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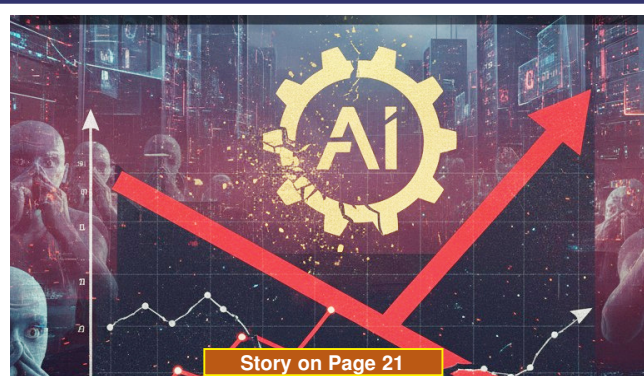
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Indian Man Stabs Two Teens With Metal Fork On US-Germany Flight, Arrested Who Was Vaishnav Krishnakumar, Indian Teen With Golden Visa Who Died In Dubai

(Our Staff Reporter) An Indian national, Praneeth Kumar Usiripalli, has been charged in the US with allegedly stabbing two teenagers with a metal fork and

to find Usiripalli standing over him, after which the 28-year-old accused struck his left clavicle area with the fork and lunged to attack the second victim, who suffered a laceration on the back of his head. In a strange twist, after crew members attempted to stop Usiripalli, he raised his hand to make an imaginary pistol, put it in his mouth and pulled the trigger. He then turned towards a female passenger and slapped her. He also tried to slap a crew member. Following the attack, the flight was diverted to Boston Logan International Airport, where Usiripalli was taken into



slapping a passenger on board a Lufthansa flight from Chicago to Germany, according to a statement by the US Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts. According to court documents, Usiripalli allegedly stabbed a 17-year-old passenger in the shoulder with a metal fork and then subsequently attacked another 17-year-old and stabbed him in the back of his head with the same fork. The first victim was sleeping in a middle seat when he woke up

custody. The accused does not have a "lawful status" in the US currently and was admitted to the country on a student visa. Usiripalli has been charged in the US District Court with one count of assault with a dangerous weapon with intent to do bodily harm while travelling on an aircraft in the special aircraft jurisdiction of the US. If convicted, he can face up to 10 years in prison, up to three of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000.

Vaishnav Krishnakumar was an 18-year-old student from Chennithala in Kerala's Alappuzha.

(Our Staff Reporter) An 18-year-old Indian student from Middlesex University Dubai died of cardiac arrest during Diwali celebrations in the city. Vaishnav Krishnakumar reportedly collapsed during the festivities and was immediately taken to a nearby hospital, where he was declared dead. Authorities said the cause of death was cardiac arrest. The Dubai Police Forensic Department has launched an investigation to determine the circumstances surrounding the incident. Arrangements are being made to repatriate the body to Kerala for the last rites, officials confirmed. According to his family, the teen had no known heart ailments. Who Was Vaishnav Krishnakumar? Vaishnav Krishnakumar was an 18-year-old student from Chennithala, Alappuzha, Kerala. His parents, VG Krishnakumar and Vidhu Krishnakumar, are long-time residents of Dubai. His father has worked there for over 20



years, and both Vaishnav and his younger sister, Vrishti Krishnakumar, were born and brought up in the UAE. Relatives back home recall the family's last visit two years ago for the housewarming ceremony of their newly built home. "They rarely visited Chennithala. The last time they came here was two years ago. Vaishnav and his sister were born and brought up in Dubai. He was a smart and intelligent boy with most of his friends there," a family relative told PTI. He was pursuing his

first year of BBA in Marketing at Middlesex University Dubai. He was also an alumnus of GEMS Our Own Indian School. Krishnakumar was a recipient of the UAE Golden Visa. This is a special long-term residence visa that lets foreigners live, work, and study in the UAE for 5 or 10 years without needing a local sponsor. Krishnakumar held significant leadership roles in the Model United Nations (MUN), as per his LinkedIn profile.



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Outrage as Sikh trucker who killed 3 in US crash brought in court without turban

(Our Staff Reporter) A 21-year-old Indian truck driver, Jashanpreet Singh, accused of causing an eight-vehicle crash in Southern California that killed three people, appeared in a US court without his turban—sparking outrage in India. Many, including Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal, demanded that his turban be returned. A petition has also been launched, describing Singh's bareheaded court appearance as "a violation of Sikh faith" and urging authorities to "restore his religious rights and ensure

a fair trial." Singh, a resident of Yuba City who entered the US illegally from India in 2022, pleaded not guilty to all charges during his first court appearance in Rancho Cucamonga last Friday. He has been charged with driving under the influence of drugs causing bodily injury, and gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated. The crash occurred on



October 21 near Ontario, California, when Singh's semi-truck ploughed into halted traffic, killing three and injuring four. However, his family in India said he is a baptised Sikh and does not consume drugs. "He is an Amritdhari Gursikh, someone who has lived by the principles of Sikhism his entire life," Jashanpreet Singh's father Ravinder Singh told The Indian Express. "He has never consumed drugs—he hasn't even been near

them. These accusations are completely unfounded. We mourn the lives lost, but our son should not be accused of using drugs. We raised him with great care, and now everything seems dark," added Ravinder, who is a school bus driver. Jashanpreet Singh remains in custody without bail as he awaits a preliminary hearing scheduled for November 4. He appeared before the court after the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office filed charges against him, ABC7 reported.

Indian-Origin Man Opposed Stranger Urinating On His Car In Canada, Killed

(Our Staff Reporter) An Indian-origin businessman in Canada was attacked by a stranger in an unprovoked incident after the former found him urinating on his car. The assault took place in Edmonton on October 19.

Arvi Singh Sagoo, 55, was returning to the car with his girlfriend after dinner when they found the stranger urinating on the car. After that, the situation took a violent turn.

Sagoo asked the stranger, "Hey,

what are you doing?", to which the man responded by saying, "Whatever I want." He then walked up to Sagoo and punched him in the head. He fell to the ground after the attack, after which his girlfriend called 911, Sagoo's brother told Global News. When the paramedics arrived, Arvi was already unconscious. Although he was taken to the hospital and placed on life support, he died five days later.

The accused has been identified as

Arvi Singh Sagoo, 55, was returning to the car with his girlfriend after dinner when they found a stranger urinating on the car. After that, the situation took a violent turn.

Kyle Papin and has been arrested by the Edmonton Police and charged with aggravated assault. Vincent Ram, a close friend of Sagoo, launched a fundraiser to support his children and to cover funeral costs and living

expenses. "This fundraiser aims to support a very kind and loving father who is facing death and ensuring that his two children have the necessary resources and support during this challenging time," the message reads.

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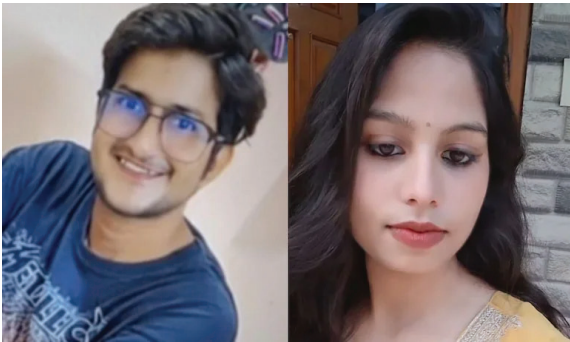
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Woman Plotted Partner's Murder Over Hard Disk. It Had Nudes Of 15 Others

Ram Kesh Meena's charred body was recovered on October 6 from a flat in north Delhi's Timarpur area after a massive blaze. As the police started investigating the case, a chilling conspiracy came to light.



(News Agency) The hard disk at the centre of a 32-year-old civil services aspirant's grisly murder earlier this month contains private visuals of at least 15 women, police have said, suggesting that he had a fetish for storing such content -- a perversion that got him killed. Ram Kesh Meena's charred body was recovered on October 6 from a flat in north Delhi's Timarpur area after a massive blaze. As the police started investigating the case, a chilling conspiracy came to light. Three weeks after Ram Kesh's death, his live-in partner, Amrita Chauhan, her ex-boyfriend Sumit Kashyap, and their common friend Sandeep

Kumar were arrested for allegedly killing him and staging the fire to make it look like an accident. Amrita told police that she plotted Ram Kesh's murder because he had recorded her private videos and stored them on a hard disk. She repeatedly asked him to delete the videos, but he refused. Getting the hard disk was among the key motives behind the crime. And now, police have found that it contained private videos of several other women, apparently stored without their consent. Ravindra Yadav, Special Commissioner of Police, Law and Order, told NDTV that Amrita and Sumit plotted Ram Kesh's murder because they feared he

might circulate her private videos on the Internet.

The Murder And The Cover-Up Attempt

The investigation has revealed that late on October 5, Sumit and Sandeep thrashed Ram Kesh and choked him to death. They then poured oil, ghee and wine on the body to fuel the fire. Sumit, police said, pulled out the gas cylinder from the kitchen and placed it near Ram Kesh's head. The knob was turned, and gas started filling the room. The accused had already taken Ram Kesh's two laptops, the hard disk, and other belongings. All checks done, Sumit ignited the fire using a lighter and locked the main door. After they had left the building, the cylinder exploded. What Gave The Killers Away Special Commissioner Yadav said that police initially suspected a blast due to a gas leak. "The front panel of the air conditioner was damaged, so we also considered that the air conditioner had exploded. But when we discussed the case, the story did not add up. Things did not fall into place. So we

decided to conduct an in-depth probe," he said. For all their meticulous planning, the killers had not factored in the CCTV. While scanning CCTV footage from the building, cops noticed something shocking. Two people, their faces covered, entered the building the night before the fire. Some time later, one of them exited the building. And then, a man and a woman left the building. This woman was identified as Amrita, Ram Kesh's live-in partner. How The Killers Were Arrested Amrita's phone was switched off after the incident. Following several raids, police caught her on October 18. During interrogation, she identified the co-accused -- her ex-boyfriend Sumit and friend Sandeep. Sumit was arrested on October 21, and Sandeep on October 23. Amrita told the police that Ram Kesh had stored her private videos on a hard disk and refused to delete them. When she shared this with Sumit, he was enraged, and the two plotted Ram Kesh's murder. Amrita, 21, is a forensics student with a keen interest in

crime thrillers. Asked if she used her forensics knowledge in her attempt to cover up the crime, the senior police officer replied, "Absolutely, she also discussed with Sumit ways on how to ensure that no clues are found." Sumit worked in cooking gas cylinder distribution and knew how long an LPG cylinder may take to explode. "They were confident that police would not reach them." Asked if such tactics could have actually covered up the case, the officer replied that a post-mortem usually identifies the cause of death. "But they can mislead the investigator, and if the doctor (conducting the postmortem) is also told it is an accident, he may not conduct an in-depth probe and the killer may escape," he said. A Hard Disk Full Of Nudes Investigators have found private visuals of at least 15 women on the hard disk recovered from Amrita. Asked about this, Yadav replied, "I would not like to comment on this because we have not received any other complaint in this connection."

