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COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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Air India's Mid-Air Toilet Trouble

Indian Railways has long been struggling with clogged bio-toilets. Reason: random things flushed down by passengers, just as found on the Chicago-Delhi Air India flight



Air India's flight AI126 departed from toilets on board were inoperable. There Chicago's O'Hare International Airport was little option but to turn the flight back for New Delhi on March 5, passengers to Chicago, the crew considered. had probably expected little more than The culprit, though, wasn't a mechanical a movie marathon or a good nap. But breakdown or inclement weather but an on tracks via traditional toilets has Is there a solution? Could clearer less than two hours into take-off, a array of items that passengers had drastically different kind of drama apparently flushed down the toilets on malfunctioning mid-journey. Such or simply more waste-bins around stop unfolded.

(By Our Staff Reporter)- When another. Before long, eight of the 12

board.

The crew began to notice that toilets While Air India arranged for hotels in were being rendered unusable, one after Chicago for passengers and also

PM Modi presents Overseas Citizen cards to Mauritian PM Ramgoolam, his wife Veena



special gesture, Prime Minister Narendra The handover took place on the first day Modi on Tuesday presented Overseas of his state visit, underscoring India's Citizen of India (OCI) cards to his commitment to its diaspora and bilateral Mauritian counterpart Navin Ramgoolam and his spouse Veena Ramgoolam.

Modi handed over the OCI cards to Ramgoolam and Veena at the beginning of a community event attended by more to Mauritian nationals of Indian lineage than 3,500 people, including members traceable up to the seventh generation of the Mauritius Cabinet, government an initiative aimed at fostering closer ties officials, and National Assembly members.

day, Modi presented OCI cards to Indian community in the country. Mauritius' President Dharambeer The OCI card grants holders the right to

(By Our Staff Reporter)- In a Gokhool and First Lady Vrinda Gokhool. relations with Mauritius.

During President Droupadi Murmu's state visit to Mauritius in March 2024, India extended eligibility for OCI cards with the Indian diaspora.

Mauritius is home to 22,188 Indian "It is a pleasant surprise for me and my nationals and 13,198 OCI card holders, wife," Ramgoolam said.Earlier in the reflecting the significant presence of the

alternate flights, its investigation hit 2020, raising major hygiene issues. The unusable mid-flight and compelled the paper cups. crew to make the emergency about- Turns out that like railways, there is turn.Social media quickly erupted with never a dull moment aboard Air India incredulous reactions. Many seemed flights too. It has faced unique baffled as to what would have prompted challenges, most infamously an unruly, passengers to dispose of such items drunk passenger allegedly urinating on mid-flight, and in this manner. The a fellow flier on an international flight in incident also prompted broader 2022. discussions, linking the case to similar One view is that passengers often view crowded railway network.

lavatory waste previously being dumped or throwing wrappers on the road. Bengaluru City Railway Station hard in airlines look for some solid answers.

some strange discoveries: polythene Comptroller and Auditor General of India bags, rags and even items of clothing (CAG) found that almost 200,000 stuck in the plumbing systems of the complaints of clogged bio-toilets were flight. These not-so-random 'foreign logged in one year (2016-17). The usual objects' had rendered the lavatories suspects: plastic bottles, wrappers and

problems long associated with India's airports or train stations like a temporary service and do not show respect. Indian railways, one of the largest rail Moreover, lazy convenience is often the networks globally that moves millions enemy of model civic sense, which is of people every day, has been anyway weakened by everyday habits, struggling with clogged bio-toilets for such as plunking waste or spitting eons. The supposedly novel solution to paan/gutkha out of the car while driving,

ironically made more news for signage, strong public awareness drives problems had hit train services out of this? As passengers debate this,

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CITY OF NEW YORK HONORS BAWA JAIN WITH OFFICIAL CITATION FOR GLOBAL PEACE AND INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE

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York, NY - The City of New York, under to global peace, inter-religious dialogue, the leadership of Mayor Eric Adams, and spiritual leadership.

role

(By Our Staff Reporter)- New in recognition of his unwavering dedication

CBI and Kerala Police Arrest Lithuanian Fugitive

(By Our Staff Reporter)--In a cybercriminals.

major international operation, the Since its launch in April 2019, Garantex Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is believed to have processed at least and Kerala Police have arrested Aleksej \$96 billion in cryptocurrency Besciokov, a Lithuanian national transactions, including hundreds of wanted by US authorities for his alleged millions linked to hacking, ransomware, in a multi-billion-dollar drug trafficking, and terrorism. As the cryptocurrency fraud and money primary technical administrator of laundering scheme. Besciokov was Garantex, Besciokov played a crucial apprehended in Thiruvananthapuram role in maintaining the exchange's

> infrastructure and overseeing highrisk transactions. The US indictment also states that he conspired to violate economic sanctions and operate an unlicensed money transmission business, both of which are federal offenses.

to trace and arrest Besciokov. by Delhi in a corruption case. Acting on this, India's Ministry of The order came three days after India

world faces complex challenges, this dialogue in advancing peace. recognition holds even more significance, "We have no room for the hate that is collective action.

lifelong dedication to peace and interfaith humanity." harmony has had a profound impact not This recognition underscores the we strive to uphold."

presented the citation on behalf of Mayor individuals and communities to strive for Eric Adams, emphasizing the crucial role a future rooted in compassion, unity, and honored Bawa Jain with an official citation Originally conferred during the Diwali of leadership in strengthening justice.

celebrations in October 2024, unforeseen communities. Accepting the honor, Bawa circumstances delayed the formal Jain stressed the importance of interpresentation. However, at a time when the religious collaboration and global

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emphasizing the need for unity and plaguing our society today," said Bawa Jain. "In these challenging times, it is Deputy Commissioner Dilip Chauhan, a more essential than ever that we come strong advocate for the South Asian together to build bridges of community, highlighted the significance understanding and work towards a future of this honor, stating, "Bawa Jain's founded on peace, respect, and shared

just in New York City, but globally. His transformative power of responsible leadership exemplifies the values of leadership in overcoming divisive forces unity, diversity, and mutual respect that and driving positive change. As the world continues to evolve, Bawa Jain's work Deputy Commissioner Mr. Dilip Chauhan serves as a beacon of hope, inspiring

Vanuatu revokes citizenship of Wanted by the US in Multi-Billion Dollar Crypto Fraud fugitive Indian ex-IPL cricket boss



Kerala Police The US authorities island nation to fugitive Indian under law," Jaiswal had said. had submitted a formal request businessman Lalit Modi, who is wanted

External Affairs (MEA) secured a confirmed that Mr Modi had got against him from Patiala House than 80 islands in the Pacific Ocean.

Court, Delhi, on March 10, under Mr Modi, the former chief of the Indian stars and India's elite. the Extradition Act, 1962. The Premier League (IPL), is wanted for But on Monday, Vanuatu's Prime Minister while allegedly planning to flee the CBI's International Police Cooperation allegedly rigging bids during his tenure Unit (IPCU) then coordinated with Kerala as the head of the world's richest cricket London."We are also given to Napat as saying.

(By Our Staff Reporter)- The understand that he has acquired prime minister of Vanuatu has ordered the citizenship of Vanuatu. We continue to Coordinated Action by CBI and cancellation of a passport issued by the pursue the case against him as required

The news of Mr Modi becoming a Vanuatu citizen had made headlines in India, where he was once the face of the glamorous, cash-rich IPL tournament. He Provisional Arrest Warrant citizenship of Vanuatu, a string of more was a regular presence on the social scene, rubbing shoulders with Bollywood

Jotham Napat announced that his country had decided to cancel Mr Modi's Police, leading to his swift arrest. A CBI tournament.Mr Modi, who has been citizenship.Napat said a Vanuatu The U.S. Secret Service, in its spokesperson confirmed, "In a living in the UK since 2010, has always passport was a "privilege" and that "applicants must seek citizenship for



country.

The Case Against Besciokov

indictment, has accused Besciokov coordinated action with IPCU, Kerala denied the allegations.India has made and his co-conspirator, Russian Police arrested wanted fugitive Aleksej several unsuccessful attempts to legitimate reasons"."None of those national Aleksandr Mira Serda, of Besciokov, who was attempting to extradite him. On Friday, India's foreign legitimate reasons include attempting to operating Garantex, a cryptocurrency escape from India." Besciokov will be ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal avoid extradition, which the recent facts exchange that reportedly laundered produced before Patiala House Court, told reporters that Mr Modi had applied brought to light clearly indicate was Mr illicit funds for transnational criminal where extradition proceedings will to surrender his Indian passport in Modi's intention," a media release quoted organizations, terrorist groups, and commence.

Sambhal's Jama Masjid among 10 mosques to be covered during Holi procession

In Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal, 10 mosques, including the historic Jama Masjid, will be covered with plastic sheets and tarpaulins that will fall along the route of a Holi procession.

(News Agency)- The Sambhal police in Uttar Pradesh have decided to cover 10 mosques, including the historic Jama Masjid, with plastic sheets and tarpaulins that will fall along the route of a Holi procession on March 14. This year. Holi coincides with the Friday prayers during the holy month of Ramzan.

Police said the decision had been taken to ensure smooth proceedings for both the religious events.

Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Shrishchandra said all religious sites along the traditional route of the Holi procession would be covered following mutual agreement between both communities.Sambhal Sub-Divisional Magistrate Vandna Mishra said the UP Police detained 1,015 people.

"Lekhpals have been put on duty at different masjids in Sambhal. The district has been divided into sectors. We are fully prepared for Holi and will make sure it goes peacefully," she told news agency ANI.



Tension has been simmering in was constructed on the ruins of a Hindu Sambhal since last November follow- temple. Protests over the survey spi-Masjid based on claims that the mosque five dead and over 20 police personnel day prayers) during Holi celebrations.

injured.

Earlier this week, a row erupted after senior Sambhal police officer Anui Kumar Chaudhary "advised" Muslims to stay indoors during Holi as it comes only once a year. The Sambhal cop's remarks were backed by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

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"The festival of colours comes only once a year, while Friday (for namaz) comes 52 times in one year... We have given a direct message that when people play Holi, and if they (Muslims) don't want colours to fall on them, then they should stay at home," Chaudhary said.

With Holi coinciding with Friday prayers, several leaders have attracted controversy with their foot-in-the-mouth remarks. On Tuesday, BJP leader Raghuraj Singh suggested that Muslim men wear hijabs made of tarpaulin to avoid inconvenience during Holi celebrations. The mayor of Bihar's Darbhanga also stirred a row by suging a court-ordered survey of the Jama ralled into massive violence, leaving gesting a two-hour break for jumma (Fri-



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Cop who escorted Ranya Rao said order came from seniors, agency tells court

The special court for economic offences, which was hearing Kannada actor Ranya Rao's bail petition, reserved its order for March 14.



of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) told a Ranya Rao, the stepdaughter of a senior Karnataka court that the protocol officer police officer, was arrested with gold bars who helped Kannada actor Ranya Rao, worth Rs 12.56 crore earlier this month arrested for smuggling gold, dodge from the Bengaluru airport. The gold bars fell under Section 135(1)(a) and (b) of legal procedures. security checks at the airport received were found strapped to her body in a the Customs Act, making it a cognisable "We are not debating whether Ranya is instructions from seniors. The court, hidden waist belt.

(News Agency)-The Directorate reserved its order for March 14.

which was hearing Ranya's bail petition, DRI ON VIP AIRPORT PROTOCOLS

The DRI has alleged that Ranya exploited through the 'Green Channel' with the help Investigators have claimed that a state customs duty. protocol officer would go to the He said the actor, who starred in three immigration and pick up the actor's films, hid the gold bars in her jeans, waist, luggage for fast-track security clearance. and shoes, and even taped them to her This way, she would skip frisking at the thigh using a medical bandage. airport after landing. The police officer The prosecutor asserted that the DRI did admitted before DRI officials that they not violate the actor's freedom in any way provided the protocol based on and a detailed explanation of the grounds instructions from department authorities. of her arrest and the necessity of the Hence, they admitted to granting protocol arrest was provided. The DRI claimed in this case," Special Public Prosecutor that Ranya used various links for (SPP) Madhu Rao, representing the DRI, smuggling and operated through hawala told the court. The Karnataka government channels. has also launched a separate probe into The DRI further contended that the actor whether Ranya's stepfather, K could flee the country and influence the Ramachandra Rao, an IPS officer and witnesses if granted bail. current DGP, had any role in the RANYA RAO'S ARGUMENTS and non-bailable offence. The prosecutor guilty or not. But procedural violations by

VIP airport protocols meant for senior of a protocol officer instead of the 'Red officials to bypass security checks. Channel', indicating an intent to evade

incident.During the hearing, the The DRI's response came after senior prosecutor opposed the bail plea, saying advocate Kiran Javali, appearing for evasion of customs duty exceeding Rs Ranya, claimed that the agency did not 50 lakh was a serious offence. He said it state the "grounds of arrest" in violation

further said Ranya exited the airport investigators warrant bail," Javali said.

Hyderabad police issue restrictions on Holi celebrations in city

Hyderabad City Police issued guidelines to the public for celebrating Holi in the city, to ensure public safety and prevent disturbances. As per the notification, putting colour or throwing water on unwilling individuals was strictly prohibited.

(News Agency)-The

Hyderabad City Police issued strict guidelines ahead of the Holi festival on March 14 to ensure public safety and prevent disturbances.

As per the notification, throwing colours or water on unwilling individuals, smearing colours on vehicles or public spaces without consent, and group vehicle movements that disrupt public order are strictly prohibited. The order issued on March 11, 2025, by City's Commissioner of Police CV Anand, said the order will be in effect from 6 pm on March 13, 2025, to 6 am on March 15, 2025. The prohibitive guidelines were issued under Section 22 of the Hyderabad City Police Act, which empowers the police offences such as abetting opposition or "Ever since the Congress government because the eighth Nizam was KCR commissioner to issue orders regarding refusal to follow a direction, and violating came into power in Telangana, Hindu (former chief minister K Chandrasekhar procession and assembly conduct, routes, times, preventing obstructions, maintaining order, etc, for the preservation of peace to the guidelines to ensure a safe and said. Singh criticised the restrictions on Holi on Hindu festivals," the BJP MLA said.



and public safety. Violators will face legal peaceful Holi celebration. BJP MLA from action under Section 76 of the Hyderabad Goshamahal, T Raja Singh, tore into the prohibitory orders, with varying

celebrations, calling the government biased against Hindus.Previously, the Telangana government had prohibited immersions of Lord Ganesh idols in Hyderabad lake, and issued restrictive guidelines regarding Diwali celebrations as well.Raja Singh argued that similar restrictions were not imposed during Ramadan, despite large gatherings and late-night activities.Raja Singh accused the Congress-led government and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of being anti-Hindu and compared him to the Nizams. "This is what the Congress is trying to tell today and our Telangana state's Chief Minister says that City Police Act, 1348 Fasli, which addresses Congress-led government in Telangana. I am not the eighth but the ninth Nizam temples have been attacked. Attempts are Rao) .. and Nizam's habit was known to be punishments. The public is urged to adhere being made to ban Hindu festivals," he torturing Hindus, his job was to put a brake

Friday 14 March to 20 March 2025

INDIA CURRENT AFFAIRS

Lithuanian man wanted in US for crypto laundering case arrested in Kerala

(News Agency) - The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Kerala Police arrested a Lithuanian national wanted by the United States for allegedly operating cryptocurrency exchange Garantex to launder illicit funds, officials said Wednesday.

Aleksej Besciokov was apprehended while allegedly planning to escape from India. According to documents from the US Secret Service, he controlled and operated Garantex between 2019 and 2025, facilitating cryptocurrency transactions of at least USD 96 billion, linked to transnational criminal organisations, including terrorist groups.



victims," the

documents US sanctions.He faces multiple millions in criminal proceeds and was primary technical administrator, to commit money laundering (20-year of their action against the exchange. drug trafficking, often impacting US continued operation despite violating Emergency Powers Act (20-year Eastern District of Virginia.

maximum sentence), conspiracy to operate an unlicensed moneytransmitting business (5-year maximum sentence). The Ministry of External Affairs, acting on a US request under the Extradition Act, 1962, obtained a provisional arrest warrant from a Delhi court on March 10. The CBI's Interpol Coordination Unit (IPCU) coordinated with Kerala Police for Besciokov's arrest, and he will be produced before the Patiala House Court in Delhi, officials said.Meanwhile, the US Secret Service seized three domain names used to support Garantex's operations on March 6, following an order from a judge in Virginia. US authorities also "Garantex received hundreds of stated. Besciokov, the platform's charges in the US, including conspiracy froze 26 million dollars in funds as part used to facilitate crimes such as allegedly oversaw its infrastructure, maximum sentence), conspiracy to Besciokov is wanted for trial before the hacking, ransomware, terrorism, and reviewed transactions, and ensured its violate the International Economic United States District Court for the

The twists in Ranya Rao gold smuggling case and unanswered questions



smuggling case involving Kannada actor DRI sources said that Ranya travelled Ranya Rao have been nothing short of to Dubai 27 times in the past year, four a heist potboiler, with twists and times within just 15 days, allegedly inconsistencies in her statements to the investigators leaving several unanswered questions. While it has CLAIM been 10 days since Ranya, the daughter Another clinching evidence for the DRI of a senior cop, was arrested with gold that she was involved in smuggling smuggling racket. The CBI has also KARNATAKA WITHDRAWS CID bars worth Rs 12.56 crore at the activities previously was her declaration probing if there are international links PROBE INTO POLICE ROLE Bengaluru airport, the cops are yet to zero in on the mastermind and the larger smuggling racket.

GOLD FOR FIRST TIME

(DRI) that it was the first time she Geneva. However, her travel history bought crepe bandages and scissors after issuing it? smuggled gold from Dubai is among the showed that she landed in India. She has from the airport and attached the gold With the case taking a new turn each intrigue to the case. However, the actor to the DRI.CONFESSES, THEN hid the gold in her jeans and shoes. was already under the radar of the DRI CLAIMS SHE WAS TRAPPED

The details emerging in the gold due to her frequent trips abroad.

smuggling kilos of gold on each trip. **DUBAI CUSTOMS RECORDS BUST**

at the Dubai Customs in November and December last year.

Records show Ranya purchased gold in YOUTUBE VIDEOS'

"trapped".

travels were for photography and real I smuggled gold from Dubai to received instructions from seniors. statement.

unknowingly caught in the gold the case. to the smuggling racket.

Interestingly, the gold bars were found of the closet in the coming days.

Moreover, in her very statement to the concealed in a jacket that had secret DRI, the actor confessed to smuggling pockets designed to avoid detection. gold and said she travelled to Europe, This indicates a well-prepared plan to America and the Middle East also. smuggle gold and busts Ranya's claim However, since then, the actor has been of learning to hide gold through videos. cagey and claimed that she was THE AIRPORT PROTOCOL OFFICER **MYSTERY**

While Ranya has not revealed the name Mystery shrouds who ordered the of who "trapped" her, she told the sleuths protocol officer to help Ranya dodge that she had been receiving calls from security checks at the Bengaluru airport. unknown foreign numbers for the past On Wednesday, the DRI told a two weeks. She also said her frequent Bengaluru court that the protocol officer, who helps fast-track the immigration estate business."This was the first time process for VIPs, admitted that he

Bengaluru. I have never brought or This indicates the involvement of the purchased gold from Dubai before... The Karnataka police department. The DRI caller had an African-American has not revealed who was the "senior" accent," she said in her latest who ordered the protocol officer to help Ranya. The development has spurred However, the question remains if the an investigation into the role of Ranya's actor was an active participant or got stepfather, DGP Ramachandra Rao, in

The same day DRI made the disclosure 'LEARNT TO HIDE GOLD FROM in court, the Karnataka government withdrew the CID probe into the state RANYA RAO SAYS SHE SMUGGLED Dubai twice, on November 13 and Ranya also declared that she learnt to police's alleged misuse of privileges and December 20 and declared to the hide the gold bars from YouTube videos allegations of lapses on the part of the The actor's latest statement to the customs department there that she - another statement that has raised department. But, why did the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence would be travelling to Switzerland's eyebrows. Ranya claimed that she government withdraw its order a day

several inconsistencies that have added failed to explain the source of the gold bars to her body in a restroom. She also day with fresh developments, authorities suspect more skeletons will tumble out **INDIA CURRENT AFFAIRS**

Ajit Doval to chair meeting with world's top intelligence chiefs on March 16

(News Agency)- National Security Advisor Ajit Doval will chair a conference hosted by India on March 16, which is expected to discuss ways to enhance intelligence sharing to combat terrorism and various transnational crimes.

