official protocol. According to the party, during the conferment of the Bharat Ratna, those present remain seated while the President presents the award, and there was no breach of decorum. "TMC's fake news factory is at it again," the BJP said, adding that the party was

attempting to twist "a dignified moment involving the Hon'ble President Droupadi Murmu, PM Shri Narendra Modi and Bharat Ratna Shri LK Advani for petty politics."

The BJP also called on the Trinamool Congress to respect the dignity of the highest constitutional office instead of spreading misinformation.

TMC's Fake News factory is at it again. The truth behind TMC's manufactured outrage.

As per official protocol during the presentation of Bharat Ratna award, others present remain seated while the award is being conferred.

There was absolutely no breach of decorum. It is shameful <https://t.co/eS12BWnAbr> pic.twitter.com/SmcntLoYau— BJP West Bengal (@BJP4Bengal) March 8, 2026 The political exchange intensified after



Banerjee displayed a photograph from March 2024 showing President Murmu

conferring the Bharat Ratna on Advani while PM Modi was seated beside him.

U.S. Temporarily Eases Sanctions to Allow India to Buy Russian Oil Amid Iran Conflict

(News Agency) The United States has temporarily relaxed sanctions to allow India to purchase Russian oil currently stranded at sea as tensions in the Middle East disrupt global energy supply routes. The move comes as the ongoing conflict involving Iran threatens shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a key transit point for global oil and gas shipments. U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced a 30 day waiver that will permit the sale of Russian oil already stuck in transit. He described the measure as a short term step designed to keep oil moving through global markets and reduce pressure on energy supplies during the crisis. Officials say the waiver applies only to oil that is already on ships and does not authorize new Russian energy transactions. The Strait of Hormuz remains a central concern for global energy markets. Nearly half of India's crude oil and gas imports pass through the narrow waterway. Since the conflict began, Iran has warned that vessels attempting to move through the route could face attacks, raising fears of a major disruption to international energy trade. Energy analysts say millions of barrels of



oil are currently trapped near the region as shipping companies assess the risks. India, which imports about 90 percent of its crude oil, relies heavily on supplies that move through the Gulf. Roughly half of its imports, estimated at about 2.5 to 2.7 million barrels per day, normally pass through the Strait of Hormuz from producers such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. The disruption has already affected energy shipments to India.

Petron LNG, the country's largest gas importer, issued a force majeure notice after its tankers were unable to reach loading terminals in Qatar. Indian companies including the Gas Authority of India Ltd and Indian Oil Corporation have reportedly begun cutting gas supplies to some industrial customers as a precau-

tion. Analysts say the waiver could allow about 145 million barrels of Russian crude currently in transit to be redirected toward Indian ports if commercial agreements are reached.

However, experts caution that the temporary policy does not resolve India's broader reliance on Middle Eastern energy supplies.

India Dominate T20 World Cup Final with Crushing 96-Run Victory Over New Zealand

India Confirms Continued Russian Oil Imports Amid Global Energy Market Turbulence



(News Agency) India delivered a spectacular performance in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Final on Sunday, overpowering New Zealand by 96 runs in Ahmedabad to successfully defend their title. The hosts piled up a massive total of 255 for 5 in their 20 overs before bowling out New Zealand for 159 in 19 overs. The emphatic win secured India their third T20 World Cup crown and marked the first time a men's team has defended the title in the tournament's history. India's batting lineup set the tone early with an explosive start. Abhishek Sharma smashed a quickfire 52 from just 21 balls, helping India surge to a 98 run opening partnership alongside Sanju Samson. Samson continued the momentum with a commanding innings of 89 from 46 deliveries, combining power hitting with controlled stroke play. Ishan Kishan also contributed significantly, scoring 54 off 25 balls as India maintained relentless pressure on New Zealand's bowlers. Despite a

brief moment of hope for New Zealand when Jimmy Neesham claimed three wickets in quick succession, the damage had already been done. Neesham finished with figures of 3 for 46, removing Samson, Kishan, and captain Suryakumar Yadav in the same over. However, India's aggressive batting ensured the scoreboard pressure remained overwhelming heading into the second innings.

New Zealand's chase never truly gathered momentum. After losing Finn Allen early, Tim Seifert provided a spark with an aggressive 52 off 26 balls. However, the middle order struggled to keep pace as Rachin Ravindra, Glenn Phillips, and Mark Chapman were dismissed for single digit scores. India's disciplined bowling attack tightened the grip on the match as wickets continued to fall. Jasprit Bumrah led the bowling effort with a brilliant spell of 4 for 15, dismantling the lower order and effectively sealing the result.

India has reaffirmed that it will continue purchasing Russian oil despite geopolitical tensions and sanctions pressures, stating that its energy decisions are guided solely by national interests. The announcement came after the United States issued a temporary waiver allowing oil shipments currently stranded at sea to be sold to Indian buyers. The waiver was granted by the U.S. Department of the Treasury on Thursday as global energy markets faced renewed volatility following the escalating U.S. and Israeli military campaign against Iran and retaliatory actions from Tehran across the Gulf region. The conflict has significantly disrupted oil supplies and triggered sharp increases in global crude prices.

Despite the waiver, India's Press Information Bureau emphasized that the country does not rely on approval from other nations when making decisions about energy imports.

In an official statement, the government said India has never depended on permission from any country to buy Russian oil and confirmed that Russia remains the country's largest supplier of crude oil as of February 2026.

The comments also come after the

Trump administration rolled back a 25 percent tariff on Indian exports earlier this year as part of an interim trade agreement between Washington and New Delhi. U.S. officials had suggested the tariff reduction was tied to India's commitment to halt purchases of Russian oil, though the Indian government has not confirmed such a pledge and



said oil procurement decisions remain based on domestic energy needs. India also stated that it remains well prepared to manage any short term disruptions in supply.

Officials reported that the country currently holds more than 250 million barrels of crude oil and petroleum products in reserves, providing a significant buffer during periods of global market instability.

Meanwhile, oil markets have reacted strongly to the growing tensions in the Middle East.

LPG crisis: Iran war bites Mumbai's vada pav and Bengaluru's iconic dosa



(News Agency) The shockwaves of a war being fought around 3,000 km away in Iran are now being felt in India's kitchens and by hotels and restaurants that rely heavily on commercial LPG cylinders. The ripple effect of the Iran conflict and the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a global energy chokepoint, has led to an LPG cooking gas crunch. Over the past few days, videos have emerged of serpentine queues outside LPG agencies. But the crisis is being felt even more sharply by restaurants and hotels in Bengaluru, Chennai, and Mumbai.

Behind the crisis is a stark reality -- India imports over 60% of its domestic LPG requirement, and nearly 85-90% of

these imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz, making supplies vulnerable. With the conflict now entering its second week, the disruption in the supply of commercial cylinders has started to impact the hospitality sector. It has raised a worrying prospect. Your humble vada pav or masala dosa could soon become costlier, or temporarily disappear from menus if the supply crunch continues.

MUMBAI RESTAURANTS STARE AT SHUTDOWN

The crisis is acute in Mumbai. AHAR, which is the Mumbai Hotels Association, has stated that around 20% of hotels and restaurants have already shut down. It has warned that up to 50% of hotels could

shut within the next two days if supplies do not improve.

Already, eateries in popular areas like Dadar and Andheri have begun shortening their menus. Operating hours are also being curtailed to conserve remaining stocks. One possible factor behind the LPG crunch being faced by res-

taurants could be the government's move to prioritise cooking gas supplies for households. On Monday, the Centre invoked the Essential Commodities Act to ensure an uninterrupted supply of domestic cooking gas. Restaurant owners have claimed that commercial LPG supplies have largely stopped since Sunday.

One call from PM Modi to Israel, Iran can stop war: Ex-UAE envoy to India

Hussain Hassan Mirza, the first UAE Ambassador to India, said that a single phone call from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to both Israel and Iran could help stop the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Speaking to India Today TV, Mirza highlighted India's diplomatic standing and PM Modi's relations with both countries, and said that the combination of the two factors could help bring down tensions. "India is a great country. The profile of India... the mere fact that

one telephone call from Mr Modi to both Israel and Iran to stop, it will stop. One phone call," Mirza said. He pointed out that PM Modi recently visited Israel and also maintains good relations with Iran. "Mr Modi was in Israel 10 days ago. Mr Modi has a very, very good relationship with Iran. He's the biggest buyer of Iran's oil. Very simple... One phone call from Mr Modi will solve the problem," he said.



IndiGo flight from UK diverted to Cairo, 300+ flyers stranded for over 8 hours



(News Agency) An IndiGo flight operating from London to Mumbai was diverted to Cairo in Egypt due to airspace restrictions, leaving more than 300 passengers—all Indians-- onboard as the aircraft remained at the airport for several hours.

The flight, 6E2, departed from London's Heathrow Airport at 9.33 pm UTC on March 8 (3.03 am IST on March 9), according to data from flight tracking website Flightradar24. Instead of continuing towards India, the aircraft altered its route mid-journey and eventually landed in Cairo after changing course over the Red Sea. Flight path data shows the aircraft initially travelled southeast across Europe and entered Egyptian airspace before continuing further towards the Red Sea. It then

made a U-turn over the Red Sea and headed north towards Cairo, landing at around 6.21 am UTC ((11.51 am IST). Several users on social media platform X raised concerns about the flight's status. One user asked the airline for an update, saying the aircraft had departed London but had not reached Mumbai and was showing its location at Cairo International Airport.

Responding to the query, IndiGo said the flight was diverted due to restrictions in the region's airspace. "Hi, we understand your concern. Please be informed that the flight was diverted to Cairo due to airspace restrictions. Feel free to reach out to us for any further assistance," the airline said in a reply on X. Another user

said their family members were onboard the aircraft and sought clarification from the airline, asking why the plane was in Cairo. The diversion comes amid wider disruptions to international flight operations due to the ongoing conflict in the Middle

East, which has led to airspace closures and route restrictions. Earlier today, another IndiGo flight from Delhi to Manchester was forced to return to the national capital after facing restrictions while attempting to enter Eritrean airspace.

Two Lok Sabha MPs don't take salary. Here's who they are

(News Agency) Members of Parliament are often seen coming together across party lines when it comes to increasing their salaries and perks. But there are some who do not want a paise in remuneration. A Right To Information response reveals that only two MPs in the current Lok Sabha have chosen not to draw their salary -- one from the BJP and the other from the Congress. The two MPs represent constituencies separated by 2,575 kilometres -- the distance between Kurukshetra and Imphal. However, one of them has gone a step further: he has chosen not to take even the government perks and allowances that come with the office. According to the RTI reply from the Lok Sabha Secretariat, made in response to a query posed by India Today, the two

MPs are Naveen Jindal, MP from Kurukshetra, and Dr Bimol Akojiam Angomcha, MP from Inner Manipur. Moreover, Jindal has also chosen not to avail his official allowances or perks. According to their election affidavits, the two MPs come from very different financial backgrounds. Naveen Jindal, the MP from Kurukshetra, has declared assets worth Rs 1,241 crore, while Dr Bimol Akojiam Angomcha, who represents Inner Manipur, has declared assets of about Rs 97 lakh.

Jindal is also among the wealthiest members of the 18th Lok Sabha. Yet, he is not the richest. That distinction belongs to Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, the Telugu Desam MP from Guntur, who has declared assets worth over Rs 5,705 crore.

Trump is doing the right thing for the U.S., and we Democrats should judge the war on the merits.

(By David Boies, WSJ)

Every past president since Bill Clinton, Republican and Democrat alike, has declared that Iran couldn't be permitted to develop nuclear weapons. Not one acted to prevent it. Every president since Ronald Reagan has condemned Iran's role in terrorism against American citizens, interests and allies. Not one acted to stop it. Instead each president left his successor with a more dangerous Iran and a more complicated threat to address.

Last June President Trump undertook a limited military operation designed to interrupt Iran's development of nuclear weapons and discourage the country from continuing its nuclear program. In the face of Iran's refusal to forswear nuclear weapons and evidence that it was rapidly increasing the number, sophistication and range of its missiles, Mr. Trump began the current military campaign.

If he hadn't acted, his successor would have been left with an even more dangerous choice than his predecessors left him. Three or four years from now, the Iranian missiles now hitting Iran's neighbors could be hitting Berlin or London, perhaps even New York or Washington—perhaps with a nuclear device or at least a dirty bomb.

No sensible person wants a war, a president least of all. Wars destroy lives, waste treasure and usually are unpopular. But the widespread hostility to this military action seems untethered to any serious discussion of the merits. What is the alternative?

Obviously, few are prepared to say it is simply to permit religious madmen who swear "death to America" and back up their threats with terrorism to secure nuclear weapons and the capability to deliver them. The scope and scale of Iran's response show how much its military capabilities have progressed, and how dangerous it would have been to permit them to increase further.

For three decades we have tried everything that each president could think of. We've tried being nice, talking tough, moral suasion, negotiated agreement, economic sanctions. None worked. The problem is that there is only one language Iran's leaders understand.

I understand some of the hostility to Mr. Trump's action. The isolationist wing of the Republican Party and the pacifist wing of the Democratic Party each are wrapped in the fantasy that we can afford to ignore the capabilities and intentions of enemies because they are thousands of miles away. Two hundred years ago that view was credible. One hundred years ago

it was plausible. Today it takes only one missile carrying a nuclear or dirty bomb to get through our defenses, or one such



device smuggled into this country, to devastate a city.

I also understand—and deplore—the fringes of both parties that apparently hate Israel and Jews so much that they oppose any action to neutralize Israel's enemies.

What is harder to understand, and particularly troubling for our country, is opposition rooted simply in antipathy toward Mr. Trump himself. We used to say that politics stops at the water's edge. That was never completely true; the willingness to bludgeon a president over foreign policy for domestic political gain is as old as Vice President Thomas Jefferson's attacks on President John Adams. Yet for most of our history we have given the president the benefit of the doubt.

More important, criticisms have historically been based on policy differences over the military action at hand, not knee-jerk opposition to the president himself. Many Republicans supported Mr. Clinton's military actions and President Obama's surge in Afghanistan; many Democrats supported President George W. Bush's actions in Afghanistan and (at least initially) Iraq. More Republicans than Democrats probably supported President Lyndon B. Johnson's actions in Vietnam.

More important still, even when we believed a president's actions were misguided, we almost always wanted him to succeed if possible. Some efforts to curtail what the president is doing in Iran seem motivated simply by a desire not to give him a win—even if it means a loss for America.