Video Of Driverless Car Goes Viral In Bengaluru As Seer Takes Joyride.

(News Agency) A video showing a driverless car moving around a college campus in Bengaluru has gone viral on social media, sparking widespread curiosity about the vehicle and the team behind it. The video shows a seer seated calmly inside along with a few others, as the vehicle moves autonomously. It has now been confirmed that the seer is Sri Satyatmatheertha

the smooth and safe operation of the driverless car once it is fully ready. The initiative is a collaboration between Wipro, the Indian Institute of Science (IISc),



Swamiji of the Uttaradi Matha, who had visited RV College of Engineering and took a short ride in the concept driverless vehicle inside the campus. According to sources, the project is still under development, and a formal launch is expected in the coming months. A detailed mapping and study of Indian road conditions are currently in progress to ensure

and RV College of Engineering, under the WIRIN (Wipro-IISc Research and Innovation Network) programme. WIRIN is a joint platform aimed at advancing next-generation technologies through research, innovation, and design focused on real-world applications. The partnership between Wipro and IISc was formalized through an MoU to promote collaborative

research in AI, robotics, and human-machine interaction, with RV College contributing engineering expertise to the development of the autonomous vehicle. The other areas of the collaboration include: * Autonomous Systems - imaging, image processing, and computer vision Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning - including deep learning algorithms Data Science and Cybersecurity * Smart Materials and Emerging Technologies *

Disruptive Design and Manufacturing Driverless concept cars are being developed in several countries. In India, IIT Hyderabad is also working on autonomous navigation technology and has developed vehicles that are meant for off-road uses in agriculture or mining. The prototype vehicles currently ferry people in the institute's campus.

After Doctor Suicide, Someone Used Her Fingerprint To Delete Data On Phone: Family

(News Agency) The relatives of the woman doctor, who allegedly committed suicide in Maharashtra's Satara district last week, have claimed that someone used the victim's fingerprint to unlock her phone after her death and erased vital information from it. They have also alleged that the 'last seen' status on the doctor's WhatsApp account showed activity on the social messaging app even after her death, raising suspicion that someone else used it. The 28-year-old doctor, hailing from Beed district of central Maharashtra and posted at a government hospital in Satara, was found hanging in a hotel room in Phaltan town (in Satara district) on the night of October 23. In the suicide note written on her palm, she alleged that sub-inspector Gopal Badane raped her on multiple occasions, while Prashant Bankar, a software engineer, mentally harassed her. The sub-inspector and the

engineer were arrested on October 25. Talking to reporters on Monday night, the victim's uncle claimed that the woman doctor's mobile phone was accessed using her fingerprint after her death, and crucial data was deleted. "We were informed about the doctor's death by hanging, but by the time we reached the spot (hotel room), her body had already been taken to the hospital. We later found out that a suicide note was written on her hand," he said. "We suspect that her mobile phone was tampered with after her death. Before we arrived at the spot, someone had used her fingerprint to unlock the phone and erased vital information related to the incident. Her WhatsApp 'last seen' status appears to show activity after her death, which raises further suspicion that the phone was operated by someone else after her death," he said.

UP man stabbed in private parts by wife, thrashed by son over property dispute



(News Agency) A middle-aged man in Uttar Pradesh's Moradabad has accused his son, daughter-in-law, and wife of assaulting him and inflicting serious injuries to his genitals following a property dispute. According to the victim, Shankar Lal, the assault took place in the middle of the night while he was asleep at home. He alleges the three ganged up on him, before his wife dragged him into a room and brutally attacked him with a blade. "My son and his wife wanted me to put the house in his name," he said. "They attacked me at night when I was

sleeping. They hit me in the chest with a rock. Then my wife took a blade and stabbed me in my private parts." Police said neighbours rushed to Shankar Lal's home after hearing his screams and alerted authorities.

Officers arrived at the scene and took the injured man to the district hospital. He is presently undergoing treatment. Shankar Lal claimed that the assault was part of a "conspiracy" over property ownership. He also

alleged that his family members stole cash from his pocket during the attack. City Superintendent of Police Kumar Ran Vijay Singh confirmed that a case has been registered based on Shankar Lal's complaint.

RSS march cleared in Mallikarjun Kharge's stronghold in Karnataka with 10

(News Agency) The Yadgiri district administration in Karnataka has granted conditional permission for an RSS route march in Gurmitkal, the former assembly constituency of AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge. The march, scheduled for October 31, will take place under strict conditions to maintain public order. According to officials, ten conditions have been imposed on the event, including a ban on provocative slogans, carrying weapons, and causing damage to public or private property. The procession will begin from Narendra Rathod Layout and pass through major locations such as Samrat Circle, Basaveshwara Circle, Hanuman Temple, and Kumbharawadi. Meanwhile, tensions prevailed in neighbouring Kalaburagi district, where a peace meeting

convened to discuss permissions for the RSS and nine other organisations to hold rallies in Chittapur on November 2 ended without consensus. The meeting, chaired by Deputy Commissioner Fouzia Taranum as per Karnataka High Court directions, saw heated exchanges among representatives of the RSS, Bhim Army, Bharatiya Dalit Panthers, Hasiru Sene, and other groups. Several organisations urged the RSS to conduct its march carrying the national flag and the preamble of the Constitution instead of lathis and the saffron flag. RSS representatives, however, rejected the proposal, asserting their right to follow traditional practices. Opposing groups, including the Bhim Army, warned they would organise their own marches on the same day if the RSS did not agree to the change.

Supreme Court notice on plea against eviction of Bengali

(News Agency) The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice on a plea alleging the targeting of Bengali-speaking Muslims living in the Assam government's eviction drive in a forest area near the Assam-Nagaland border. According to the petitioners, they



gave a time of seven days, the petitioners claimed they were barely given any time before the eviction drive. "What followed was a selective demolition drive where only houses of Bengali-speaking Muslims were targeted. This was accompanied by widespread rumour mongering and tensions escalated, forcing many people to leave the area

where houses were yet to be an eviction drive that they claimed was demolished," the plea said. It also said they were either forced to live in the open or at the mercy of friends and relatives. The petitioners have said while they are occupy the residences of the Indian citizens, the Assam government's petitioners. Successive waves of "illegal actions" have been disguised such eviction drives have led to under the premise that the land is covered displacement of more than 50,000 under the provisions of the Assam Forest people, the plea added. The Regulation, 1891. Alleging that the state petitioners said they were largely action seemed guided by a malafide engaged in betel nut farming and targeting of families belonging to a cultivation in the said area and the specific community, the plea argued that eviction came at a time when the crop others were not being targeted despite was ready to be harvested, resulting in living on the same land and living there an immediate loss of livelihood. Some undisturbed. The petitioners said they of the petitioners were also given trade were handed notices stating their licences by the state government to trade occupation of the land, which is alleged in betel nut produce.

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Does India Control The Taliban? The Busan Breakthrough: Trump's Tactical Wins and One Strategic Miss with Xi

Dispelling a useful myth is an act of naivete. It is no wonder, then, that the fiction of India exerting an inexorable pressure on Afghanistan's internal affairs continues unchallenged. As a matter of fact, facts are dispelled in favour of this myth. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif has yet again made an outrageous claim with respect to Indian engagement with the Taliban. "The people in Kabul pulling the strings and staging the puppet show are being controlled by Delhi," said the minister, infamous for routinely making statements that have precious little to do with supporting evidence. India is, yet again, being treated as a convenient scapegoat for the failed Afghanistan-Pakistan peace summit in Turkey.

India And Afghanistan, Over The Years

After the first Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 1996, India followed a policy of undermining the regime it did not officially recognise by funding and equipping its rival, the Northern Alliance. The Indian embassy in Kabul was shut, only to be reopened after the US military intervention ousted the Taliban.

The only exception came in the form of humanitarian or cultural outreaches, like one in 2001, when the Taliban ordered the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan. New Delhi then urged the Taliban government to allow the statues - irreplaceable objects of not just the Indian-origin Buddhist legacy but also world heritage - to be transferred to India. The Taliban didn't pay any heed to this request and destroyed the Buddha statues.

Indian engagement with Afghanistan saw a meteoric rise between 2001-2020, when humanitarian and infrastructure aid from New Delhi poured in for the reconstruction of the war-torn country. The engagement paused with the US withdrawal in 2021. During the two decades separating the first and the second Taliban regime in Afghanistan, India has maintained no relations with the Taliban, even informally.

The Picture Today

India has been vociferous in condemning the human rights violations committed against the minorities and women by the Taliban. There was an acute sense of betrayal and indignation in both India and Afghanistan when New Delhi did not help individuals and organisations targeted by the Taliban. Despite the civil society's appeals within the country and hapless cries in Afghanistan, the Indian government refused to engage with the Taliban. Historical ties between the two countries became a casualty of the US foreign policy and unimaginative strategic thinking on New Delhi's part.

Since 2021, India's 'influence' in Afghanistan has steadily waned. New Delhi and Kabul have nothing in com-

mon at this moment except a fruit-and-nut flavoured nostalgia and the ashes of future prospects many Afghan youngsters believed in during their education in Indian institutions. A small mission in Kabul has been taking care of humanitarian aid mostly.

After two years of limited and sporadic engagement with the Taliban, it is only in 2025 that India has openly suggested a recalibration of its approach in Afghanistan. At this moment, India lacks political, military, and financial levers with the Taliban. The announcement to reopen the embassy in Afghanistan has come only after Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi's recent New Delhi visit.

What Irked Pak So

What seems to have rattled Pakistan is probably one sentence in the joint statement issued by India and Afghanistan during this visit. "The Afghan Foreign Minister reiterated the commitment that the Afghan government will not allow any group or individual to use the territory of Afghanistan against India." Pakistan, a historically close ally of the Taliban, cannot be happy with this unequivocal show of goodwill towards India. Right now, when Taliban-Pakistan relations are at an all-time low, using India as a disruptor comes easy.