Intelligence chiefs from the US, Australia, Germany, New Zealand and several other friendly countries of India are also expected to attend the meeting to be held in New Delhi. The Security and Intelligence Chiefs' Conference is expected to bring together heads and deputy heads of intelligence and security organisations from around 20 countries. US National Intelligence Director Tulsi



Richard Moore will be among top global conference. Apart from attending the Gabbard, Canadian intelligence chief intelligence chiefs gathering in India this Intelligence Chiefs' Conference, Tulsi between the two countries in the Indo-Daniel Rogers and Britain's MI6 chief weekend to attend a security Gabbard will address the Raisina Pacific region.

Dialogue and hold a one-on-one meeting with NSA Doval. It is learnt that the US Intelligence Chief will visit India on March 15 after concluding her trip to Thailand. In their deliberations, the intelligence chiefs are also expected to focus on various global challenges, including the implications of the Russia-Ukraine war and conflicts in West Asia. Ways to tackle crimes in the digital space are also likely to be discussed.

NSA Doval is also expected to hold oneon-one meetings with his counterparts from several key countries during the conference. In meetings with Indian interlocutors, Gabbard is also likely to discuss the need to enhance cooperation

Scientist dies in Punjab after neighbour assaults him during parking dispute



(News Agency)-A scientist who eventually leading to his death. worked at the Indian Institute of Science In the CCTV video, some residents of the Education and Research (IISER) in Mohali region could be seen standing near a bike.

has died after a parking dispute outside Swarnkar then walks to the two-wheeler Swarnkar's family and neighbours are action based on the CCTV footage. Mohali on Wednesday.

his rented home. A CCTV footage of the and following a chat, removes it from the furious about the incident, and have incident has emerged that shows the spot. Within a few seconds, a fight breaks demanded strict punishment against the victim, Abhishek Swarnkar, engaged in a out between one of the residents and the accused. Senior police officer Gagandeep verbal spat with a neighbour who then scientist. A neighbour pins Swarnkar to the Singh told India Today that a case under pushes him to the ground and thrashes ground and starts beating him. Both their Section 105 (culpable homicide not him.According to information, Swarnkar families immediately intervene, but the amounting to murder) under Bharatiya was from Bengal and had recently scientist struggles to stand and collapses Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 has been registered undergone a kidney transplant. He was also on the ground. Soon after, several other against the accused. The accused on dialysis. Following the clash on Tuesday, neighbours step out and assemble near neighbour has been missing since the his condition reportedly deteriorated, the area, surrounding the scientist who incident and efforts are on to arrest remains motionless on the road. The police him. Swarnkar's postmortem will be are investigating the matter and will take conducted today after his family arrived in

Blade, worms found in food at Hyderabad university hostel, students stage protest

Godavari Hostel at Hyderabad's that worms and foreign objects were on Tuesday arrested three individuals Mayur Vihar Phase III in Delhi, Uvaish Osmania University staged a protest frequently found in their food, but the involved in a Rs 4 crore scam, where Ahmed (19) from Etah in Uttar Pradesh after allegedly finding a blade and authorities turned a blind eye to their fraudsters impersonated Union Home and Gaurav Nath (19) from Delhi's worms in their food. The students complaints. The protesting students Minister Amit Shah's son to offer blocked the university's main road, raised



issues. According to the students, the canteen staff would apologise, saying it March 11 at around 8.29 am, three of the state's legislators received calls authorities haven't taken any action would not be repeated, but that wasn't accused persons were brought from from a person who allegedly identified despite them complaining to them the case. The students demanded Dehradun via Delhi by Imphal police led himself as Union Home Minister Amit repeatedly about the poor quality of food immediate action to improve the quality by Sub-Inspector Farooque Sheikh on Shah's son Jay Shah, and offered them there. This incident occurred on of food and threatened to continue their an Indigo flight in connection with the ministerial positions for a sum of Rs 4 Tuesday night after students found a protest until their demands are met.

(News Agency)-Students of blade in their meal. The students alleged slogans against

administration, and demanded Among the targets was speaker justice. They alleged that the Thokchom university was playing with their accused were brought to Imphal lives, and wanted the Vice from Delhi on Tuesday morning. Chancellor to meet them and An FIR has been registered, and address their issues.

student had previously found glass 319(2) for impersonation, of the pieces in the food. He said that Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita in their Ghariapur. After the President's Rule was

3 arrested in Manipur for posing as Amit Shah's son, duping MLAs with fake offers

the fake ministerial posts to MLAs. Satyabrata.The the police have invoked Sections A protester alleged that another 318(4) for cheating and fraud, and

case. The three fraudsters have been crore each, police said.

(News Agency)- Manipur Police identified as Priyanshu Pant (19) from



demanding that the varsity address their whenever they raised the issue, the investigation. According to the police, on imposed in Manipur last month, several

INDIA CURRENT AFFAIRS

Siddaramiah accused of influencing Muda probe, complaint against 3 IPS officers

IPS officers Lokayukta ADGP Manish Karbikar, IGP Subramanyeshwar Rao and Mysuru Lokayukta SP Udesh have been accused of submitting a false report to shield Siddaramaiah.

(News Agency)-A Right to Information (RTI) activist, who is the chief complainant and whistleblower in the alleged Mysore Urban Development Authority (Muda) scam, has accused three senior Karnataka IPS officers of assisting Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the case, whose wife BM Parvathi is an accused in the case.

Activist Snehamayi Krishna has filed a formal complaint against IPS officers, Lokayukta ADGP Manish Karbikar, IGP Subramanyeshwar Rao and Mysuru Lokayukta SP Udesh, accusing them of submitting false report to а Siddaramaiah.

Despite substantial evidence, there large amount of evidence had been scam, intensifying demands for an court dismissed the plea on Februare allegations that the accused are destroyed during the course of the independent probe into the case. being protected, raising concerns investigation.



shield he alleged in the complaint. In the let-ficers deliberately misrepresented leging irregularities in the allotment ter, the petitioner also alleged that a facts to protect those involved in the of 14 plots to Parvathi. However, the

about political influence in the case, The complaint alleges that these of- Karnataka High Court quashed the vestigation by the Lokayukta.

Enforcement Directorate (ED) summons issued to his Siddaramaiah's. BM Parvathi, and Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh in connection with the Muda land allotment case.

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The RTI activist, who originally complained in the case, had moved the High Court, seeking a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Snehamavi Krishna had approached the Karnataka High Court earlier with a writ petition demanding the transfer of the case from the state ombudsman Lokayukta to the CBI, alary 7, ruling that there was no evi-This came just days after the dence to suggest bias or shoddy in-

Astra, Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile, test-fired onboard LCA Tejas

The ASTRA missile is designed and developed by the Defence and Research Development Organisation (DRDO), capable of engaging targets over 100km.

(News Agency) -In a significant boost to the Air Force's striking capabilities, the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) has successfully conducted a testlaunch of the homegrown ASTRA Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM) from a Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) AF MK1 prototype fighter plane, a government statement said.

Being a Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile means it can hit targets beyond a fighter pilot can see.

The test launch was carried out on Wednesday off the coast of Chandipur in Odisha. The test-firing successfully demonstrated the direct hit of the missile on a flying target.

All the subsystems performed



accurately, meeting all mis- the Defence and Research equipped with advanced greater accuracy. The missile appreciated the efforts of scision parameters and objec- Development Organisation guidance and navigation ca- is already inducted into the entists, engineers and technitives. The ASTRA missile is (DRDO), capable of engaging pabilities, allows the missile Air Force. designed and developed by targets over 100km and, to destroy targets with The successful test-firing is a organisations and industries.

significant milestone towards the induction of the LCA AF MK1A variant.

The test fire is the result of hard work by the integrated team of scientists, engineers and technicians from the ADA, the DRDO, and the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), along with support from CEMILAC, DG-AQA, IAF & Test range team, the statement added.

Further trials are planned for the performance evaluation. After the successful test fire of ASTRA, Defence Minister Rainath Singh congratulated the teams of DRDO, Air Force, ADA, HAL and all the agencies who made the trial possible.

Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Dr Samir V Kamat also cians from various

NSIDER

Jailed Punjab MP Amritpal Singh granted leave of absence: Centre to High Court



Sabha granted a 54-day leave Wednesday.

(News Agency) Lok informed by the Centre on

of absence to jailed Punjab MP A bench of Chief Justice Sheel from November 25, 2024 to Punjab's Khadoor Sahib. Amritpal Singh, the Punjab and Nagu and Justice Sumeet Goel December 20, 2024. Haryana High Court was was informed by Additional Singh's counsel, he said, had denied the constitutional right parliamentary sittings.

advocate Dheeraj Jain, about session. the development.

Dibrugarh Jail under the Development Security National formed to examine the leave applications of recommended the cases of five court, Amritpal had said even a absence from its sessions for MPs including Singh, to be Member of Parliament under 60 days in terms of Article placed on the floor of the house preventive detention had the 101 of the Constitution, in Lok Sabha on March 10. Jain said on March 11, Singh sessions under the Constitution. The petitioner said on

was granted the 54-day leave Singh contested last year's November 30 last year, he had of absence from June 24, 2024 parliamentary polls as an requested the Lok Sabha to July 2, 2024, from July 22, independent candidate and was speaker to allow him to attend 2024 to August 9, 2024 and elected to the Lok Sabha from Parliament sessions and was

Solicitor General Satya Pal withdrawn the request to allow and being forced to absent from Jain, who was appearing with him to attend the Lok Sabha the parliamentary proceedings

Singh, a radical Sikh leader, is officials regarding the Members unrepresented. His plea argued currently lodged in Assam's of Parliament Local Area the ploy was to get his seat vacant Act (MPLADS), Jain said the court serious consequences for (NSA).Advocate Dheeraj Jain gave him the liberty to make his him and his constituency of said a 13-member committee, representation before the nearly 19 lakh people. An MP appropriate authorities.

right to attend the house Singh said.

with a "malicious intent" so that On Singh's plea to meet his Lok Sabha constituency went Scheme post 60 days of absence, having loses his membership of MPs, In his petition before the high Parliament upon continuous

> informed that he had been Singh claimed of having been absent for 46 days from the

PM announces Mahasagar vision with Mauritius for maritime security, trade



Mauritian Navinchandra Ramgoolam, PM announced a raft of development the two countries. Modi announced India's new projects for the strategicallyvision for Global South and located country. named it Mutual and Holistic Following talks with his Mauritian Advancement for Security and counterpart Navinchandra Growth Across Regions.

India and Mauritius on India's new vision for Global Wednesday elevated their ties to South 'enhanced strategic partnership' "MAHASAGAR" or "Mutual and and inked eight pacts to boost Holistic Advancement for ties in several sectors, including Security and Growth Across maritime security, and promote Regions", a policy approach that trade in local currencies, even as came against the backdrop of sides will enhance maritime the spirit of trade for replacement of water pipelines Prime Minister Narendra Modi China's relentless attempts to cooperation through increasing development, capacity building in Mauritius. This line of credit unveiled an ambitious vision for expand its influence in the Indian deployment of ships and aircraft for sustainable growth, and has been extended by the State growth and security of the Global Ocean."We are committed to for joint maritime surveillance mutual security for a shared Bank of India, and it is the first South.

graced the national day minister said.

Following talks with his celebrations of the island nation counterpart as the chief guest and

Ramgoolam, Modi announced and named it extend full cooperation in the and hydrographic surveys. On the second and final day of security of Mauritius' Exclusive It said the two leaders also "Under this, cooperation will be Credit that's being extended by

augmenting its defence and Agalega. security needs given the shared The the region.

secure, and safe Indian Ocean Mauritius in 2015 New Delhi's and enhancing cooperation in is the common priority of India SAGAR or Security and Growth the MSME (Micro, Small and and Mauritius and that he and for All in the Region policy that Medium Enterprises) sector. Ramgoolam agreed that defence formed the bedrock for India's In his remarks, Ramgoolam said cooperation and maritime engagement with the Indian Mauritius continues to benefit security are an important part of Ocean Region. the strategic partnership between

Joint Vision for an Enhanced Strategic Partnership' that outlined the futuristic approach expanding bilateral in cooperation in a range of areas including in defence and maritime security, trade, health and education, and space and climate change.

The document noted that the two

his two-day trip to Mauritius, Modi Economic Zone," the prime resolved to deepen cooperation ensured through technology New Delhi to any country, he

In the meeting, Modi reiterated Mauritius, including through grants," Modi said. India's continued support and enhanced utilisation of newly The agreements inked after assistance to Mauritius in built runway and jetty at Modi- Ramgoolam talks will

objectives of the two nations in 'MAHASAGAR' vision came 10 border transactions, sharing of years after the prime minister maritime data, joint work in The PM said a free, open, announced during his visit to combating money laundering

"We have taken the SAGAR socio-economic development, vision forward for the stability adding the two sides will The two sides also unveiled a and prosperity of this entire continue to reinforce trade region. Today, taking it forward, relations I would like to say that our vision Comprehensive Economic for the Global South will be, Cooperation and Partnership beyond SAGAR -- (it will be) Agreement (CECPA). MAHASAGAR that is"Mutual At a media briefing, Foreign and Holistic Advancement for Secretary Vikram Misri said an statement.

future, he said.

towards securing EEZ of sharing, concessional loans and said.

provide for promoting use of unveiling of the national currencies for cross-

from Indian assistance for its through the

Security and Growth Across agreement was inked on an Regions", Modi said in his media Indian rupee-denominated line of credit amounting to Rs 487 The new approach will focus on crore for undertaking the ever Indian rupee-based Line of

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US AND THE WORLD

Kremlin awaits US briefing on Ukraine talks before deciding on proposed ceasefire

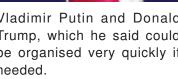
Russia said it needed a briefing from the US before commenting on a proposed 30-day ceasefire in Ukraine, which was accepted by Kyiv and taken to Russia by Washington.

(News Agency)-The Kremlin said on Wednesday it needed to be briefed by the United States on the outcome of US-Ukrainian talks in Saudi Arabia before it would comment on whether a proposed ceasefire was acceptable to Russia.

After more than eight hours of talks with Ukrainian officials in Jeddah on Tuesday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the US would take an offer of a 30-day ceasefire in Ukraine, accepted by Ukrainian officials, to Russia. The United States also agreed to resume military aid and intelligence sharing with spokesman Dmitry Peskov Vladimir Putin and Donald would need to hash out the injured, displaced millions of Ukraine after suspending them and opening waiting for a briefing from be organised very quickly if get some sort of guarantees. biggest up bilateral talks with Russia Washington. He did not rule needed. in a reversal of longstanding out the possibility of a phone A senior Russian source told agree to this in its current West since the 1962 Cuban



earlier told reporters Russia was Trump, which he said could terms of any ceasefire and people and triggered the



US policy on Ukraine.Kremlin call between presidents Reuters earlier that Russia form," the source, who spoke Missile Crisis.

on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation, told Reuters. "Putin has a strong position because Russia is advancing".

10

Russia controls just under a fifth of Ukraine, about 113,000 square km and has been edging forward for months. Ukraine seized a sliver of western Russia in August as a bargaining chip but its grip there is weakening, according to open source maps of the war and Russian estimates.

Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine has left hundreds of thousands of dead and confrontation "It is difficult for Putin to between Moscow and the

Russia lays out demands for Ukraine ceasefire as US team en route for talks

It is not clear what exactly Moscow included on its list or whether it is willing to engage in peace talks with Kyiv prior to their acceptance. Russian and American officials discussed the terms during inperson and virtual conversations over the last three weeks.



Russia has presented whether it is willing to engage in

the US with a list of demands for peace talks with Kyiv prior to their

terms as broad and similar to be finalized. and international recognition of undermine any talks. belong to Russia.

demanded the US and NATO comment. expansion.

awaiting word from Putin on a potential 30-day ceasefire with former US officials. whether he will agree to a 30-day Russia could be used to draft a The effort failed and Russia truce that Ukrainian President broader peace deal. a deal to end its war against acceptance. Russian and Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Moscow has raised many of US and Russian officials in Ukraine and reset relations with American officials discussed the Tuesday he would accept as a these same demands over the recent weeks have said that a Washington, according to two terms during in-person and first step toward peace last two decades, some making draft agreement discussed by people familiar with the matter. virtual conversations over the talks. Putin's commitment to a their way into formal negotiations Washington, Kyiv and Moscow It is not clear what exactly last three weeks, the people said. potential ceasefire agreement is with the US and Europe. Moscow included on its list or They described the Kremlin's still uncertain, with details yet to Most recently, Moscow discussed starting point for peace talks.

demands it previously has Some US officials, lawmakers administration in a series of presented to Ukraine, the US and and experts fear that Putin, a meetings in late 2021 and early NATO. Those earlier terms former KGB officer, would use a 2022 as tens of thousands of included no NATO membership truce to intensify what they say Russian troops sat on Ukraine's for Kyiv, an agreement not to is an effort to divide the US, border, awaiting the order to deploy foreign troops in Ukraine Ukraine and Europe and invade.

that Crimea and four provinces Washington and the White military operations from Eastern House did not immediately Europe to Central Asia. Russia, in recent years, also has respond to a request for While rejecting some of the

"root causes" of the war, Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed this by engaging with Russia on including NATO's eastward week's meeting in Saudi Arabia several of them, according to US between US and Ukrainian US President Donald Trump is officials as constructive, and said

them with the Biden

They included demands that President Vladimir Putin's claim The Russian embassy in would constrain US and NATO

terms, the Biden administration address what it has called the In Kyiv, Ukrainian President sought to forestall the invasion government documents reviewed by Reuters and multiple

> attacked on February 24, 2022. in Istanbul in 2022 could be a

SOUTH ASIA

Pak says train siege is over: Hostages freed, 30 insurgents, 28 soldiers killed

The Pakistan Army said all 33 Baloch insurgents who hijacked a train in Balochistan have been eliminated, and all the hostages were freed after an intense military operation.

All the Baloch insurgents who hijacked a train and held 212 passengers hostage in Pakistan's restive Balochistan have been killed, and the captives have been released after a day-long intense military operation, ending the siege, the Pakistan Army said on Wednesday evening.

Twenty-one passengers and four paramilitary soldiers were killed by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) while the security forces eliminated all 33 insurgents present at the scene, the Army spokesman told local media.

"The armed forces successfully concluded the operation in the (Wednesday) evening by killing all terrorists and rescuing all passengers police, and spy agency ISI. The Jaffar Authorities have said that the rescued safely," Lt Gen Ahmad Sharif said. The Express, carrying around 500 passengers individuals include women and children, Baloch insurgent attacks on Pakistani Army's statement came shortly after the in nine coaches, was targeted on Tuesday whom the insurgents were using as security forces, this was the first time they insurgents claimed to have killed 60 with explosives, derailed, and hijacked human shields. Officials earlier stated targetted a passenger train. The attack hostages and threatened to execute more by the BLA in mountainous terrain, about that the insurgents, wearing vests loaded came days after various resistance groups, if the military operation does not cease. 160 km from Quetta, while the train was with explosives, had grouped women and advocating for Balochistan's independence They had been demanding the release en route to Peshawar. A multi-pronged children together and forced them to sit from Pakistan, announced a new of Baloch prisoners in exchange for the assault, including an aerial offensive, was nearby, making the rescue operation intensified offensive against Pakistan and hostages, whom they claimed were launched against the insurgents following difficult." The rescue operation continued China and launched a unified outfit members of Pakistan's security forces, the train attack.



periodically, and in the final clearance named the Baloch National Army.

operation in the evening, all remaining hostages were secured. Since the terrorists were using passengers as human shields, the operation was conducted with extreme precision and caution," he told Dunya News.