When North Korea invaded South Ko-

rea President Harry S. Truman acted to stop it. It was so unpopular that Truman didn't seek re-election in 1952. Dwight

threat Iran poses need to support the military action not because we owe anything to Mr. Trump but because we owe it to ourselves, our country and our children.

If we opposed the war and succeeded in pressuring Mr. Trump to curtail it before the mission is accomplished, we would have the satisfaction of defeating someone we generally oppose, which might help ourselves politically. But America would be worse for it.

America's national security is too important to hold hostage to partisanship. We Democrats need to begin by asking what our position would be, and why, if the action had been taken by Mr. Clinton, Mr. Obama or Mr. Biden. I'm not counting on it, but maybe in 2029, when a Democrat is in the White House, our Republican neighbors will return the favor, and judge that president's efforts to keep our nation safe on

the merits and not merely obstruct.

If we believe that Iran presents a serious threat, we need to support the president on this issue.

There's plenty to disagree with him about, and we don't need to like or admire him. But on Iran we should be on common ground. Not primarily because we want to reduce partisanship in foreign affairs—although that is conceivable.

Not because the voters will reward us for a more measured response—although I hope they will.

But because it is the right thing to do for our country, our children and the Democrat who will succeed Mr. Trump as president.

Mr. Boies is a founding partner of the law firm Boies, Schiller & Flexner.

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BRETT VELICOVICH: Iran built a drone terror machine — America just hacked it



As coordinated U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran continue, one thing is clear: this is not the kind of war we have spent decades planning for. There are no massed formations or carrier battle groups trading salvos. This conflict is being fought with swarms of relatively inexpensive, one-way drones. Adaptation and rapid innovation now determine how conflicts are fought.

Iran has spent years perfecting saturation warfare. The concept is straightforward: flood the sky with enough drones and missiles to exhaust the enemy's interceptors, force impossible triage decisions and eventually break through.

Iran has targeted hotels, tourist centers and locations without hardened counter-drone systems. Iran's kamikaze drones, called Shaheds, are low, slow and persistent.

They aren't technically sophisticated, but they are difficult to stop in large numbers. This isn't a failure of U.S. technology.

It's a logistics and economics problem that we need to solve and adapt to. And we're al-

ready doing that. For the first time, the U.S. has deployed the LUCAS system — a one-way attack drone modeled directly on Iran's own Shahed design — in combat. The system was developed by reverse-engineering downed Iranian drone systems in Ukraine and rebuilding them with American guidance systems, hardened navigation and real-time targeting integration into our intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) networks. Then we sent them back to Iran to destroy their infrastructure.

LUCAS was used in the opening strike, hitting Iranian drone manufacturing sites and other weapons infrastructure before advanced fighters followed. These drones aren't just munitions; they're nodes in a combat cloud, receiving real-time targeting updates and networked with intelligence assets in ways Iran's drones cannot match.

While Iran is building volume, the U.S. is building systems. This distinction matters.

This operation has also marked the largest-scale deployment of AI models across the U.S. Department of War in his-

tory. From intelligence assessments to target identification to battle scenario simulation, AI has been part of the decision cycle at every level. This precision has been another point of delineation between the two sides. While Tehran responds with indiscriminate barrages hitting civilian areas, U.S. strikes are being driven by layered intelligence, refined targeting and a disciplined operational picture. That gap in approach is not only strategic but ethical.

But there are still areas where we're adapting. The cost dynamics of this new approach remain unresolved. The U.S. has traditionally favored high-tech, expensive weapons systems requiring extensive training and planning. But when the adversary has more drones than you have interceptors, the math turns against you fast.

Relying on high-cost interceptors to counter cheap, easy-to-produce drones is not a sustainable equation.

The answer isn't to outgun; it's to intelligently adapt — and to do so quickly. Lower-cost, high-speed, combat-proven

intercept platforms designed to counter one-way attack drones, including the Shahed-136, Geran-2 and other Group 3-class unmanned threats, are what this new battlefield demands.

That's the lesson Ukraine has been teaching for years — and one this conflict is reinforcing in real time: no military in the world is adequately prepared to stop cheap, mass-produced one-way drones at scale.

Not yet. The U.S. industrial base has the capacity to change that. The constraint is understanding the new reality and deciding to move on it.

Iran spent years developing and proliferating the Shahed as a tool of destabilization, deploying it in Yemen, Iraq and Ukraine, and against American forces across the region. Now, a version of that same weapon has been turned against the factories that produce it.

As of today, the Islamic Republic is in unprecedented internal chaos.

Leadership is scrambling, and the regime's command-and-control picture is unclear even to those inside it. That un-

certainly creates both opportunity and risk. Precision matters more — not less — in these moments.

This conflict will be decided by the side that adapts fastest, identifying problems and finding solutions on a compressed timeline.

Though the U.S. drone industry isn't where it needs to be, real-world, battle-tested deployment is how capability gaps get closed. What we learn here will shape doctrine, acquisition and industrial strategy for the next decade.

America just delivered one of the most significant demonstrations of adaptive military capability in modern history.

The question isn't whether we can innovate — it's whether we're prepared to build the industrial and defensive infrastructure at the scale and speed this new era demands.

The answer to that question isn't decided on a battlefield. It's decided here at home — where we invest and how seriously we take the threat.

The conflict with Iran has made that choice unavoidable.

AOC and Pat Ryan Bring "Downstate Energy" to Glens Falls Town Hall



GLENNS FALLS, NY — In a packed Charles R. Wood Theater on Sunday night, Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14) and Pat Ryan (NY-18) held a high-energy town hall that functioned as both a constituent forum and a strategic offensive into New York's North Country. The event, held in the heart of the 21st Congressional District, signaled a concerted effort by Democrats to reclaim the seat currently held by Republican Elise Stefanik.

The two-hour session touched on a range of urgent national issues, from the burgeoning conflict in Iran to the influence of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) on local services.

Key Takeaways and Counter-Perspectives The following summary outlines the primary claims made during the town hall alongside the common-sense re-

buttals typically offered by GOP challengers and local skeptics.

1. The Conflict in Iran
The Claim: Rep. Pat Ryan, an Iraq War veteran, issued a blistering critique of the Trump administration's military actions in Iran, noting that six U.S. servicemembers have already been killed. He called for a War Powers Resolution, warning against another "forever war" started by a "chicken-hawk President. The Rebuttal: Opponents argue the President has the Constitutional authority as Commander-in-Chief to respond to immediate threats. They contend that the Iranian regime's nuclear ambitions and regional aggression necessitate a decisive response, framing Democratic hesitation as a threat to national security and regional stability.

2. Social Security & "DOGE" Cuts
The Claim: Ryan and AOC highlighted the local

impact of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), specifically citing the Poughkeepsie Social Security office's appearance on a "savings" list. Ryan argued these cuts threaten the very survival of seniors who depend on in-person services. The Rebuttal: Republican supporters maintain that DOGE is targeting bureaucratic waste and fraud, not "earned benefits. They point to President Trump's repeated promises to protect Medicare and Social Security, arguing that Democrats are using "scare tactics" to distract from the need for a more efficient federal government.

3. Economic Anxiety and America in Decline
The Claim: AOC declared this the first generation likely to be worse off than their parents, calling it the "definition of a nation in decline." She argued for massive reinvestment in social programs and la-

bor power to reverse this trend. The Rebuttal: Critics argue that economic stagnation was exacerbated by Biden-era inflation and overregulation. They contend that the path to prosperity lies in deregulation, energy independence, and tax cuts, rather than expanded government spending which they say further devalues the dollar.

4. Corporate Power and Media Consolidation
The Claim: Both representatives took aim at corporate "oligarchy," with AOC calling for the breakup of healthcare and media conglomerates. She argued that billionaire donors, including Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos, are essentially "assigning" policy to Republican lawmakers.

The Rebuttal: Skeptics point out that billionaire influence is a "both sides" reality, citing major Democratic donors in Silicon Valley and Hollywood. They

argue that government-mandated breakups are an overreach that stifles innovation and that the real "media consolidation" issue is an ideological bias in mainstream outlets.

The Road to November
The location of the town hall was no accident. By appearing in Glens Falls, AOC and Ryan are testing whether their message of "collective power" can resonate in rural, traditionally conservative districts. While the theater was "overflowing" with supporters, the local GOP was quick to frame the event as a "downstate invasion."

Republicans argue that the pairing of a Bronx progressive with a Hudson Valley moderate highlights the internal contradictions of the Democratic party—contradictions they believe will alienate North Country voters concerned with border security and the cost of living.

Is China's silence on US-Israel's war in Iran strategic?

Why has China maintained silence, first on Venezuela and now on the US-Israel-Iran War? What cold calculations are at play?

There is a strong constituency within China that is of the opinion that only Taiwan is the core of China's core interests, followed by the South China Sea. Anywhere else in the world, China is primarily concerned with trade and business.

While doing business, China welcomes anti-Americanism in its partners/friends. But that is not the sole criterion. For example, according to official Chinese data, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq consistently rank as China's top three crude oil suppliers.

But Saudi Arabia is a staunch supporter of the US, and Iraq is allegedly a "puppet state". And this doesn't prevent China from doing business with them. In fact, China's bilateral trade and direct investment in Iraq are significantly higher than those in Iran.

Whether it's Venezuela or Iran, China's primary interest is oil, and its secondary interest is markets.

Therefore, China's message for its anti-American friends/partners is clear: China hopes they will continue to oppose the US, but it does not want them to court trouble by directly clashing with the US, relying solely on China for support.

Similarly, while resolving the Taiwan issue, China will likely neither need nor expect help from any of its friends — it will only need its friends to continue doing business with China.

"Resolve your own problems don't expect unconditional aid from China, and certainly don't drag China into your own troubles," read one article in *Guancha.com*, explaining China's lack of strong response on the Iran issue. It further emphasised that China cannot act as a superpower dominating its allies without achieving national unity and without safeguarding the core of its core interests, and therefore, should prioritise Taiwan and East Asia.

LOSING OLD FRIENDS?

The other argument that is fast gaining currency within Chinese strategic circles is that the recent actions of the US in the western hemisphere — military invasion of Venezuela, threats against Colombia, blockade of Cuba, and now attack on Iran — are fundamentally part of the US's global competition strategy, all stemming from considerations of ultimately competing strategically with China.

The US and the West have consistently grouped countries like



China, Russia, North Korea, Cuba, Venezuela, and Iran. Currently, the US is trying to avoid a full-scale conflict and confrontation with China, but it is systematically targeting the other countries from the said grouping. It's a pattern that warrants serious attention from China and closer coordination with other like-minded nations, particularly Russia. Wu Hailong, former President of the China Public Diplomacy Association, in his recent speech at the 2026 China-Russia Sanya Dialogue, argued that if the US succeeded in overthrowing the Iranian regime, it would set a very bad precedent in the international community. He said it would damage the credibility of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and BRICS, restrict the influence of China and Russia in the Middle East, and cause real and concrete damage to China and Russia's national interests. Iran's adherence to an anti-American stance still has positive strategic value for both China and Russia, in terms of depleting US strategic resources and containing US power. He also assessed that the possibility of the current Iranian regime collapsing or

disintegrating in the short- to medium-term is still quite low, and that China and Russia must make some effort to "rescue" it.

HOW CHINA MIGHT INTERVENE

Iranian missiles and drones — possibly with Russian intelligence and navigation support — have reportedly targeted and destroyed US radar and anti-missile facilities in several Middle Eastern countries. A section of the Chinese strategic community believes that China too needs to intervene, but in a low-key manner, so as not to disrupt President Donald Trump's impending visit to China. Diplomatically, China condemned the US and Israel's assassination of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and opposed the military strikes against Iran, to provide diplomatic and moral support to Iran. On March 8, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi strongly criticised the military actions, emphasising that "might does not equal right" and that the "world cannot revert to the law of the jungle." Going forward, China, while occupying the moral high ground, plans to further exert pressure on the US and Israel for peace talks,

urging them against expanding the scope of military strikes, against assassinations of new Iranian leaders, and thereby gradually reducing the intensity of the conflict. Secondly, through active diplomatic mediation, China is also seeking to ease relations between Iran and the Middle Eastern countries and prevent them from joining forces against Iran. China has reportedly been communicating with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and will be sending its special envoy to the Middle East for mediation. It also wants to maintain economic and trade relations with Iran to ensure that the Iranian government's finances remain uninterrupted and the economy does not collapse. China is also encouraging Russia, Pakistan, and North Korea to provide military and economic assistance to Iran in their own ways. Overall, China may overtly or covertly, directly or indirectly, provide Iran with the necessary intelligence support and necessary dual-use military and civilian supplies, to enable Iran to fight a "protracted war" against the US.

Antara Ghosal Singh

Operation Gazab Lil Haq: Pakistan's War Of Optics Amid A Crisis At Home

When Pakistan announced the launch of 'Operation Gazab Lil Haq' on February 26 against Afghanistan, the name itself seemed designed for effect.

This peculiar phrase, which roughly translates as "Fury for truth", suggested moral clarity and even inevitability. But behind this grandiose terminology lies a far more prosaic reality: Pakistan is a troubled state struggling to contain mounting violence at home and hence turning, once again, across the contested Durand Line as both battleground and diversion.

The latest escalation began when Pakistan carried out airstrikes deep inside Afghan territory on February 22 and claimed to have killed nearly 80 fighters from the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP. The group has emerged as the security nightmare for the Pakistani authorities by conducting attacks against government and military installations with unprecedented success.

But Kabul swiftly rejected Islamabad's account and accused Pakistan of targeting civilian homes and killing at least 18 people, including women and children, holding that it reserved the right to retaliate against this breach of sovereignty. And it did retaliate on the intervening night of February 26, when Afghan Taliban government forces launched large-scale cross-border strikes on Pakistani military positions all along the border and claimed to have inflicted heavy Pakistani casualties and captured border outposts. Even as fighting flared along the border, Pakistan's military expanded its operations across a broad swathe of Afghanistan by launching airstrikes from Kabul to Kandahar, Paktika to Nangarhar, among others.

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif even went to the extent of declaring that the country was in "open war" with the Afghan Taliban. However, such rhetorical escalation cannot obscure the fact that despite repeated assertions of inflicting heavy losses on TTP militant hideouts inside Afghanistan,

Pakistan has not claimed to have killed any senior TTP leader yet. Such a divergence between official "triumphalism" and operational ambiguity raises an uncomfortable question: whether this is a decisive counterterrorism campaign or just an act of strategic theatre.

Nevertheless, understanding the present Afghanistan-Pakistan

targeting as many as 48 military and government sites across 14 cities of Balochistan, killing dozens of soldiers. The scale and audacity of the operation underscored the fragility of the state's writ in its largest province.