To accuse India, therefore, of being the ringleader of the Taliban is nothing beyond the time-honed practice of the Pakistan establishment aiming at domestic consensus-building. Post Operation Sindoor, there has been a revitalised bellicist tendency in Pakistan.

The latest accusation also serves a crucial diplomatic purpose. By calling the Taliban's recent spate of attacks on Pakistan as India's proxy warfare, Islamabad aims to distance itself from the de facto rulers of Afghanistan after a revamp of the US-Pakistan relations. Nothing earns the US goodwill better than a show of solidarity against the common enemy, sweetened further with the promise of some rare materials.

Victim Card, Again

By trying to cover its own inadequacies in terms of domestic and neighbourhood policies using India's alleged involvement, Pakistan is again playing the victim card, flinging liberally its favourite catch phrase 'regional stability' at whomever is concerned. Pakistan has been routinely doing the same with the Baloch dissent within its borders. But why does India let these accusations go mostly unchallenged? One possible reason could easily be ego. Agencies like to be feared. Nothing establishes their credentials better than the stories of their 'involvement' in important events. As Thomas Hobbes once observed, "Reputation of power is power." In South Asia's strategic theatre, the perception of influence can often matter more than its reality for all parties concerned.

By Nishtha Gautam

President Donald Trump's recent meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the APEC Summit in Busan delivered a welcome de-escalation of trade tensions. The outcome, which saw China agree to resume major purchases of U.S. soybeans and suspend restrictions on rare earth minerals, is being rightly hailed as a diplomatic victory. However, while Trump achieved four major tactical wins, the single, unaddressed strategic issue leaves the core conflict unresolved.

The Four Clear Wins for the White House

The immediate deliverables from the meeting provide tangible relief to two critical sectors of the American economy and two national security concerns.

Averting the Rare Earth Crisis: The most significant win is China's agreement to pause the expanded export controls on rare earth minerals for at least a year. These 17 elements are vital components in everything from F-35 fighter jets to electric vehicles and advanced semiconductors. China, which refines the vast majority of the world's supply, was weaponizing its dominance. Securing a one-year reprieve removes a massive supply chain threat that could have crippled high-tech U.S. industries and defense manufacturing.

The Soybean Deal: The resumption of large-scale Chinese purchases of U.S. soybeans and other agricultural products is a huge, immediate boost for American farmers who have been caught in the crossfire of the trade war. This move provides economic relief and political capital for the administration, bringing the market back into balance after months of boycotts.

Tariff Reduction: In a move to stabilize trade, the U.S. agreed to reduce the overall tariff rate on Chinese imports, specifically cutting the fentanyl-related tariff. This signals a thaw in the tariff war and offers a modest benefit to American importers and consumers who bear the cost of these duties.

Fentanyl Cooperation: Xi's commitment to "work very hard" to stop the flow of fentanyl precursor chemicals into the U.S. addresses a major public health and security crisis. While execution remains to be seen, securing China's renewed pledge for fentanyl control is an important diplomatic step.

The One Big Miss: Structural Competition Remains

Despite these four clear victories, the meeting failed to secure a breakthrough on the single most consequential issue for America's long-term prosperity and security: China's industrial policies and technological competition.

The core of the conflict is not soybeans or even rare earths—it is China's state-backed drive for technological dominance, including massive subsidies, intellectual property theft, and forced technology transfer. By settling for a temporary truce on imports and exports, the administration appears to have kicked the can down the road on the toughest structural issues, such as:

Export Controls on Advanced Chips: The future of U.S. restrictions on the sale of advanced semiconductor chips—like Nvidia's cutting-edge products—remains murky. These chips are central to China's ambitions in Artificial Intelligence and supercomputing. The lack of a clear, decisive policy on the most advanced technology is a missed opportunity to leverage the temporary wins for long-term structural concessions.

The Dominance Playbook: The one-year deal on rare earths, while beneficial in the short term, is merely a pause. China has clearly demonstrated its willingness to use its supply chain monopoly as leverage. The U.S. needs to reduce its dependency permanently by accelerating domestic refining capacity and diversifying its global sourcing. A temporary deal only grants a reprieve, not a lasting strategic solution.

By Sharanjit Singh Thind

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A Necessary Step: Prioritizing Integrity in US Work Authorization



The recent, sudden change to the US work permit rules—specifically the decision to end the automatic extension of Employment Authoriza-

tion Documents (EADs) for certain categories of applicants—is a decisive move that, while creating immediate friction, is fundamentally a positive and necessary step towards strengthening the integrity and national security of the US employment system.

This policy change, which requires a new round of screening and vetting before work authorization is renewed, is not an arbitrary impediment. It is a "commonsense measure" that reinforces the principle that working in the United States is a privilege, not an automatic right.

Enhanced Vetting for National Security

The primary and most compelling argument in favor of this change is the enhancement of national security. The previous policy, which allowed foreign nationals to continue working for up to 540 days while their renewal application was pending, essentially created a prolonged gap during which background checks and vetting were not rigorously or recently confirmed.

By ending the automatic extension, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) ensures that individuals seeking to continue their employment authorization undergo a fresh and full background check at regular intervals. This more frequent and robust review is crucial for deterring fraud, detecting potential security risks, and ensuring that everyone with active work permission is properly vetted. In a complex global land-

scape, a system that prioritizes the safety and security of its citizens by tightening eligibility checks is simply acting responsibly.

Restoring Clarity and Accountability

Another positive outcome is the restoration of accountability and clarity to the immigration process. The prior system, while convenient for applicants, arguably fostered an over-reliance on the government's processing inefficiency. The automatic extension effectively masked the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) own backlogs, creating a false sense of security for workers who could remain employed regardless of how long the government took to adjudicate their case.

This new rule forces a fundamental shift. It places a greater, though perhaps challenging, onus on the applicant to file their renewal in a timely and correct manner—up to 180 days in advance, as advised by USCIS—to ensure continuity of employment. This incentivizes prompt action and reduces the risk of long-term bureaucratic complacency.

Furthermore, this move reasserts governmental control over the employment authorization process. It sends a clear message that the government is dedicated to managing who works in the country and under what circumstances, putting the interests of national screening and the rule of law ahead of procedural convenience.

A Stronger System for the Long Term

While critics correctly point out the disruption this causes for many hard-working foreign professionals—especially H-4 spouses and F-1 OPT students—the long-term benefit of a more secure and auditable system outweighs the temporary administrative headaches. The focus should now shift to USCIS accelerating its processing times to match the new urgency the rule creates, which would nullify the main point of contention. Ultimately, a system with integrity is a system that is fair and sustainable. By closing a vetting loophole and ensuring proper, recurring screening, this sudden rule change is a forceful yet constructive step toward a more secure and accountable US immigration and employment framework. It's a move that prioritizes the national interest, which is the foundational duty of any government.

By Sharanjit Singh Thind

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The Self-Inflicted Wound: Why and How to End the Federal Government Shutdown



The federal government shutdown, now stretching for weeks, is nothing short of a national disgrace—a self-inflicted wound that cripples public services, harms our economy, and fundamentally erodes public trust. This manufactured crisis, a product of political brinkmanship, must end now. The reasons why are evident in the growing pain felt by ordinary Americans, and the solution lies in prioritizing national stability over partisan leverage.

The Unacceptable Toll of Political Games

A government shutdown is not a budget-cutting measure; it is a failure of governance. While "essential" services like air traffic control and military operations continue, a vast array of critical functions—from food safety inspections to small business loan approvals—are halted. Furloughed

federal workers, the dedicated public servants who keep the machinery of government running, are forced to live without a paycheck. The very people entrusted to serve the American public are reduced to seeking aid. This is a profound moral injury.

Beyond the immediate human cost, the economic impact is real and lasting. Non-partisan analyses, like those from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), show that shutdowns cost the economy billions in lost GDP. This isn't just delayed spending; it's a permanent loss of productivity and output. Small businesses that rely on federal permits or loans are left in limbo. Critical economic data releases are postponed, creating an "information vacuum" that hurts financial markets and corporate planning. Furthermore, the political instability signaled by a

repeated failure to fund the government diminishes America's standing on the global stage, suggesting an inability to manage even our most basic fiscal responsibilities.

The Path to Reopening: A Clean Bill and Institutional Reform

Ending the current impasse is straightforward: Congress must pass a clean continuing resolution (CR). A clean CR is a temporary funding bill that simply maintains current spending levels without attaching controversial, unrelated policy demands. The largest federal worker unions, representing hundreds of thousands of impacted Americans, have repeatedly called for this solution to get their members back to work immediately and allow policy debates to resume under normal, functioning government.

The use of the appropri-

ations process as a tool for "legislative terrorism"—holding the entire government hostage to extract policy concessions—must stop. The proper venue for debating complex issues like healthcare subsidies or border security is through regular order, robust committee work, and stand-alone legislation, not a high-stakes, last-minute funding fight.

To prevent this cyclical chaos, Congress must pursue fundamental institutional reform. This includes:

Adopting Automatic Continuing Resolutions: Legislation should be passed to automatically fund the government at the previous year's levels if a budget or CR is not passed by the deadline. This mechanism would remove the threat of a shutdown, stripping away the political leverage that encourages brinkmanship, and forcing lawmakers to debate

the budget on its merits, not on the fear of chaos.

Reforming the Appropriations Process: Congress needs to restore its capacity to pass the 12 annual appropriations bills on time, potentially through an overhaul of the committee structure or a move toward a biennial budget cycle.

The current shutdown is a monument to partisan dysfunction. It is time for lawmakers on both sides to heed the non-partisan call of federal workers, economists, and common sense. Reopen the government now with a clean funding bill, ensure all workers receive full back pay, and commit to institutional changes that will ensure this damaging spectacle is relegated to the history books. Our nation's economy, stability, and integrity demand nothing less.

By Sharanjit Singh Thind

Pak's Great Game: What Rawalpindi Really Wants From Its War With Afghanistan



The trouble is that war-making has become almost the norm these days, what with the conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, and now Afghanistan and Pakistan. What was possibly the first ever aerial bombing of Afghanistan by Pakistan has led to a sudden escalation of the situation into near-war condition, after decades of insurgency and sponsored terrorism. Not that those two don't continue; they do. While one side is a master of the game in the former, even defeating a superpower, the other has got so accustomed to sponsoring terror that it seems unable to stop.