NSIDER 11

The rescued passengers were being sent to their hometowns, and the injured were being treated at hospitals in the Mach district. Security officials who spoke to news agency Associated Press said over 300 hostages were rescued as the operation had concluded.

The Chief Minister of Balochistan province, Sarfraz Bugti, informed the provincial assembly that "we people have also been martyred, but we will share details later". Though there had been a spate of

Pakistan's Balochistan policy is a train wreck



(News Agency)-The but with little success.

took around 200 passengers not met. number at 500).

Baloch pro-independence Fierce resistance by the Baloch game mounting complex militant group, the Balochistan has forced the Pakistan army to attacks, improving coordination Liberation Army (BLA), has withdraw. The militants have across vast once again carried out an demanded the release of restructuring audacious attack in the most Baloch political prisoners from organisational setup, and restive province of Pakistan. Pakistani prisons and have enhancing the lethality of their Baloch freedom fighters threatened to execute the operations to inflict maximum hijacked the Jaffar Express and hostages if their demands are damage, both physical and

struggle in Balochistan, where train like the Jaffar Express has The militants claim that many the predominantly Punjabi been targeted, unlike in the past of the hostages are either Pakistan army's brutalities when either a track would be Pakistani security personnel against innocent Baloch citizens blown up or there would be firing (Pakistan army), government are now being paid back in the on the train this time, the entire employees, or Punjabi settlers. same coin, it would not be train was hijacked. In and of At the time of writing, Pakistani surprising if the Baloch itself, this incident is emblematic authorities had reportedly separatists follow through on of the growing prowess of the launched a rescue operation, their threat. After all, the Baloch Baloch insurgents.

fighters are on a death mission with nothing to lose.

This stand-off will end at some point, but the war for Balochistan's liberation from Pakistan's voke is unlikely to end anytime soon. If anything, its intensity, ferocity, and audacity continue to grow.

Baloch militancy evolves rapidly Baloch groups are upping their geography. their psychological, on their enemy. hostage (some claims put the Given the history of a bloody While this isn't the first time a

Why is Yogi Adityanath trending in Nepal?



the border in Nepal, a political January as well. earthquake is brewing, and Supporters, including leaders monarchy, and apparently, some former king. people in Nepal are seeing that However, certain political had met Yogi Adityanath during the rally.

(News Agency)-Across his visit to Uttar Pradesh in

somehow, posters of Uttar and members of the pro-Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi monarchist Rastriya Prajatantra Adityanath are right in the middle Party (RPP), chanted slogans in of it.A pro-monarchist rally was the former king's favour, news organised in Kathmandu to greet agency PTI reports. During the Nepal's former king Gyanendra rally, which was intended to Shah on March 10. And smack demonstrate support for the dab in the middle of it? Massive reinstatement of the monarchy images of Adityanath. Why? in Nepal, some loyalists Because Adityanath has been a allegedly held up photographs of ocal supporter of Nepal's Adityanath alongside that of the

as a sign that India is keeping factions criticised the inclusion an eye. Gyanendra Shah, in fact, of Adityanath's images during

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EDITORIAL

We can't know if Vladimir Putin will accept a ceasefire in Ukraine. But this is what he'll be thinking

important to be clear-sighted. The US-Ukraine meeting in Jeddah was a damage-control operation. Both parties reset relations that had been damaged, largely by Washington's impatience. The US reversed its previous decisions in exchange for something Ukraine was ready to provide anyway: privileged access to Ukraine's natural resource wealth and a willingness to start a peace process.

It is encouraging to see renewed US-Ukraine dialogue to end the war. As Churchill said, the only thing worse than fighting with allies is fighting without them. The public mugging in the Oval Office, calling Volodymyr Zelenskyy a dictator and the pause in military and intelligence support were hard to fathom. Ukrainians wondered why President Trump was putting the blame and the pressure on the victim, and protecting the aggressor. Trump's "beautiful" deal involved bullying the weaker and reassuring the stronger. He finds it more natural to put pressure on allies, be it Ukraine or Canada, and relax it on adversaries.

This week's meeting in Jeddah may have been an effort by the White House to re-balance the pressure scale and expose Vladimir Putin's real intentions. By the beginning of this week the US had lifted the pause on intelligencesharing and resumed security assistance. This intelligence is critical for defending Ukrainian cities from the nightly aerial bombings. US satellite images and communication systems sustain several targeting and airdefence platforms. The night the delegations met in Saudi Arabia, the port of Odesa was hit, killing four people in a strike on a grain vessel. Ukraine is waging a defensive war and perhaps the White House has understood that the best leverage over Putin is powerful and well-equipped Ukrainian armed forces. Nobody wants peace more than Ukraine. When President Trump was accusing Zelenskyy of not wanting peace, it must have pleased the Kremlin immensely. Trump was reciting Russian talking points. The US-Ukraine meeting dispelled that falsehood and demonstrated Kyiv's constructive and cooperative position. The joint statement points out that "Ukraine expressed a readiness to accept the US proposal to enact an immediate, interim 30-day ceasefire, which can be extended by mutual agreement of the parties, and which is subject to acceptance and concurrent implementation by the Russian Federation".

So what will be Putin's move? I think his agreement on a ceasefire will be

At this stage of the crisis, it is driven by two factors: whether his country can stay in the fight for much longer and the terms of the arrangement imposed on Ukraine. Putin may decide that the cost of losing a seat at the superpower table with the US president outweighs any benefits of conquering a few more villages in eastern Ukraine. Putin may, therefore, settle for a ceasefire that secures his interim gains: he gets his "grey zone" with a weakened Ukraine outside Nato and an unresolved war that can be reignited at any time. This would mean Ukraine would need to continue to spend a huge portion of its national budget on defence, straining its economy and struggling to deliver on the EU integration agenda. Putin, meanwhile, gets a secure "land bridge" connecting Crimea to Russia via the coast of the Azov Sea.

> A ceasefire would bring Russia muchneeded economic relief and buy time for a military reconstitution. Given Ukraine's persistent destruction of Russian oil refineries, it will need time to rebuild those too. For this, the lifting of energyrelated western sanctions will be key to get new equipment in. And a pause allows for regrouping of manpower, since Ukraine has killed or wounded nearly 80% of the ground troops that Russia has mobilised for this war. Russia has struggled to take large chunks of Ukraine because of a deficit of men and equipment.

> The final incentive to pause the war may come from Putin's confidence in his ability to wreck Ukraine from within. Recent US insistence on elections and calls for Zelenskyy to resign are also part of the Kremlin's plans. Putin is determined to destroy Zelesnkyy's government. The grey zone scenario enables the forces of chaos, fuelled by disinformation, to damage prodemocratic parties. The blame for this neither-war-nor-peace situation will fall on Zelenskyy. Issues of war trauma, lack of foreign investment and new outflows of people when travel restrictions are lifted make a ceasefire risky for Ukraine. A ceasefire that doesn't lead to a just settlement will worsen regional security in the long run.Ukraine may not "have all the cards", but nor is it bluffing when it says it will not capitulate to Moscow's demands. Support for Zelenskyy remains high. Despite its own difficulties with military personnel, only 38% of Ukrainians believe Kyiv should agree to relinquish Ukraine's sovereign territory to Russia. This is mainly driven by the understanding that Russia is waging a genocidal war to destroy the Ukrainian nation - 87% of Ukrainians believe Moscow will not stop at the current frontlines.

> > By Orysia Lutsevych

India has tariffs for 3 reasons. One is sheer stupidity

ourselves: is MAGA turning into MIPA? isolationist.India can live with some of Is the progress of Donald Trump's Make this. We can buy American weaponry America Great Again programme and higher-priced oil to keep Trump resulting in Make India Poor Again?It's happy. But this is not going to be enough. the kind of question that the government As Trump has often said, and as Howard does not want us to ask. When the Prime Lutnick, his Commerce Secretary, Minister went to Washington, the Indian repeated while addressing the India state-pleasing media told us what a Today Conclave last week, we have to success his visit was. Piyush Goyal has lower our customs duties (tariffs) to spent several days in America with no match the US'. In effect, this means that good news of substance to report but you if we don't let American goods (which are would not necessarily learn that from the cheaper than ours) into our market with media.

India has told Washington that it is the sold in America world's last bulwark against Chinese 3 reasons for tariffs domination. India also has one of the From no angle does this look good for world's largest markets. So the US should India. While our tariffs have come down help us grow our economy and invest in since the 1991 reforms they are far India to stop China's rise.

governments have persuaded American to protect domestic industry. Two: to raise administrations that this is indeed the revenue. Our current budget assumes case. Total trade between India and the customs revenues of Rs 2.40.000 crore US has doubled in the past decade, to in FY 2026. And three: sheer stupidity. around \$130 billion in 2024. American The stupidity is easy to counteract. Why, firms employ 1.7m people in India and for instance, should we fight with the EU have made substantial investments in our to go on imposing punitive duties on fine economy.But no matter how many Howdy wine when there is no domestic fine wine Modi and Namaste Trump rallies may industry to protect?The revenue have been organised by members of the implications are more worrying. If we Sangh Parivar and their friends, it doesn't reduce tariffs on American goods we will make a difference to Donald Trump.

American revenues-from trade and the the government-which has been sale of expensive defence equipment— desperate enough for money to destroy while simultaneously increasing American the Indian stock market with new Capital jobs. He doesn't care about this 'last Gains tax systems-will be hard-pressed bulwark against China' stuff. He doesn't to find as yet untapped sources of revenue. even care too much about global politics.

At some stage we are going to ask His policies are determinedly very low duties, then Trump will impose The problem is simple enough. For years punitive duties on Indian goods that are

above global norms.

For the most part, successive Indian We impose them for three reasons. One:

have to offer reductions to other trade Trump's platform is based on increasing partners too. Once customs revenues drop, **By VIR SANGHVI**

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How China Is Increasing Surveillance Around India's Borders

By Gunjan Singh

In a recent statement, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi asserted that India and China should "support each other rather than undermine each other or undercut each other", and that they "should work with each other rather than guard against each other". On face value, the statement appears to indicate the positive momentum that India-China relations have witnessed years. The Belt and Road Navy's security challenges, as since October 2024. After a gap Initiative (BRI), which was they can gather confidential data of more than four years since the launched in 2013, has helped on violent 2020 Galwan Clashes, Beijing gain a strong foothold in preparedness. In 2017, the New Delhi and Beijing have the region as it has used its Gwadar Port's day-to-day started to discuss ways to economic prowess in the form operations were also handed proceed ahead with border of loans and aid to gain over to a Chinese state-run patrolling and disengagement. leverage. A number of South company for 40 years. China has With this, China has also Asian countries are facing major also sent a number of continued to reiterate that the debt challenges as a result of border issue should not be the that. central point to base the direction Sri Lanka And Maldives of the bilateral relations. Even The first casualty was the well. The strong tilt of Male a Large Phased Array Radar can be literally translated as though Beijing calls for "trust" and leasing of the Hambantota Port towards Beijing under the (LPAR) in Yunnan province and 'remote sensing'. This coupled not guarding "against each by Sri Lanka to China in 2017 Muizzu government is a cause near the Myanmar border, which with its other satellite systems, other", it has continued to for a period of 99 years. This has of concern for India. Chinese has a monitoring range of 5,000 like Gaofen and Shiyan, undertake reconnaissance and monitoring woes. China has also used its Male. Recent talks between with access to a large tract of capability to track even car-sized exercises.

Chinese efforts to gain influence to let its spy ships and vessels involved discussions about keep tabs on missile and other Oceans. As per reports, Beijing and access, especially in the dock there under the garb of installing fish aggregating air force movements. It is has a total of 245 operational South Asian region, have grown research. These vehicles have devices (FADs) in the Indian believed that this radar has the reconnaissance satellites, while



movement and submarines to the region.

one of the most advanced off the coast of Odisha. The research vessels in China, also island is used primarily for the visited Maldives.

It was during a 2015 visit to intercontinental missile, and of Mauritius that the Indian Prime the K4 submarine-launched Minister had envisioned the idea missiles. Both these things of Security and Growth for all in compromise India's security the Region (SAGAR). Years preparedness as they help later, as the Prime Minister visits Beijing monitor every possible the island nation on March 11- move undertaken by New Delhi. 12, New Delhi is set to conclude India, meanwhile, has been in MoUs that will help India in talks with Moscow to receive the sharing information and counter growing range of 8,000 kilometres, a step Chinese inroads. India has also that will enhance India's security been working towards apparatus. strengthening its Lakshadweep It is not only land and sea; the Islands and has established the Chinese space reconnaissance INS Jatayu base, on Minicoy, the system southernmost archipelago. The LPAR In Yunnan

New Delhi faces a similar Apart from oceans, China, as per challenge from the Maldives as reports, also recently deployed Yaogan satellites so far. Yaogan surveillance, intensified New Delhi's security ships have continued to dock in kilometres. This provides Beijing provides China with the economic clout over Sri Lanka China and Maldives also Indian land, which will help it objects in the Indian and Pacific consistently over the last few consistently added to the Indian Ocean Region. In early 2024, capacity to detect missile tests New Delhi has just 26.

Xiang Yang Hong 03, which is conducted at Abdul Kalam Island launch of Agni V, an white-shipping Voronezh radar system with a

> is also auite sophisticated. Beijing had started this programme in 2006 and has launched more than 140

nina is waiting for Trump to falter—and step up to lead the world order

By SANA HASHMI

India has become a focal point in Chinese diplomacy, shaped by both conflict and the necessity of managing bilateral ties. During the press conference at the Third Session of the 14th National People's Congress last week, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi used the metaphor of "dancing with dragons and elephants" to emphasise that cooperation is the only viable path forward.Wang's tone reflected cautious optimism toward India, broader effort to engage New titled Dealing with the Trump positioning it as a key player with shared responsibilities in challenging hegemonism and upholding international norms. He suggested that a China-India partnership could foster a more democratic global order accelerate and regional development. Wang Yi's remarks Trump's role in China's term. In response, he advocates the West. Diao Daming, Deputy Xiang Haoyu of the China Institute also signalled China's response to shifting diplomatic dynamics, While China is refining its resilience, and deeper diplomatic American Research Center, Japan as a case study in this particularly in the wake of US President Donald Trump's "America is shaped by the evolving First" policies, which disrupted the US' alliances network and forced Beijing to recalibrate its strategy.



Delhi, which is often viewed as a Shockwave, analysing the impact counterbalance to Beijing. By of Trump's policies on China. emphasising cooperation, China Jin Canrong, a professor at aims to stabilise bilateral ties while Renmin University's School of India-US strategic partnership under Trump.

diplomacy

diplomatic approach, much of it ties. He asserts that with China's reasons that in response to the dilemma. By aligning with the US priorities of the US-both as of the US, Trump's policies pose should adopt a more unified global contain Beijing, but if China-US opportunities and challenges. The little real threat. Jin dismisses role, stabilising its course and tensions escalate further, Japan Chinese news and opinion Trump's foreign policy as "babble- leading progress. Similarly, risks becoming collateral This framing aligns with China's website Guancha has a section style"-marked by excessive Shanghai Institute of International damage-a "losing third party".

that confrontation with China will

rhetoric, unpredictability, and a Studies' Zhao Long highlights that lack of long-term strategy. He strengthening ties within the region argues that despite his aggressive remains central to China's tone, Trump's policies lack diplomacy, particularly through consistency and tangible impact major global initiatives and on China's global standing. governance reforms that amplify Though Trump has been in office developing nations' voices. for only a few months, many Meanwhile, Chinese Academy of already view his return as more Social Sciences' Zhao Chen disruptive than his first term's underscores Wang Yi's strategy of shockwaves. Tian Feilong, Vice "seizing the general trend, Dean of Minzu University's Law shouldering great responsibilities, School, reinforces perspective. He contends that of China's great power diplomacy. Trump's policies have weakened That it can bring stability amid US alliances, creating an opening for China to position itself as a stable and cooperative global opportunities leader. China strengthens its own China is also anticipating that US subtly countering the deepening International Relations, argues narrative of ascendance by foreign policy will determine how portraying Trump's leadership as allied nations, particularly US remain central to Trump's second a force that can ultimately weaken partners, position themselves. for strategic composure, domestic Director of Renmin University's of International Studies sees productivity now surpassing that "America First" approach, China against China, Japan hopes to

this and forging ahead" as a reflection global turbulence.

Turning dilemmas into

<%*& What's Vulgar Is Not Always Illegal, Milords!

By Varun Pathak

society, particularly societies that are based on pluralism and diversity. But today, it is being hunted by many on various counts. In India, colonial legacy and laws have shaped the constitutional What is vulgar may not be obscene, discourse on free speech. Article 19(1)(a) though it is only the latter that is is its bedrock and fountain, with the only prohibited in law and is restricted as an restrictions being under Article 19(2), which have to be reasonable and associated with India's sovereignty, integrity, security and friendly relations with foreign states, or with public order, Anr. v. State in its judgement dated decency and morality, or, with contempt of court, defamation or incitement of an vulgar language and profanities does not offence.

Every once in a while, a public incident revolved around a web series, College so occurs that it enrages the masses and kicks off debates on morality, with a language. The Court distinguished special emphasis on regulating speech between vulgarity and obscenity and literary, artistic, political, or scientific Singhal v. Union of India (2015), where on technological platforms, including created a fine balance between the value audio-visual forms. While these debates freedom of expression with societal We live in a digital age where audio- to over-policing of content and are hot, we often forget that there is a standards of decency, particularly in the video stimulus and 'content' is suppression of dissent on the internet. difference between vulgarity and realm of digital media. obscenity. For example, the culture of The Court rejected the outdated 'Hicklin rights guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) guiding force in determining the limits of

traditions as well as daily exchanges, is defined obscenity on the basis of its upon, and liberty must be protected understood in this light.

Vulgarity vs Obscenity

exception to free speech. Vulgarity, sure, may not be in good taste, but it is not prohibited under the law.

The Supreme Court in Apoorva Arora & March 19, 2024, held that the use of by itself constitute obscenity. The case Romance, which contained profane

using gaali (abuses, cursing, or Test' propounded in Regina v. Hicklin in are guarded zealously. Suppression of free expression, rather than subjective profanities), in both folk and popular 1868 by Chief Justice Cockburn. It any kind should be judicially frowned moral standards.

where the 'Community Standards Test', compromised. Obscenity', as propounded by the US Suppress Supreme Court in Miller v. California in India is both India and Bharat. If our daily deems a material legally obscene if:

an (excessive sexual) interest;

patently offensive way, as defined by applicable law; and

Free speech is essential for any thriving guite common. Some recent influence on its recipients, as something under all circumstances and at all costs. controversies regarding crude humour that essentially corrupts their minds to Constitutional morality is supreme, and and comments need to be addressed and immoral influences. The court then ought to be enforced as such, without followed its own judgement in Aveek India's cherished traditions of satire, Sarkar v. State of West Bengal (2014), humour, literature, and folk culture being

also known as the 'Miller Test for Don't Let Vulgarity Become A Tool To

1973. The test, consisting of three levels, linguistic interactions are replete with gaalis and vulgarity, then such average person, applying utterances, at least at a public level, contemporary community standards, should not become tools or excuses would find that work appealing to prurient to suppress free speech and expression. Morality should be the work depicts sexual conduct in a expressed through dialogue, and outrage should be enforced through maturity, not violence.

the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious There have been cases like Shreya the Court struck down provisions that led inescapable. It is thus important that the Constitutional morality must remain the

SIDER

'Unsuitable' Quest



By Bharti Mishra Nath

Volodymyr Zelensky arrived at the White dressed for the occasion. Since the outright bullying? House for his meeting with US President Ukraine-Russia war broke out three years Bizarre Scrutiny Donald Trump on that fateful Friday, he ago, he has frequently travelled between Dressed in his statement attire, Zelensky could never have imagined the public countries, meeting world leaders in his dressing-down that would follow.

Among other grievances that 'tragic' day (February 28), President Trump and his down shirts, and ties since the Russian deputy, JD Vance, took issue with Zelensky's choice of attire. They believed that by not wearing a suit, he was failing to In a multicultural world, nations have their 'respect the dignity of their office'.

now-signature outfit.