For Pakistan's military-dominated establishment, such figures are more than statistics

had hoped that the Afghan Taliban's takeover would yield what its strategists once described as "strategic depth", that is, a friendly regime in Kabul that would neutralise Indian influence and help contain anti-Pakistan militants, the policy has instead boomeranged.

The Afghan Taliban have consistently denied harbouring or

once were, as they now command a state apparatus, however rudimentary that may be.

In that sense, the current crisis is not merely a diplomatic spat. It is the culmination of a long strategic experiment. For years, Pakistan's security doctrine relied on cultivating militant proxies to advance its



confrontation necessitates going beyond Pakistan's rhetoric and examining how its internal security has unravelled in recent years. The country has experienced a sharp uptick in violence over the past five years, with TTP and allied groups, besides Baloch nationalist insurgent factions like the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), having emerged stronger despite Pakistan's successive nationwide military campaigns like Zarb-e-Azb, Raddul Fassaad and Azm-i-Istehkam. These groups have carried out coordinated attacks across KP and Balochistan respectively.

According to reports by the Islamabad-based Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), in just the first two months of 2026, the country witnessed nearly 180 militant and insurgent attacks which resulted in over 212 military and civilian casualties. For instance, the BLA executed a multi-day military assault, called Operation Herofideouts inside Afghanistan, 2, starting January 31 this year,

and represent a crisis of credibility. Given that the Pakistani Army has long positioned itself as the ultimate guarantor of national security and territorial integrity, this resurgence of both Islamist and ethno-nationalist insurgencies suggests an erosion of that claim. It is in this context that the Afghan escalation appears less as a strategic necessity and more as a political manoeuvre. By attributing the TTP's revival to sanctuary and support in Afghanistan, Islamabad externalises the problem. Kabul, in this framing, therefore becomes not merely a neighbour but the primary enabler of Pakistan's insecurity.

There may be some basis for concern since TTP shares ideological and historical ties with the Afghan Taliban. But so did the Pakistani Army, which sheltered the Afghan Taliban during the two decades of the American War on Terror and even facilitated its return to power in Kabul in 2021. Though Pakistan

supporting the TTP and have instead urged Islamabad to address what they call its "internal sources of instability". The group has shown little inclination to accede to Pakistani demands of cracking down "decisively" on the TTP, as it risks alienating ideological allies and internal constituencies; a reluctance interpreted in Islamabad as complicity. The February airstrikes, then, can be read as an expression of frustration and desperation. But they also serve another purpose. In moments of domestic strain, external confrontation has often provided Pakistan's establishment with a means of redirecting public attention. Historically, tensions with India have played that role. In the current geopolitical climate, Afghanistan has become the more accessible target. But such a deflection carries risks, as escalation along the Durand Line is not a cost-free exercise. Afghanistan's Taliban rulers are not the fractured insurgency they

regional interests. The expectation was that these groups could be managed, redirected or dismantled as circumstances required. The resurgence of the TTP and the intensification of insurgency suggest that the control mechanisms have frayed.

Therefore, while "Operation Gazab Lil Haq" may project strength, its very existence underscores a failure of foresight, policy and governance. By expanding the theatre of conflict into Afghanistan, Pakistan's leadership risks deepening regional instability while leaving its domestic vulnerabilities unresolved. In the end, the question is not whether Islamabad can strike across the border. It is whether it can restore security and public confidence at home without relying on the language and the optics of perpetual external confrontation. A strategy built on deflection may buy time. It cannot, however, substitute for reckoning.

Arun Anand

Fury In The Gulf: Why Is China Missing In Action?

About 14% of China's oil imports come from Iran. Nearly 45% of China's oil imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz. This strait is currently choked. The war that the United States and Israel have brought to Iran therefore threatens one of China's main life-giving energy arteries.

While Iran is undoubtedly an important energy partner for China, it is also an important buffer state. Iran sits in a sensitive geography that curtails Western influence from making inroads into China's adjacencies, especially the Central Asian republics that Beijing has drawn into the orbit of the Belt and Road Initiative.

If Iran were to become a US client state, as Donald Trump hopes, China would suddenly find itself vulnerable in a region where it hopes to exercise strategic primacy.

So why has China done so little to help Iran? Why is it missing in action, to borrow a military term? Is Beijing playing the waiting game, or in more academic language, exhibiting strategic patience?

Here are six possible reasons.

Energy Stability First: China depends heavily on Gulf oil. A wider war involving



Iran could threaten tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, something Beijing wants to avoid.

Strategic Patience: Let the United States expend money, weapons and political capital in another Middle Eastern conflict, much like during the Iraq War.

Avoid Alliance Entrapment: China prefers partnerships over military alliances. Directly defending Iran would create expectations and obligations

Beijing would rather avoid.

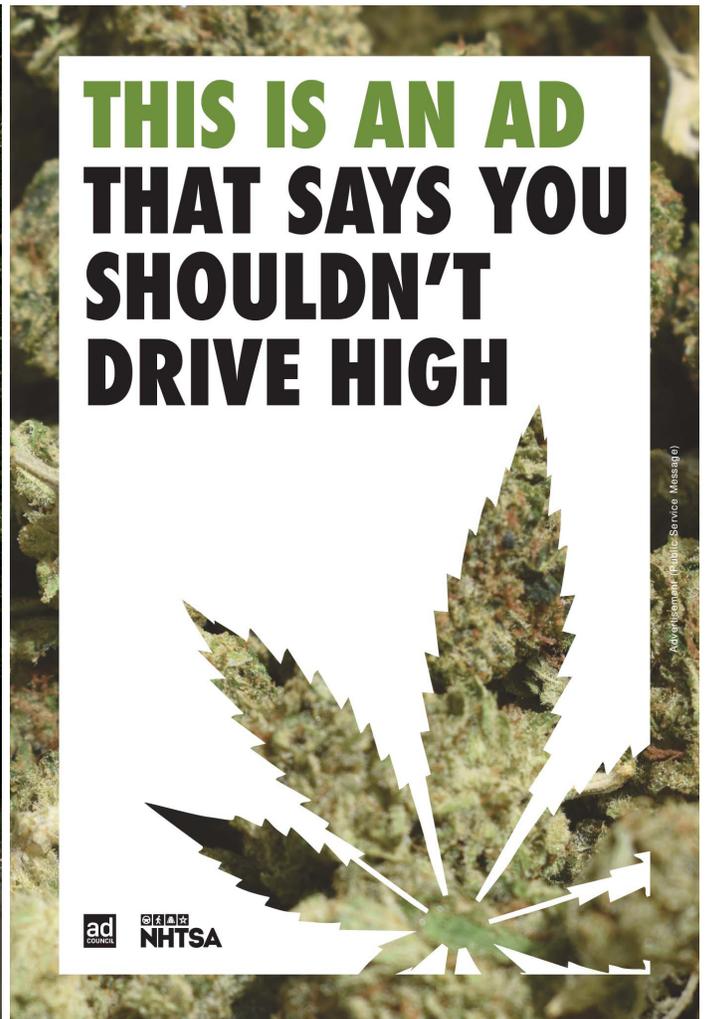
Economic Fragility: China's leadership is managing slowing growth and financial stress. A confrontation with Washington could trigger sanctions, market instability and trade disruption.

Benefit from Iranian Dependence: An isolated Iran becomes more reliant on Chinese oil purchases, finance and infrastructure tied to the Belt and Road Initiative. A Distracted America Helps

China: If the United States is absorbed in the Gulf, it has less strategic focus on China's core theatres, especially Taiwan and the South China Sea.

For these reasons, China may have a greater incentive to watch America and its regional ally, Israel, become embroiled in a costly war that may not even deliver Iran or its energy resources into their strategic orbit.

Rahul Shivshankar



Why Congress's Criticism Of Modi Govt Over Khamenei's Death Is Petty Politics

Since the death of Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of Iran, as a result of bombings jointly by the United States and Israel, the Leftists and Liberals have been targeting the Narendra Modi government for remaining silent on his death.

Sensing an opportunity to attack the Modi government, the main Opposition Congress launched scathing attacks on the dispensation. Party's former president Sonia Gandhi, who is currently Chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party, even wrote an Op-Ed in the Indian Express strongly attacking the Modi government and equated the silence as an act of abdication.

Sonia Gandhi in her Op-Ed mentions that India's ties with Iran are civilisational as well as strategic. She mentions Tehran playing a consequential effort in blocking a resolution against India at the UN Commission on Human Rights over Kashmir pushed by some countries, including Pakistan, of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 1994. No doubt, that this is a fact that India can't deny.

Surprisingly, Sonia fails to mention how Khamenei has repeatedly tried to portray India as an "oppressor" of Muslims. In a post on X in September 2024, the deceased leader alleged that Muslims are "suffering" in India and placed Indian Muslims along with that of Gaza and Myanmar, prompting even strong reactions from the Ministry of External Affairs. Khamenei protested when Article 370 was changed — a much delayed necessary move which actually completed the integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India.

He also criticised when the Modi government decided to give citizenship to minority religions of three Islamic countries of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan through the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019, which in no way cancelled citizenship of any Indian Muslim. If Khamenei was a true friend of India, he wouldn't have posted against Article 370 and CAA, which were in India's interests and also

purely domestic affairs.

While Sonia Gandhi highlights about Tehran's crucial role in 1994 and then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Tehran visit in 2001 where he reaffirmed India's relations with Iran as both civilisational and temporary, she remains silent how Khamenei

concerns over the situation in West Asia. While Leftists, Liberals, and Congress party accuse India for taking a clear side in favour of Israel, Modi's X post where he mentions speaking with Netanyahu significantly didn't condemn the attacks on Israel by Iran.



has repeatedly interfered on India's domestic affairs and even peddled falsehoods about "persecution of Muslims" in India.

Sonia's charge that the silence of the Modi government on Khamenei's killing as an abdication of power is misguided given the deceased leader's propaganda against India. India's silence isn't abdication of power; but it is a strategic restraint where the country's interests remain the topmost priority.

INDIA'S STAND ON THE WEST ASIA CONFLICT

The government of India has clearly stated that it remains deeply concerned about the escalating conflict in Iran and the Gulf region, and reiterated its position by urging all sides to exercise restraint, avoid further escalation, and prioritise the safety of civilians. On the other hand, prime minister Narendra Modi has spoken with heads of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar and condemned the attacks on them, although without mentioning Iran, as mentioned by him through his posts on X. He also spoke with heads of Jordan, Oman, and with Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, expressing his deep

While Modi is yet to speak with the Iranian president, foreign minister S Jaishankar has spoken with both Iranian and Israeli counterparts. In his post on X, Jaishankar mentions India's call for dialogue and diplomacy to de-escalate tensions while speaking to Israel's foreign minister.

This clearly shows that India hasn't taken a completely clear side in favour of Israel as accused by the Opposition. Rather, it has given priority to its own interests — safety of its citizens living in the region. It has only reiterated its traditional stand on protecting sovereignty, respecting territorial integrity, and urged for de-escalation to both sides, and to prioritise the safety of civilians.

CONGRESS AIMING FOR CONSOLIDATION OF MUSLIM VOTES

Actually, Sonia Gandhi and Congress are aiming to consolidate the Muslim vote bank by using the death of Khamenei.

It has sensed an opportunity seeing the outpour of emotions for Khamenei not only among Shia Muslims, but also among dominant Sunni Muslims. In recent times, it has been seen

that there is a churning within the Muslim community to search for alternatives beyond the grand old party. In recent times, Hyderabad-based Assaaddin Owaisi's All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimen (AIMIM) has made inroads in Muslim-dominant areas in different parts

of the country, raising alarm bells for the Congress. So, for the party, Khamenei's death is an opportunity to consolidate its Muslim support base, and to prevent its traditional base to look for options like AIMIM.

The Muslim appeasement policy by the Congress has a long history. The much-talked Shah Bano case is the prime example of Congress's appeasement policy. Sonia's husband and then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi walked an extra mile to overturn the Supreme Court's verdict on Shah Bano only to satisfy the Muslim fundamentalists. This development aided the rise of Hindutva BJP and was one of the turning points in India's political history. But it seems that Congress doesn't want to learn from history.

The arrogance within the party keeps it believing that it is the country's "de-facto party". In appeasing the Muslims, the grand old party under the Gandhi family failed to realise how the party lost a significant section of its Hindu support base. Still now, it has failed to come up with a proper strategy to get back the lost Hindu base.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO DOWNSIZE "BRAND MODI"

Years back in a TV interview Sonia Gandhi had mentioned how "Brand Modi" was successful in luring the voters during 2014 Lok Sabha elections. It was another thing that she was silent on why the Gandhi brand failed. If the BJP has to be defeated, it has to diminish the ratings of "Brand Modi". It's another thing that the party has failed to do so in the last 12 years, although attempts continue. Congress, particularly Rahul Gandhi, tried to paint Modi working for the interests of big capitalists — a charge that failed to click with the voters. Though the party didn't abandon the narrative, it just added another one — that Modi is serving Trump-led US interests! Since the ceasefire between India-Pakistan last year, the party thought that showing Modi as being subservient to Donald Trump would diminish Modi's stature and electorally help the party.

Although the party is yet to get electoral benefits through this narrative, it still believes that this an effective one in countering Modi-led BJP's strong nationalism.

With Khamenei's death at the hands of US and Israel joint missiles and the strategic silence of Modi on his death, the Congress sees an opportunity to utilise this foreign affairs issue to diminish "Brand Modi". Sonia Gandhi's Op-Ed is part of this broader Congress strategy aimed at portraying Modi as prioritising foreign interests — here US interests — over India's own national concerns.

It is another story that she in her Op-Ed doesn't mention how India under her United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government — she was accused of controlling the same government through extra-constitutional powers — voted against Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on three occasions, allegedly under US pressure.

If the Congress believes that by indulging in such acts it will regain its lost support base, the path for the party's revival definitely seems misguided.

Sagarneel Sinha

Tees Maar Khan: Biography of Trump as the most dangerous fool in the world

In the long tradition of Indian storytelling, there is a specific kind of fool considered the most dangerous. He is called Tees Maar Khan: a delusional braggart masquerading as a warrior.

He is not a villain. He does not scheme. He simply acts, with total conviction, on an understanding of reality built entirely from the image he has constructed of himself. The tragedy, and the danger, is that by the time the world realises he is Tees Maar Khan only because he squished thirty flies, it is too late.

In the modern context, Donald Trump is that man.