It is now common knowledge that Pakistan chose to hit Kabul and Paktia on October 9, with drone attacks on the very day that Taliban's Acting Foreign Minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi, was being feted in Delhi. Since then, violence has snowballed, with Pakistan attacking via air alleged Tehrik-e-Taliban camps across the border and one such strike even killing members of a local cricket team at Urgon district. That led to Afghanistan pulling out of a tri-nation cricket series. That this happened hours after a 48-hour truce was set to expire underlines Rawalpindi's clear intent to escalate. In all fairness, however, there was also a suicide attack on the same day that killed 17 Pakistani soldiers in one fell swoop. That was claimed by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). It is unclear which came first, but the result is that the two countries are now at war.

The Pattern Of Violence

True, that Pakistan has taken a beating. Its Centre for Research and Security Studies reports a 46% rise in violence, with the first three quarters seeing more of it than the whole of last year.

What led to this is not diffi-

cult to fathom. Pakistan's counter-terrorism tactics have followed set patterns. A faction of the Islamic State of Khorasan (IS-K) suddenly declared war on Baloch and others such as the Pashtuns and their leaders, including the charismatic and entirely non-violent Mehrang Baloch and Manzoon Pashteen, who lead the peaceful Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM). This was followed by a specific audio threat.

This is a striking shift in itself. The IS-K has been present in Balochistan for years, specifically in the Mastung and Khuzdar areas, where it had usually targeted churches and shrines, and then several Jamiat Ulema Islami (Fazlur) leaders. JUI(F) leader Fazlur Rehman has, in fact, also incurred the wrath of the army for warning repeatedly against attacking Afghanistan.

Now it seems the Pakistan army is against the Baloch. Even a schoolkid would be able to fathom that Pakistan's agencies are using the IS-K to hit the Baloch. The IS-K is also present in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, around Peshawar and Bajaur area, and across in Nuristan and Kunar. No wonder then that Afghans hit Bagram, a route long used for not just insurgents but also drugs and human smugglers and the like. Pakistan, too, used a barrage of drones to hit Afghan border areas, mainly Paktia, but faced an almost equally fierce onslaught with suicide attacks on a police training school and against paramilitary forces.

A Dicey Ceasefire

On October 19, the Qatar Foreign Ministry put out a ceasefire agreement mediated also by Turkey - reportedly with its intelligence chief present too, together with defence and intelligence

chiefs from warring sides. While Mullah Yakub and Minister Khwaja Asif are seen in the picture, Pakistan's intelligence Chief, Lt Gen Asim Malik attended the meet too, with presumably Abdul Haq, his Taliban counterpart. The agreement, calling for follow-up meetings to implement a ceasefire, was roundly criticised by Afghans on social media for its reference to a 'border'. In fact, the Afghan Deputy Defence Minister has been warning that if Afghanistan declared someone an invader by religious decree - which presumably would be done by the Amir Hibatullah - Pakistan would have no defence even till Indian borders. Pakistan's Khwaja Asif, in turn, warned all Afghans to leave the country, adding that Kabul leaders were "sitting in India's lap". Within this narrative of blaming Afghanistan and now India, it's important to consider that all TTP leaders, from founder Baitullah who was born in Landi Dhok in Bannu, to Hakimullah born in Jandola, Fazlullah in Swat and Noor Wali Mehsud in Tiarza, were from Pakistan, just like their

cohorts. All grew from the crucible of the Afghan war and were once part of the Pakistan-backed Taliban that took over Kabul. They also sheltered the Taliban, mostly in Waziristan, which is why giving them up would be anathema to the Afghans.

The Final Message

The ironic fact is that the messaging from the Pakistan army completely copied the Indian positions as it warned of a "new normal", spoke of precision strikes only against civilians, and reserved the right - through its over-articulate defence minister - to carry this further. Field Marshal Munir also chose to give another warning of nuclear war against India for reasons unknown, at least immediately. Some explanation for these threats may lie in US President Donald Trump's claims that it would be "easy" for him to solve the war. That needs to be examined carefully. Getting the US back into the picture has been Rawalpindi's single-point agenda for years, with a former National Security Advisor even making that plea in a prominent

journal. That means not just pressure on the Taliban but also plenty of dollars for Pakistan. Pak Will Do What It Wants So, expect that Islamabad will do everything in its power to get Bagram for the US, even if it means escalating the war with Afghanistan to much higher levels and using much heavier conventional weapons. This is what the Pakistan army does best, even if it means a disaster for the rest of the country. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, Sohail Afridi, a stalwart of Imran Khan's party and who is from the grassroots, recently called for a 'grand jirga' so that the people of this region could decide peace for themselves. That was a message to Rawalpindi that it had done enough damage, and that it should leave the people alone. But that's not the army's way. It dislikes anyone doing anything on their own, however beneficial. It will, therefore, retain its sole agenda: get the US in and get the money for itself. Others can - sometimes quite literally - burn in hell.

By Tara Kartha

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Demographic Time Bomb: Inside Modi & Shah's Mission To Rid India Of Illegal Immigrants

India is fighting a battle for its identity. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi stood at the ramparts of the Red Fort and declared war on illegal immigration through a high-powered demography mission, he articulated what many nation-loving citizens have been screaming for decades. Under a well-thought-out conspiracy, India's demographic fabric is being rewoven, thread by thread, with infiltrators snatching livelihoods, encroaching tribal lands, and compromising border security. Previous governments and parties now in opposition label this as fearmongering. The reality, however, is starkly different. Changing demography is a crisis that has festered for decades — all with the tacit approval of politicians whose only plank for winning elections is vote-bank

would force Modi to temper controversial policies and govern through consensus. Yet on national security matters, particularly illegal immigration, the Centre has demonstrated zero willingness to compromise. The same aggression that defined BJP's absolute majority years now characterises the fight



and brazen appeasement politics. Even today, some politicians actively encourage illegal infiltration — with the hope that such fence-jumpers will become secure vote banks. The game changed with Prime Minister Modi's August declaration, where he made it amply clear that his government would employ an iron-fist approach to combat the menace of illegal immigration. In what can be termed a national response, states are now implementing MHA directives with unprecedented coordination, establishing detention centres, conducting 30-day verification drives, and executing deportations with precision. Home Minister Amit Shah's "detect, delete, deport" doctrine has become the cornerstone of this coordinated national offensive. Gujarat alone detained over 1,000 Bangladeshi nationals in a single night. Rajasthan, meanwhile, converted sub-jails into detention centres as suspects multiplied. Assam — which has suffered illegal immigration for decades — intensified eviction drives targeting encroached forest lands. The pattern is unmistakable: a whole-of-nation approach to counter what Amit Shah describes as "deliberate demographic design."

More remarkable still is that this ferocity persists despite the BJP no longer holding an absolute parliamentary majority. Political analysts predicted this

against illegal aliens, proving that when sovereignty is at stake, coalition compulsions take a backseat. Shah continues personally overseeing the immigration enforcement machinery with the same intensity as when the BJP held 303 seats. This sends an unambiguous message to allies and adversaries alike: coalition dynamics may influence economic reforms or social policy, but core national security priorities remain non-negotiable.

At the same time, the opposition's predictable hysteria about targeting "minorities" misses the fundamental point. This campaign distinguishes between refugees fleeing persecution and infiltrators exploiting porous borders for economic or strategic gain. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) already provides a lawful pathway for persecuted Indic minorities from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh to gain Indian citizenship. What the Modi government refuses to tolerate is the continued haemorrhaging of national security through illegal crossings that no sovereign nation would accept.

When West Bengal refuses to provide land for border fencing despite repeated requests from the Centre, when 450 kilometres of the Bangladesh border remains open because the state government prioritises its vote banks over national security, the

problem becomes crystal clear, and so does the character of those leaders who refuse to co-operate with the Centre on a national security concern of this magnitude.

The numbers paint a grim picture. According to government data, India hosts approximately 20 million illegal Bangladeshi im-

migrants. Home Minister Amit Shah has pointed out that Muslim population in census data increased from 9.8% in 1951 to 14.2% in 2011, with infiltration playing a significant role. In Assam, nearly 10 lakh acres remain under encroachment by suspected illegal immigrants. Tripura has been demographically overwhelmed, with indigenous populations now a minority in their own homeland. These statistics represent a systematic demographic warfare that threatens the cultural and territorial integrity of Bharat.

The security implications cannot be overstated. The April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people triggered the intensified crackdown, exposing links between illegal immigration networks and security threats. Intelligence agencies have raised concerns about Rohingya refugees potentially connected to militant groups in Pakistan. The Railway Protection Force alone apprehended 916 individuals, including 586 Bangladeshi nationals and 318 Rohingya since 2021. Human trafficking rings, document forging networks, and cross-border criminal syndicates thrive on illegal migration.

The economic burden falls disproportionately on India's most vulnerable citizens. Illegal immigrants undercut wages in the informal sector, which constitutes 86% of India's workforce and 50%

of GDP. They compete directly with Indian workers for jobs as rickshaw pullers, construction workers, agricultural labourers, and domestic help. When resources meant for India's poor — subsidised rations, welfare schemes, government services — get diverted to undocumented populations, it robs legitimate citizens of their birthright. The infiltrators exploit social programmes funded by Indian taxpayers while sending remittances abroad, creating a net drain on the economy.

Tribal communities have borne the brunt of this demographic invasion like nobody else. Infiltrators mislead indigenous populations and encroach on their ancestral lands, threatening both their livelihoods and cultural survival. In Assam, approximately 90% of the 3.4 crore native population lacked land pattas as of 2017, making them vulnerable to organised land grabs by illegal settlers. The Ministry of Home Affairs has instructed district collectors to clear illegal encroachments within 30 kilometres of borders and protect indigenous rights under the Forest Rights Act. These measures recognise that for tribal communities, land isn't merely property, but their entire identity.

The 30-day verification mechanism streamlines what was previously a months-long bureaucratic morass. Under the new guidelines, suspected illegal immigrants must prove Indian citizenship within 30 days or face deportation. Special Task Forces in every district work with police, intelligence, and border forces to detect, detain, and deport infiltrators. Critics call the campaign harsh. Realists recognise it as long overdue. What rankles most is the opposition's deliberate obfuscation. When Rahul Gandhi and Mamata Banerjee scream about "targeting minorities," they're defending infiltrator vote banks, not Indian Muslims. When they oppose the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls designed to purge infiltrators from voter lists, they're protecting electoral fraud masquerading as social justice. The TMC government in West Bengal has opposed efforts to fence the

Bangladesh border, identify illegal immigrants, or implement the National Register of Citizens. One must ask the obvious question — why? The answer is blowing in the wind — cynical electoral mathematics overpowers national security for some politicians.