He has deliberately shunned suits, buttoninvasion began in 2022 as a gesture of solidarity with Ukraine's front-line troops.

adorned with the Ukrainian trident, world leaders? Would such a demand not When Ukrainian President Zelensky believed he was appropriately amount to cultural insensitivity-if not

walked into the crucial meeting, surrounded by men in sharp suits—Trump, Vance, and a press corps equipped with pointed questions. One of these was about his outfit.

Zelensky had travelled to Washington to ease tensions between the two countries. Clad in a military-style black sweatshirt tie be considered the only official attire for slanging match, with Trump and Vance nonchalance.

using the Oval Office as their stage. Reports suggest that US officials had previously advised Zelensky's team to opt for formal attire, advice he seemingly ignored.

Ukraine is heavily dependent on American military support in its fight against Russia. Yet, following Trump's Oval Office outburst, a disgruntled President wasted no time in suspending military aid to Ukraine.

In Western politics, a well-tailored suit has traditionally been the standard attire for leaders, particularly men, at high-profile meetings and global summits. However, Trump's administration has been one of the most informal in history, with highprofile visitors often dressed casually.

Tech billionaire Elon Musk, a frequent visitor to the Oval Office, has repeatedly ditched the suit in favour of black T-shirts, jeans, leather jackets, and even the occasional baseball cap. Musk, who heads the US government's Department for Government Efficiency (DOGE), has defied convention at every turn-including bringing his son to the Oval Office last month.Musk even attended Trump's first cabinet meeting in his usual casual outfit while others adhered to the formal dress code. Perhaps his hundreds of millions in campaign donations secured him a free pass. One wonders why the same reporter who questioned Zelensky's attire never once challenged Musk's. On the contrary, MAGA supporters and own formal dress codes. Should a suit and Instead, the meeting turned into a televised sections of the media have justified Musk's

What 'Power-Dressers' - And Trump - Can Learn From Gandh

By Shuma Raha

One would have thought that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi settled this debate long ago. That real power dressing lies in how powerfully your dress transmits who you are and what you stand for-and not in donning a so-called appropriate set of clothes. Or, indeed, a sharp suit.

In 1931, Gandhi went to meet King George V at Buckingham Palace, dressed in his usual handspun short dhoti and shawl. While the rest of the guests were arrayed in splendorous morning coats-as the dress code had called for that day—Gandhi saw no reason to shed the attire that he had embraced in Madurai on September 22, 1921, to express his oneness with the poor people Bullying Zelensky of colonised India. Some royal eyebrows Last week another journalist posed a television channel, Real American Voice, may have been infinitesimally raised, some stiff upper lips may have quivered, but at the tea party, at least, the Mahatma decorous formal wear since Russia House Oval Office. "You're at the highest was not questioned about his sartorial preference.



occasion, Gandhi famously retorted, a war. "The king had enough on for both of us".

wasn't somewhat underdressed for the solidarity with his people who are fighting

"Why don't you wear a suit?" asked Brian Glenn, a correspondent for the right-wing similar question to Ukraine President when Zelensky was meeting with US invaded his country three years ago, and level in this country's office, and you When a journalist later asked him if he and combat boots to express his drawing titters from many of his fellow at the door.

journalists and a wide smirk from Vice-President JD Vance. "Do you own a suit?" he went on to demand boorishly.

Incidentally, it was Trump himself who had set up the cue for this obnoxious line of questioning. Receiving Zelensky on the steps of the White House, Trump gestured to him and said, with obvious snark, "He is all dressed up today." **Fashion Is Politics**

No doubt, both Trump and his chosen brood of reporters are aware that Zelensky has been similarly dressed at every public appearance, television interview, meeting with world leaders, and, so on, since the beginning of the war in 2022. And by doing so, he sends a powerful message - that he stands with his people, a people fighting for survival and living under the constant threat of being bombed, maimed or killed Volodymyr Zelensky, who has given up President Donald Trump at the White by Russian aggression. This is no time for him to go swanning around in style, he seems to be saying-this is a time to has worn dark sweatshirts or sweaters refuse to wear a suit." Glenn said, hunker down and beat back the enemy



Brutalism: The Next Liberal Order Of The 21st Century

By : Om Prakash Dwivedi

At the end of the Cold War, Francis Fukuyama pronounced, "What we may be witnessing [is] the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human of neo-fascist ideology, eventually hijacked by the core principle of wealth believe it's America's responsibility to right government." What was predicted as the acme of civilisational development has instead turned into a perennial catastrophe for humanity, even the planet we inhabit.

fully itself'. A political philosophy, habitability on this planet, much in the as collaborators. emboldened by globalisation, that was same way, as globalisation promises free In 2013, Stephen M. Walt, the Harvard easier to imagine an alternative world on unchecked freedom of the market, thus Liberalism has failed. It has 'become more Mars than to churn out conditions for our treating citizens as consumers, and states Afghanistan."

aimed at reforming the world order, circulation of goods and capital but Professor, put this phenomenon very investing more autonomy in individual restricts the movement of migrants across starkly. He asked, "Are you a liberal rights, and promoting human dignity and borders. Liberalism's virtues have died imperialist? [Who] are like kinder, gentler liberty, has slowly morphed into a kind essentially because these have been neoconservatives: like neocons, they exacerbating human conditions in the generation under the guise of choices and political and humanitarian wrongs around name of giving more choices and freedom. In other words, freedom of the world, and they're comfortable with freedom. Let's say, for example, it is far individuals has been replaced by an the idea of the United States deciding who will run countries such as Libya, Syria, or

University's Policy Makers Should Work More on University-Industry Linkage and Future-Readiness: President Murmu



By Jag Mohan Thaken

Chandigarh (India), March 12: While addressing the 72nd Convocation of Panjab University, Chandigarh, the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu appreciated Punjab University for promoting academia-industry linkage. She urged the university's policy makers to

work more on university-industry linkage and future-readiness. She said that the university's subjects should be application-based education. Education should support students in their life journey. Coming times will be challenging and the competitive spirit will keep

advanced skill-set to face the challenges. essential for success.

said that in the last 140 years, Panjab University has developed as a major centre of higher education. This university has made its own identity in academic, realizing their dreams. sports, research, and cultural fields. She Appreciating the girls' achievements, was happy to note that this university has President Murmu said, "I am told that the won the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad number of boys and girls studying in this Trophy 17 times. She said that it is a university is almost equal. But more than testimony to the dedication and determination of the athletes of this University. Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh, students of this university, have remarkable achievement highlights the made the country extremely proud by winning medals at the 2024 Paris girls as they overcome obstacles and Olympics. The President told students that excel in every field. I applaud the parents it is a matter of pride for them that they and the university for promoting such increasing. Therefore, it is important that got the opportunity to study in this outstanding talent.

every student has a positive mindset and prestigious university. This university has given the society many great personalities Acquiring and continuously developing ranging from the President, Prime knowledge of emerging technologies and Minister, Nobel laureates to leaders and the ability to use them properly will be outstanding contributions in various fields. She urged students to carry forward this Speaking on the occasion, the President legacy. She told them that through their efforts and visionary thinking they could make effective contributions to the society, nation and the world along with

> 80% of the toppers of the university are girls. I heartily congratulate all the girl students for this achievement. This importance of educating and empowering

Kashmir Regresses Over Gulmarg Fashion Show As Saudi Embraces Modernity

By : Abhijit Majumder

Islamists and political forces that had driven Jammu and Kashmir into being a swamp of blood and bigotry are still to accept that the state has been freed from the prison of Article 370. They are in denial that Indian laws, not Sharia, have kicked in in the Valley with full force.

Why otherwise would there be such a hissy fit over a recent fashion show in Gulmarg, that too a privately organised one that was not open to the general public?Which Indian law forbids fashion shows from being held?

Did the event showcase nudity?

Kashmir's chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, a dyed-in-the-wool separatist, termed the fashion show held during Ramzan "outrageous" and "obscene". He said "such obscenity in the name of tourism promotion will not be tolerated in Kashmir". Was it a government event done with taxpayers' money? Did anyone invite or force Mirwaiz to attend it? Immediately on the defensive, CM Omar Abdullah said: "The images I have seen show a complete disregard for local sensitivities and that too during this holy month."

People's Conference president Sajjad Lone was much less virulent, calling the event "eminently avoidable".



BJP's Sunil Sharma accused the chief hurts Kashmir in the local sense. minister of lying. "Such a big function was First, it tries to reinforce Kashmir's happening in your relatives' hotel, and you exceptionalism, which had no idea? I feel you only must have organised this programme," he said.

specialises in holiday wear, hastily put out womb of darkness and undo the a statement: "We deeply regret any hurt immense work from infrastructure to caused by our recent presentation in social parameters to tourism that is Gulmarg during the holy month of Ramadan. Our sole intention was to celebrate creativity and the ski & apresski lifestyle, without any desire to offend anyone or any religious sentiments."

The entire outrage is invalid and even Mohammed bin Salman, elements in

Islamist separatists have harped and played on for so many decades. Heeding them Luxury brand Shivan and Narresh, which would be to push Kashmir back into the being done in Kashmir under PM Narendra Modi's leadership.

Second, while the birthplace and heart of Islam, Saudi Arabia, is fast shedding its orthodoxy under Crown Prince inimical to India's national interest, and Muslim-majority Kashmir want to push

it backwards despite being part of a liberal democracy.

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Saudi Arabia now regularly hosts events like the Riyadh fashion week, Saudi Fashion Expo, and the Red Sea Fashion Week. In 2024, for instance, Saudi hosted its inaugural fashion show featuring swimsuit models (that too one a Friday), in a country where, till just a few years ago women were required to wear the body-covering abaya. Third, objecting to fashion in the name of "local cultural sensitivities" in Kashmir is like spitting on one's own heritage. After four decades of extensive excavations at Burzahom, 16 km north-east of Srinagar city, an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) report in 2017 suggested that Neolithic Kashmiris were adept at weaving and intricate craftsmanship. Ranging from 3000 BC to 1000 BC, evidence of bone needles, cotton, wool, and other fabric point to a fairly vibrant textile industry.

So, instead of sanctimoniously buttoning up, Kashmir should actually aggressively woo the fashion industry to come and invest in the Valley.Unless Kashmir rises from its cloistered and violent baggage of Islamism and embraces modernity, all the splendid roads, tunnels, and railway bridges being built now will not lead it to a peaceful and prosperous future.

Rahul Gandhi's Call For Congress Revamp: Genuine Reform Or Political Rhetoric?

By : Prosenjit Nath

The Indian National Congress, once the undisputed leader of Indian politics, is now a shadow of its former self. Plagued by internal strife, electoral setbacks, and a lack of clear ideological direction, the party is struggling to remain relevant in a political landscape dominated by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Against this backdrop, Rahul Gandhi's recent remarks during a meeting with Gujarat Congress and criticised certain leaders as statements without following workers have sparked a fresh debate about the possibility of a the first time he has made such much-needed revamp within the party.

bold and uncharacteristically the Congress, yet little has been direct, the question remains: Is done to address the party's deep-Rahul Gandhi serious about rooted issues. reforming the Congress, or is this His resignation as the Congress **EMPTY PROMISES**

the removal of 10 to 40 the party's failures. individuals to set an example, This pattern of making grand One of the biggest challenges expelling high-profile figures who India's youth.



the "B-team" of the BJP, is not through raises doubts about his sweeping statements. Over the years, he has repeatedly spoken While his statements have been about the need for change within

just another instance of rhetorical president in 2019 after the Lok than a decision-maker? This posturing?RAHUL GANDHI'S Sabha defeat was seen as a ambiguity in leadership only adds party, he must go beyond rhetoric a platform to shine. If Rahul RHETORIC: A HISTORY OF moment of accountability, but to the confusion and undermines since then, he has continued to the party's credibility. Rahul Gandhi's address in wield significant influence without FACTIONALISM Ahmedabad, where he called for formally taking responsibility for INFIGHTING: A FAILURE OF

sincerity. If Rahul Gandhi is serious about reform, why has he not assumed formal leadership of the party? Why does he continue to operate as a de facto leader while leaving the official role to Mallikarjun Kharge, who appears more as a figurehead AND

LEADERSHIP

facing the Congress is have failed to deliver results. factionalism, which has plagued LACK OF ORGANISATIONAL the party for decades. In states STRENGTH: A REFLECTION like Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, OF WEAK LEADERSHIP and Maharashtra, bitter infighting The Congress's inability to build among senior leaders has a robust organisational structure weakened the organisational structure and a key factor in its electoral demoralised its cadre. Rahul failures. In states like Bihar, Gandhi's recent call to separate where elections are imminent, loyalists from rebels is a step in the Congress unit is in shambles. the right direction, but it is not Rahul Gandhi's failure to address enough. The Congress has a this issue reflects a lack of vision long history of making lofty and leadership. While he has promises of change, only to spoken about the need to retreat into its old ways when promote young leaders, the party faced with the prospect of continues to rely heavily on making difficult decisions.

For instance, the G-23 group of in top positions for decades but dissenting leaders had previously demanded internal reforms, but their concerns were largely ignored. If Rahul Gandhi is been successful in promoting serious about revamping the young leaders and giving them and take concrete steps to Gandhi is serious about address the root causes of its revamping the Congress, he decline. This includes holding must focus on nurturing a new leaders accountable for their generation of leaders who can actions, even if it means connect with the aspirations of

party's at the grassroots level has been veteran leaders who have been have failed to deliver electoral success.

The BJP, on the other hand, has





How Trump's Imperial Impulse Could Hasten The End Of Pax Americana He's Attempting To Rebuild

By : Minhaz Merchant

United States President Donald Trump is upending a global order underwritten by the West since the end of the Second World War in 1945. The order governed global institutions ranging from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The US-led West controlled the levers of the world's military, economic and financial power.

The balance of power began shifting from west to east in the first decades of the 21st century. The rise of China and India was a clear sign of the global centre of gravity moving towards Asia. Europe was in secular decline, its economic sclerosis masked by US military and financial guarantees. Those guarantees have expired.Trump's attempt to rehabilitate Russia in its war with Ukraine and support Israel's territorial expansion in the Middle East are part of his worldview. Can this worldview survive the end of Trump's presidency in 2029? The Democratic Party has vowed to reverse some of Trump's radical military and trade policies if they regain control of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

of global power appears irreversible. A 300-year-long era of Western domination could be ending.

over Ukraine also irreversible? Given is this fear that Trump has tapped into efforts to subordinate Canada, Mexico, power vacuum.

Trump's unpredictability, probably not. among his MAGA base. Illegal Panama and Greenland to US power look transatlantic alliance forged after the Second World War. But rapid demographic and ethnic changes will, within a generation, transform the US into a White-minority country for the first time since European colonists arrived in North America over 400 years ago.

Trump began the process of delinking the US from Europe using the pretext of Russia-Ukraine war. But "America First" and "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) are both dipped in a racist, White supremacist ideology.

Elon Musk's DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) seeks to banish DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) from America. DEI is essentially affirmative action to help African-Americans and other American citizens of colour who have faced historical discrimination and prejudice.Trump himself is not a dyedin-the-wool racist. He is a dealmaker. As

White-minority country.

Trump's MAGA policies on DEI, to American assistance. up unmaking America. As Faisal Devji, neither Russia's army nor China's economy. Even Muslims and migrants, long the favourite internal enemies of and Mexico, and on Europe's military and once had." economic status.

challenge solely to the Donald Trump administration, it has been in the making transatlantic alliance, will also weaken the he said last week: "My whole life is about for much longer under Democrat-led US-led world order as other powers in deals."Trump's MAGA supporters, administrations than under Republican Eurasia, China and India rise. however, are not dealmakers. Many are ones. Commentators are fond of That is precisely the opposite outcome

Future Democratic presidents will attempt immigration from Central America and like the making of a new Monroe Doctrine to repair the damage done to the Asia, MAGA supporters know, will hasten for a Western Hemisphere that, as in the America's demographic shift into a original, abandons Europe to a world in which it no longer has any special claim

immigration, trade protectionism and "While the Monroe Doctrine had signalled isolation from Europe could ironically end America's rise, its reprise, however, is a manifestation of its decline. For a world professor of Indian history at Oxford in which India, Russia and China might University, noted in an insightful op-ed in get more favourable treatment than a leading daily on March 1, 2025: "It is Britain, France or Germany is one in reciprocal global trade tariffs and the only now dawning on European which US hegemony has collapsed and politicians that the most serious threat the with it the idea of the West. If they cannot West faces as a geopolitical actor is become its rivals, Europeans will now have to pay for the privilege of serving as America's vassals. Globalisation has led to the emergence of new economic Europe's populists, pale in insignificance and military powers in the world outside before the external threat posed by US the West, and these cannot be dragooned policy on Russia and Ukraine, Canada into serving as America's allies as Europe

Weakening the West

"While it is tempting to attribute this Trump's break with Europe therefore, while disrupting the 80-year-old

But the fundamental shift in the balance embittered, poorly educated racists. They following Trump by taking William of Trump's America First policy. Trade dread a future when the number of White McKinley as his model for a new tariffs will harm US consumers as local Americans in the US population falls American empire. But a more realistic prices rise. The military alliance between below 50 per cent. That is estimated to assumption might be James Monroe and Europe and the US could splinter as Is the break between the US and Europe take place as early as the mid-2040s. It his vision of America's power. Trump's NATO flounders, leading to a global

VIEW POINT

NSIDER

Trump's Approach To Indian Tariffs Reeks Of Bullying

By Kanwal Sibal

US President Donald Trump is on a roll after his reelection, which he believes amounted to a validation of his thinking and policies on the entire gamut of US domestic and foreign affairs. Internally, the Democrats are in disarray after the election loss. With both the House and the Senate under Republican control and the Supreme Court packed by Trump nominees, the system of Why Is America Not 'Great' Again' have overtones of checks and balances in the US Yet? political system has become Trump's leitmotif is that the rest This "Great Again" ambition weaker for the time being.

economic redressal. rebuilding is not great?



of the world has taken advantage includes claiming Greenland for Trump's slogan of 'Make of US generosity and openness America Great Again' has an in- and that this is no longer built contradiction. The slogan acceptable. He projects a sense has domestic resonance, of victimhood, whereas many specifically in the context of an non-Western countries see of themselves as victims of the US America's power over the years. The long to make it sound less Mexican illegal immigration and the that now it was America's turn to manufacturing base, US list of US military interventions, companies investing more at overthrow of governments, home, creating more jobs, and regime change policies, the so on. The slogan appeals to the weaponisation of the US dollar and so on. middle class in particular. and US control over the global This imperial mindset leads to of its willingness to cooperate. products was twice what the US However, the guestion remains, financial system, and the use of inflicting blows on an already. He has also partially suspended charged them, and that South why does he think that America, sanctions as a tool of foreign debilitated multilateralism by some tariffs in the case of Korea's average tariff was four still the foremost economic, policy, constitute the reality of withdrawing from the Paris Canada. Trump is of course times higher despite the fact that technology and military power, US power. Does, therefore, the Climate Change Agreement, the violating the US-Mexico-Canada the US provided so much help vision of 'Making America Great World Health Organization Free Trade Agreement by to it militarily and otherwise.

imperialism?

national security reasons to counter Russia's domination of the Arctic, the Panama Canal to counter China's control of its ports, re-naming the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America and more American, repudiating Canadian sovereignty by inviting

Rights Commission (UNHRC). Tariffs As Currency

A key component of Make The US President had already America Great Again through imposed a 10% tariff on Chinese muscle-flexing is using tariffs as exports and recently announced a currency of power. Trump an additional 10% duty. In the believes that the US has been case of China too, he has sought treated most unfairly by other cooperation to control the flow countries, and this includes of precursor chemicals to friends and foes alike, by raising Mexico and Canada for the high tariff walls against imports production of Fentanyl, of which from America while exporting China is the biggest source. liberally to it given its low tariffs. China has retaliated with tariffs Trump has announced the of its own, especially on US imposition of 25% tariffs on agricultural products. imports for Mexico and Canada, Trump has not so far imposed with whom the US trade deficit tariffs on EU exports to the US. is huge. He has not treated the though in his State of the Union issue of tariffs on them only as a Address, he mentioned the EU, trade-related one but also as a China, Brazil, India, Mexico and point of pressure to compel both Canada as countries that unfairly Mexico and Canada to curb used tariffs against the US and trafficking of the drug Fentanyl use tariffs against them. He into the US. Trump has added that India charged 100% it to become the 51st of the US, suspended the imposition of tariffs on US auto exports, that tariffs on Mexico twice in view China's average tariff on US

(WHO) and the UN Human imposing these tariffs, but this seems to be of little concern to him.