Prologue: The Tees Maar Khan

The story of the original Tees Maar Khan usually begins with a humble, lazy weaver. One afternoon, while eating a piece of jaggery (or sugar), he is annoyed by a swarm of flies. He swats at them in frustration and, by pure chance, kills exactly thirty flies with a single blow.

Stunned by his own "prowess," he thinks: "If I can kill thirty at once, why am I wasting my life weaving?" He abandons his loom, grabs a rusty sword, and travels to the King's palace. When asked who he is, he boldly proclaims: "I am Tees Maar Khan, the slayer of thirty!"

The King, assuming he meant thirty warriors or tigers, is instantly impressed and appoints him as the head of his army. Trump arrived in the White House the same way.

To understand his evolution as the Tees Maar Khan, you need only trace the arc of his presidency, from the beginning to its current chaos in the Middle East.

It is a story that starts with a boast, runs through a series of self-inflicted wounds dressed up as victories, and arrives at a war that did not have to happen.

CHAPTER 1: THE MAN WHO DIDN'T READ THE BRIEFINGS

Trump arrived at the presidency in January 2017 with no prior political office, no military service, and a stated



contempt for expert advice. He would rely on his instincts. His instincts were, in his own assessment, extraordinary, tremendous; they were better than his generals on military matters, better than his economists on trade, better than his epidemiologists on a pandemic.

Multiple senior officials of his staff describe a president who did not read his daily intelligence briefings, who required information condensed to a single page with his name mentioned frequently to maintain his attention, and who routinely overrode professional advice on the basis of something he had seen on Fox News that morning.

He had made this plain even before taking office. Asked during his transition in December 2016 why he was skipping nearly all of his intelligence briefings, he told Fox News: "Well, I get it when I need it. I don't have to be told; you know, I'm, like, a smart person." A Trump confidant, speaking to the Washington Post, summarised it plainly: "I call the president the two-minute man. The president has patience for a half-page."

Some officials said even a single page of bullet points could strain his attention during policy briefings. Others wondered if he thinks like a statesman or a real estate agent.

The verdict from the staff was even more damning.

CHAPTER 2: ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN

In October 2017, NBC News reported that Rex Tillerson, the then Secretary of State, had called President Trump an effing moron.

According to officials present, Tillerson was frustrated after a session regarding the modernisation of the US nuclear arsenal, during which Trump had reportedly asked why America couldn't simply increase its nuclear weapons 10x. Tillerson never publicly denied the characterisation. He was fired months later, via a presidential tweet." According to Bob Woodward's book *Fear: Trump in the White House*, at a National Security Council meeting in January 2018, Trump questioned why the US was spending money maintaining forces in South Korea.

James Mattis, the Defence Secretary, reportedly replied: "We're doing this in order to prevent World War III."

Woodward wrote that after the meeting, Mattis told close associates that the president acted like, and had the understanding of, "a fifth- or sixth-grader."

Mattis denied this, but Woodward said he stood by the reporting, noting the book was based on hundreds of interviews and conversations with insiders.

CHAPTER 3: NUKING HURRICANES

According to reports, on at least two occasions, Trump asked national security and homeland security officials about the possibility of using

nuclear weapons to stop hurricanes before they hit the US mainland.

According to Axios, he said: "I got it. I got it. Why don't we nuke them? They start forming off the coast of Africa... we drop a bomb inside the eye of the hurricane, and it disrupts it." Officials were forced to explain that not only would a bomb not stop a storm of that scale, but it would also create a radioactive hurricane that would deposit fallout across the Atlantic and potentially the US.

CHAPTER 4: WHEN KHAN MET COVID

When COVID began, Trump's response was a sequence of confident mispredictions delivered as facts. He claimed: The virus would disappear by April, when the weather warmed. There were fifteen cases, soon to be zero. It was a Democratic hoax.

He promoted hydroxychloroquine as a treatment despite no clinical evidence, after seeing it discussed favourably on television. Mask-wearing became politically charged because Trump declined to wear one and mocked those who did. The peak was hit during a televised 2020 press briefing, where Trump turned to his medical experts to discuss the possibility of treating the virus internally.

"And then I see the disinfectant, where it knocks it out in a minute. One minute. And is there a way we can do

something like that, by injection inside or almost a cleaning?" Doctors and the makers of Lysol had to immediately issue emergency warnings to the public not to ingest or inject cleaning products.

The United States, with the resources of the wealthiest nation in history, finished 2020 with one of the highest per-capita COVID death rates in the developed world.

CHAPTER 5: THE RED TIE AS THE RED LINE

By this time, Trump's attire had started entertaining the critics and watchers. The MAGA hats, the padded shoulders, and the bulky suits.

Of particular interest was his elongated red tie. Observers noticed that he wore it well below the waistline and attributed it to his vanity. A Guardian columnist arrived at two theories. One, he was trying to deflect attention from his belly, where a traditional tie sits like a red flag. Two, he was signalling that his manhood too, was XXL. And so the most powerful office in the world quietly turned into a butt of jokes. The briefings got shorter. The bullet points got bigger. The ties got longer. But the real Tees Maar Khan show was yet to begin.

CHAPTER 6: TRADE WARS

Tees Maar Khan, like 'Don Quixote', looks around for a larger enemy. He finds one in every direction. He tilts at windmills, shadows and even friends. First, he went for the trade partners. Trump's theory of trade was simple, confident, and wrong. Trade deficits, in his telling, were proof that other countries were robbing America. When America bought more from a country than it sold to it, America was losing. Economists across the political spectrum reminded him that trade deficits reflect consumer demand and capital investment, not exploitation.

But Trump went to war. In February 2025, barely a month into his second term, Trump imposed new tariffs on almost every country.

Inside Iran's Military Mosaic

On the morning of March 8, 2026, black rain fell on Tehran. The Iranian capital was engulfed in a cloud of toxic smoke that unleashed oil-tainted rainfall dozens of miles away after overnight Israeli strikes hit several fuel depots, causing fires to burn for hours.

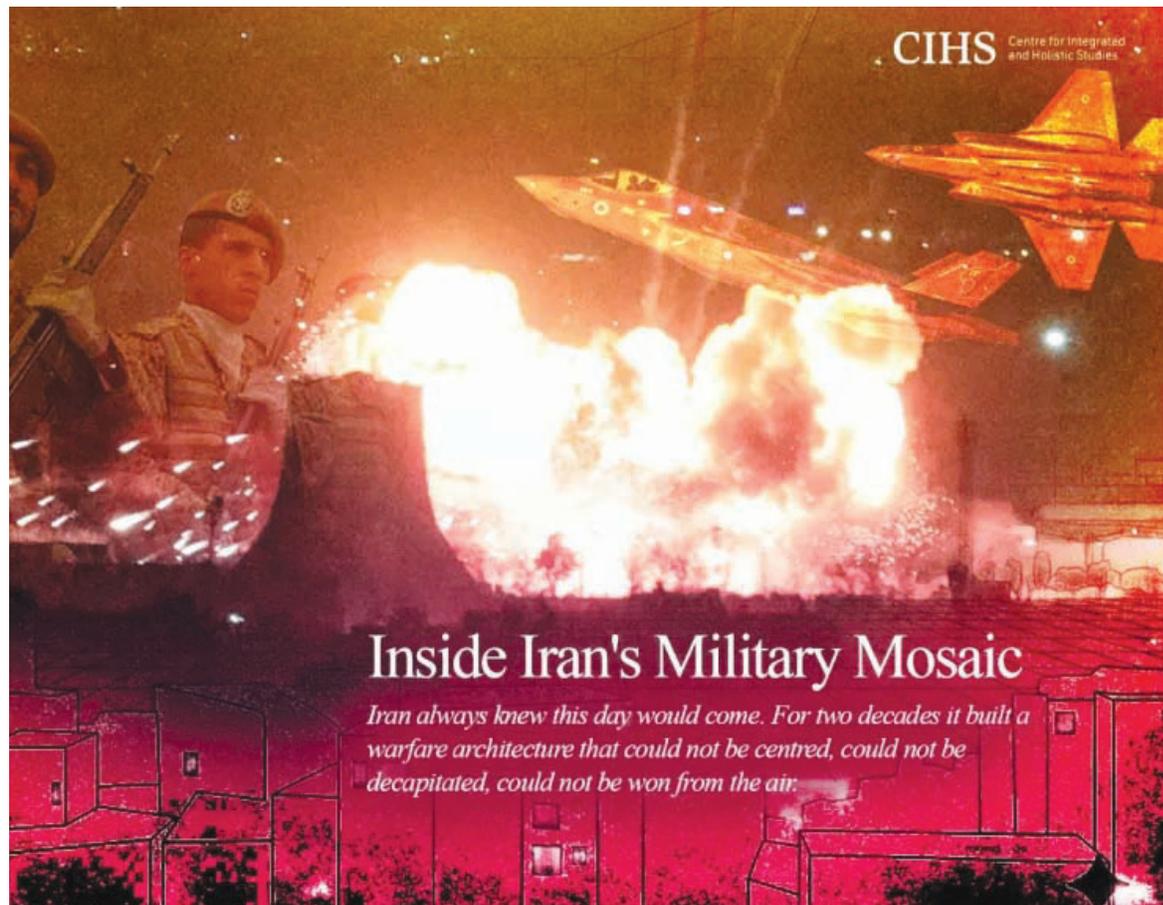
Four oil depots and a petroleum products transfer centre in the Tehran and Alborz provinces were under Israeli fire and damaged, and four personnel, including two oil tanker drivers, were killed. By 10:30 in the morning, cars on Valiasr Street, Tehran's main north-south artery, still needed their headlights on to navigate the darkness. It was a catastrophic image, and it was designed to be one.

But here is what the architects of this air campaign may be miscalculating: Iran was not built to survive this war from the top. It was built to survive it from the bottom. This is the Mosaic Defence, and it is arguably the most consequential military framework to emerge from the Middle East in the past two decades.

Its origins trace back to 2009, when then-IRGC Commander Mohammad Ali Jafari formally reorganised the Revolutionary Guards around a single, haunting lesson drawn from watching American military power eviscerate two neighbouring states.

Afghanistan fell in weeks. Baghdad collapsed in three. In both cases, destruction of centralised command produced almost immediate systemic failure. Tehran incorporated those lessons: don't fight the enemy's preferred war. The US advantage is high-end airpower, precision strikes, and intelligence dominance. Mosaic Defence tries to make those strengths less decisive by ensuring there is no single headquarters, city, or leader whose loss collapses the fight.

The architecture that emerged is methodical. Each of Iran's 31 provincial IRGC commanders operates with his own weapons arsenal, logistics chains, intelligence services, and Basij militias, explicitly trained to make independent military decisions, plan attacks, and wage guerrilla



warfare without consulting Tehran. The formal language inside IRGC operational culture refers to this as the "operational autonomy protocol," triggered automatically when central command goes dark. Iranian Deputy Defence Minister Reza Taleinik confirmed publicly that each figure in the command structure has named successors stretching three ranks down. You kill the general, his brigadier already has orders. You kill the brigadier, the colonel carries on.

On March 1, after Israeli strikes killed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi posted on X in direct, unflinching terms: "Bombings in our capital have no impact on our ability to conduct war. Decentralised Mosaic Defence enables us to decide when, and how, the war will end." It was not bravado alone. It was a precise articulation of a deeply embedded strategic posture.

The Basij is the human tissue that holds this organism together. Established in 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini as a people's volunteer force and now operating as a

subsidiary arm of the IRGC, its estimated one million members form the paramilitary backbone beneath the Revolutionary Guard's 150,000 professional troops. In the coastal provinces, "Ashura" and "Imam Hussein" battalions are organised in towns to operate autonomously, defending designated geographic areas, leveraging proximity to logistics centres and coastal road networks to ensure flexible, rapid movement of combat assets between sectors. These are not conscript armies waiting for radio orders. They have pre-assigned mission packages. They know their terrain the way a farmer knows his field. The strategic calculation is brutally simple: to defeat Iran, you do not take Tehran. You take 31 separate, motivated, geographically embedded armies simultaneously.

Operationally, this manifests in ways that have already unnerved American planners. In February's "Smart Control" exercises in the Strait of Hormuz, IRGC fast-attack craft swarmed in coordinated patterns,

electronic warfare systems blinded radars, and decentralised orders were executed without central authorisation. This is the rehearsal. The Strait, through which roughly a fifth of the world's traded oil passes, is now overseen not by a single naval command in Tehran but by distributed coastal units that can independently initiate harassment, mining, or blockade operations. The UAE's Ministry of Defence reported intercepting over 1,400 drones, eight cruise missiles, and 238 ballistic missiles from Iran in under a week of conflict. Some of that volume reflects this posture, not desperation: swarm the adversary's interception capacity until something gets through.

The darker edge of this framework is its unpredictability under pressure. While disciplined elite units will sustain coherent operations, less experienced units will fall victim to confusion and disorder, raising the risk of uncoordinated strikes and navigation errors that could trigger unintended escalation. The Iranian drone that reportedly

struck Oman, a country actively mediating ceasefire talks, illustrated exactly this: autonomous units operating on pre-issued orders with no one in Tehran in a position to call them back in real time.

The oil rain over Tehran, apocalyptic as it appeared, does not break this system. Iran's oil distribution company confirmed that despite the strikes, sufficient gasoline reserves remained. Fuel disruption to a city of ten million is a genuine hardship and a psychological blow. But Mosaic Defence was never designed around keeping Tehran's refineries lit. It was designed around the premise that even if Tehran burns, Khuzestan fights, Isfahan launches, and the IRGC navy at Bandar Abbas decides on its own when to close the Hormuz chokepoint.

The question the US and Israel face is not whether they can win a battle. It is whether there is a battle to win. You cannot break a mosaic; you can only rearrange its pieces. And the pieces, right now, are fighting on their own.

What we still get wrong about insulin resistance

(News Agency) One thing social media and global connectivity deserve credit for is making us more aware and self-conscious about our health. We may roll our eyes at the constant talk around protein intake and wellness trends, but the truth is that social media has played a huge role in helping us understand why these things matter. Now, insulin resistance is that buzzword.

For a very long time, insulin resistance was often framed as a medical condition that belonged in doctors' clinics and blood reports; something that appeared after years of unhealthy eating or weight gain, something you dealt with only when the numbers crossed the danger line.

But in real life, insulin resistance doesn't start in a lab report. It starts with daily habits, how we eat, move, sleep, work, scroll, snack, and cope with stress. At its core, insulin resistance is the body adapting to constant stimulation.