The demographic mission announced by the Prime Minister represents India's recognition of demographic warfare as an existential threat.

The high-powered commission will study illegal migration's impact on religious, social, and demographic patterns, unusual settlement patterns, and border management burdens. It will provide the data-driven foundation for long-term policy interventions to protect Bharat and its natives.

While opposition parties retreat into divisive caste politics for electoral gains in Bihar, the Modi government is constructing broader national consensus against demographic subversion. The caste census that Congress and regional parties demanded has been granted, but it won't distract from border and demographic security. The BJP's bet is that Hindu unity transcending caste divisions, combined with visible action against infiltration, will trump the opposition's caste arithmetic. Whether that gamble succeeds electorally matters less than whether it succeeds strategically in protecting India's territorial and demographic integrity.

Some may view India's fight against illegal immigration as the Modi government's latest attempt at polarisation, when in fact it merely represents Bharat's survival instinct. No nation can surrender to infiltrators and invaders. India is not a dhamshala where anyone can settle at will. Those coming legally to contribute to prosperity are welcome. Those infiltrating illegally to exploit resources, grab land, or threaten security will be detected, deleted, and deported. The demographic time bomb has been ticking for decades while successive governments prioritised appeasement over enforcement. At least now, someone is finally trying to defuse the bomb before it detonates on all our faces.

By Sanbeer Singh Ranhotra

Dreadful and Shameful Evil of Drug Menace: Hollowing the Indian Society

By Jag Mohan Thake

For a country like India, what a disturbing and astonishing incident it is, wherein even the school girls are noticed purchasing the liquor!

As per Media reports, on October 24, 2025 a video reportedly floated on social media, the footage of which went viral on Thursday, shows several girls covering their faces with scarves, entering the shop, purchasing liquor, and leaving briskly with bottles tucked discreetly into their school bags in Nainpur town under Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh.

Another incident which shows the most dreadful and shameful face of drug menace has been reported by Leader of opposition in Punjab Vidhan Sabha, Pratap Singh Bajwa on 25th October. Bajwa highlighted that in a gut-wrenching incident that exposes the horrifying depths of Punjab's drug crisis, a drug-addict couple from Mansa district sold their five-month-old son to a family in Budhlada for Rs 1.8 lakh — just to fund their addiction.

"In 2022, the central government submitted a report to the Supreme Court that an alarming 15.8 million youths between the ages of 10 and 17 battle substance addiction nationwide. Based on findings from a court-mandated research study, alcoholic beverages rank as the primary mind-altering substance consumed by the population, with marijuana and opioid-based drugs following behind", The New Indian Express in an Article on March 30, 2025 reported.

It is despite the National Centre for Drug Abuse Prevention underscores on its website that Drug abuse is a serious problem having dangerous consequences and recognizing the seriousness of the multi-faceted implications of the incidence of substance abuse in the country, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has been implementing various steps.

Also, in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha on

March 18, 2025, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs Nityanand Rai told that to address the problem of Drug Abuse, Government has formulated and implemented the National Action Plan for Drug De-

Virudh" waged by Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann to eradicate drug menace from state consecutively for the 242nd day, Punjab Police conducted raids at 358 locations on Wednesday leading to the



JAG MOHAN THAKEN

mand Reduction (NAPDDR) under which the Government is taking a sustained and coordinated action for arresting the problem of substance abuse. This includes: Launched Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA) in all districts of the country through more than 10000 master volunteers. It has reached out to more-than 14.79 crore people including 4.96 crore youth and 2.97 crore women.

Despite the central government's launching 'Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyaan' (NMBA) in all districts of the country, why has India not succeeded in curbing this evil? Why was the evil not nipped in the bud? Why as per ground reports, the situation is still so alarming? Here we will discuss the situation in agrarian states-Punjab and Haryana, just as samples.

However, the Aam Adami Party ruled Punjab government has been running its 'YUDH NASHIAN VIRUDH' (Battle against drugs) campaign since long and on October 29, this drive completed its 242nd day.

A government press release claims that continuing the war against drugs "Yudh Nashian

arrest of 87 drug smugglers after registration of 71 first information reports (FIRs) across the state. With this, the number of total drug smugglers arrested has reached 34,511 in 242 days.

However, its appreciable action and step of the Punjab government, but also exposes the ground situation of the state that how deep the roots of drug menace are. The figure of total drug smugglers arrested has reached 34,511 in 242 days shows the seriousness and gravity of the problem.

Despite strenuous efforts of the state government to hammer the problem, the opposition party, Congress, alleges that Punjab continues to face the worst-ever drug crisis, and the Chief Minister Mann keeps boasting about ending it.

The drug menace is not "under control" — it's out of control, spreading like a plague through our villages, consuming generation after generation, alleged the Leader of the Opposition Bajwa.

Bajwa came down heavily on Chief Minister Bhagwant

Mann accusing him of wilfully ignoring the drug menace. Bajwa highlighted that in a gut-wrenching incident that exposes the horrifying depths of Punjab's drug crisis, a drug-addict couple from Mansa district sold their five-month-old son to a family in Budhlada for Rs 1.8 lakh — just to fund their addiction.

Bajwa stated that the mother was once a state-level wrestler. She and her husband, both enslaved by drugs, sold their baby to keep their next high going. This is not fiction. This is the reality of Punjab in 2025.

"While Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and his government shamelessly parade hollow promises about "eliminating drugs," Punjab's families are being destroyed, children are sold like cattle, and villages decay in the shadow of addiction. Every such incident is a damning indictment of this administration: a system that has utterly failed to prevent addiction, failed to protect children, and failed—repeatedly—to uphold the most basic tenets of humanity," Bajwa thundered.

The Congress party in Haryana also alleges that drug menace is growing rapidly in the state.

The General Secretary of All India Congress Committee, former Union Minister, and Sirsa MP Kumari Selja, in a press statement on October 13, said that the BJP government is not serious about the growing drug menace in Haryana. Kumari Selja said that the government has blindly trusted the official figures presented by officers while the reality is that cases of drug overdose and drug-related deaths are being reported daily in various districts. Out of the 22 districts in the state, 16 have been severely affected by drug addiction, with Sirsa being the worst hit, where drug-related deaths continue to rise.

Drugs have now reached the villages from synthetic drugs to 'Chitta', every form of addiction is spreading rapidly.

The Haryana government has completely failed to control the drug menace.

Kumari Selja said that the fast-spreading drug network in Dabwali and nearby areas has engulfed the entire region, and in the last 40 days, 15 young lives have been lost, which reflects the frightening ground reality. She said it is "deeply unfortunate that drugs are being sold openly at medical stores while both the BJP government and the district administration remain silent spectators."

Kumari Selja said that there are about 1,700 medical stores in Sirsa district alone, but the number of officers and inspectors is extremely low. Kumari Selja said that without regular inspections, the sale of medical drugs as narcotics cannot be stopped. The government claims that 162 de-addiction centres are functioning in Haryana, and 3,350 villages and about 900 urban wards have been declared drug-free, including around 180 villages in Sirsa, but the ground reality tells a different story.

"Conduct high-level inspections of all medical stores. Take strict action against those selling or protecting drug peddlers. Transform the anti-drug campaign into a people's movement", advised Selja. She said the rising number of drug-related deaths is not just a statistic, it reflects the government's insensitivity and the failure of our entire system.

Concludingly, it seems that the present efforts are not efficient and sufficient. It needs a heavy hammer blow. To protect children and youth from addiction, awareness programs must be launched at schools, colleges, universities, other educational institutions and village level social platforms. Concrete steps are urgently needed to curb drug trafficking and illegal sales across the country. Will the governments and the society adopt a joint effective and forceful strategy to get rid of this blot?

Trump Versus The Cartel Of Suns

The Cartel of the Suns is an informal Venezuelan crime organisation allegedly headed by high-ranking members of the Armed forces of Venezuela who are supposedly involved in international drug trafficking.

On July 25, 2025, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned the Cartel of the Suns as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist organisation. According to the Americans, it is a Venezuela-based criminal group supposedly headed by President of Venezuela,

Nicolas Maduro Moros, and other high-ranking Venezuelan individuals in the Maduro regime that provides material support to foreign terrorist organisations, thereby creating a threat for the security of the United States.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio reiterated the Trump administration's view that Venezuela poses a serious threat to the US through the illegal drug trade. "Unfortunately, the regime that governs, but is not the government of Venezuela, is a transshipment organisation," he said. "They allow cocaine from Colombia and other places to be shipped through national territory—not just with the cooperation, but in many cases, with the participation of elements of this regime."

The US has sent a flotilla to Venezuela that includes an aircraft carrier with 70 fighter jets and attack helicopters, a helicopter carrier with another 30 tilt-rotor aircraft and attack helicopters and nearly 2,000 Marines, the spearhead of an assault landing force, a guided-missile cruiser, six or more destroyers and other support ships. A US destroyer, the USS Gravelly, and the Marine unit are already in Trinidad and Tobago, just six miles from the Venezuelan coast.

Since September 2, 2025, US forces have bombed 10 boats, with eight of the attacks occurring in the Caribbean, for their role in allegedly trafficking drugs into the US. At least 43 people

have died in the attacks. The US alleged that the vessels were operated by groups it designated as narco-terrorists, including the Venezuelan criminal organisation Tren de Aragua and the Colombian guerrilla group National Liberation Army, but has not publicised any evidence for the allegations. Tensions are mounting in the region, with Trump saying he has authorised CIA operations in Venezuela and that he is considering ground attacks against alleged drug cartels in the Caribbean country.

Venezuelan President Maduro pleaded against a "crazy war". Regional tensions have flared as a result of the campaign, with Maduro accusing Washington of seeking a regime change.

"We know the CIA is present in Venezuela," the country's defence minister Vladimir Padrino said. "They may deploy—I don't know how many—CIA-affiliated units in covert operations... and any attempt will fail." Padrino was overseeing military exercises along Venezuela's coast in response to the US military deployment in the Caribbean.

Experts have questioned the legality of using lethal force in foreign or international waters against suspects who have not been intercepted or questioned. Self-defence, terrorism and a state of conflict have all been invoked as justification for attacks on the high seas. The Tren de Aragua is just a Venezuelan street gang. The Trump administration formally designated eight Latin American crime organisations as foreign terrorist organisations. The label is normally reserved for groups like al Qaeda or the Islamic State that use violence for political ends—not for profit-focused crime gangs.