Something From Trump's First Term Is Haunting Him Ag



By KV Prasad

There were 90-minute over to stir the cauldron. It is here that politics. the politics inside the Beltway, as Americans Have Never Been Washington politics is identified, More Divided would determine the course.

There were two distinct and little discernible threads in the March surprises about what US 4 speech, which, in essence, was President Donald Trump told his a reiteration and elaboration on country and the world in his joint the issues he flagged during the address to the US Congress last campaign. One, Trump outlined week. The ramifications of the how his administration was rolling speech, out plans to take America on the considered one of the longest path to regaining its "greatness" delivered in decades, would be and ushering in a "golden era". experienced in America in the The other was a distinct display weeks ahead as DOGE Chief of partisanship that is now a more Elon Musk's slashes have begun pronounced feature of American

Aware of the sharp polarisation

to shape the narrative. But that exited and placards populated the area, the address. conveying objection to several Taking Everyone Along measures that the new In the weeks ahead, Trump and advocate. administration announced. Deep divisions were on full display. While some Democrats

carried placards reading "Save Medicaid", others flashed cards that had "Lies" or "Protect under the previous administration allegedly for 'dubious' or 'nonpriority' beneficiaries. Simultaneously.

Democratic Congressman Al who had moved

suggested its members not to said were against women, while unusual for members of one party react to Trump in a fashion that a few staged a walkout. Towards to support a Bill floated by a would give Republicans a chance the end, most Democrats swiftly floor the while proved difficult as handheld signs Republicans stood applauding

his team will require the support How Will GOP Act? of Congress to pass proposals While mentioning his plan to offer and to usher in tax reforms and policies. This will require amending existing laws. The Republicans control both the Veterans" written on them as House and the Senate, though Trump read out a long list of with a slender majority. Typical budgetary allocations made political play on The Hill will in, like ending taxes on tips, require dexterous deal-making. That is the challenge the administration of the day faces, senior despite its inherent strength.

After the experience during the Green of Texas was escorted out first term, President Donald the Republican right but my right of the House for interrupting the Trump is acutely aware of how here [occupied by Democrats] -President's speech. It was Green Members of Congress, even I am sure you are going to vote an those belonging to the for those tax cuts because I don't impeachment motion against Republican Party, can throw a believe people will ever vote for President Trump in his first term; spanner in his plans. Unlike in you", he said, adding, "I am doing in fact, last month, he had parliamentary democracy, where you a big favour by telling you threatened to do so again. Many a whip forces members to toe the that."

in the United States, the women members turned up in party line, on the Hill, each bill Democratic leadership had pink attire to protest policies they requires negotiation. It is not member from the other side of the aisle. These voting patterns are dictated by the policies and commitment of members on issues they or their constituents

tax breaks for interest on loans taken for cars made in the United States, President Trump pointed towards the Democrats and encouraged them to pass it along with a few other measures thrown overtime pay, and social security benefits. In his typical style, President Trump mocked the Democrats: "... And I am sure people on my right – I don't mean

Can India And China Ever Really 'Dance' Together?

By Nishtha Gautam

Is the dragon-elephant dance desirable for India?

Or, will it turn into danse macabre? It is difficult to gauge what China truly wants from and for India. With all its tiger diplomats and increasingly aggressive talk, China remains one of the most complex countries in terms of decoding diplomacy. While foreign minister Wang Yi wants "a cooperative partnership between the dragon and the elephant", China's new defence budget for 2025-26 stands at \$249 billion.

Wu Qian, the spokesperson for the defence ministry, says, "The Chinese on the Depsang and Demchok regions of in the government can afford to ignore or military faces tough challenges in safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity." After Russia and Mongolia, China shares its third longest of PM Modi and President Xi Jinping's land border with India, which is 3,380 kilometres in length. And this border hasn't been China's quietest.

Signals From China

With a 7.2% increase in its annual defence budget-and its public justification-China has sent out important signals, the most significant one being to the United States. Miffed with the US selling arms to Taiwan, Wu stated, "Several pieces of US weaponry will not alter the inevitable demise of Taiwan independence." After the declaration of retaliatory tariffs on the US, which have come into effect, this statement is in sync with Beijing's hard stand. A similar firm stance was displayed during the Line of Actual Control (LAC) conflict with India, which reached some form of resolution pales against that of China. This security concern for India. But Beijing also ready to work with India". only late last year. Beijing did not soften asymmetry is a hard reality that nobody reiterates that border issues should not Let's make China work with and for India.



between the two militaries in 2020.

summits, clashes along the LAC severely dented India-China relations. The fouryear-long freeze in bilateral ties should biggest lesson being, Beijing doesn't blink. It can afford not to.

India Should Remain Cautious

It is, therefore, important for India to tread carefully. The Chinese foreign minister is correct when he says that Beijing and New Delhi "should work with each other rather than guard against each other". Beijing, Delhi needs to bleed resources. As and the Taiwan Strait".

Ladakh, the site of bloody clashes overlook. Within the milieu of a global economic slowdown, the choice of exports raw materials like castor oil, iron Despite the personalised public diplomacy ramping up military spending at the cost ore, Light naphtha, p-xylene, shrimps, of other sectors-for money is always etc., to China, we import machinery limited-doesn't come easy.

China keeps insisting that India is not a significant security threat. Yet, reportedly, have been a learning experience. The it has significantly amped up its should concern us before making any deployed in Yunnan province near the can look at expanding its cross-sector Myanmar border. Not only this, Chinese military commanders have been calling more Chinese FDI. for military preparedness of the People's India's best bet, currently, is to align its

tarnish overall bilateral relations with India.

So, what should we do?

'Neighbourhood First' There are no simple solutions, but the Indian government's stated policy of putting "neighbourhood first" may act as a guiding principle. Amidst a fierce, albeit zero-sum trade war with the US, China aims to consolidate its economic stature within and beyond the Global South. How India can align its own goals with those of its stronger neighbour demands an unsentimental look at our ambition-ability equation.

The growing deficit in India-China bilateral trade also offers insights. While India and electronics (including crucial parts) from them. Not just the volume but also the nature of this deficit surveillance capabilities over India. A new strategic decision about China. A Large Phased Array Radar (LPAR) with a move away from importing goods from range of over 5,000 km to track India's China towards importing capital from missile tests is said to have been there may work in the short term. India infrastructure capabilities by inviting

though, sits more comfortably at the guard Liberation Army citing, "military tensions security and economic goals with China's posts and to match its presence, New on multiple fronts, the border with India aim of "opposing hegemonism and power politics". This is neither easy nor risk-free. against China's Rs 21.9 lakh crore, India's It gives credence to India's Army Chief's The success of India's diplomatic acumen 2025-26 defence budget sits at Rs 6.81 latest statement, "The two-front threat is will rest on how we take advantage of what lakh crore. India's border infrastructure a reality." China certainly presents a Wang Yi recently stated: "China stands

Manipur Crawls Back To Normalcy As Centre Tightens Its Grip

By : Sanbeer Singh Ranhotra

The past two years have been rough for Manipur. Ethnic tensions between the Meiteis and Kukis have all but destroyed the social fabric of the state. The scale of the violence seen in Manipur since 2023 has shocked Indians at large, as it should. For someone born and brought up in the Northeast, the violence was shocking, yet hardly surprising.

It is no secret that ethnic tensions and communal distrust plagues not just Manipur, but many other north-eastern all-blockades. For decades, the state better law enforcement, and efforts to states. Unfortunately, the wider Indian population is simply not aware of the ground realities and complex social equations of this region. For most, the Northeast is nothing more than a tourism hotspot replete with exotic beauty. Amidst this demographic, the urge to pin all blame on government ineptitude comes instinctively. And that is a flawed way of looking at all things Northeast.

Manipur is no stranger to social strife,



daily life, economic activities, and had long eluded the region. essential supplies.

an extended period of relative peace and large-scale ethnic violence in 2023.

has suffered under the weight of curfews, foster dialogue among communities bandhs, and ethnic tensions, disrupting contributed to a sense of normalcy that

Ironically, just as Manipur seemed to after 2014, when Manipur experienced back into turmoil with the outbreak of

stability. The once-frequent disruptions I have grown up in the Northeast. I have that had plaqued the state saw a seen just how powerless government Security forces have ramped up their significant decline, allowing economic machinery becomes once communities operations across Manipur. On March 8 and infrastructural development to gain decide to turn on each other. Preventing and 9, for instance, Manipur Police unrest, and—most infamous of them momentum. Improved governance, violence is not a luxury that governments arrested 15 cadres of various insurgent

in the region enjoy. Often, they simply have to deal with the fallout of it all. In Manipur, the initial weeks and months of strife tore through the state's social fabric. Now, the government has the mighty task to rebuild that fabric and bring Manipur back to normalcy.

This can be a time-consuming process. However, recent decisions taken by the Centre - from the imposition of President's Rule to the appointment of Ajay Kumar Bhalla as Governor suggest that the government is keen on resolving the latest cycle of violence for once and for all. Home minister Amit Shah has also directed the reopening of highways for the free movement of goods and people, while sternly calling However, a striking contrast emerged have turned a corner, the state was thrust on both communities to surrender their arms. The message was clear: surrender your weapons before we come looking for you.

Extreme weather will be your new normal in 2025

Year 2024 was a big eye-opener on climate change, even for the uninitiated, with some or the other region of the world experiencing extreme weather events. India was among the countries worst-affected by this global crisis.

To put this into perspective, out of the 274 days tracked by the New Delhi-based think-tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) in its 'State of India's Environment 2025' report, 255 days (93 per cent) saw extreme weather in at least one region. This is a marked spike from the corresponding period in 2023 (235 days of extreme weather) and 2022 (241 days). The report was released recently at the Anil Agarwal Dialogue (AAD) 2025, conducted by CSE in Rajasthan.

If 2024 was bad, 2025 will be From all projections, year 2025 will be no different. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has announced the onset of an early summer, with even higher temperatures than last year and frequent heatwaves. February 2025 has already been declared the warmest February in the country since 1901.

The fear of big natural disasters looms too. Remember the massive landslides in Kerala's Wayanad last July, which killed over 350 people, including those missing and now declared dead, and ravaged several villages? Far away, in the desert region of Jaisalmer in Rajasthan, single-day rainfall bursts have become frequent. The area received 55 per cent of the season's rainfall in a single day last year while the cold desert region of Leh experienced a heat-wave in July 2024. The human cost of natural calamities in India was high: 3,238 people lost their lives in such events in 2024, a rise of 18 per cent since 2022, which recorded 2,755 deaths.

Globally, 2024 was the first calendar year with the average worldwide temperature 'clearly exceeding' 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level. Eleven months of the year saw the global average surface-air temperature above this threshold, found the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service in its 'Global Climate Highlights 2024' report, released this January. The report said 2024 was also the warmest year on record for Europe.

It is hardly surprising then that scientists are calling this environmentally tumultuous time as the Anthropocene Epoch, a period in Earth's history when human activities have significantly altered the planet's climate and ecosystems.

Sunita Narain, director general of CSE, said not just the frequency of extreme weather events but also their intensity and duration have increased, and that this is going to be the new normal the world must face.

According to Dr Roxy Mathew Koll, a climate scientist from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology in Pune, one of the

country's tropical geography. "The tropics receive higher levels of solar radiation, which is trapped by greenhouse gases. Urban areas, with increasing concretisation, absorb more heat. Unlike natural surfaces, concrete retains this heat and prevents night-time cooling. In cities like Delhi, the night-time temperature difference between urban and rural areas can be as much as 15 degrees Celsius," Koll explained while speaking at the AAD 2025.

"Heat-waves are intensifying, and prothree to six times by the end of the century," added Koll. He pointed to the rising frequency of compounding climate events, where heat-waves overlap rainfall deficits, wildfires and droughts. Moreover, heat-waves in the ocean, known as marine heat-waves, also contribute to a higher incidence of cyclones.

Warming oceans led climate disasters As oceans absorb more heat, they evaporate more water, leading to increased heat and moisture in the atmosphere. The heat and moisture act as additional supply of energy, which in turn fuels extreme weather events such as storms and cyclones. It also contributes to rising sea levels as the volume of water expands with increased oceanic heat content

Essentially, there is a 7 per cent rise in the atmospheric moisture levels for every 1 degree Celsius rise in global average temperature, which is a perfect brew for extreme weather events, said the 'State of India's Environment 2025' report. "Currently, across major regions, including Asia-Pacific, North America, Latin America, Europe, Middle East, Africa and China, sea levels are rising at an average rate of three millimeters per year. While this may seem small, over a decade, it amounts to a 3 cm rise, which is equiva-

key reasons behind this in India is the lent to 17 metres of land intruded by seawater," warned Koll.

> The Indian Ocean's annual mean tempera-Celsius since the beginning of the 20th century. As global temperatures head towards 2.5 degrees Celsius above pre-infects will escalate. For instance, sealevel rise could double from 3 cm per decade to 5-7 cm per decade, leading by the sea.

is unprecedented. Due to human-trig- ter and energy security.

gered greenhouse gas emissions, the climate change cycle has accelerated from thousands of years to just a few ture has already risen by 1.2 degrees decades. Impact on health, food and security According to 'World Cities Report 2024: Cities and Climate Action', released by UN-Habitat, by dustrial levels, many climate-related ef- 2040, almost 2 billion people in urban areas will experience a 0.5 degree Celsius rise in temperature. "Almost no urban resident will be to several more metres of land intruded unaffected, with billions of people subjected to hotter temperatures or Koll noted that while Earth's climate exposed to the risks of flooding and jections indicate they could increase by naturally warms and cools over cycles other threats," said Anacludia of 20,000 to 400,000 years, due to Rossbach, executive director, UN-Habitat, shifts in the planet's orbit, tilt and in the report. Climate-related changes afwobble, today's rapid temperature rise fect multiple sectors, including food, wa-

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Ranya Rao's Bail Plea Rejected By Court In Gold Smuggling Case

Kannada actor Ranya Rao's bail petition Court, but her plea was denied. She then was rejected by the special court for eco- moved the Special Court for Economic nomic offences in gold smuggling case, Offences, where her request was rejected citing the seriousness of charges against again. her.

Gowdar agreed with the prosecution that the actor should continue to be in judicial 14-day judicial custody after she was arond accused, Tarun Raju, was sent to 15day judicial custody.

Gold bars valued at Rs 12.56 crore were seized from Ranya Rao at the Bengaluru Airport. Subsequently, officials conducted searches at her properties, recovering gold jewelry worth Rs 2.06 crore and Rs 2.67 crore in cash.

initially sought bail from the Magistrate preventing the DRI from arresting him.

Following these setbacks, her legal team The court led by Justice Vishwanath is now preparing to approach the Sessions Court for relief. Until a decision is reached on her bail application, she will continue custody.She was earlier remanded to a to be in judicial custody.The Enforcement Directorate initiated an investigation into rested at the airport on March 4. The sec- the case. Ranya Rao purchased round-trip tickets from Bengaluru to Dubai using her husband Jatin Hukkeri's credit card, raising suspicions about his possible involvement in the gold smuggling case.

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) subsequently conducted searches at nine locations in Bengaluru linked to Hukkeri. Meanwhile, he obtained an in-Ranya, arrested in a gold smuggling case, terim order from the Karnataka High Court,



How Jinnah's betrayal sparked **Baloch freedom movement**

gest of Pakistan's four prov- and a fair share of ism into its own Baloch region, serves in Balochistan, dissolu- complete Balochistan. inces and the most sparsely Balochistan's natural gas rev- provided military assistance to tion of the One Unit scheme Kalat declared independence populated, has rarely seen enues. peace or development. On Before that, it was the 1970s In 1977, General Zia-ul-Hag The insurgency ended in 1969 Despite being an independent March 11, militants of the which saw the bloodiest and displaced Bhutto in a military with a general amnesty and the sovereign state, a British Balochistan Liberation Army longest period of Baloch mili- coup. The armed struggle release of Baloch separatists. memorandum of September 12 (BLA), fighting to secede from tancy. Pakistan, hijacked a train and BANGLADESH CONNECtook 100 passengers, including TION AND BALOCH MOVEsecurity personnel, hostage. It MENT OF 1970s was the betraval of the Baloch t was the Independence of THE SECOND AND THIRD HOW BALOCHISTAN WAS 1947, Jinnah asked Khan to expeople by Muhammad Ali Bangladesh (East Pakistan) BALOCHISTAN CONFLICTS DECEIVED, MERGED INTO Jinnah, Pakistan's founding fa- from Pakistan in 1971 that In 1954, Pakistan launched PAKISTAN ther, that is at the root of the sparked the demands for the One Unit Scheme by However, the root cause of the insurgency.

tionalists have been up in arms Balochistan. against the Pakistani state. Protests swelled as the de-Balochistan has seen episodes mands were junked by Prime of a violent independence Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. movement in 1958-59, 1962- It was in 1973 that Bhutto dis-63, 1973-77, and the latest one missed the Balochistan provinhas been raging since 2003.

railed the Quetta-Peshawar scale military operation under Jaffar Express and took hun- the ruse that a cache of arms dreds of passengers hostage. was found in the Iraqi embassy However, in 1959, Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah, merged the instrument of accession, his On Wednesday, the second that was intended for the tricked Nauroz Khan into sur- with Pakistan. day, the Baloch rebels still hold Baloch rebels. over a hundred people That resulted in a full-scale hostage.The people Balochistan, which is an arid four years till 1977. This is five of his relatives were ex- for independence. but mineral-rich province, have known historically felt ignored by the Balochistan conflict. Punjab-dominated politics of According to reports, around resentment and solidified the Jinnah as his legal advisor to So, after being independent for Pakistan. The Baloch people 55,000 Baloch tribesmen, un- Baloch independence move- represent his case before the 226 days, Balochistan was have been economically op- der the leadership of Marri, pressed even as the mineral Mengal, and Bugti tribal government.

Baloch people's ire is the sands of Baloch civilians. developing with China's assis- a level that Iran, fearing a aimed at forcing Pakistan to and Las Bela were to be people's armed resistance. tance. Chinese engineers have been attacked by Baloch militant groups. The Gwadar port is part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

"The leadership of the Baloch nationalist movement remains highly fractured. As a result, the Baloch nationalist movement is not unitary in either its goals or its tactics." according to a piece in The International Affairs Review.

The latest round of armed rekilling of influential Baloch by Pakistani forces in 2006.

Balochistan, the big- autonomy, resource control, spillover of Baloch national- share revenues from gas re- merged with Kalat to form a

Starting from 1948, Baloch na- of the National Awami Party in

cial government of Akbar Khan On March 11, BLA militants de- Bugti and declared a large-

> fourth ecuted. as the

Pakistan.

ended after amnesty was In 1970, Balochistan was granted to the tribesmen and recognised as one of the four take the international responsimilitary withdrawal from provinces after the One Unit bilities of an independent state. Balochistan

Balochistan with other prov- of India in 1947. its autonomy.