We wake up tired, grab something quick to eat, sit for long hours, snack through meetings, stress-scroll at night, eat late, sleep poorly, and repeat. None of these habits seem



extreme on their own. Together, they create a body that is always switched on and never fully recovering. The cycle is simple: insulin keeps getting released. Cells stop responding. Fat storage increases. Energy drops. And yet, we continue to blame bad metabolism or age, missing the real picture entirely.

Understanding insulin resistance

Dr Satish Koul, senior director and unit head – internal medicine, Fortis Hospital, Gurugram, simply explains that insulin resistance occurs when the body's cells do not respond

properly to insulin, making it harder for glucose to enter cells for energy. It is often confused with blood sugar, but it is vital to understand that blood sugar level is the amount of glucose in the blood at a given time, while insulin resistance is the underlying problem that can eventually cause high blood sugar. "For years, blood sugar levels may remain normal because the body is overproducing insulin to keep things stable. That's why many people feel perfectly fine while insulin resistance is already developing silently in the background," adds Dr Nishchitha

K, consultant endocrinology, Gleneagles Hospital, Bengaluru.

Anyone can develop it

Insulin resistance is not limited to people with diabetes or those who eat a lot of sugar, mentions Dr Nishchitha. "Genetics, sleep patterns, stress, physical inactivity, hormonal conditions such as PCOS, irregular meal timing, and even chronic stress all play a role." While food plays a key role here, it is not only about sweets. Large portions of refined carbohydrates, frequent snacking, sugary beverages, poor sleep, and long hours of

sitting collectively affect how the body handles insulin.

Many people who rarely eat desserts still develop insulin resistance because lifestyle patterns, not just sugar intake, influence metabolism.

It affects almost everything

Insulin affects far more than just blood sugar. It plays a role in how our body uses energy, stores fat, manages hunger, balances hormones, and even how clearly we think. So when the body starts resisting insulin, the impact isn't limited to one area; it shows up almost everywhere. This is why insulin resistance often feels confusing. You may feel tired soon after eating, notice weight gain around the belly that doesn't budge easily, or struggle with constant cravings. For some, it shows up as irregular periods, acne, brain fog, or low energy that no amount of sleep seems to fix. Over time, if insulin resistance is left unaddressed, it increases the risk of conditions like type 2 diabetes, fatty liver disease, heart disease, and hormonal issues. It doesn't behave like a single health problem. Instead, it works like a chain reaction, quietly affecting multiple systems in the body at once.

India's Silent Sleep Crisis: Doctors Warn Poor Sleep Is Becoming A Major Public Health Risk



(News Agency) Sleep has quietly become one of the most neglected pillars of health in modern India. In a country where productivity, long working hours and digital connectivity are often worn as badges of honour, sleep is frequently sacrificed without much thought. Yet doctors across specialities are increasingly warning that poor sleep is no longer just a personal lifestyle issue, it is fast turning into a public health concern.

The problem begins early in life. Children, who require significantly more sleep for growth

and development, are increasingly missing out on restorative rest.

Dr Jayant Khandare, Consultant – Paediatrics and Neonatology, Surya Mother and Child Super Speciality Hospital, feels sleep plays a critical role in childhood development. "Sleep is like the ultimate superpower for kids. It boosts brain power, strengthens immunity and helps them stay happy and focused," he explains. Yet globally, between 20–60 per cent of children are sleep deprived, a trend that experts say is

becoming increasingly visible in urban India as well. Excessive screen exposure, late bedtimes and chaotic routines are disrupting children's sleep patterns. Dr Khandare notes that modern habits are largely to

blame. Screens before bedtime, irregular sleep schedules and stimulating environments often make it difficult for children to fall asleep.

To improve sleep hygiene in children, he advises

simple but effective habits establishing a predictable bedtime routine, ensuring bedrooms are dark and quiet, keeping them free of screens and avoiding digital devices at least an hour before sleep.

High Cholesterol Explained: What Are The Causes, Risks, And How Medicines Work



(News Agency) Busy lifestyles and changing food habits have led to a rise in cholesterol problems for many people. Some believe high cholesterol inevitably leads to a heart attack and begin taking medicines out of fear. But how much of what we think about cholesterol is actually true? Here's what experts say about cholesterol and the medications used to control it.

Why Millennials and Gen Z are paying to travel with strangers

"It's amazing to be with so many solo travellers, but it's also a little sad that we are all kind of lonely," said Rupa, who chose Vietnam for her first solo trip but signed up for a group tour to avoid travelling completely alone. Her thought captures a growing trend among millennials and Gen Z: travelling solo, but not alone. At first glance, it may look like people are paying to travel with strangers. But the trend reflects something deeper. Community travel, curated group trips where strangers explore destinations together, is fast becoming a hot trend among young travellers. While group tours were once associated largely with elderly pilgrims, Millennials and Gen Z are now embracing them for companionship, convenience and shared experiences.



Companies such as WanderOn, Thrillophilia, Tripoto and several others have tapped into this demand by organising curated group experiences designed specifically for young travellers.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY

TRAVEL?

To understand the appeal, I joined one such trip myself. The day usually begins with an early breakfast at the hotel before everyone piles into a bus for sightseeing, spontaneous photo stops and long road journeys

where conversations drift from awkward introductions to easy laughter. The format is simple. You sign up with a company for a trip to a destination of your choice. Other travellers, often solo, join the same itinerary, and the group goes on the journey

together. The company handles logistics such as flights, accommodation, visas and sightseeing. Most trips also have a "trip captain" who accompanies the group and manages the itinerary, while local guides offer deeper insights into the destination. For many travellers, the biggest draw is simple: the chance to explore new places while being surrounded by like-minded people. The experience often encourages conversations, shared activities and spontaneous friendships that may not happen during conventional tourism. Rohit Shroff, CEO and co-founder of trip planning platform Holidify, said it is the fastest-growing segment. "Group tours are one of the fastest-growing segments within tour packages right now.

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Prada launches chai perfume, but it is not everyone's cup of tea

Remember when luxury brand Prada faced a social media backlash for showcasing India's famous Kolhapuri chappals at Milan Fashion Week without giving credit at first? With the new year here, Prada seems to be turning the page and starting fresh with something that's sure to delight Indians, especially chai lovers.

The brand has launched a chai-scented perfume, creamy, spiced, and subtly intense, called Infusion de Santal Chai, part of its Les Infusions collection.

Prada Infusion de Santal Chai is a unisex fragrance that captures the cosy warmth of a chai latte. It blends spicy chai notes with creamy sandalwood, a hint of cardamom, and fresh citrus, creating a scent that is both comforting and uplifting.

Soft musks give it a clean, gentle finish, making it perfect for everyday wear. The perfume comes in a luxurious brown bottle with a camel-coloured Saffiano-textured cap, combining Prada's signature elegance with a timeless, sophisticated design.

On Prada's official website, the perfume retails for \$190 (around Rs 17,000) for a 100 ml bottle.

As much as Prada likely hoped their new launch would thrill chai lovers around the world, Infusion de Santal Chai is getting mixed reactions. While some



fragrance enthusiasts and tea fans are excited about trying the creamy, spiced scent, others aren't quite convinced.

Social media is buzzing with comments like, "As much as I love chai, I most certainly don't want to smell like

one," while some are left wondering if the launch is a joke.

Clearly, Prada's bold, chai-inspired fragrance is stirring both curiosity and debate. Some social media users are even posting comments like, "First the

sandals, now this," pointing out that last year's Kolhapuri chappal controversy hasn't been forgotten.

Well, love it or laugh at it, Prada's chai perfume shows India is inspiring the world of luxury fashion. What do you think?

You don't have to lift heavy weights to build muscles, but there's a catch

A new study suggests training with lighter weights can be nearly as effective as lifting heavy, provided you do more reps.

Many gym journeys end almost as soon as they begin because of how gruelling weightlifting can be. Heavy weights often feel intimidating, leading many to believe that the gym simply isn't for them. But here's the good news: you don't always have to lift heavy to see results.

A new study suggests that training with lighter weights can be nearly as effective as going heavy. If you've dreaded hitting the gym or struggled to stay consistent because of intense lifting sessions, this might change the way you look at your workouts.

For the study conducted in Canada, researchers recruited 20



healthy young men who did not normally engage in weight training. They trained under supervision for 10 weeks. Each

session required them to perform three sets of bicep curls and knee extensions.

What counts as heavy and

what counts as light?

But here's where it gets interesting: each hand used different weights for the

exercises, and the same approach was applied to their legs. To compare heavy and light weight training more accurately, one arm and one leg were randomly assigned to lift heavier weights, while the opposite arm and leg performed the exercises with lighter weights.

The heavy weights were challenging enough that participants could not perform more than 12 repetitions. In contrast, the lighter weights allowed them to complete up to 25 repetitions before stopping due to fatigue. Once participants were able to exceed the set repetition range for either the heavy or light weights, the load was gradually increased.

High Cholesterol Explained: What Are The Causes, Risks, And How Medicines Work



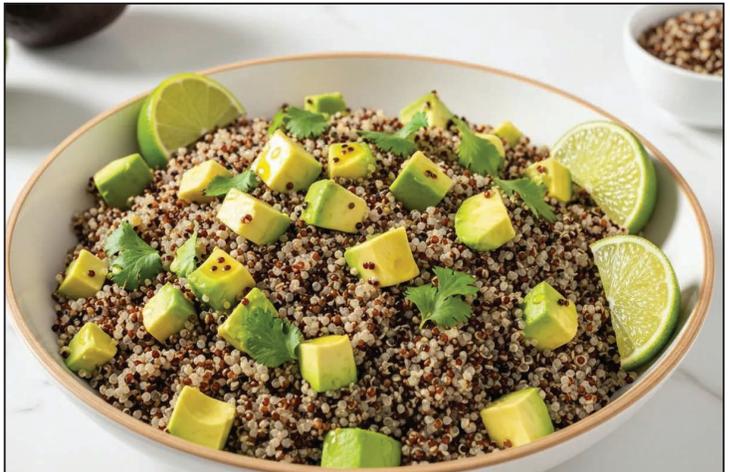
Ashwagandha-Infused Milk: This soothing bedtime tonic uses warm almond milk, cinnamon, and ashwagandha powder—a powerful adaptogen. It helps regulate the body's stress response and promotes deep, restorative sleep. Sip slowly to calm your nervous system after a demanding day of work or parenting. (Image: AI Generated)

Roasted Turmeric Cauliflower Bowls: Combining anti-inflammatory turmeric with fiber-rich cauliflower and chickpeas, this bowl supports gut health and mood stability. The healthy fats from a tahini dressing ensure nutrient absorption. It is a grounding, colorful meal that provides steady energy without a sugar crash. (Image: AI Generated)



Wild Salmon with Asparagus: Rich in omega-3 fatty acids, salmon is essential for brain health and reducing anxiety. Paired with lightly sautéed asparagus, this high-protein dish provides folic acid to regulate neurotransmitters. It's a simple, elegant meal designed to nourish both mind and body. (Image: AI Generated)

Magnesium-Rich Spinach and Lentil Dal: Magnesium is nature's "chill pill," and spinach is loaded with it. This comforting lentil dal offers plant-based protein and iron to combat fatigue. The warm spices aid digestion, making it the perfect restorative meal for busy evenings requiring mental clarity. (Image: AI Generated)



Berry and Greek Yogurt Parfait: Berries are packed with antioxidants that fight oxidative stress, while Greek yogurt provides probiotics for the "gut-brain axis." Topped with walnuts for extra healthy fats, this breakfast or snack keeps blood sugar stable, preventing the irritability associated with hunger. (Image: AI Generated)

Quinoa and Avocado Power Salad: Quinoa is a complex carbohydrate that helps the brain produce serotonin, the "feel-good" hormone. Mixed with creamy avocado and lime, this salad provides healthy monounsaturated fats. It's a refreshing, filling lunch that keeps you focused and emotionally balanced all afternoon. (Image: AI Generated)

Guava With Or Without Peel? Experts Explain Which Way Is Healthier For You



Guava is widely considered one of the healthiest fruits. It is rich in essential vitamins such as vitamin C, A, B and K, which help improve digestion, strengthen immunity and regulate blood sugar levels. Suitable for people of all ages, guava offers several health benefits. However, many people wonder whether it is better to eat guava with the peel or without it.

Tamil Nadu-based nutritionist Deekshika recently addressed this question in a social media post. She said guava is highly nutritious, and eating it with the peel can provide even more health benefits. She explained that guava peel contains important micronutrients such as potassium, zinc and vitamin C.

Iftar Snacks To Make At Home: Easy And Delicious Recipes For Ramadan Evenings

As the sun sets and the fast is broken, the iftar table becomes a moment of comfort, celebration and togetherness. While traditional favourites remain timeless, many families today are also experimenting with quick, homemade snacks that bring both flavour and nourishment to the evening meal. From crispy bites to light savoury treats, preparing iftar snacks at home allows you to balance indulgence with freshness – while filling your kitchen with the aromas of Ramadan.

Ingredients

For the Dough

All-purpose flour (Maida) – 2 cups
 Oil/Ghee- 4 tablespoons
 Salt to taste
 Water as needed to knead a tight dough

For the Filling

Mutton or Chicken Kheema (mince)-300g
 Onion, finely chopped- 1 large
 Ginger-Garlic paste -1 tablespoon
 Green chillies, finely chopped 2-3
 Coriander powder -1 teaspoon
 Cumin powder- 1/2 teaspoon



Turmeric powder- 1/4 teaspoon
 Garam Masala powder- 1/2 teaspoon
 Fresh coriander, chopped -2 tablespoons

Instructions

1. Prepare the Dough: Mix flour, oil/ghee, and salt. Add water gradually and knead into a tight, stiff dough. Cover and rest for 20 minutes.
2. Prepare the Filling: Heat oil in a pan. Add chopped onions and sauté until translucent. Add ginger-garlic paste and green

chillies, cook for one minute.
 3. Add the kheema and cook until it changes colour. Stir in all the powdered spices (coriander, cumin, turmeric, garam masala, and salt). Cook until the meat is dry and well-cooked.
 4. Stir in fresh coriander and let the filling cool completely.
 5. Shape the Samosas: Divide the dough into small balls. Roll each ball into an oval shape and cut it in half.
 6. Take one semi-circle, moisten the straight edge with water, and

fold it into a cone shape. Press the seam to seal.
 7. Spoon 1-2 tablespoons of the filling into the cone. Moisten the open edges and press to seal the triangle shape.
 8. Fry: Heat oil for deep frying. Fry the samosas on a low-to-medium flame until they are golden brown and crisp on all sides. Drain excess oil on a paper towel.
 9. Serve hot with mint chutney or tamarind chutney.
 Quick Phirni Cups (Rawa Version)

by Chef Anjan Islam, Product & Operations Lead, Curefoods

Ingredients

Milk (Full-Fat)- 1 litre
 Rawa / Semolina (fine) – 1/4 cup
 Sugar- 1/2 cup (adjust to taste)
 Cardamom Powder (Elaichi)- 1/2 tsp
 Saffron Strands (Kesar) – Pinch, soaked in 1 tsp milk
 Kewra Water- 1/2 tsp (few drops only)
 Garnish: Almonds & Pistachios (as required)

Instructions

1. Soak the rawa in a little water for 10 minutes, then drain.
2. Bring milk to a gentle boil in a heavy-bottom pan.
3. Lower the flame and add the soaked rawa while stirring continuously to avoid lumps.
4. Cook on low flame for 8–10 minutes until the mixture thickens and the rawa cooks fully.
5. Add sugar, cardamom powder and saffron milk. Cook for 2–3 minutes until the sugar dissolves.
6. Add kewra water at the end, mix gently and switch off the flame.
7. Pour into kulhads or cups, garnish with nuts.

Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind

From a renowned historian comes a groundbreaking narrative of humanity's creation and evolution—a #1 international bestseller—that explores the ways in which biology and history have defined us and enhanced our understanding of what it means to be “human.” One hundred thousand years ago, at least six different species of humans inhabited Earth. Yet today there is only one—homo sapiens. What happened to the others? And what may happen to us? Most books about the history of humanity pursue either a historical or a biological approach, but Dr. Yuval Noah Harari breaks the mold with this highly original book that begins about 70,000 years ago with the appearance of modern cognition. From examining the role evolving humans have played in the global ecosystem to charting the rise of empires, Sapiens integrates history and science to reconsider accepted narratives, connect past developments with contemporary concerns, and examine specific events within the context of larger ideas. Dr. Harari also compels us to look ahead, because over the last few decades humans have begun to bend laws of natural selection that have governed life for the past four billion years. We are acquiring the ability to design not only the world around us, but also ourselves. Where is this leading us, and what do we want to become? Featuring 27 photographs, 6 maps, and 25 illustrations/diagrams, this provocative and insightful work is sure to spark debate and is essential reading for aficionados of Jared Diamond, James Gleick, Matt Ridley, Robert Wright, and Sharon Moalem.

Yuval Noah Harari



Sapiens

A Brief History of Humankind

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING
AUTHOR OF **SAPIENS**

Yuval Noah Harari



21 Lessons for the 21st Century

21 Lessons for the 21st Century

In Sapiens, he explored our past. In Homo Deus, he looked to our future. Now, one of the most innovative thinkers on the planet turns to the present to make sense of today's most pressing issues.

How do computers and robots change the meaning of being human? How do we deal with the epidemic of fake news? Are nations and religions still relevant? What should we teach our children?

Yuval Noah Harari's 21 Lessons for the 21st Century is a probing and visionary investigation into today's most urgent issues as we move into the uncharted territory of the future. As technology advances faster than our understanding of it, hacking becomes a tactic of war, and the world feels more polarized than ever, Harari addresses the challenge of navigating life in the face of constant and disorienting change and raises the important questions we need to ask ourselves in order to survive.

In twenty-one accessible chapters that are both provocative and profound, Harari builds on the ideas explored in his previous books, untangling political, technological, social, and existential issues and offering advice on how to prepare for a very different future from the world we now live in: How can we retain freedom of choice when Big Data is watching us? What will the future workforce look like, and how should we ready ourselves for it? How should we deal with the threat of terrorism? Why is liberal democracy in crisis?

Harari's unique ability to make sense of where we have come from and where we are going has captured the imaginations of millions of readers. Here he invites us to consider values, meaning, and personal engagement in a world full of noise and uncertainty. When we are deluged with irrelevant information, clarity is power. Presenting complex contemporary challenges clearly and accessibly, 21 Lessons for the 21st Century is essential reading.

Anthropic takes the Pentagon to court, Google and OpenAI back Claude AI-maker: Story in 5 points

Anthropic, one of the world's leading AI startups, has sued the US Department of Defense. The lawsuit follows the Trump administration's decision to designate the company a "supply-chain risk" and ban its AI systems from federal use. The dispute began when the Pentagon asked for greater control over the use of Anthropic's AI chatbot, Claude, in defense operations for "all lawful purposes" pertaining to national security. However, Anthropic firmly refused, citing concerns over use of its AI models for mass surveillance or potential development of fully autonomous lethal weapons. Now, Anthropic has filed two lawsuits against the US Department of Defense, calling the supply-chain risk designation an unlawful, politically motivated and unconstitutional act that violates free speech. While the Pentagon has already moved ahead and signed a new deal with OpenAI, researchers from across the AI industry are stepping forward in support of Anthropic. More than 30 researchers and engineers from

companies including Google and OpenAI have stepped in backing Anthropic in court, warning that the ban could harm innovation and create uncertainty for AI companies working with the US government. But why exactly is Anthropic suing the Pentagon? And how did a major defense AI partnership turn into a legal battle involving Silicon Valley's biggest AI players? Here is the full story in five points.

Point 1: Anthropic's billion-dollar deal with Pentagon

For nearly two years, Anthropic was one of the Pentagon's key AI partners. The company, which is currently one of the top players in the AI industry with Claude, had secured a contract worth up to \$200 million with the US Department of Defense to customise and deploy AI systems for national security use. For all these years, Claude was integrated into parts of the US defense ecosystem and even authorised to run on the Pentagon's highly sensitive classified cloud networks. While Anthropic was working closely with US defense, it also maintained itself as



Point 2: Ban on Anthropic, deal with OpenAI

a "safety-first" AI company, favouring responsible deployment of its AI models in sensitive areas like defense and intelligence. And this very philosophy brought the company into conflict with US defense officials. The Trump administration argued over who should ultimately control how the technology is used in military operations, insisting that the government, not a private AI company, should have the final say.

While the Pentagon continued pushing Anthropic to grant unrestricted access to Claude for lawful defense purposes, the company refused to remove certain ethical restrictions. Anthropic insisted that its AI should not be used for mass domestic surveillance of American citizens or deployed in fully autonomous lethal weapons systems.

Middle East countries cut daily oil output amid Hormuz disruption: Bloomberg News



Oil production cuts across major Middle Eastern producers are deepening as shipping through the Strait of Hormuz remains severely disrupted, trimming roughly 6% from global oil supply, according to a report by Bloomberg News.

Four of the region's largest producers, including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kuwait have collectively reduced output by as much as 6.7 million barrels per day, Bloomberg News reported on Tuesday, citing people familiar with the matter.

The production cuts come as the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical oil transit routes, remains near a standstill

amid the escalating Gulf conflict, forcing major exporters to curb production due to limited export capacity.

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest crude exporter, has lowered output by between 2 million and 2.5 million barrels per day, Bloomberg News reported, citing people with knowledge of the matter.

The United Arab Emirates has cut its production by between 500,000 and 800,000 barrels per day, while Kuwait has reduced output by about 500,000 barrels per day, according to the report.

Iraq has made the steepest reduction, lowering production by roughly 2.9 million barrels per day, Bloomberg News said, citing sources familiar with the situation.

The cuts highlight the growing impact of the Gulf conflict on global energy flows as tensions around the Strait of Hormuz intensify. The narrow waterway connects the Persian Gulf with international shipping lanes and is a vital corridor for oil exports from the Middle East.

Disruptions to tanker traffic through the strait have rattled global oil markets as the route normally carries a significant share of the world's crude exports from

Gulf producers. With limited alternative routes available to move such large volumes of crude, producers in the region have been forced to scale back output while the shipping bottleneck persists.

Analysts say sustained production cuts at this scale could tighten global oil supplies and increase volatility in crude prices, particularly if disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz continue for an extended period.

IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers steps down 3 months after operational meltdown

IndiGo said on Tuesday that its CEO Pieter Elbers has stepped down with effect from March 10, 2026. The resignation comes after the airline faced its worst-ever operational crisis in December, which drew scrutiny from both the public and the government. Following Elbers' exit, Rahul Bhatia will take charge of the company's management on an interim basis.

The airline confirmed that Bhatia, who serves as managing director, will oversee the affairs of the company until further arrangements are made.

In early December 2025, IndiGo faced major disruptions, cancelling 2,507 flights and delaying 1,852 flights between

December 3 and 5, impacting over three lakh passengers nationwide. The problems were linked to inadequate preparation for implementing revised Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) norms for pilots.

Following the incident, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) cut IndiGo's winter schedule by 10% until February 10.

The regulator, on January 17, 2026, imposed penalties of over Rs 22 crore, issued warnings to Elbers and two other senior executives, and asked the airline to furnish a Rs 50 crore bank guarantee to ensure systemic improvements.

THWARTED TERROR AT GRACIE MANSION: Pennsylvania "ISIS Wannabes" Charged in NYC Bomb Plot

NEW YORK, NY — Two Pennsylvania men who allegedly sought to outdo the carnage of the Boston Marathon bombing are now in federal custody after a botched terrorist attack outside the official residence of New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani. "Emir Balat (18) of Langhorne and Ibrahim Kayumi (19) of Newtown were apprehended on Saturday, March 7, 2026, after attempting to detonate improvised explosive devices (IEDs) amidst a crowd of anti-Muslim protesters and NYPD officers. "Even Bigger Than Boston": The Attack Sequence "The incident unfolded during a volatile face-off between far-right demonstrators and counter-protesters near Gracie Mansion. According to federal prosecutors: "The First Device: Balat ignited and hurled a jar-sized IED containing TATP (known as the "Mother of Satan") into a crowd. The device failed to detonate, only emitting smoke and flames. "The Second Attempt: Moments later, Balat retrieved a second shrapnel-filled device from Kayumi and dropped it near a group of NYPD officers before both

suspects attempted to flee. "The Admission: Following their arrest, Balat told investigators he hoped the attack would be "even bigger" than the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. Kayumi reportedly smirked in court as the ISIS-inspired charges were read. "Affluence and Extremism: The Backgrounds "The investigation has turned a sharp lens on the suspects' comfortable lives in the Philadelphia suburbs. "The Kayumi Residence "Social media reports and property records indicate that Ibrahim Kayumi's parents—naturalized citizens who fled Afghanistan for the safety of the United States—own a \$2.5 million mansion in Newtown, PA. The 5,800-square-foot home features six bedrooms and five bathrooms, highlighting a stark contrast between the opportunities provided to the family and the extremist ideology allegedly embraced by their son. "The Balat Radicalization "Emir Balat, a senior at Neshaminy High School, had recently returned from a months-long trip to Turkey in January 2026. The FBI



later discovered explosive residue and evidence of TATP manufacturing in a storage unit in Langhorne tied to the investigation.

A City on Edge "The attack occurred during a "heightened state of

alert" following recent international hostilities. NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch confirmed that the devices were packed with nuts, bolts, and screws—designed specifically to maximize human casualties.

FBI's iconic Most Wanted list enters new era with unprecedented addition



For the first time in its more than 75-year history, the FBI's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list will include an alleged cybercriminal — and officials say it's a sign of how today's biggest threats don't just carry guns, they carry malware. Anibal Aguirre, who also goes by "Prometheus," becomes Fugitive No. 540 on the FBI's most notorious roster. Investigators say he is the alleged architect behind a sweeping ATM "jackpotting" scheme that uses custom-built malware to force cash machines across the United States to spit out money on command. But authorities say this isn't just high-tech theft. Federal prosecutors allege the operation funnels millions of dollars to Tren de Aragua

(TdA), the violent Venezuelan transnational criminal organization that U.S. officials describe as a terrorist group. "The violent criminals on the FBI's Top Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list are the worst of the worst, and they are in the FBI's sights," FBI Director Kash Patel said in a statement ahead of the announcement. "For more than 75 years, the Ten Most Wanted Fugitives program has been one of the FBI's most powerful tools for bringing dangerous criminals to justice." Patel makes clear the Bureau is counting on the public. "By sharing information about these fugitives with the public, we greatly expand the reach of our investigations," he said. "Our message is simple: if you commit violent

crimes or prey on innocent people, we will continue pursuing you — and with the public's help, we will find you." The FBI is offering a reward of up to \$1 million for information leading directly to his arrest. Authorities say he has ties to Venezuela and Mexico, is known to speak Spanish, and may be operating outside the United States. The FBI is also offering a reward of up to \$1 million for information leading directly to his arrest. Prosecutors in the

District of Nebraska have charged 93 defendants in connection with the broader conspiracy. Authorities say many millions of dollars are drained from ATM machines across the country as part of the scheme. U.S. Attorney Lesley Woods says investigators follow the money trail from compromised American ATMs all the way back to what she describes as the operation's "terroristic roots in Venezuela."

From Camelot to 'outsider': JFK's grandson shakes up NYC House race taking aim at gatekeeping Dem 'machine'

Jack Schlossberg, the only grandson of former President John F. Kennedy, is running for Congress in New York City, where he says, despite being a member of arguably the most prominent political family in American history, he's heading an 'outsider' campaign that's upsetting the political establishment power brokers. "It's probably hard for people to believe me saying that I'm an anti-establishment outsider given my family ties, but in this race, I really am," Schlossberg told Fox News Digital in an interview. "I am going up against a political machine here in NY-12 that doesn't want change, that doesn't want any outsiders to come shake things up, do things differently," he continued.

"They want to control the people who they send to Congress, and that means trading favors and endorsements before the seat has even opened up." A dozen Democrats are running in the June primary to replace Democratic Congressman Jerry Nadler, who announced his retirement in September at the age of 78 after more than three decades in Congress, citing the need for "generational change" in the party. If Schlossberg, the only son of John F. Kennedy's daughter Caroline, wants to be the Democrat that brings that change, he will have to navigate a political landscape in New York City dominated by county committees, major donors, and a Nadler-endorsed candidate in the race.

India pumps 5,000 tonne of diesel into Bangladesh amid Iran war strain

Amid war-driven energy strain, India has begun pumping 5,000 tonnes of diesel to Bangladesh through the cross-border Friendship Pipeline as part of an annual agreement to supply 180,000 tonnes of the fuel. The first consignment on Tuesday marks the start of the five-year-long supply plan, and could be seen as a sign of bilateral energy ties stabilising after Sheikh Hasina's exit.

Amid the raging war in West Asia, which has threatened global energy security, India has begun pumping diesel to Bangladesh through a cross-border pipeline from Assam's Numaligarh refinery. At least 5,000 tonnes of diesel would reach Bangladesh on Tuesday as part of the supply, said Chairman of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), Muhammad Rezanur Rahman.