Trump recently ordered a strike on a small boat that he accused of carrying drugs in the waters off Venezuela. He says the strike killed four men but offered no details on who they were or what group



they belonged to. Trump says in his own social media post that the boat was "loaded with enough drugs to kill 25 TO 50 THOUSAND PEOPLE" and implied it was "entering American Territory" while off the coast of Venezuela.

Article 51 of the UN Charter on self-defence requires an 'armed attack' in order to trigger the right to an armed response. Shipping drugs or supplying them to willing customers clearly does not constitute an armed attack. Self-defence is therefore not available as justification for the US strikes. Instead, drug smuggling is clearly a matter for border control and law enforcement, along with steps to reduce domestic demand.

There are many international conventions seeking to repress the drugs trade. However, these are not considered to be part of the legal regime addressing terrorism. The fact remains, for

any country to invoke self-defence, it needs to be demonstrated that an assailant is just about to launch an armed attack akin to a military assault. Also, law en-

forcement statutes and rules dictate that the Coast Guard normally takes the lead in maritime law enforcement operations, using standard procedures to halt any suspected drug vessel. If the vessel refuses to comply, the Coast Guard may resort to firing warning shots and disabling fire. None of these procedures were followed. Secretary of State Marco Rubio revealed that, "Instead of interdicting it, on the President's orders, we blew it up. And it'll happen again. Maybe it is happening right now." The decision to destroy and not interdict the alleged drug vessel, killing all civilians on board, raises a host of ethical and legal issues.

In August 2025, the US government announced an increased reward of \$50 million for information leading to the arrest and trial of Maduro, describing him as 'one of the largest narco-traffickers in the world'.

Never before has drug trafficking been treated as terrorism, and there is a danger that the Trump administration is attempting to open a new "forever war" against

an amorphous set of actors who are not in reality engaged in hostilities against the United States. Borrowing language from the post-9/11 "Global War on Terror", the Trump administration is trying to dress up counter-narcotics missions into counter-terrorism operations.

It is like giving a new label to old wine. But applying a new label to an old problem does not transform the problem itself, nor does it empower the US president with any legal authority to kill unarmed civilians.

Glenn Greenwald, in *A Tragic Legacy: How a Good vs. Evil Mentality Destroyed the Bush Presidency* says: "The fact that war is the word we use for almost everything—on terrorism, drugs, even poverty—has certainly helped to desensitise us to its invocation; if we wage wars on everything, how bad can they be?" The US experience of using the military in its war against drugs in Vietnam and Afghanistan has not been fruitful, but holds many bitter lessons. Hope Venezuela does not become another bitter chapter.

I'm Curtis Sliwa. This is why I want New York City's vote for mayor



New York City is at a breaking point. Hardworking New Yorkers are being told to accept more corruption, more chaos or more ideological extremism. But there's a real alternative: me.

Zohran Mamdani is a radical socialist with ideas so reckless that even longtime Democrats are alarmed.

In 2021, I warned everyone that Eric Adams, our current mayor, would be corrupt. People didn't listen. Instead, we got resignations, arrests, indictments and a pay-to-play culture that hollowed out City Hall while basic services fell behind and working New Yorkers paid the price.

As for former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, he resigned in disgrace after a barrage of sexual harassment allegations that are now being settled with taxpayer dollars. He helped bring us the crime wave New Yorkers live with now by ushering in bail reform, Raise the Age, Less Is More and the HALT Act.

Cuomo's rent laws punished small property owners, his energy decisions closed Indian Point and drove up utility costs, and his congestion pricing scheme taxes you just for trying to get to work.

Here's the truth that New Yorkers already sense: Cuomo and Mamdani are two sides of the same coin — different labels, same results: higher costs, weaker safety, and ideology over common sense. I am Curtis Sliwa. I'm not a career politician. I've walked these streets for more than 45 years — riding the subways, patrolling neighborhoods, and standing up for people when no one else would. I founded the Guardian Angels with grit, courage and a red beret. As I once said, "If you do nothing, that just empowers the gangsters."

I've been to every neighborhood — all 350 of them — including places where Mamdani ran strong, because I'm not afraid to engage and listen.

As mayor, I'll restore public safety and make New York affordable again. I'll hire 7,000 police officers and pay for them by cutting bloated agency budgets, rooting out contract corruption and redirecting money from political cronies to essential services.

Inside the NYPD, we'll end cronyism, stop political promotions and build careers on merit and leadership.

Affordability must be front and center. Families are be-

ing squeezed by taxes, fees, fines and rising costs that City Hall makes worse. I'll lower taxes across the board by cutting waste and returning savings to taxpayers. We'll simplify permits and reform the property tax mess, protect seniors with stronger relief and rein in water rates and city-imposed fees.

Our education system needs honest change. We spend over \$42,000 per pupil per year, yet too many students can't read or do math at grade level. I'll shrink Department of Education bureaucracy and put that money into classrooms. I'll restore merit, raise standards and prepare kids for the future. I'll also create parent-controlled education accounts, so families can tap into that exorbitant per-pupil funding and receive a rebate for approved educational purposes — including private school, if they wish.

I'll end the "City of Yes" developer free-for-all. We'll build smarter where infrastructure can handle it and protect one- and two-family neighborhoods that are already stretched to the limit. We'll clear red tape that blocks good projects and stop giveaways that only help insiders.

Quality of life matters. We'll clean the streets, remove illegal vending that blocks sidewalks, crack down on illegal smoke shops, take back the subways for riders and make sure animal abusers see real jail time.

City government will live within its means and deliver the services you pay for.

Government must be accountable to the people. I'll publish a citywide performance dashboard so every New Yorker can see what's working and what's not, open the books on contracts, ban pay-to-play and audit every agency for results.

I'll show up in every

community and keep showing up.

New Yorkers want safety, affordability, and basic competence back in City Hall. I'm the only one in this race who's delivered for decades without holding office.

This election isn't about left or right. It's about right and wrong. You don't have to choose the lesser of two evils. You don't have to pick between the architect, Cuomo, and the apprentice, Mamdani. You can choose change.

You've seen what I've done for decades without a title. Imagine what I'll do with one.

By Curtis Sliwa



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How the left's embrace of Mamdani could doom Democrats nationwide

Hakeem Jeffries has made it official: Zohran Mamdani, antisemitic socialist, is now the face of the Democratic Party.

Democrats are in trouble. Having your party hijacked by far-left fanatics is OK in New York, and a couple of other progressive hotbed states, like California or Washington. But for most of the country, the idea that a 34-year-old jihadi-friendly Muslim with zero work experience could become the mayor of New York City — the citadel of capitalism — is horrifying. That House Minority Leader Jeffries, one of the Democrats' top officials, endorsed the absurd Mamdani, will haunt the party. Here's a reality check: only 26% the country describes themselves as "liberal" or "very liberal." Some 32% say they are "moderate" and the balance — 33% — describe themselves as "conservative" or "very conservative."

In other words, the leftists now directing the Democrat Party are putting all their eggs in one small basket, and risk alienating nearly two-thirds of Americans. That is a truly terrible marketing plan. Just ask the makers of Bud Light. Democrat leaders are not leading, they are caving. For weeks, Jeffries pretended to give the matter serious consideration. His Hamletian dithering riveted political junkies, but there was never any doubt that Jeffries would fall in line with his fellow New York pols, nearly all of whom have endorsed State Assemblyman Mamdani and all of whom are terrified of the progressive wing of their party. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, one of the few remaining hold-outs, will almost surely be the next to bend the knee. Schumer, too, has been noncommittal, even though his political future clearly hangs in the balance. The New York senator has long been one of the staunchest supporters of Israel.

There are well over 1 million Jews living in New York; Schumer, who is Jewish, is deeply committed to that community and one of the top recipients of campaign donations from pro-Israel groups, raking in almost \$2 million dollars between 1990 and 2024. Though Mamdani has backtracked on some of his more outrageous anti-Israel or antisemitic comments, he has yet to condemn the phrase "Globalize the Intifada," which is effectively a call to wipe out Jews. He also is steadfast in his incendiary threat to arrest Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should he set foot in New York. Schumer infuriated the left earlier this year when he helped Republicans pass a spending bill; progressives want their elected representatives to resist the Trump administration on all matters, even if it hurts

the country. Schumer did the right thing but was slammed for it.

He is now paying a stiff price, and it could cost him his job. Consider Schumer's fundraising. The New York Post reports that "the Brooklyn Demo-



crat brought in just \$133,000 during the three months ending Sept. 30" and compares that paltry sum to the \$4.5 million raised over the same period by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the flashy "Squad" member. AOC may challenge Schumer in the Democratic primary when his Senate seat comes up in 2029. AOC is coy about her intentions, but her lefty fans are encouraging her to run and a May survey of the hypothetical head-to-head contest showed AOC crushing Schumer by 21 percentage points. Now, Sen. Schumer risks further alienating the left if he doesn't back Mamdani.

The last time he faced such a dilemma was four years ago when he held out on endorsing India Walton, the Democratic Socialist running to become mayor of Buffalo. In that contest, he finally buckled just days ahead of the vote, which Walton lost to a write-in candidate, mewling that she won the Democratic primary "fair and square" and that she has "always believed that the Democratic Party is a big tent." Meanwhile, the rest of the country, outside the festering progressive terrain of New York City, must be aghast at a Democrat tent which now accommodates antisemites, homophobes, racists, would-be murderers, Nazis and Socialists. There's a candidate, Graham Platner, who is running in the Democratic primary for the chance to challenge Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins. He once sported a Nazi tattoo on his chest (which he has since covered up) and has a history of making anti-gay insults. Astonishingly, he looks to have the edge on rival Gov. Janet Mills. Jay Jones, the Democrat running for attorney general in Virginia, three years ago sent text messages in which he fantasized about a Repub-

lican adversary "getting two bullets to the head," and hoping that the GOP lawmaker's children "die in their mother's arms." Surely that's a bad look for a fellow running to be the top law enforcement official in his state.

with denigrating colleagues as "Black boys"? Of course not, but Democrats look the other way at all these outrages, terrified to call out their own radicals. But for Democrats today, socialism is not radical. Gallup reports that while most Americans still support capitalism, two-thirds of Democrats now embrace socialism, a system that has literally failed every time it has been adopted, leaving poverty and corruption in its wake. Unhappily, that's not what AOC or Mamdani or others were taught in our schools. Yes, the far left will succeed in New York, or California, where Democrats far outnumber Republicans.