This triggered massive resentment among Baloch leaders Makaran. and Nawab Nauroz Khan, the Khan of Kalat, declared indea guerilla warfare against Pakistani forces.

rendering with promises of le- However, Kalat, under Khan Mir

ment.

and release of Baloch rebels.

policy was scrapped.

greater autonomy from leaders which its provinces were Balochistan rebellion started reorganised. The merger of when Pakistan was carved out

They had the option of either joining India, merging with Papendence in 1958 and started kistan, or maintaining their independence. Three of the to agree to Jinnah's terms. states, under the influence of Though Khan of Kalat signed

niency. Instead, Nauroz and Ahmed Yar Khan -- also known against Pakistan in 1948. of armed uprising that lasted for his sons were arrested, and as the Khan of Kalat -- opted

> This act of betrayal deepened appointed Muhammad Ali ism. British Crown.

wealth of their land has been heads, fought against 80,000 One Unit formula. Within five 4, 1947, attended by Lord Jinnah's extracted to fund the federal Pakistani military personnel, years, the restive province saw Mountbatten, the Khan of Islamabad's military might. This The Pakistan Air Force what is referred to as the Third Kalat, and Jawaharlal Nehru, betrayal from 75 years ago and One of the targets of the bombed villages, killing thou- Balochistan Conflict in 1963. Jinnah supported the Khan's the exploitation of the people Led by Sher Muhammad decision for independence. On and the region's resources re-Gwadar port that Pakistan is The conflict escalated to such Bijrani Marri, the insurgency Jinnah's insistence, Kharan main at the root of the Baloch

on August 15, 1947.

stated that Kalat couldn't under-In their meeting in October pedite Kalat's merger with Pakistan, writes Taj Mohammad Breseeg in Baloch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development up to 1980.

Khan rejected Jinnah's claim on inces under One Unit reduced The region of Balochistan ex- Kalat and sought help from sevisted as four princely states -- eral quarters, including from In-Kalat, Kharan, Las Bela, and dia. Seeing no help from anywhere, he yielded.

On March 26, the Pakistan Army moved into the Baloch coastal region, and Khan had

brother, Prince Abdul Karim, led the first armed insurgency Though the rebellion was suppressed in no time, it planted The Khan of Kalat had in 1946 the seeds of Baloch national-

merged into Pakistan, not with Baloch never accepted the In a meeting in Delhi on August the will of the people, but by betrayal and

Fields of despair: How war is turning Myanmar into world's opium capital

Township, near the border of resistance groups like the table.Extracting sap from expands, so does human Karen State and southern Shan Karenni Nationalities Defence poppies, the first step in heroin suffering. With each season, State of Myanmar, fields of Force (KNDF), working illegally production, is painstaking work. more families are forced into scarlet poppies stretch as far as in poppy fields to make ends The latex-rich fluid is collected this dangerous livelihood, the eye can see. Yet, beneath meet. Myanmar is now the and sold to middlemen, feeding caught between survival and their beauty lies a harsh reality. world's largest opium producer, an underground economy that the dangers of an economy built These fields serve as a lifeline surpassing Afghanistan in 2024 thrives in lawless regions. As on addiction. In war-ravaged bellion started in 2004 and for thousands displaced by the with a staggering 1,080 tons international agencies warn of Myanmar, the blood-red petals gained momentum after the country's ongoing war. These harvested. With conflict tearing growing drug addiction and of the poppy are more than just photos capture scenes of communities apart, the illicit cross-border tribal leader, Akbar Khan Bugti, desperation: men and women, trade has flourished. For those farmers here see little survival, of struggle, and of a driven from their homes by with nowhere else to turn, choice. These photos reveal a nation trapped in a cycle of Bugti was demanding greater relentless fighting between growing poppies is often the heartbreaking paradox: while conflict and crime.

In the hills of Pekon Myanmar's military and ethnic only way to put food on the Myanmar's opium trade trafficking, a crop. They are a symbol of

FRONT PAGE FEATURE

Trump's immigration crackdown leaves deported migrants stuck in Panama

get to the U.S., fleeing conflict, she landed, she rode eight hours coast, then took a bus to Mexico ders Afghanistan and has been after the takeover of the Taliban religious persecution, poverty to Mexico City, continuing on by City. She spent two weeks there plagued for decades by conflicts because he identified as an atheand government crackdowns in bus and car to Tijuana. countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Cameroon, China, Pakistan and Iran.

After flying to Central and South Artemis Ghasemzadeh, 27, Iran America, they bused through Artemis Ghasemzadeh left her countries where they didn't speak country in January, fleeing after the language and walked through converting from Islam to Chrisunfamiliar jungle to get to the tianity something that could cost U.S.-Mexico border.

and put on military aircraft that stayed two weeks and then took flew nearly 300 of them to a flight to South Korea. Panama as U.S. President From there she flew to Mexico Donald Trump sought to accel- City, staying there for three erate deportations to more complicated destinations.Panama was supposed to be a stopover. But for those unwilling to return days, including her birthday. home mostly out of well-founded fear Panama sent them to a punishment is death," she said. guarded camp without access to lawyers in the same Darin jungle pen.' many had crossed months earlier on their way north.

Over the past week, under legal ter he was imprisoned for three pressure, the Panamanian government dropped them off at a mocracy and human rights isbus station in the capital with 30 sues. days to figure out where they will He flew from Beijing to Cuba, go next.

"It feels like the whole world is crushing down on me. It's like everything is stopping," said Isha Len, a 29-year-old from Cameroon. "I risked everything, my life, everything, crossing the Darin Gap, just to be sent back." Here are the stories that some of the deportees told The Associated Press:

Isha Len, 29, Cameroon

small town, Len crossed Aug. 17, due to warfare between Cameroon by car and minibus, the government and militants of then a fisherman friend carried al-Shabab, which the U.S. recher four hours by boat to Nigeria

Len, a schoolteacher, flew to Sao Paulo, Brazil, where she said until she reached South Africa. authorities detained her for a From there, she flew to Sao month in the airport. From there, Paulo, Brazil, and spent the next she wound north through South America by bus, following other migrants until they reached the Darin Gap.

dangerous jungle that divides Year's Day. Colombia and Panama before She took buses to the southern boarding buses that carried her Mexican border city through Central America. After Tapachula, where she was tembeing kidnapped for days by a porarily kidnapped and robbed by gang in Guatemala, she crossed a gang. To avoid immigration

She crossed the U.S. border and presented herself to American authorities.

Ghasemzadeh her life in Iran. Within days, they were detained She flew to Dubai, where she

> weeks before going to Tijuana. She crossed the U.S. border on Feb. 9, and was detained for five

"For changing your religion, your "We don't know what will hap-

Wang Qiu, 53, China

Wang Qiu said he left home afyears for speaking out about de-

then to the small South American country of Suriname. From there, he traveled by land: through Guyana, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia, before trekking through the Darin Gap.

He moved up through Central America and Mexico before being detained after crossing into the U.S. in San Diego.

Qamar Abdi, 19, Somalia

After conflict broke out in her Qamar Abdi, left for the U.S. on ognizes as a terrorist group.

She hopped from buses to shared cars for nearly a month six months riding buses north. When she arrived at the northern tip of Colombia, she traveled six days through the Darin Gap, She walked days through the landing in Panama on New

of

They crossed oceans to coast to evade authorities. After grants along Mexico's Pacific region of Parachinar, which bor- Omagh fled Afghanistan in 2022 before driving to Tijuana, where she crossed into the U.S.

> Ebrahim Ghezelgechi, 36, Iran Ebrahim Ghezelgechi fled Iran with his wife, Sahar; 10-year-old daughter, Aylin; and 11-year-old son, Sam, on Nov. 21.

> The family flew to Brazil, then to Panama and finally Nicaragua. From there, they took buses north to Guatemala, then crossed into southern Mexico by boat. They road on top of trains and in buses and vans to get to Tijuana. After Mexico authorities sent them back to the southern part of the country, they took a plane to the resort area of Los Cabos. There, they were detained, had their passports taken and were sent back south again.

> They tried getting north a number of times, punted back by Mexican authorities, before eventually paying a driver to take them to Tijuana.

> After crossing into the U.S., they were detained in San Diego for a week

Samin Haider, 21, Pakistan Samin Haider left for Dubai in 2023 after violence surged in his Diego.

between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslim communities.

Haider was there for 1 1/2 years before the United Arab Emirates canceled visas for Pakistanis. Haider then flew to Mexico and traveled to the U.S.-Mexico border with the hopes of seeking asvlum.

Now deported to Panama, he still hopes to reach the U.S.

Elham Ghaedi, 29, Iran

flying to Brazil and then to Venezuela's capital Caracas.

She traveled to Colombia, where took a bus north and then walked five days through the Darin Gap. She stayed 15 days in a migrant camp in southern Panama before taking a bus through Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and to Mexico's southern border. There, migration authorities detained her for six davs.

Tijuana. U.S. authorities detained where he was detained. her when she crossed to San "After so much time, I've lost

ist and was part of an ethnic minority, something that could put his life in danger.

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He first went to Pakistan, where he got a visa for six months, and struggled to get a new one due to his Afghani passport.

He then went to Iran and worked there for 1 1/2 years. But the country wouldn't accept him as a refugee.

He managed to get a visa to Bra-Elham Ghaedi left on Oct. 21, zil, which offered a number of Afghan people refuge after the rise of the Taliban, and flew to Sao Paulo in 2024.

> Hoping to reunite with friends and family in the U.S., Omagh paid smugglers to move him north through Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. He trekked through the Darin Gap, then took buses north through Central America to southern Mexico.

Mexican authorities detained him and dropped him back in south-She traveled north to Mexico ern Mexico a few times before City, where she spent a month, he managed to take a flight to before boarding a flight to Mexico City and later to the U.S.,

hope," he said.

Green card holders have no indefinite right to stay in US, can be deported: JD Vance

US Vice President JD Vance has said that green card holders in the United States do not have an indefinite right to stay in the country and can be deported at the administration's discretion.

His remarks amid US President Donald Trump's push for the 'Trump Gold Card', a new investor visa programme allowing foreigners to gain US citizenship by investing \$5 million in the country.Commenting on the possible deportation of a Columbia University student over his pro-Palestinian activism. Vance said that the decision is ultimately about whom the American public wants to include in the national community."For a green card holder, even if I might like that green card holder, he does not have an indefinite right to be in the United States of America," the Vice President said in an interview with Fox News

A green card grants lawful permanent residence and allows holders to live and work permanently in the US as long as they do not commit any actions that would violate immigration law.

Indians account for the second-largest immiinto southern Mexico, where she authorities, she traveled hours grant community in the US, with several thoutook a boat along the Pacific packed on a boat with other mi- sands holding the green card. Vance further

asserted that American citizens have different rights from people who have green cards and people who are on student visas.

"My attitude on this is that it is not fundamentally about free speech. To me, yes, it is about national security, but more importantly, it is about who we, as the American public, decide to allow to join the national community". Vance stressed that if the US President or the Secretary of State decides that a person should not be in the country, "they have no legal right to stay here. It is as simple as that". When asked about more deportations similar to that of Columbia student Mahmoud Khalil, Vance said the US would certainly see some people get deported if the country determines that it is not in the best interest to have them. "I don't know how high that number is going to be, but you are going to see more people," he said.

Khalil was arrested on Saturday, and is currently in the custody of immigration authorities as the Donald Trump administration began fulfilling its campaign promise to deport foreign-born activists who participated in the wave of pro-Palestinian protests on US college campuses last year.

How the Maratha Deccan became the ulcer of Aurangzeb's empire



"I came alone and I'm going alone. I have not done well to the country and the people, and in the future, there is no hope." This is how Aurangzeb lamented to his son, Azam, in his final days, according to after criticising the portrayal of historical the Mughal emperor's collection of letters, Rugaat-i Alamgiri. Despite expanding the Mughal empire to its greatest territorial extent, Aurangzeb's relentless wars drained its resources and left it vulnerable. A big part of his lament had to do with the repeated blowback from the Marathas.As Aurangzeb contemplated on his reign and deen, there was a sense of deep dissatisfaction. He left Delhi for the Deccan, only to face stiff Maratha resistance and losses. His stringent policies also bred unrest, alienating key allies like the Rajputs and Deccan nobles. Unlike his predecessors, who pursued expansion selectively, Aurangzeb immersed himself completely in extending his empire into the Deccan. Many historians have even called it his "obsession."Historian EW Osborne called the Deccan an "ulcer" for the Mughal Empire because it was a long, festering 1707. conflict that drained resources without It was this Deccan campaign, including looting its treasury. Aurangzeb sent forces yielding lasting success.

Aurangzeb, however, while writing to his son Azam, must have thought that he would be forgotten by history. Little did he know that he would become the most contested ruler in Indian history.

There are frequent references to BEFORE AURANGZEB Aurangzeb in India's politics and public discourse. Only last month, the Mughal emperor made a fresh entry into both cinema and politics. The recently released film Chhaava, starring Vicky Kaushal, portrays the life of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, the second ruler of the Maratha crushing the Nizam Shahi dynasty, and could subdue the region. With an

Aurangzeb.

Aurangzeb then found a mention in the Maharashtra Assembly.

MLA Abu Azmi triggered a political storm events in Chhaava.

"Wrong history is being shown in Chhaava... Aurangzeb built several temples. I do not think he was a cruel administrator." Azmi said.

It is true that Aurangzeb is a controversial figure. What is also true is that his dominance, while the Marathas, under expansionist plans faced the stiffest resistance from Marathas like Sambhaji Maharai

Aurangzeb conquered Bijapur in 1686 and Golconda in 1687, covering present-day Pradesh between 1658 and 1707.

northern Maharashtra, remained contested. Despite Mughal control, the Marathas dominated Maharashtra, parts of Madhya Pradesh, northern Karnataka, and western Telangana, reclaiming lost mobility frustrated the Mughals, whose territories through guerrilla warfare by

his war with the Marathas, that was Aurangzeb's tallest ambition and his biggest defeat too. The prolonged nature of the 27-year Deccan war made it an ulcer for the Mughal empire.

Before Aurangzeb, the Mughals took a cautious approach to the Deccan, securing Khandesh and Burhanpur through diplomacy and limited military Leaving behind Delhi's majestic action. Shah Jahan, however, expanded splendour, he marched south in the early Mughal control by subduing Ahmadnagar, 1680s, convinced that only his presence

states, notes Stanley Lane-Poole in Aurangzib, and the Decay of the Mughal Empire. Appointed viceroy in 1636, Aurangzeb inherited a volatile Deccan, where the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar, under Murtaza Shah III, posed a growing threat. Tasked with eliminating them, he successfully ended the Nizam Shahi rule, marking his first major military victory. However, lasting peace remained elusive as Bijapur and Golconda resisted Mughal Shahaji Bhonsle, manoeuvred between these powers.

HOW MARATHA RAIDS ANGERED AURANGZEB

Aurangzeb's encounters with the Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Marathas during his vicerovalty reinforced his resolve to crush them. Unlike Bijapur The former Nizam Shahi areas, now and Golconda, the Maratha kingdoms, led by Shahaji Bhonsle and later Shivaji, relied on guerrilla warfare, targeting Mughal supply lines and retreating into hill forts. Historian Stewart Gordon notes that their conventional tactics proved ineffective. In 1657, Shivaji raided Mughal-held Junnar, to suppress him, but the rugged terrain and swift Maratha cavalry made containment difficult. Historian Richard Eaton notes that Aurangzeb's time in the region convinced him that containment MUGHAL STANCE ON DECCAN was ineffective, and that military subjugation was the only path to lasting control.

AURANGZEB'S DECCAN CAMPAIGN: **RULING FROM BATTLEFIELD**

Empire, and his protracted conflict with making Bijapur and Golconda tributary entourage of tens of thousands, his sons,

a harem, and a vast mobile court, he ruled from the battlefield, a move historian Richard Eaton calls unprecedented. disrupting Mughal administration and weakening imperial stability. At first, his conquest seemed unstoppable. In 1686, Bijapur fell after a brutal 15-month siege. A year later, Golconda succumbed to treachery. The Deccan sultanates were gone, their wealth absorbed into the empire. Yet, these victories only deepened his troubles. The real battle had just begun. HOW CONQUESTS EXPOSED MUGHAL **EMPIRE TO MARATHAS**

NSIDER

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Rather than securing Mughal supremacy, the conquest of Bijapur and Golconda deepened the ulcer that was the Deccan exposing the empire to an enemy it could not overpower. The empire's problems deepened. While the Mughal army fought endlessly in the south, northern India suffered from neglect, leading to uprisings by the Jats, Sikhs, and Rajputs. In Deccan, the Marathas, now the primary opposition, intensified their resistance. Several historians have argued that Aurangzeb's decision to destroy the Deccan sultanates was a strategic error, as it removed potential allies who could have been used to counterbalance Maratha influence.

His prolonged campaigns drained the treasury, overburdened the administrative system, and spread discontent among Mughal nobles. He persisted with the belief that the conquest of the Deccan would ultimately shape his legacy

MARATHAS: A DIFFERENT ENEMY FOR THE MUGHALS

The Mughal-Maratha war under Aurangzeb was unlike any other conflict the empire had faced. Unlike the Rajputs, who could be subdued through diplomacy and matrimonial alliances, or the Deccan sultanates, which relied on conventional battlefield tactics, the Marathas operated with a decentralized structure and an unconventional style of warfare. Their guerrilla tactics, deep knowledge of the Western Ghats, and ability to swiftly regroup after setbacks made them a relentless enemy. Rather than engaging in large-scale battles, the Marathas harassed Mughal supply lines, raided garrisons, and used their forts as defensive strongholds to resist prolonged sieges. The war of attrition turned into a festering ulcer, as Aurangzeb's vast army, built for large-scale engagements, found itself exhausted by an enemy that refused to fight with conventional tactics. His vast army wasn't prepared for the decades-long Deccan campaign, which became one of the most exhausting wars in Mughal history.

BUSINESS

Airtel and Jio are bringing Starlink to India but don't take out your wallets just yet

Airtel and Reliance Jio have signed a deal with Elon Musk's SpaceX to bring Starlink services to India. However, the rollout of these services still depend on regulatory approvals. So when will the services roll out in India? This article has all the details.

Airtel on Tuesday signed a deal with Elon Musk's SpaceX to bring Starlink to India. Earlier this morning, Jio made an announcement about a similar arrangement. Rollout of Starlink satellite internet services in India is expected to help the two network providers in expanding the availability of their service in areas that have been underserved till now, including rural schools and health centres, and other remote areas. However, if you are thinking that Starlink will soon be available now that the deals have been signed with Airtel and Jio, don't take out your wallets just yet.

Airtel and Jio aren't exactly ready to rollout Starlink yet

regulatory approvals from the government of Starlink services are "subject to SpaceX receiving its own authorisations to sell Starlink in India". The same was declared by Jio in its press announcement as well.



India for a while now

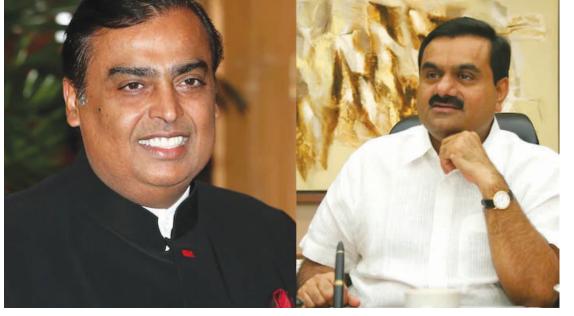
The Indian market has over 950 million regulatory this would only be made possible once attempt made by SpaceX to roll out potential cyber and data threats.

the Indian government approved the same. Starlink in India, Union Minister leverage its telecom infrastructure in SpaceX has been trying to get Starlink to Jyotiraditya Scindia had said that India India. Similarly, Jio has entered a is open to granting Starlink a satellite partnership with SpaceX to provide While Airtel and Jio have declared a deal This isn't the first time that SpaceX has internet licence, as long as it complies Starlink services through its physical with Starlink, a lot still depends on tried to bring Starlink services to India. with the country's strict security and stores and online platforms once it requirements. for the Starlink services to be made subscribers, so naturally SpaceX wants emphasised that, like any other satellite to incorporate Starlink into its broadband available in India. Airtel's press release its services to be rolled out here. service, Starlink must fully adhere to lineup, complementing existing services yesterday made it very clear that the rollout However, it's been a bumpy ride for India's security protocols and meet all like JioFiber and JioAirFiber. This Starlink so far. In 2022, SpaceX was conditions outlined in the government's collaboration will strengthen Jio's internet forced to refund pre-orders for its licensing framework. Once these offerings, especially in regions where Starlink equipment after the Indian requirements are met, the government will government flagged it for offering grant the licence. To operate in India, a challenge. Jio also says that it will Essentially, while Airtel and Jio have had satellite internet services without Starlink will need to follow an manage the installation, activation, and their initial agreements to work together securing the required approvals. Last established process that prioritises customer support for Starlink users in India, with SpaceX for providing Starlink India, year, in November, after another security, ensuring protection against ensuring a seamless experience for

Airtel and Jio's plans to bring Starlink to India Airtel has announced plans to collaborate with SpaceX, potentially selling Starlink hardware through its retail outlets and offering satellite-based internet services to businesses. The company also intends to use Starlink's technology to expand connectivity in rural schools, healthcare facilities, and remote locations where conventional internet infrastructure is inadequate. Additionally, Airtel is exploring ways to integrate Starlink into its network while allowing SpaceX to He secures regulatory approvals. Jio aims deploying traditional broadband remains customers.