The move comes as Bangladesh faces a severe fuel shortage triggered by disruptions in global oil supplies due to the ongoing US-Israel-Iran war. The first shipment on Tuesday was part of a larger annual supply agreement between the two neighbours.

Sources in the BPC told Dhaka-based The Financial Express that the diesel consignment is expected to reach the Parbatipur depot in northern Bangladesh's Dinajpur from the Numaligarh refinery in Assam through the Bangladesh-India Friendship Pipeline. The Bangladesh-India Friendship Pipeline, which commenced in 2017-18, and was operationalised in 2023 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina, transports diesel from Numaligarh to the Parbatipur depot in northern Bangladesh's Dinajpur district.

Bangladeshi officials say the delivery could ease immediate pressure on power generation and transport. Bangladesh's energy dependence on India has been under strain since the collapse of Sheikh Hasina's government in August 2024. The interim administration of Muhammad Yunus that followed reviewed and partially suspended several power and energy agreements with New Delhi, alleging unfavourable terms.

Imports of electricity from Adani's Jharkhand power plant were reduced, coal supplies were disrupted, and some cross-border gas and LNG initiatives slowed down. Against this tense backdrop, India's latest diesel supply could be seen as a sign of bilateral energy ties stabilising again.

HOW MUCH DIESEL IS INDIA SENDING TO BANGLADESH AND HOW?

India has begun by sending 5,000 tonnes of diesel to Bangladesh via the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline. Before the pipeline was inaugurated, fuel transfer had to rely on railway tankers.

The shipment is the first instalment



under a broader agreement, where India has committed to supply 180,000 tonnes of diesel annually.

"We have an agreement with India, and according to that agreement, India will supply 180,000 tons of diesel to Bangladesh via the pipeline each year. The 5,000 tons of diesel that is arriving now is a part of that agreement," Chairman of BPC, Muhammad Rezanur Rahman told news agency ANI. He added that at least 90,000 tonnes would be delivered in the next six months to help Bangladesh deal with immediate shortages. Muhammad Rezanur Rahman said the shipments are part of a structured import plan aimed at stabilising fuel availability.

"...We hope that within the next two months, we will bring in the total diesel amount for the entire six months," added the BPC chairman.

The transnational pipeline has become a strategic asset for both India and Bangladesh as it cuts transportation costs and delivery time compared to tanker shipments.

"The pumping started at 3.20 pm on Monday. It takes about 44 hours to bring in about 5,000 metric tonnes of diesel... We are pumping about 113 tonnes of oil here every hour.

Accordingly, the supply is expected to be completed by tomorrow [Wednesday] evening," the GM of the Commerce and Operations Department

at BPC, Muhammad Morshed Hossain Azad, told The Financial Express.

WHY IS BANGLADESH FACING A FUEL CRISIS?

Like many other energy-dependent countries, Bangladesh's fuel crisis has deepened because of the ongoing US-Israel-Iran war. The choking of the strategic Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf has disrupted global oil flows. The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most critical energy corridors. Bangladesh imports around 95% of its fuel, much of it from the Middle East. Any disruption in supply routes quickly translates into shortages at home. The crisis has already triggered long queues at petrol stations, rationing of fuel sales, and public anxiety. The Bangladesh government, in some places, has capped sales at 10 litres of petrol for motorcycles and 40 litres for cars.

ENERGY DEALS BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH CAME UNDER STRAIN AFTER HASINA'S EXIT

Energy cooperation between India and Bangladesh weakened after Sheikh Hasina's government collapsed in August 2024 following mass protests. The interim administration launched a review of several major energy deals with India.

Dogs tied to poles, cats left behind: Expats flee Dubai without pets amid war

As missiles and rising tensions push people to leave parts of the Middle East, many pets in Dubai are being left behind. Animal rescue organisations say they are witnessing a worrying surge in abandoned dogs and cats as owners scramble to evacuate the region. According to reports, shelters and rescue organisations are struggling to cope with a sudden rise in abandoned animals.

The situation has become particularly worrying for groups like K9 Friends, which say they have been inundated with calls from owners looking to surrender their pets or asking for help rehoming them before leaving the country. Veterinarians in Dubai have also reported an unusual surge in inquiries about euthanising pets. Some owners, facing expensive relocation procedures, strict paperwork requirements and limited flight options, have allegedly asked clinics to put down even healthy animals rather than take them along.

Images circulating on X, show dogs tied to lamp posts with no food or water, while others appear to have been abandoned on the streets in the sweltering heat. Animal welfare volunteers say they have also come across cats and puppies left outside homes or shelters in crates.

EXPATS FLEEING DUBAI ABANDON THEIR BELOVED PETS TO A CRUEL FATE AS MISSILES RAIN DOWN

Panicked Brits are tying terrified dogs to lamp posts with

no food or water, dumping cats and puppies on scorching streets, and begging vets to euthanise healthy animals pic.twitter.com/TwxHsUgLKv— Grifty (@TheGriftReport) March 9, 2026

In one particularly heartbreaking case reported by The Sun, an animal rescuer discovered a cat along with four kittens left in a crate outside a residence. A note attached to the box reportedly read: "I'm travelling back to my country because of the situation here."

Dubai "expats" treating pets as disposable objects - abandoning dogs tied to poles & begging vets to kill healthy cats.

A pet is for LIFE, not until it's inconvenient. Cowards.

And spare me the "but people are dying in Iran" whataboutism. NO ONE said abandoned pets matter <https://t.co/vKK8O0diJ2> pic.twitter.com/XHii76NXyG— Atlanta Rey (@areyoflight) March 9, 2026 Rescue groups say they are now scrambling to find foster homes and temporary shelters as the number of abandoned animals continues to grow. Hundreds of posts about deserted pets have appeared across local social media groups, with volunteers sharing photos and appealing for people to adopt or temporarily care for them.

Some reports have also claimed that animals have been left behind near the desert routes leading toward the Oman border as residents attempt to leave the region by road.

The Khoslas are back: Khosla Ka Ghosla 2 gets a release date. See it here

The release date for the highly anticipated Khosla Ka Ghosla 2 has been announced by the film's team. The sequel is set to arrive in cinemas on August 28, 2026, coinciding with Raksha Bandhan. The announcement was made on Thursday through the official T-Series Instagram account, reviving excitement among fans of the original 2006 film.

Official announcement on release date

The makers shared the update with a post, saying, "20 years later, The Khoslas are back." The message was accompanied by, "#KhoslaKaGhosla2 In Cinemas on 28th August 2026." The production for the film began in January this year, ending years of speculation about the sequel's timeline and casting.

Cast reunion and new additions

Actor Anupam Kher earlier heightened anticipation by sharing photos with the original cast, including Ranvir Shorey, Parvin Dabas, and Kiran Juneja, as well as new ensemble member Ravi Kishan. The return of familiar faces has contributed



to growing interest in the upcoming release. The project marks a significant milestone for Kher, who noted this as his 550th film.

Reflecting on the enduring popularity of the first film, Kher remarked, "I wonder what it is that resonates with

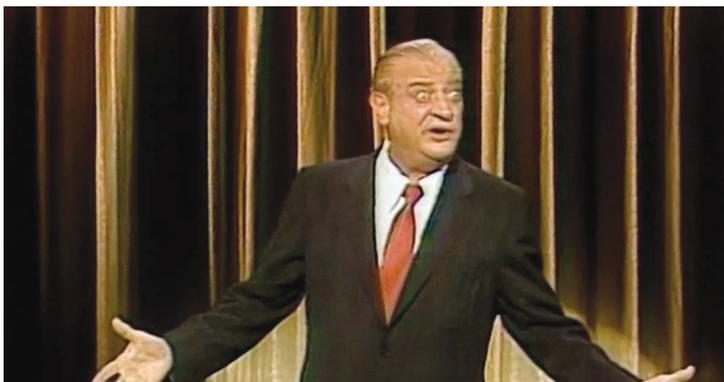
the magic of this film." The returning actors and creative team suggest that the sequel aims to recapture the spirit and humour that made the original a success.

He also acknowledged that there is "crazy anticipation" for Khosla Ka Ghosla 2 among fans for the film in another post.

The legacy of Khosla Ka Ghosla

The original Khosla Ka Ghosla centred on a family's fight to reclaim their property. It struck a chord with audiences and secured its status as a cult classic. It released in theatres on September 22, 2006.

"The Bride!" (2026): A Beautiful, Bloody Abomination Reanimates the Box Office"



CHICAGO — The stitches are showing, the electricity is humming, and the critics are divided. Maggie Gyllenhaal's sophomore directorial effort, *The Bride!*, slashed into theaters on March 6, 2026, leaving a trail of black bile and polarized reviews in its wake. "Part gothic romance, part 1930s gangster noir, and part feminist manifesto, the film reimagines Mary Shelley's classic through a lens of "outlaw lovers" on a violent spree. While some hail it as a "feverish, violent honeymoon" for the soul, others have called it a "beautifully assembled mess" that struggles to hold its disparate parts together. "The Plot: Beyond the Bolts" Set against the smoky backdrop of Depression-era Chicago, the

film follows a weary, lonely Frankenstein's monster—simply called "Frank" (Christian Bale)—who enlists the eccentric Dr. Euphronious (Annette Bening) to create a companion. "Their subject is Ida (Jessie Buckley), a gangster's moll murdered by the mob. Upon her resurrection, she is not the submissive mate Frank envisioned. Instead, she becomes *The Bride*: a lightning-frizzed, black-tongued force of nature who occasionally speaks with the possessed, spectral voice of Mary Shelley herself. "What happens if you try to keep your hand on a geyser? When it finally explodes, it's going to explode with triple the energy, and that is what happens to her." — Maggie Gyllenhaal on the *Bride's*

liberation.

Key Highlights "A "Post- glamour." "The Joker Connection: Death Bonnie & Clyde": Once Ida and Produced and shot by the team behind Frank find their rhythm, the film transforms Joker, the film's final act—featuring an into a road-trip crime spree, pursued by army of women in "torn stockings and a detective played by Peter Sarsgaard smeared lipstick"—has drawn direct and his sharp-witted assistant Penélope comparisons to the chaotic energy of Cruz. "The Musical Interludes: In one of Arthur Fleck's revolution. "Bottom the film's most surreal turns, Jake Line" *The Bride!* is a film that demands to Gyllenhaal appears as a 1930s matinee be seen on the largest screen possible, idol, leading Frank into a dreamlike if only to experience the sheer audacity obsession with old Hollywood of Gyllenhaal's vision.

From Office Manager to Icon: The Enduring Power of Christina Hendricks"

LOS ANGELES — In an industry that often tries to box talent into narrow stereotypes, Christina Hendricks stands as a masterclass in agency and reinvention. From her nomadic roots to the smoky hallways of *Sterling Cooper*, Hendricks didn't just play a character; she shifted the cultural tectonic plates of the 21st century. "As we look back at her storied career, it's clear that her impact on television, fashion, and the discourse on actress autonomy remains unparalleled. "The "Mad Men" Shift: Beyond the Silhouette" When *Mad Men* premiered in 2007, the world was introduced to Joan Holloway, the formidable office manager who navigated the misogyny of the 1960s with a mix of razor-sharp intellect and tactical

grace. "While the media initially focused on her vintage aesthetic, Hendricks' performance—which earned her six consecutive Emmy nominations—proved that Joan was the smartest person in any room. She transformed what could have been a trope into a nuanced study of power, eventually rising to become a partner at the firm.

The Fashion Ripple Effect: Designers across the globe credited Hendricks with the revival of the hourglass silhouette, sparking a massive trend in 1960s-inspired couture. A Critical Darling: The Television Critics Association remains steadfast in calling her portrayal one of the most significant in the history of the medium.

Ananya Panday Backs Deepika Padukone Amid 8-Hour Shift Debate: 'Now She's A Mother And This Is What She Needs'

Actress Ananya Panday, who was recently seen in *Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri* alongside Kartik Aaryan, has come out in support of her *Gehraiyaan* co-star and new mom, Deepika Padukone, amid the ongoing 8-hour shift debate. The debate in the industry was sparked after it was reported that Deepika requested shorter, 8-hour workdays for the films, *Spirit* and *Kalki 2898 AD* sequel, following her pregnancy.

Her exit from both projects further fueled the conversation. Now, in a recent interview, Ananya extended her support to Deepika and said that she simply voiced her needs as a new mom, which is completely fine.

Recently, Ananya joined Kareena Kapoor Khan and Kalyani Priyadarshan for a chat with *The Hollywood Reporter India*.

The SOTY actress recalled working with Deepika in the past before she became a mother, and there was "no such thing," while talking about the ongoing debate. Ananya said, "I've worked with her before she became a mother, there was no such thing like that. She was working, coming for workshops, no complaints, no asking for anything,

and that sort of way. Now she's a mother and this is what she needs, to kind of be present with her child at a time during the first two years..."

She further heaped praise on Kareena, a mother of two boys, who changed the game for the actresses. Ananya added, "Even Kareena did that, she changed the game for all of the girls coming after her. So I think it's okay to have a conversation with your producer, to find a balance between it's a private conversation you must have, and it's something that can be worked around. There's no hard and fast rule like, 'itna hi karenge, itna hi karna hai.' I think everyone is allowed to have that conversation."

On the other hand, the *Lokah* actress revealed that the Malayalam film industry often has workdays that stretch up to 16 hours.

She explained that shooting schedules typically start early in the morning, around 6 am and continue until late evening, sometimes going on until 9:30 pm. She further added that there are often no Sundays off either, making the schedule extremely demanding for everyone involved in the filmmaking process.



Kriti Sanon Raises The Glam Quotient In Brown Gown With Thigh-High Slit



Kriti Sanon's sartorial choices exude effortless charm. Her style is never too loud nor overly restrained, striking the perfect balance between elegance and impact. She recently turned heads at the Zee Cine Awards 2026, where many top Bollywood stars walked the red carpet in bold, stylish ensembles. While the evening celebrated cinema, it was the fashion moments that stole the spotlight. Amid the emerging stars and A-listers, Kriti stood out, reminding everyone why she is one of today's

- . The Elie Saab Effect: Decoding the Architecture of
- . Kriti's Brown Gown A Masterclass in Monochrome: Why
- . Earthy Tones are Dominating the 2026 Red
- . Carpet Sculpted to Perfection: The Art of the Thigh-High
- . Slit and Precision Cut-outs From Runway to Red
- . Carpet: How Kriti Sanon Reimagined Modern Couture

most-followed style icons. She looked stunning in a brown Elie Saab gown featuring striking cut-outs, a flowy silhouette, and a thigh-high slit that added dramatic flair. She accessorised elegantly with stacked statement bracelets and delicate earrings, while her hair was kept loose and natural, perfectly balancing the bold gown with a polished, casual vibe. The result was a sophisticated and effortless look, cementing her status as one of the best-dressed stars of the evening.