But of the eight House seats currently held by Republicans that are considered toss-ups by the Cook Political report and that Democrats are targeting, none is in New York or the Golden State. They are in states like Iowa, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Arizona where voters are probably not too keen on socialism, or antisemitism.

That's why election experts say the midterms, which usually favor the party out of power, look evenly matched and control of the House is a toss-up.

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What The West Gets Wrong About India's Gen Z And Its Democracy

After the recent protests in Nepal by Gen Z that toppled its government, the global commentaries are raising the question: why aren't India's youth taking to the streets?

As Nepal's Gen Z had managed to bring down a government within two days, observers in Western capitals rushed to draw comparisons with calm in India. Across all these Western media coverages, the undertone was unmistakably similar — India's young citizens are either disenchanted or forcibly silenced as they are not coming out on streets. The question that has been repeatedly asked by the Western media is how could 370 million digitally connected, energetic young people stay quiet while their neighbours erupt in rebellion!

This line of reasoning is not only too simplistic; it reflects a new colonial construct. The same Western lens that once portrayed the "East" as mysterious now depicts it as perpetually unstable. This new form of neo-orientalism associates political maturity with the violent protests on the streets; if there is no unrest, it implies stagnation and not a resilient democracy!

The recent BBC piece questioning why India's Gen Z is not taking to the streets is a manifestation of this tendency. It draws parallels between India and smaller countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, and Madagascar, suggesting that the absence of mass uprisings signals a lack of youthful energy or civic courage. The problem isn't nastiness, it's method. Comparing India to these states is to misunderstand how democracies operate at a larger scale. Nepal's protests erupted after a sudden social media ban and amid a fragile coalition government that survives on thin legitimacy. India's federal and electoral architecture, by contrast, disperses discontent across 1.4 billion people, 28 states, and thousands of local governments.

The design of Indian democracy doesn't suppress anger; it channels it. Protests in India rarely topple governments because institutions, courts, elections, bureaucracies, and welfare systems absorb the shock. To view the absence of unrest as evidence of apathy is to overlook how political participation actually functions in a robust and mature democracy. There is an unspoken discom-

fort in much of Western coverage about how India, despite all its contradictions, remains economically and politically more stable than its peers. It continues to grow faster than most large democracies, sustains multi-party elections with a healthy turnout, and manages one of the world's most complex social fabrics without systemic collapse. This stability is rarely celebrated in Western media; it's of-



ten treated with suspicion. The reflexive narrative is to ask what might be going wrong beneath the calm rather than what mechanisms have allowed a post-colonial state to sustain democratic continuity and growth at this scale.

Part of this bias comes from habit. The Western media has always treated South Asia as a theatre of crisis. If the story isn't of famine, coup, or riot, it barely registers. But another part stems from deeper discomfort; India no longer fits neatly into the developmental hierarchies that once defined the global imagination. It's too chaotic to be treated as Western, too successful to be pitted as "developing". So, its stability is read as a paradox, not as an achievement.

In Western capitals, protest is considered a hallmark of civic virtue. The French strike, the British march, and the American sit-in—these are viewed as signs of healthy democracy. Yet when the same template emerges elsewhere, it's often described in different terms: "unrest", "mob violence", or "youth instability". This double standard also extends to its inverse.

When Western societies experience protest fatigue or political disengagement, it is analysed as a sign of post-modern maturity, a democracy that no longer needs the street. When

India's youth turn to the ballot box instead of barricades, it is defined as evidence of apathy. The irony is glaring. India's 2024 general election saw the participation of nearly a billion voters, more than the population of the entire West combined. If protest is one language of democracy, participation is another. Yet the latter rarely makes headlines.

To describe India's Gen Z as "si-

not as part of a regional morality play. But when South or Southeast Asian youth mobilise, or don't, the question becomes comparative and moralising: why don't others follow? Why isn't India emulating its neighbours? This reflects 'projection' and not 'analysis'. Western media expects the template in their part of the world to be replicated everywhere. When it doesn't, they treat it as a sign of deficiency of

democratic values. If we step away from this template, India's apparent calm begins to look less like resignation and more like resilience. Its youth are not revolutionaries by default because they have grown up inside an established, functioning democracy. They have witnessed for decades that power dynamics can be successfully changed through ballots, not barricades. This generation of young Indians is also smoothly navigating global economic competition, digital transformation, and an aspirational middle-

class culture that prizes progress over protest. Their energies are directed toward mobility, not militancy. Far from being depoliticised, they are the inheritors of a political system that has normalised participation so deeply that it no longer requires upheaval to feel real. In that sense, India's "stability" is not the absence of politics, it's the maturity of it. India would never fit into the Western media's binary of democratic decline or populist revolt.

Her story is less dramatic, but more consequential: a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multilingual democracy that manages to govern, argue, and grow simultaneously. The West often mistakes this for contradiction. It is, in fact, the definition of balance. The time has come for global media to update its interpretive grammar. Not every democracy must protest to prove it's alive.

To understand India, one must abandon the lens of spectacle and learn to see political endurance as a testament to achievement, not an anomaly. The real story isn't why India's youth aren't burning tyres; it's why, despite every reason to fracture, the world's largest democracy still holds together. And that story deserves to be told without a Western filter.

By :Arun Anand

At least 64 killed in Rio police raids ahead of climate conferences



(News Agency) RIO DE JANEIRO, Oct 28 (Reuters) - At least 64 people died on Tuesday in Rio de Janeiro's most deadly police operation ever, which targeted a major gang days before the city hosts global events related to the United Nations climate summit known as COP30. Police have often conducted large-scale operations against criminal groups

programming is part of the run-up to COP30, the United Nations climate summit held in the Amazon city of Belem from November 10 to November 21. The death toll confirmed by Rio Governor Claudio Castro on Tuesday, which included four police officers, was more than twice Rio's most deadly previous police operation. "We stand firm confronting narcoterrorism," Castro wrote on social media about the operation, which he said involved 2,500 security personnel across the Alemão and Penha favela complexes, near the city's international airport. Rio's favelas are poor, densely populated settlements woven through the city's hilly oceanside terrain. Smoke rose early on Tuesday over the iconic skyline as gangs burnt cars to slow the advance of armored vehicles while bursts of gunfire rang out. Police released videos showing

suspects using drones armed with grenades against the police. The footage also showed armed men fleeing into a forested area near the operation. After the most intense fighting subsided, a Reuters journalist saw police from a special operations unit rounding up dozens of shirtless men. Sobbing family members gathered outside of a public hospital attending to those injured. The Rio state government called Tuesday's operation the largest ever targeting the Comando Vermelho gang. Justice Minister Ricardo Lewandowski said the federal government had not received any request for support from state authorities prior to the "bloody" operation, adding he had been following developments through media reports. The clashes disrupted the routines of dozens of schools and medical facilities, redirected bus

routes and snarled traffic across several neighborhoods in the state capital. Castro confirmed 81 arrests as authorities sought to serve 250 arrest and search warrants in an operation targeting alleged drug kingpins and their money laundering operations. However, some civil society groups criticized the heavy casualties in a military-style operation. Carolina Ricardo, executive director at security think tank Sou da Paz, called it a tragedy. "This is a completely failed approach, because it does not actually target the links in the drug production chain," she said. Reporting by Rodrigo Viga Gaier; Additional reporting by Aline Massuca in Rio de Janeiro, Andre Romani in Sao Paulo, Lisandra Paraguassu in Brasilia; Writing by Gabriel Araujo; Editing by Brad Haynes, Rod Nickel, Nia Williams, Nick Zieminski and Deepa Babington.

New US strikes kill 14 alleged drug traffickers, Mexico leads rescue of survivor

(News Agency) In a social media post, Hegseth said Mexican authorities took over the search-and-rescue operation for the lone survivor from the three strikes, which took place on Monday. "The four vessels were known by our intelligence apparatus, transiting along known narco-trafficking routes, and carrying

carry it out. The strikes followed at least 10 others in the Caribbean and Pacific since early September, in a campaign that has raised U.S. tensions with Venezuela and Colombia. Trump has also authorized the CIA to conduct covert operations in Venezuela. The Pentagon has provided little information about any of the strikes, including the quantity of drugs the boats allegedly carried and the identities of those killed. The strikes have raised alarm among some Democratic lawmakers, who question whether they adhere to the laws of war. Legal experts have questioned why the U.S. military is carrying out the strikes, instead of the Coast Guard, which is the main U.S. maritime law enforcement



narcotics," Hegseth said, without providing evidence.

ADMINISTRATION SILENT ON DETAILS

Hegseth posted a roughly 30-second video, which appeared to show two vessels close together in the water before exploding.

Another part of the video showed a vessel moving in the water before exploding. In a statement on X, Mexico's Navy said it received a request from the U.S. Coast Guard and then carried out a rescue operation about 400 miles southwest of Acapulco, adding that an aircraft and a vessel were being used to

agency, and why other efforts to halt the shipments were not made before resorting to deadly strikes. Reuters has previously reported that two alleged drug traffickers survived a U.S. military strike in the Caribbean earlier this month. They were rescued and brought to a U.S. Navy warship before being repatriated to Colombia and Ecuador. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has repeatedly alleged that the U.S. is hoping to drive him from power. Washington in August doubled its reward for information leading to Maduro's arrest to \$50 million, accusing him of links to drug trafficking and criminal groups which Maduro denies.



Trump files 'powerhouse' appeal in 'politically charged' Manhattan district attorney case

(News Agency) President Donald Trump's legal team filed a "powerhouse" appeal in Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's case against him, demanding the verdict be thrown out and that the "most politically charged prosecution in our Nation's history," as they called it, be dismissed altogether. Fox News Digital obtained the 111-page appeal filed in New York Supreme Court's Appellate Division late Monday night. Sullivan & Cromwell's Robert J. Giuffra Jr. is representing the president in the matter. Trump pleaded not guilty to all 34 counts of falsifying business records in the first degree but was found guilty in May after a six-week unprecedented criminal trial in New York in 2025. New York v. Trump is on a halt until 2029. "President Trump's legal team filed a powerhouse appeal in the Manhattan DA's Witch Hunt, as the President continues his fight to put an end to the Radical Democrat Lawfare once and for all," a spokesman for the president's legal team told Fox News Digital. "The Supreme Court's historic decision on Immunity, the Federal and New York State Constitutions, and other established legal precedent mandate that this meritless hoax be immediately overturned and dismissed," the Trump spokesman continued. "President Trump will keep defeating Democrat weaponization at every turn as he focused on his singular mission to Make America Great Again." The 111-page filing details Giuffra's argument for complete dismissal and reversal. "This is the most politically charged prosecution in our Nation's history," the filing states. "After years of fruitless investigation into decade-old, baseless allegations — and under immense political pressure to criminally charge President Donald J. Trump for something— New York's district attorney (DANY) manufactured felony charges against a once-former and now-sitting President of the United States. The DA, a Democrat, brought those charges in the middle of a contentious Presidential election in which President Trump was the leading Republican candidate."