India's top 7 billionaires lose \$34 billion amid stock market slump

Seven of India's richest people, including Mukesh Ambani, Gautam Adani, Shiv Nadar, Azim Premji, Shapoor Mistry and others, have lost a massive \$34 billion owing to the stock market selloff in 2025. Together, these billionaires had a combined net worth of over \$300 billion, as per Bloomberg Billionaire index data, but their fortunes have taken a significant hit as market conditions remain volatile.Among them, Gautam Adani has suffered the most, with his wealth shrinking by \$10.1 billion this year, bringing his net worth down to \$68.8 billion. His company, Adani Enterprises, has fallen 12% this year. Other Adani Group stocks, like Adani Green Energy, decreased by 22%, Adani Total Gas lost 21.26%, while Adani Energy Solutions and



Adani Ports dipped by 6% and 3%, respectively. Mukesh Ambani, India's richest person, lost \$3.13 billion this year, though he still remains India's richest man with a net worth of \$87.5 billion. While Reliance Industries is up 2.54% this year, Jio

Financial Services is down 28.7%. Shiv Nadar, the chairman of HCL Technologies, witnessed a decline of \$7.13 billion in his wealth. His net worth currently stands at \$36 billion.Wipros' Azim Premji saw a drop of \$2.70 billion this year and presently, his current net worth is at \$28.2 billion.

Shapoor Mistry, the man behind the engineering and construction giant Shapoorji Pallonji Group, suffered a decline of \$4.52 billion, with his fortune now standing at \$34.1 billion.Savitri Jindal, chairperson emeritus of the OP Jindal Group, has lost \$2.22 billion, leaving her with a net worth of \$30.1 billion. Dilip Shanghvi of Sun Pharmaceutical Industries saw his fortune decrease by \$4.21 billion, bringing his net worth down to \$25.3 billion.Meanwhile, the impact of the stock market downturn extends beyond India. On the global level, Elon Musk, the richest person in the world, witnessed a loss of \$126 billion, triggered by a slump of 39% in Tesla shares this year.

Nicotine-free vapes too can harm your lungs

London- Researchers found that even the nicotine-free vape caused oxidative stress in the lung, increased inflammation and the breakdown of blood vessels. This damage is similar to those found in patients with lung injury, said the team from Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) in the UK.

E-ci garettes have become increasingly popular in recent years and areoften seen as harmless alternatives to cigarette smoking. The team identified a protein that causes nicotine-free vape fluid to increase in the lung, causing the damage.

In the paper, published in the journal Microvascular Research, they demonstrated a range of damaging pathways when an in vitro model of the human lung was exposed to a common brand of nicotine-free market is not currently well- function," Chichger said. e-cigarette.

Recent studies have focused on harm done by vapes containing nicotine, and 39 countries have banned the sale of nicotine-containing ecigarettes, resulting in an increase in the use of nicotinefree vapes, particularly in adolescents.

"Vaping is a significant health concern considering the rising numbers of smokers, especially young teenagers, and research into its health impact is still at an early stage," said lead author Dr Havovi Chichger, Associate Professor of Biomedical Science at ARU.

"Nicotine-free vape fluid has been demonstrated to have the same chemical composition as nicotine-containing fluid except for the absence of nicotine. As the



regulated, it has been difficult to The team at the University's human lung.

vape fluid on cells in a model of a vaping of nicotine-free e-

the most damaging to vascular group measured the effect of flavour, were purchased from an future years."

online retailer and contained different concentrations of nicotine: 0mg, 10mg and 20mg in a 2ml solution to mimic concentrations commonly used by the public.

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Analysis of the data revealed that a protein, ARF6, which was not previously thought to be linked to smoking or lung injury but is associated with vascular function, has a key role in regulating pulmonary microvasculature.

"Our findings indicate that nicotine-free vape fluid exposure causes similar pro-oxidant and pro-inflammatory effects on human microvascular endothelial cells, and that ARF6 is a key regulator in vape-induced damage to blood vessels," Chichger said.

"Further investigation is vital to identify the link between the cigarettes and the potential judge which chemical could be Biomedical Science Research Three vapes, all watermelon development of lung injury in

Family companies are experiencing heir loss: Report

Family companies are the hidden engines of the global economy. More than 90 per cent of all companies are family companies. These include many of the world's biggest organisationssuch as LVMH Moet Hennessy Louis Vuitton SE in France and Samsung Electronics Co. in South Korea, Bloomberg reported. A third of companies in Standard & Poor's 500 index and 40 per cent of the largest companies in France and Germany have a strong family element, Bloomberg reported. Yet thanks to a combination of demographics and changing social mores, many family firms now face the ultimate threat to their survival: a shortage of heirs. Good riddance, you might say, after watching the psychopathic antics on succession. That ignores the importance



of the best family firms not just as engines of progress and innovation, but as repositories of public trust, especially at a time when trust in capitalism is at an historically low ebb, Bloomberg reported. Even if family companies grow to be behemoths like Succession's Waystar RoyCo, family companies are inherently fragile organisations. This is partly or even beyond, Bloomberg reported.

because they are so prone to family feuds but also because producing a capable heir is hard. Nonfamily companies have the advantage of choosing successors from the entire universe of management talent. Family-run companies are restricted by DNA, Bloomberg reported. The heirs that remain are much less inclined to follow their fathers into the family business. The brightest ones go off to elite universities and business schools and frequently put down their roots in big cities. The less talented ones who stay at home may be willing to take over the company but are often not up to the job. Two other demographic factors compound the problem of the shortage of heirs. Patriarchs and matriarchs now live much longer and may not be willing to concede control until they are in their seventies

Diabetes drug Ozempic can reduce severe liver disease risk too

London- Novo Nordisk's Ozempic and other GLP1 agonists -- popular diabetes drugs -- are also associated with a reduced risk of developing cirrhosis and liver cancer in people with Type 2 diabetes and chronic liver disease, according to a study. GLP1 agonists like Ozempic reduce blood sugar levels and are mainly used to

treat Type 2 diabetes. However, as the drug also reduces appetite, it is now increasingly used to treat obesity and has drug.



become a popular weight-loss The study, published in the who took the drug for a long approved drugs to reduce this something about the effect of the journal Gut, showed that those period of time had a lower risk risk," said Axel Wester, Assistant drugs before that."

forms of liver disease such as Department of Medicine. cirrhosis and liver cancer.

This suggests that GLP1 stopped taking GLP1 agonists, agonists could be an effective resulting in a lack of protective treatment to avoid severe liver effect. However, those who disease in people with concurrent continued taking their medication Type 2 diabetes, said the over a 10-year period were half researchers from Karolinska as likely to develop severe liver Institutet in Sweden.

People with Type-2 diabetes are need to be confirmed in clinical more likely to develop severe trials, but it will take many years liver disease

because there are currently no existing registry data to try to say

of later developing more severe Professor at Karolinska's

Many of the people in the study disease. However, "the results for these studies to be completed," "Our findings are interesting Wester said. "Therefore, we use

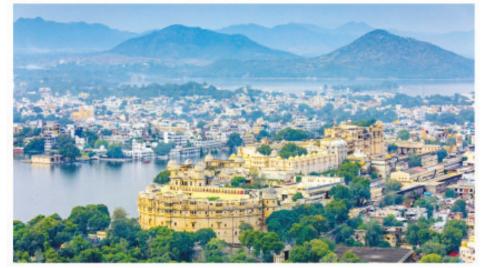
TRAVEL



Udaipur Emerges As The Top Searched Destination In India For A Holi Getaway: 5 Things To Do In The City

(Sai Bureau) With the vibrant festival of Holi falling on a Friday this year, travellers are maximising the extended weekend by opting for quick getaways in multiple tourist hotspots across the country. From cultural and spiritual immersion to scenic getaways, Indian travellers are seeking diverse experiences this Holi.

According to a report by Booking.com, one of the world's leading digital travel companies, there has been a surge in interest for destinations ranging from Vrindavan, Mathura, Pushkar, Jaipur, Shantiniketan, and Hampi. These destinations are known for their Holi celebrations. From the traditional Jaipur rituals in the temples of Mathura and Vrindavan to the royal processions of Rajasthan, these regional celebrations offer a diverse range of experiences that are capturing the attention of travellers across the country. Simultaneously, the allure of peaceful escapes is also drawing travellers to serene coastal towns and hill stations such as Puducherry, Lonavala and Ooty, highlighting the are maximising the extended weekend grand Holi celebration, where you can diverse appeal of domestic travel this with Holi.Top 10 most searched domestic international travel plans. From dance performances, and, of course, Holi parties. These events often destinations by Indian travellers cultural celebrations in Vrindavan and the throwing of vibrant gulaal. It's an feature traditional music, dance, and travelling between 13.03.2025 and Mathura to leisure getaways in Dubai excellent opportunity to experience delicious food, providing a high-end 16.03.2025 Udaipur Mumbai Rishikesh



New Delhi Varanasi Vrindavan Puducherry Puri

Lonavala

Talking about this report, Santosh Kumar, Country Manager for India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia at Booking.com said, "Indian travellers The City Palace of Udaipur hosts a Many luxury hotels and resorts in diverse domestic and Tokyo, Indians are blending the royal charm of the city while cultural immersion and contemporary celebrating with the locals. getaways. Booking.com remains 2. Join the Local Street Celebrations committed to providing a seamless and Udaipur has a lively and festive

hassle-free travel experience this festive period by providing a diverse attractions and rental cars - all bookable on one platform."

five things you must do in the city.

1. Participate in the Royal Holi 5. Attend a Holi Party at a Luxury Celebrations at the City Palace

atmosphere during Holi. Head to the local markets and streets where people come together to celebrate. You can enjoy the festive vibes, meet the friendly locals, and join in the traditional celebrations.

3. Boat Ride on Lake Pichola

For a more relaxed Holi experience, consider taking a boat ride on Lake Pichola. You can enjoy a peaceful ride while watching the festivities unfold along the banks of the lake. Some hotels and resorts along the lake may also host private Holi events.

4. Visit the Bagore Ki Haveli Museum Experience the cultural side of Udaipur during Holi at Bagore Ki Haveli. The museum hosts special range of accommodations, flights, cultural performances during the festival, showcasing traditional Rajasthani dance, music, and folk art. In case you are planning to visit It's a great place to immerse yourself Udaipur around Holi, then here are in the heritage of the city during the celebrations.

Hotel or Resort

Udaipur, such as the Oberoi Udaivilas and enjoy traditional Rajasthani music, or the Leela Palace, host exclusive experience of the festival. It's a great way to enjoy Holi in a more relaxed and luxurious environment.

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Court grants bail to man in 13,864 kgheroin smuggling case: No formal charges

The Bombay High Court has granted bail to a man from Punjab's Ludhiana, citing his prolonged detention without formal charges in a heroin smuggling case.

The Bombay High Court has granted bail to a man from Punjab's Ludhiana, accused of transferring Rs 1.5 lakh for clearing a consignment of 13,864 kg of heroin at Navi Mumbai's Nhava Sheva port for his brother, the main accused in the case.

The High Court emphasised the prolonged imprisonment of accused Gurjugdip Singh Smagh and the absence of formal charges as key reasons for granting bail. The accused was in Intelligence (DRI) in their ongoing headed for Hoshiarpur in Punjab, SIM card to erase evidence and custody for nearly two years investigation. He was also and revealed heroin drugs without charges being filed.

A bench of Justice Shivkumar influencing witnesses. Dige was hearing a bail The case began in 2022, when arrest of the main accused, The advocate representing application filed Smagh.Smagh was ordered to inspected a container destined Smagh's name. provide a personal bond of Rs 1 for Punjab, at the Mumbai port. The prosecution accused Smagh apart from the alleged fund emphasising the necessity of lakh and must cooperate with the The consignment, attributed to of conspiring with others, transfer. Mishra also pointed out balancing judicial process and Directorate of Revenue 'Smagh Trading Company', was destroying his mobile phone and that Smagh's prolonged detention individual rights.



required to abstain from concealed in bags.

Further investigation led to the if released, he might abscond.

attempting to evade arrest. The prosecution also suspected that by the DRI acted on intelligence and whose statement mentioned Smagh argued that his client had no direct evidence against him The court

without charges violated principles of justice.

Advocate Mithilesh Mishra, appearing for the accused, argued that he was behind bars for around two years, yet charges were not yet framed in the trial. "The only allegation against Smagh is of transferring Rs.1.5 lakh for clearance of the consignment of accused no 1. To prove conspiracy of the applicant in the crime, evidence is required. It may take time to conclude the trial," submitted Mishra.

However, Justice Dige, while hearing the bail plea, noted that the accused had no prior criminal record and that his alleged involvement required further trial proceedings. The court observed that the prolonged incarceration without formal charges being framed was a significant factor in granting bail.

granted bail,

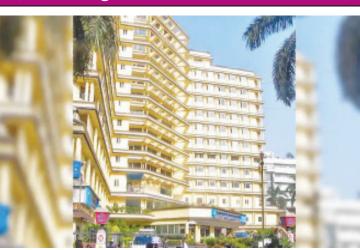
Lilavati hospital ex-trustees accused of siphoning Rs 1,250 crore, 3 cases filed

The current trustees of Lilavati Hospital conducted a forensic audit of accounts and uncovered significant financial irregularities, including the embezzlement of Rs 1,250 crore through fake orders and records.

The trust managing Mumbai's renowned Lilavati Hospital has filed an embezzlement case exceeding Rs 1,250 crore against its former trustees, who allegedly siphoned off the funds through fraudulent orders and records. However, the former trustee rejected the allegations as baseless and malicious.

Three FIRs have been registered for the alleged financial misappropriation by Mehta, and his relatives and financial records. associates. against the former trustees.

trustees practised black magic trust. the current trustee, Prashant documents and signatures to which uncovered significant adjudication," he said. Mehta, and his mother, Charu appoint his sons and nephews financial irregularities, including THREE CASES FILED



former trustees, including Vijay Mehta. The large-scale fraud as trustees while removing Mehta, brother of Lilavati came to light following a recent Kishore Mehta as a permanent Hospital's founder Kishore forensic audit of the hospital's trustee. This led to a prolonged

complaints of tax evasion and Kishore Mehta travelled abroad regained his position. theft have also been lodged for medical treatment, during Following Kishore Mehta's

legal battle, which ended in

embezzlement through fake Three FIRs have been filed orders and records.

of Vijay Mehta, who is also a misappropriation of Rs 11.52 former trustee, said in a crore invested in Mayfair statement through his advocate Realtors and Vesta India, that the allegations are companies unrelated to "baseless and malicious". healthcare. Listing the "achievements" as a The second FIR involves trustee of the hospital, Mehta cheating and misappropriation said, "As facts prove, there is of Rs 44 crore under the guise no veracity, whatsoever, for any of legal fees, despite no actual of the allegations made by these legal proceedings. disputed and alleged trustees". The third FIR is over the He also claimed that the siphoning of over Rs 1,200 concerned authorities, in crore for hospital supplies that September 2024, upheld his were never purchased, as position as a permanent trustee, revealed in the forensic audit. Additionally, According to officials, in 2002, 2016 when Kishore Mehta which has been challenged Additionally, the former trustees since. "It is their endeavour to are under investigation by the malign my client and browbeat Income Tax Department for which his brother, Vijay Mehta, death in 2024, his son Prashant him into giving up proceedings alleged tax evasion amounting It is also alleged that the former took temporary charge of the Mehta became the permanent against these alleged trustees to Rs 500 crore. trustee. Prashant conducted a and their illegal appointment, A separate case of theft is also on the hospital premises to harm Vijay Mehta allegedly forged forensic audit of accounts, which, as of now, are pending being probed regarding

against Vijay Mehta and others. Meanwhile, Chetan Mehta, son The first FIR pertains to the

valuables and jewellery worth over Rs 59 crore stolen from a

Holi wasn't always about Holika burning. Medieval India called it festival of Kama



By ANIRUDH KANISETTI

popular and distinctive festivals. coloured water and powders, But how did the idea of throwing amid general merriment. Holika, colours in the springtime develop? it's believed, was a demoness It took over two thousand years who attempted to kill her nephew for Holi to take on its recognisable Prahalada, a devotee of Vishnu. form; over this time it developed In North India especially, the from a festival focused on women throwing of colours is also linked and erotic love, to a celebration to Krishna, one of Vishnu's of cosmic deities, sponsored by avatars. All of these - the bonfire, states.

expresses not only the fun and before their amalgamation into renewal of springtime, but also Holi. India's ideas of gender relations, Interestingly, a spring celebration and the politics of the powerfulas regressive statements by the oldest surviving festival of certain UP politicians show. Holi and the spring

What is Holi, really? Today, this Dipavali festivals of lamps. A Madana-Mahotsava. There is a All castes and professions took the length and breadth of courtly spring festival is best defined by "Holaka" spring festival is surprising common thread: they part in the merriment. Women Sanskrit, describing coloured two practices. First, the bonfire mentioned in the addenda to the were all centred around a god played a major part in the general water and pastes caressing

demoness Holika, followed the Holi is one of India's most next day by the throwing of the colours, the connection to In many ways, this festival Vishnu - evolved separately, Kashmir to the Deccan. Historian Anderson, Vasantotsava: The Indeed, Dr Anderson suggests

by the name of "Holi" is perhaps the entire Sanskritic corpus celebrating the destruction of the Atharva Veda, dating to about who is no longer important in rowdiness: they would roll about various body parts.

there's no mention, at this early erotic love. date, of demoness-burning or Festival of Kama of Holi as it's imagined today. Medieval, this was a time of extraordinary innovation, stimulated by Central Asian rulers such as the Kushans and the trade networks they brought with them. Sanskrit broke out of priestly circles and into courtly literature. Suddenly — like the springtime itself — there is a great blossoming of spring festivals in the sources, from many:

the 7th-8th centuries BCE, but Hinduism. Kama, the deity of in flowers, ingest mango-

writes, there are also occasional century CE, the poet (and with sticks. mentions of "festivals of colours". possibly emperor) Harsha has Medieval women would clamber But we don't have a clear sense this to say in his epic, Ratnavali. onto swings in gardens; they "Observe the charm of this, would also lead the worship of Something changed in the first Kama's festival... with citizens Kama, whose idols were placed millennium CE, though. As I've dancing at the touch of water at the foot of flowering trees. discussed elsewhere in Thinking from syringes. Citizens are Kama was believed to have been voluntarily seized by lovely born in the springtime, thus women under the exhilaration of linking the blossoming of the wine... all the quarters are world to the blossoming of desire, rendered yellowish-red with a to the fertility of women. mass of fragrant powder Premodern Indians were not coy scattered all about... Behold the about sex and eroticism. The sporting of courtesans who are worship of Kama, the centrality charming on account of their of women to the spring festivities, hissing uttered when struck by and the dissolution of societal water from syringes charged by norms were all part of the naughty gallants." (Translation by seasonal cycles of the world. Leona Anderson, in "The Indian Spring Festivals of India, Texts that the throwing of colours may Spring Festival (Vasantotsava): & Traditions.) This, and other have developed from the One or Many?" analyses this. verses, tell us why Kama's throwing of flowers and pollen; The names and celebrations are festival was so popular: normal the squirting of water from Vasantotsava, social boundaries were blurred, syringes may also have had Phalgunotsava, Chaitrotsava, with men and women publicly erotic undertones. In fact, there older even than Dipotsava/ Madhutsava, Kamotsava, consuming intoxicants together. are rather explicit verses, across

blossom wine, and tease the men. While the gender roles coloured powders. In the In the rich, confident, urban have reversed in India today, centuries thereafter, seasonal milieu of courtly Sanskrit, some of this survives in traditions festivals continued to develop, descriptions of spring festivals such as Lathmar Holi, where and, as historian Sam Dalrymple are everywhere. Around the 7th women thrash men (playfully)

Out of Putin's war and Trump's treachery, a new Europe is being born

By Nathalie Tocci

Moscow's immense military mobilisation is clearly not aimed just at Ukraine. Unless Vladimir Putin accepts a ceasefire with meaningful security guarantees there will be no end in sight to the war. If anything, we could see the extension of Russia's aggression beyond Ukraine. The bleak reality is that Europe still faces an unprecedented threat and notwithstanding signs of progress for Ukraine at colonise and prey upon. Most (mainly through close-knit talks in Jeddah, we face it European publics sense this. economic and monetary means we have to accept that Starmer becoming the dominant alone.

confront it with the US working beginning to act. against us. Vladimir Putin and Their response is forming the Through the defence alliance, easier to say what it is not than lists carefully curated. But Donald Trump appear to share basis for a different kind of European countries acted as what it is. It is not the EU, or not Eurosceptics, including those in a plan: a Vichy-like regime in Europe from the one we have loyal transatlantic allies. They the one we have long taken for the Trump administration who Ukraine and a European known for decades, the allowed Washington to reap granted. The 27-country union is are hoping this means that a continent split into spheres of Europe that was built in significant gains from the simply not equipped to take dysfunctional EU has been influence, which Russia, the peacetime. That Europe treaty, starting with the US decisions with the speed and sidelined and rendered US (and perhaps China) can sealed peace internally defence industry. Europeans level of ambition necessary to irrelevant, are off the mark.