Kriti Sanon is cementing her spot on the world fashion landscape. The actor turned eyebrows as she visited Burberry's Fall/Winter 2026-27 event during London Fashion Week. Kriti looked stunning in a daring version of Burberry's iconic trench coat, combining classic British heritage with a modern twist. Her outfit revolved around a mocha brown trench-inspired leather dress made of panelled leather, giving the classic silhouette. The standout piece featured strong padded shoulders, pointed notch lapels, and a double-breasted front, emphasising its structured appeal. The tailored fit beautifully caressed her figure, while a matching leather belt highlighted her waist. Additional details, belted sleeves, intricate embroidery, and a below-the-knee hem transformed the conventional trench into a high-fashion dress.

Kriti Sanon's commanding front-row presence and daring style choices show that her fashion influence extends far beyond Bollywood, firmly cementing her place among the global style elite.

Britney Spears's Representative Reacts To Her Arrest On Suspicion Of Driving Under Influence: "Completely Inexcusable"



Following her arrest, her representative has stated that the singer's life is in need of a "long overdue change."

What's Happening

Britney Spears' representative told *The Independent*, "This was an unfortunate incident that is completely inexcusable. Britney is going to take the right steps and comply with the law, and hopefully this can be the first step in the long overdue change that needs to occur in Britney's life." The statement continued, "Hopefully, she can get the help and support she needs during this difficult time. Her boys are going to be spending time with her. Her loved ones are going to come up with an overdue, needed plan to set her up for success and well-being."

Background

Authorities stated that the singer was taken into custody on Wednesday, March 4, at around 9:28 pm local time. She was later booked at 3:02 am and released a few hours later at 6:07 am. Reports from outlets including *Billboard*, *Variety* and *TMZ* confirmed the development after reviewing official records.

The singer is expected to appear in court on May 4 in connection with the case. Spears has lived much of her life under intense public scrutiny.

Microsoft adds Anthropic Claude Cowork to Copilot after SaaSocalypse scare

Just over a month ago, Anthropic shook the stock market, with fears of a SaaSocalypse. The AI startup released Claude Cowork, a tool aimed for productivity in the workplace, allowing users to use AI to do a wide variety of tasks. And now, Microsoft is bringing Claude Cowork to its own AI platform, Copilot. Copilot Cowork will be built on Anthropic's Claude Cowork technology, for Microsoft's enterprise users.

How does Copilot Cowork work?

Copilot Cowork lets users delegate tasks like calendar management, report generation, and research with less supervision. Charles Lamanna, Microsoft's president of business apps and agents, said, "Cowork is the new chat. It's the new way of interacting with AI." Microsoft's Copilot Cowork will run via the cloud, instead of operating locally on a user's device. Microsoft's Jared Spataro told Reuters, "We work only in a cloud environment and we work only on behalf of the user. So you know exactly what information it (Copilot Cowork) has

access to." Anthropic's Claude Cowork operates locally on devices, a setup many companies find uncomfortable.

How to use Copilot Cowork?

Microsoft is rolling out Cowork on a limited basis in March 2026, as part of its \$30-per-user, per-month M365 Copilot package, with additional usage available for purchase. Anthropic's latest Claude Sonnet models will also be accessible to Copilot users, expanding beyond OpenAI's GPT models. As Copilot Cowork enters testing, Microsoft is launching Agent 365 on May 1, a platform for managing the growing number of AI agents in the workplace. The company says it has already created over half a million AI agents with this platform.

What is Claude Cowork?

Claude Cowork, released in January this year, quickly gained traction beyond developers by offering an autonomous AI agent capable of performing a broad range of white-collar tasks, such as payroll calculation and financial analysis. Anthropic built Cowork following the



success of Claude Code, that became a hit amongst coders. Claude Cowork comes with 11 workflow-specific plugins – Productivity, Enterprise search, Plugin Create or Customize, Sales, Finance, Data, Legal, Marketing, Customer support, Product management, and Biology Research. These advancements led to losses for major SaaS providers like Infosys and TCS, as agentic AI

threatened the traditional value of enterprise software. With investors fearing the end of SaaS as we know it.

Cowork will change how we work

As agentic AI reshapes the workplace, Lamanna noted that "the shape of what we do on a day-to-day basis will change," with AI potentially giving time back to employees by automating routine assignments.

Silver jumps nearly Rs 10,000: Will the Iran-US war push prices even higher?



Escalating tensions between the US, Israel and Iran are sending ripples across global commodity markets, pushing investors toward precious metals. Silver prices surged sharply on Tuesday, climbing by nearly Rs 10,000 in domestic markets as geopolitical uncertainty and rising oil prices triggered strong safe-haven demand. At around 12:45 pm, silver was trading at Rs 2,76,588, up Rs 9,428 or 3.43%, while gold was priced at Rs 1,61,738, gaining Rs 1,401 or 0.87%.

GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS TRIGGER SAFE-HAVEN DEMAND

The rally in silver comes as investors react to the escalating conflict in the Middle East. Concerns that the US-Israel-

Iran tensions could disrupt global oil supply chains have raised fears of higher inflation and economic instability. In such uncertain times, investors often turn to precious metals like gold and silver to protect wealth from volatility in equities and currencies. Silver, which tends to be more volatile than gold, typically sees sharper price movements during such phases.

SAFE-HAVEN BUYING INTENSIFIES

The rally in silver is largely driven by safe-haven demand as geopolitical uncertainty deepens. Investors typically shift money into precious metals during wars or global crises to protect wealth

from market volatility. Escalating military action between the US, Israel and Iran has heightened fears of a broader regional conflict, pushing bullion prices higher.

OIL CRISIS ADDS INFLATION FEARS

Another factor lifting silver prices is the surge in crude oil prices triggered by tensions around the Middle East, a region crucial to global energy supply. Disruptions to key shipping routes and

oil production are fuelling concerns about inflation and economic instability, which often strengthen demand for precious metals as a hedge.

PROFIT-TAKING EMERGES AFTER STRONG RALLY

Despite the surge, experts say the precious metal is also witnessing phases of correction as investors book profits after the recent sharp rally.

EPF rate stays at 8.25%: Should investors continue with VPF or choose SIPs?

For many salaried employees, the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) forms the core of their retirement savings. But many investors go a step further and put extra money into the Voluntary Provident Fund (VPF) for its stable returns, tax benefits and safety.

Now that the EPFO board has kept the EPF interest rate unchanged at 8.25% for FY26, many investors are wondering whether they should continue increasing their VPF contributions or divert extra savings to market-linked investments such as SIPs that may offer higher long-term growth. According to Pratik Vaidya, Managing Director and Chief Vision Officer at Karma

Management Global Consulting Solutions Pvt. Ltd, the decision should largely depend on an investor's risk appetite and overall financial planning.

WHY VPF REMAINS APPEALING

"VPF holds a strong value at 8.25% for salaried investors who want long-term savings with stability," says Pratik Vaidya. He points out that while savings accounts offer about 3% and bank fixed deposits hover around 6-7%, EPF and VPF continue to offer a meaningful premium.

What makes VPF particularly attractive is that it earns the same interest as EPF while remaining part of a disciplined retirement savings plan.

Lakme Fashion Week X FDCI: Manish Malhotra, Amit Aggarwal, Kartik Research To Showcase At The Mumbai Edition

Lakme Fashion Week X FDCI is back in the city of dreams with a schedule packed with conscious collections, beauty innovation and creative brand partnerships. With 22 showcases and presentations, the Mumbai edition of Lakme Fashion Week X FDCI will have celebrated designers including Manish Malhotra, Amit Aggarwal, AK|OK Anamika Khanna, Karthik Research, péro, Abraham & Thakore, Payal Pratap and AFEW Rahul Mishra among others.

Presented by the House of Lakme, the Fashion Design Council of India, and Reliance Brands, Lakme Fashion Week X FDCI will be held from March 19 to March 22, 2026 at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai.

The Opening Night

The Opening night showcase will have Anamika Khanna's luxury pret brand AK|OK close day 1 with a unique presentation. Expect nothing less than magic from Anamika Khanna, Vishesh and Viraj Khanna. A Conscious Curation Every season comes with a sustainable



twist and the schedule for the Mumbai edition is packed with one-of-a-kind showcases focusing on conscious collections.

Show that are a must watch this season are L'Atelier 1664 x Abraham & Thakore, Khadi India showcase featuring Samant Chauhan, Shruti Sancheti, Pawan Sachdeva, and COEK creations, and R|Elan Circular Design

Challenge winner CRCLE and the Fashion Trust Arabia, India Guest Country Winner – Karthik Research among others.

Creative Brand Partnerships

Lakme Fashion Week X FDCI as a platform has celebrated an array of creative partnerships over the years. Continuing its long-standing association with fashion, NEXA presents Manish

Malhotra, where the designer will unveil his new Luxury Pret line. Similarly, collaborations to look forward to this season include SUPIMA Presents AFEW Rahul Mishra, 1664 x Abraham & Thakore, R|Elan x Payal Pratap and Indriya X Amit Aggarwal among others.

The Closing Night

The House of Lakme Grand Finale this March will close with a spectacular showcase by Péro, marking the brand's first-ever Grand Finale.

The Voices Of Fashion

Sunanda Khaitan, CMO, Beauty & Wellbeing, Hindustan Unilever "For us, fashion and beauty have always been deeply personal forms of self-expression. This season, we wanted to focus on beauty that feels intuitive, modern, and easy to make your own.

With the launch of Lakme 9to5 Beach Edit, we're embracing a more practical, summer-ready approach to makeup, one that brings together sun care and performance in a way that fits seamlessly into everyday life.

Kate Middleton Adds A Desi Touch To Holi Match Your Summer Energy With With Jhumka-Inspired Earrings In Leicester Handcrafted Chic Co-Ord Sets

Royal fashion often communicates far more than style alone – it can signal diplomacy, cultural respect and thoughtful symbolism. During a recent Holi celebration in Leicester, Catherine, Princess of Wales, demonstrated exactly that, pairing classic British elegance with

felt appropriate for both a royal engagement and a festive cultural event.

Layered over the dress was a tailored coat by Chris Kerr of Savile Row, a piece royal watchers quickly recognised. The Princess had previously worn the coat during her appearance at the 2023 Christmas carol service, reinforcing her well-known commitment to thoughtful wardrobe repetition. The neutral colour palette was completed with camel-toned suede pumps and a matching clutch, creating a monochrome ensemble that felt timeless, understated and impeccably tailored.

While the outfit itself exuded quiet sophistication, it was Kate's jewellery that sparked the most conversation online. She accessorised the look with the 'Dina' earrings from Parisian label Sézane – gold-plated recycled brass drops featuring delicate beadwork and vivid blue stones. The handcrafted design bears a striking resemblance to traditional Indian jhumka earrings, instantly drawing attention from fashion enthusiasts and cultural commentators alike.

Priced at approximately \$130 (around Rs 11,900), the earrings offered an accessible yet elegant statement piece.

Urmil by Ritika & Prerna unveiled the Spring Summer Edit with their latest designs at AZA in Mumbai. From the signature gold palette embracing intricate applique and handcrafted embellishments to exploring various fabrics and turning them into statement asymmetric pieces perfect for every occasion, Urmil is a celebration of craft, colour and contemporary silhouettes.

For Ritika and Prerna, the founders of Urmil, every piece of clothing in the collection is a hero piece and can be styled in multiple ways for various occasions. While the ensembles can be worn as is, each element in the sets becomes a showstopper look when styled over either a pair of jeans or a glamorous saree. The designers, who have been working closely with AZA for almost three years now, share with News18 the experience they have had with the association. "We've been working with AZA Fashions for I think two, three years, and it has been excellent. Today, if we are able to make a mark in AZA, which is a multi-designer store, it's something worth taking back for ourselves as feedback," express Ritika and Prerna. **A Colour Soiree**

The Spring Summer Edit is a mélange of Urmil's signature gold colour, which is rustic yet shimmery, and plays the perfect canvas to enhance the handcrafted embellishments. The palette also trickles down to some interesting shades such as ivory, mint, sage, orange, black, blush and red. The colours are brought to life in



a subtle yet meaningful nod to Indian heritage.

The Princess visited the city on March 5 to celebrate Holi with members of the British Indian community, and while the festivities were lively and vibrant, her outfit struck a characteristically refined balance between simplicity and statement.

A Neutral Palette With Royal Polish For the occasion, Kate Middleton chose a softly structured cream pleated midi dress from Ralph Lauren. The design featured a fitted bodice and a gently flowing skirt that moved elegantly as she walked, offering a polished silhouette that



fluid and breathable fabrics including tissue, organza and linen.

Statement Silhouettes

While co-ord sets dominate their design language, you can't help but fall in love with the asymmetric aesthetic Urmil brings to the table. Jackets, capes, neck bibs, shirts, and flared pants are realised in structured, fluid and creative patterns. Layering each element from the collections not only adds to your fashion statement but also sets the mood board from styles perfect to flaunt from dawn to dusk.

Fearless Voice of the Community

The South Asian Insider

23 Glorious Years, Always a Step Ahead

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Venezuela's Maria Machado dedicates Nobel Prize to Trump
Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado who won the Nobel Peace Prize 2023 and called Donald Trump a demon of violence, praised the US President for supporting the Venezuelans working to establish democracy and end President Nicolas Maduro's dictatorship.

British and Indian prime ministers promote trade deal during visit by Starmer

The American Dream turned nightmare, Gujaratis in Peril in US Motel Business?

The Road from Patna to Pennsylvania Avenue: How Bihar's Verdict Will Shape Modi's Hand in US Trade Talks

Big Crackdown Coming: India To Audit All Cough Syrup Makers

Brazilian influencer's death after 'fox eyes' surgery exposes beauty culture's dark side

As Afghan Taliban Minister Begins 1st India Visit, Delhi Has A Flag Dilemma

Who Is Ashley Tellis, Indian-American Expert Charged Over Top Secret Files

Inside India's Scariest Scam, And How To Stop It
Digital scams are proliferating as India's elderly population embraces the internet. Scammers are highly effective, preying on the vulnerabilities of seniors, such as respect for authority, fear of legal trouble, and loneliness.

Starship Hits the Bulls-eye, Lands in Indian Ocean and Crashes Exactly Where Musk Predicted

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