A critical mass of European interdependency). Externally, Worse, we now have to leaders gets it too. They are its security was largely

Washington in its follies, such death, as the invasion of Irag in 2003 geopolitical and security to topple Saddam Hussein.

All along, the EU could afford Moreover, the EU now includes to be slow and cumbersome; Trojan horses such as there was no rush. It was wiser Hungary's Viktor Orbán and to painstakingly construct the the populist nationalist Robert "common European home", Fico, prime minister of gradually weaving together Slovakia, who are plainly joint interests and believing that working on behalf of Putin's a common European identity Russia and Trump's US. would slowly emerge.

War in Europe however, and the European leaders including unreliability of the US as an ally Emmanuel Macron and Keir the post-1945 and the post-1989 voices, shifting into crisis mode, Europes are gone. A new Europe convening emergency summits in guaranteed by the US via Nato. is being born however; and it is their respective capitals; invitation

also obediently followed confront the dramatic, life-orfast-changing moment its citizens face.

This is why we have seen

ENTERTAINMENT

Deepika slays in Parisian white, hubby Ranveer says 'have mercy on me'

Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone turned heads in a breathtaking white ensemble exuding vintage glamour with a modern Parisian flair, leaving her actor-husband, Ranveer Singh, utterly smitten. Deepika took to Instagram and dropped several looks of herself ahead of attending the Louis Vuitton Fashion Week in the fashion capital. In the first image, Deepika posed in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris.She is seen leaning over a stone railing with the iconic tower in the background, wearing a white oversized coat, black gloves, and a wide-brimmed white hat with a black ribbon. Then there's a close-up portrait of Deepika with a confident expression, showing her bold red lips, well-defined makeup.However, it was the comment by her husband Ranveer, which caught the eyes of many. The actor's reaction to the picture was pure admiration as he wrote, "Lord have mercy on me," after seeing his wife's photographs.Deepika and Ranveer started dating while shooting for the film 'Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela'. Later they got married in the year 2018. They married in Lake Como, Italy. They had two wedding ceremonies, one in South Indian style and the other one in Sindhi style. The two welcomed their first child on 8th September, 2024 and in November shared to the world that they named their baby girl Dua Padukone Singh, Deepika took to Instagram to share pictures of her daughter's feet. She captioned the post: "Dua Padukone Singh." Deepika explained, "Dua means 'a prayer' because she is the answer to our prayers." The actress concluded, "Our hearts are filled with love and gratitude. - Deepika and Ranveer." On the work front, Deepika made a small cameo in 'Singham Again' as Shakti Shetty. She was seen alongside Ajay Devgn, Ranveer, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Akshay

Sharvari takes Bengaluru by storm with her 'yummy' escapades



Bollywood actress Sharvari was "in and out of Bengaluru" but still managed to indulge in some mouthwatering food during her visit.Sharvari took to her Instagram stories, where she shared a collage of pictures featuring what all she had. The photographs showed that the actress gorged on dosas and filter coffee at the iconic breakfast spot Central Tiffin Room, known for their signature benne dosas, bajji and coffee. For the caption, the actress wrote: "In & out of BLR but yummy food has been had!"

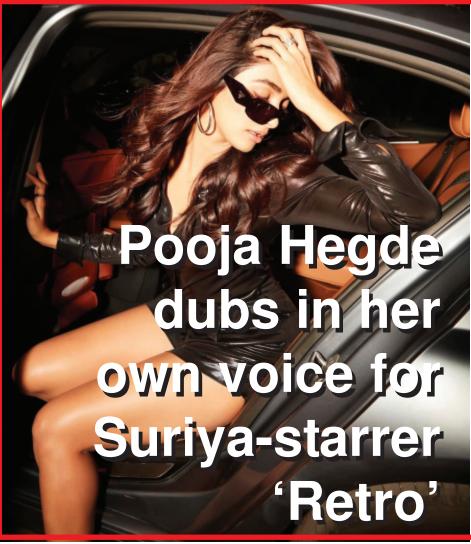


Rashmika Mandanna reveals what a night shoot looks like on the 'Thama' set

Rashmika Mandanna is currently shooting for the highlyanticipated film, "Thama", alongside Ayushmann Khurrana. The 'Animal' actress took to her official IG and dropped a sneak peek into the night schedule of the flick.Rashmika shared two photos in the stories section of her Instagram. In one of the snaps, she was seen sleeping in the car. "Hmmmm...night shoots..how much I love night shoots..clearly !@aditya_a_sarpatdar sir knows very well. #Thama.", the diva captioned the pic. In another still, Rashmika was seen in her vanity holding a travel cup that read, "Thama night shoot".On a different note, protagonist Ayushmann revealed that the shoot for "Thama" came to a momentary halt to celebrate India's win at the Champions trophy. Ayushmann took to his Instagram and posted a video of him and his crew members watching the India Vs New Zealand match on a phone.After India won the finals, the actor and his "Thama" crew started to cheer and clap. However, the team slowly proceeded towards the shoot location. Touted to be a 'bloody love story', "Thama" is a part of Maddock's blockbuster horror comedy universe. The film promises to be a gripping love story, set against a bloody backdrop.

With Ayushmann and Rashmika as the lead pair, the project also features Paresh Rawal and Nawazuddin Siddiqui in significant roles. "Thama" has been made under the direction of Aditya Sarpotdar of 'Munjya' fame. The story of the drama has been written by Niren Bhatt, Suresh Mathew, and Arun Fulara. The film talks about a relentless historian who delves into ancient texts, unraveling chilling truths about local vampire legends, as supernatural forces awaken. This quest not only unearths history but also ignites a battle for the town's very soul. Produced by Dinesh Vijan and Amar Kaushik, "Thama" is expected to be released by October 2025.





Actress Pooja Hegde is dubbing in her team that she would overcome this own voice for her character in direc- too," the production house tor Karthik Subbaraj's much-awaited explained."After an impressive look action entertainer Retro, featuring test, she began her daily Tamil trainactor Suriya in the lead. Continuing its ing and surprised everyone by depractise of presenting some funny and livering even lengthy monologue sememorable incidents that have hap- quences flawlessly. There were pened on the sets of Retro as a comic plenty of fun moments on set, with strip, Stone Bench films, the firm pro- the team confusing her with tougher ducing the film along with Suriya's 2D Tamil words," it disclosed. Entertainment, on Monday released its fifth comic strip titled 'EPI005: news for the last. It said, "And here's Vaazhga Tamizh! Challenge ac- the big news! Pooja Hegde is dubcepted! Pooja Hegde dubs for herself' bing in her own voice for the first on its X timeline. The production time in a regional film. Her dedicahouse then went on to explain how the tion and hard work has truly paid off. actress was chosen for the role and Can't wait to witness this on the big how she was up to the challenge of screen!"Apart from Suriya and Pooja having to dub for the role herself. Hegde, 'Retro', which is to hit "When director Karthik Subbaraj was screens on May 1, will feature a host searching for a heroine, multiple of stars including Malayalam actors names were suggested, but it was Joju George and Jayaram and Tamil Pooja Hegde who caught everyone's actor Karunakaran. Music for the film attention. After seeing her, Pandiyaa is by Santhosh Narayanan and cinhimself confirmed, 'This is the girl ematography by Shreyaas Krishna. we've been looking for!'. The only con- Editing is being handled by Shafique cern was whether she could deliver Mohamed Ali and art direction by dialogues fluently in Tamil. But Pooja, Jacki, Mayapandi. The film, which known for taking on challenges since will be high on action, will have her childhood, confidently assured the stunts by Kecha Khamphakdee.

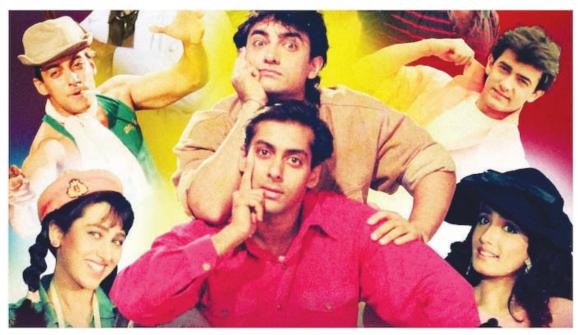
But the unit saved the best

NSIDER 32

Aamir Khan discusses Andaz Apna Apna 2 with Salman at his birthday bash

Aamir Khan celebrated his 60th birthday with a gathering at his home, attended by Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan. India Today Digital exclusively learnt that Aamir and Salman, along with director Rajkumar Santoshi, discussed Andaz Apna Apna and the possibility of a sequel. Aamir Khan welcomed his friends to his home to ring in his 60th birthday. It was attended by Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan, among others.

The three Khans also got chatting. Sources revealed that during their interaction, Aamir brought up the topic of Apna.



In the past, Santoshi has said that if the actors commit and give dates, he can put together a script. During his meeting with Salman today, sources revealed to India Today that the topic of Aamir and Salman reuniting for a second part was heard being discussed. The presence of director Rajkumar Santoshi at Aamir's place also added fuel to this speculation.Santoshi has recently directed Lahore 1947, starring Sunny Deol and Preity Zinta which is being produced by Aamir Khan Productions. Will there Only time will tell.

Aamir brought up the topic of Apna. The Rajkumar release and has been in the because of a possible be Andaz Apna Apna 2 then? a follow-up to Andaz Apna Santoshi film is set to re- news for many months sequel. Only time will tell.

Janhvi Kapoor says sister Khushi is looking like a 'princess' in song 'Tirkit Dhoom'



Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor gushed over her younger sister Khushi's dance moves, saying she looked like a "princess" in the song Tirkit Dhoom from her latest release, Nadaaniyan.Jahnvi took to her Instagram stories section, where she shared a glimpse of the song, which is sung by Vishal Dadlani, Amitabh Bhattacharya, Jigar Saraiya & Shradha Mishra. The "Mili" actress added the caption: "Khushi Kapoor is looking like a princess and dancing like a dream." Helmed by Shauna Gautam and produced by Dharmatic Entertainment, the project enjoys a stellar supporting cast, including Mahima Chaudhary, Suniel Shetty, Dia Mirza, and Jugal Hansraj."Nadaaniyan" chronicles the journey of Pia (Khushi Kapoor), a South Delhi diva who is determined to create her perfect love story, and Arjun (Ibrahim Ali Khan), a middle-class overachiever aiming to become the debate team captain. Their lives intertwine when Pia convinces Arjun to pose as her boyfriend for a staged romance. However, what begins as a simple plan soon turns complicated. Talking about Janhvi, the actress will be seen in "Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari" with Varun Dhawan. The film, which is directed by Shashank Khaitan, also stars Sanya Malhotra, and Rohit Saraf. She also has Param Sundari with Sidharth Malhotra. The actress recently resumed shooting for the film after completing the Kerala schedule. Talking about "Param Sundari", the film has been made under the direction of Tushar Jalota, who is known for his work on 'Dasvi'. The film stars Sidharth as 'Param' and Janhvi as 'Sundari'. The project is set against the picturesque backwaters of Kerala, the romantic comedy promises to be a rollercoaster of laughter, chaos, and unexpected twists. It is a cross-cultural love story that centers around a love tale where two contrasting worlds collide, a "North ka munda" meets a "South ki Sundari." "Param Sundari" is slated for a release on July 25.

NSIDER 33

Rakul enjoys 'floating meal' with her *whole heart' Jackky in Maldives*

Bollywood star couple Rakul Preet Singh and Jackky Bhagnani are currently enjoying a romantic holiday in the Maldives. The actress tagged her husband as her "whole heart" while enjoying a floating meal. Rakul took to her Instagram stories, where she shared a picture romantically posing with her husband. The picture features the couple enjoying a floating meal in a luxurious setting.

The actress looks like a doll in a red swimsuit and sunglasses, while Jackky is shirtless and is also sporting sunglasses. They are in a pool, embracing each other with a beautiful ocean backdrop. The floating meal tray contains an assortment of pastries, bread, scrambled eggs, cold cuts, cheese, fruit, and condiments. She wrote "My whole (heart emoji)" as the caption. On March 9, Rakul shared some romantic glimpses from their holiday. She took to her Instagram stories, where she shared a video featuring the couple. In the clip, the actress and Jackky are seen embracing each other. Rakul then asks her husband "like the sunset?" To which, Jackky looks at his wife lovingly and answers "lovely". On the work front, the actress has wrapped up the Patiala schedule of her upcoming film "De De Pyaar De 2."

In "De De Pyaar De 2," the actress will be seen reprising her role of Aisha alongside Ajay Devgn. The sequel, directed by Anshul Sharma, also features R. Madhavan. In the upcoming comedy, Madhavan will portray Singh's father, and there will be a comedic interaction between his character and Ajay Devgn's role, Ashish.

The first film, "De De Pyaar De," which hit theaters in May 2019, told the story of Ashish (Ajay Devgn), a wealthy 50-year-old man who falls in love with Ayesha (Rakul Preet), who is nearly half his age. Their relationship faces opposition from Ashish's family and his ex-wife, Manju (Tabu).

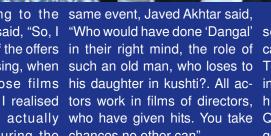


Aamir Khan reveals he never got a film offer from Subhash

Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan, who was last seen in 'Laal Singh Chaddha', has shared that he never received an offer for a film from filmmaker Subhash Ghai despite being a bonafide superstar. The actor recently spoke with veteran lyricist and screenwriter Javed Akhtar in Mumbai, and said, "The directors with whom I had to work, the ones who are successful, Subhash Ghai, you know, at that time they were the top directors. them?". Responding to the same event, Javed Akhtar said, screenwriter asked him play- what fully, "Have you ever thanked done". Elsewhere, during the chances no other can".



And I wanted to work with same, the superstar said, "So, I "Who would have done 'Dangal' selective is something which image, Aamir is perhaps the them, but none of them offered chose from the rest of the offers in their right mind, the role of me a film". He further men- I got. And after choosing, when such an old man, who loses to tioned, "They didn't give me an the shooting of those films his daughter in kushti?. All acoffer", on which the veteran started, that's when I realised tors work in films of directors, l had





came to him very early in his life. only superstar from Hindi cin-The actor said that during the initial phase of his career after his debut in 'Qayamat Se potential to set standards both Qayamat Tak', he struggled with in terms of box-office and the good scripts but back then as cultural impact.

well he said no to a lot of films.The actor said, "At my worst I had the courage to say no. That's why I behave this way till now. If I would have compromised that day my entire career would have been a series of compromises". "I got a Mahesh bhatt film at the worst point of life. But I didn't like the film. I had the courage and told this to Mahesh Bhatt", he added. While other Bollywood superstars are very Aamir said that being conscious of their cinematic ema, who dares to experiment, and does films that have the

ENTERTAINMENT

Kriti Kharbanda reveals what led to her casting in 'Housefull 4'

Bollywood actress Kriti Kharbanda, whose Vinod Bachchan and said, 'kahan se laya movie 'Shaadi Mein Zaroor Aana' has re-released in theatres, has shared that the film played a huge role in her being offered the comedy franchise 'Housefull 4'.Shaadi Mein Zaroor Aana', which first released in 2017, became a sleeper hit and has since gained a loyal following. Talking about her work in the film, she said, "This is one film where I didn't care about what anyone else thought. I watched myself and said, 'Damn, Kriti, you nailed it! I'm so proud of you!" she shared. "For the first time, people spoke about my performance, not just about how I looked. They appreciated the depth I brought to the role, and that, for me, was the biggest win". Sharing what led to her casting in 'Housefull 4', the actress said, "Sajid Nadiadwala sir watched 'Shaadi Mein Zaroor Aana', and that's how 'I landed Housefull 4'", Kriti revealed. Even the legendary David Dhawan was so impressed that he called producer

tu iss ladki ko?". Kriti's journey is nothing short of inspiring. In an industry where connections often matter more than talent, she has fought her way up, proving time and again that she deserves every bit of success. She has built her career with hard work, resilience, and an undeniable ability to win hearts.

Meanwhile, on the work front, she's gearing up for her next big chapter. The actress is making her OTT debut with 'Rana Naidu' season 2, alongside Rana Daggubati, Daggubati Venkatesh and Arjun Rampal.She also has 'Risky Romeo', a neo-noir comic tragedy directed by Abir Sengupta in the pipeline. In the film, she will be seen opposite Sunny Singh. From 'Shaadi Mein Zaroor Aana' to 'Housefull 4', from big-screen to OTT projects, Kriti Kharbanda's journey is proof that audiences love her and want to see more of her.



Randeep Hooda: Played dark characters before, but Ranatunga is pure evil

Actor Randeep Hooda, who will be seen in a menacing character named Ranatunga in the action-thriller "Jaat", said he has played dark and layered characters before, but this role is just "pure evil".Speaking about playing Ranatunga in "Jaat", Randeep shared: "I've played dark and layered characters before, but Ranatunga is pure evil. He's violent, unhinged, and operates with a kind of brutality that even shocked me while performing it." The actor said that "Jaat", which also stars Sunny Deol, is a film that dives into a world of raw, unapologetic crime. "And my character sits at the center of that storm. I think our director Gopichand Malineni was so very clear about how he envisioned this character and I completely took on what he has imagined for this role". It was on March 10, when Randeep's look from the film was out. He took to Instagram, where he shared a teaser video to introduce his pyaara ha (my name means a over him. With an intense character. The video begins lot to me.)"The video then cuts glare, he lights a cigarette, with the actor sitting in the to a striking shot of Randeep exuding raw intensity. He police station. He says sitting outdoors in the pouring says his character's name: "Mujhe mera naam bahut rain, a rugged jute bag draped "Ranatunga".



Mrunal Thakur's recent workout session is pure fitness goals



Maintaining a perfect physique used social media to share an is a crucial requirement in the entertainment industry these days. Marunal Thakur also used social media to share an insight and posted a video of herself into her recent workout session.She took to the stories section of her Instagram handle and posted a video of herself sweating it out on the cycling machine. The 'Sita Ramam' actress also asked a fun question to the netizens "What did sushi A say to sushi B....", the stunner asked.Maintaining a perfect physique is a crucial requirement in the entertainment industry these days. Marunal Thakur also Kolaveri Di" while cruising in her car.

insight into her recent workout session.She took to the stories section of her Instagram handle sweating it out on the cycling machine. The 'Sita Ramam' actress also asked a fun question to the netizens "What did sushi A say to sushi B " the stunner asked.Mrunal has been treating her InstaFam with behind-the-scenes moments from her shoot. Earlier, she dropped a fun video of herself singing along to the popular Dhanush's hit song "Why This