Trump's lawyers are asking the court to "now reverse."

"Federal law expressly preempts DANY's misdemeanor-turned-felony charges because those charges rest on an alleged violation of federal campaign regulations that States cannot (and have never) enforced," the filing states. "The trial was fatally marred by the introduction of 2 official Presidential acts that the Supreme Court has made clear cannot be used as evidence against a President." Trump's lawyers went on to argue that "the jury was instructed incorrectly, allowing a conviction without the unanimity required by both New York law and basic due process." "Beyond these fatal flaws, the evidence was clearly



insufficient to convict," the filing states. "In addition to all this overwhelming error, the trial was conducted by a judge who refused to recuse himself despite having made political contributions to President Trump's electoral opponents and despite having disqualifying family conflicts. For each of these independent reasons, President Trump's conviction must be set aside." Trump's attorneys also noted that the review of the by federal prosecutors in 2021 led to "no actions against President Trump even after he left office in 2021," which "should have barred any prosecution" in the Manhattan district attorney's efforts. Trump attorneys also argued that the trial court violated the presidential evidentiary immunity confirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court, which bars the

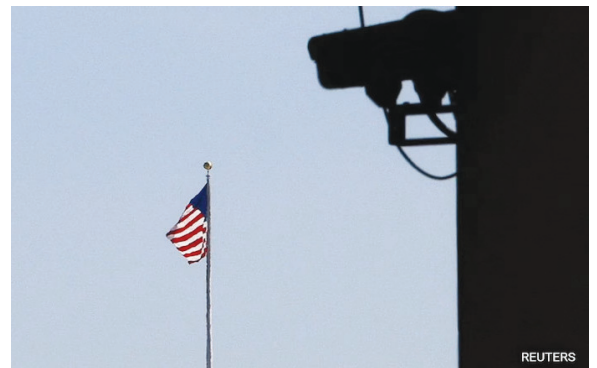
"use of evidence about" a president's official acts while in office. "The jury improperly heard extensive testimony about at least four different kinds of official acts by President Trump," the filing states, including discussions between the president and the White House communications director in the Oval Office over the White House's response to allegations of presidential wrongdoing; official presidential statements on social media; alleged discussions between the president and the attorney general about the enforcement of federal campaign regulations; and the president's practices in discharging his presidential duties, including from the Situation Room. "The U.S. Supreme Court mandated that violations of Presidential evidentiary immunity require automatic reversal of a conviction

without any harmless-error analysis," the filing states. "Even if such analysis were applied, the introduction of the prohibited testimony—which DANY repeatedly relied on and called 'devastating' in its summation, A7815—was far from harmless beyond a reasonable doubt." Trump attorneys also argued that the trial court "erred in instructing the jury that it could convict President Trump of having conspired to 'promote or prevent the election of any person to a public office by unlawful means,' Election Law § 17-152, without unanimously agreeing on what those 'unlawful means' actually were." "Instead, the court permitted the jury to convict if some jurors believed only that President Trump had conspired to violate FECA, while others believed only that he had conspired to help others commit tax fraud, and still others believed only that he had conspired to help others make false statements to a 5 bank. Due process and Section 17-152 do not permit a conviction based on such a haphazard combination of jury findings," the filing states. Trump lawyers also said the district attorney "had no proof that President Trump ever had the 'intent to defraud' expressly required by the business-records statute."

US Accuses Ex-Executive Of Selling Trade Secrets To Russia For \$1.3 Million

(News Agency) US prosecutors have accused a former executive of a government contractor that provides cyber intelligence tools to federal agencies of selling trade secrets to a buyer in Russia for \$1.3 million. In an October 14 filing in US District Court in Washington, prosecutors said Peter Williams stole eight trade secrets of two unnamed companies from April 2022 to June 2025, with the intent to sell those secrets to a Russian-based buyer. The filing does not identify where Williams worked or the companies whose trade secrets were allegedly stolen. But Williams is listed in British business records as general manager of L3Harris Trenchant from October 2024 until his

resignation on August 21. The company develops hacking tools that support national security operations and says it has US government contracts. It is a subsidiary of defense contractor L3Harris, which declined to comment. The prospect of Russia gaining knowledge of hacking tools used by US and other countries' intelligence services raises broader questions about potential attacks on federal systems and opportunities for adversaries to bolster defenses. A source familiar with the matter said the person in the British documents is the Peter Williams named in the October 14 filing. Federal prosecutors alleged that Williams made \$1.3 million from selling the secrets and seek the forfeiture



of a Washington, DC, house and luxury items including watches and jewelry, according to the court filing. TechCrunch, which earlier reported on the case, on Tuesday said L3Harris Trenchant was investigating a leak of hacking tools. Reuters could not locate Williams, who

is identified in the UK records as an Australian citizen and in the court filing as a US resident. Attorneys listed as representing Williams did not respond to requests for comment Thursday. An arraignment and plea agreement hearing was set for October 29.

'Hindus treated us better...': Outrage in Pakistan as Mardan cleric says 'we will support India if war breaks out' | WATCH

According to local reports, Pakistani intelligence agencies picked up Maulvi Gulzar after a speech in which he criticised the army and intelligence services.

(News Agency) A cleric in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has been detained after issuing unusually blunt criticism of the Pakistani Army and declaring that he would back India in the event of a conflict between the two countries. Maulvi Gulzar of Mardan reportedly said, "Hindus have not treated us as cruelly as Pakistani soldiers have treated us in jail. If India attacks Pakistan, we will support India because of the cruelty of the Pakistani government." He added that during his incarceration "All ulema swore on the Holy Quran that if India attacks Pakistan, we will support India. The cruelty with which the Pakistan Army treats Muslims and madrasa students, never has any Hindu or Indian

soldier done. Indian Army is better than Pakistani army." According to local reports, Pakistani intelligence agencies picked up Maulvi Gulzar after a speech in which he criticised the army and intelligence services. He remains in detention and authorities have neither confirmed the arrest nor commented on the authenticity of the video in which the statements were made. The episode underscores deepening disaffection in tribal and frontier regions of Pakistan where the state's writ has long been contested. In neighbouring Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and affiliated militant groups are reported to have turned large sections of the province into no-go zones for the

army, with checkpoints, vehicle inspections and forced "jihad taxes". Moneycontrol+1 At the same time, activists from Pashtun, Baloch, Sindhi and Kashmiri communities have demanded independence from Pakistan, accusing Islamabad of systematic repression and ideological manipulation via religious seminaries. Gulzar's statements represent a rare and vivid instance of a cleric openly challenging the military's authority while aligning himself with Pakistan's arch-rival India. For Islamabad, such dissent is intolerable, especially given the army's dominance in national politics and security affairs. Analysts see the incident as symptomatic of a broader erosion of state control and growing popular alienation in Pakistan's



marginalised regions. For India and observers of the region this raises further questions about Pakistan's internal fractures and the limits of its security apparatus. If religious figures feel so aggrieved that they publicly support a rival country in a hypothetical war, it

signals a profound breakdown of national solidarity. This episode may well highlight the army's loss of legitimacy among its own base of clerics and students and underscore Pakistan's deepening vulnerabilities on multiple fronts.

Pak-Afghan Inch Closer To 'Open War' After Failed Turkey Peace Talks

The failed talks have also refocused attention on Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's remarks, that Islamabad may have no choice but to engage in open conflict" if dialogue fails.



(News Agency) Talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan to secure a long-term truce have failed, state media from both countries said Tuesday afternoon, each blaming the other for the apparent deadlock. Three Pak officials with direct knowledge of the talks told The Associated Press the impasse is over Kabul's reluctance in accepting 'logical and legitimate demands', i.e., assurances were sought from the Afghan side that its soil won't be used to stage terror attacks

against Pakistan. There has been formal response or comment from either side so far, though Afghan state media RTA said its negotiators "made every effort to hold constructive talks", unlike the Pak camp, which counterered by accusing the Afghans of showing "stubbornness and a lack of seriousness", and said, "Further progress depends on the positive attitude of Afghanistan." If true, the reason for the breakdown will raise eyebrows in India, given Delhi's long-standing

position that the Pak deep state funds, trains, and otherwise supports cross-border terrorist attacks on Indian military and civilian assets and individuals. 'War' if talks fail: Pakistan The failed talks have also refocused attention on Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's remarks, that Islamabad may have no choice but to engage in open conflict" if dialogue fails. The aggressive rhetoric now stands as a point of worry in a world that can't afford more wars. Pak and Afghan reps are still in Turkey but there is no word of a fourth round of talks. The first round of talks, mediated by Qatar and Turkey, took place in Doha on October 18-19. The talks are part of a broader diplomatic push to ease months of heightened tension over Pak accusing Afghanistan of supporting cross-border terrorism. Specifically, it has accused Kabul of terror strikes

via the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, a distinct but ideologically allied group with the Taliban that seized power in Afghanistan in August 2021. The Taliban has strongly denied this allegation. Nevertheless, Pakistan has carried out air strikes to target 'terrorists and terrorist centres in Kabul'. The Taliban has slammed these as military operations violating Afghan sovereignty.

The 48-hour ceasefire

This was after Pak said it had killed 'dozens of Afghan forces and militants' and also destroyed tanks and military posts as it repelled 'unprovoked' assaults in military operations in Afghanistan's southern Kandahar. However, it firmly denied targeting civilians after the Taliban said a dozen non-combatants were killed and over 100 others wounded in that strike. Since then, there have been regular battles. On Sunday five

Pak soldiers and 25 from the Afghan side died, the former's military said, blaming the deaths on terrorists trying to cross the border. It said the attempted infiltrations cast doubt on the intentions of the government in Afghanistan in "regard to addressing the issue of terrorism emanating from its soil". Taliban-India ties Meanwhile, ties between the Taliban and India appear to be trending upward after Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi's week-long visit to Delhi in early October. After a meeting with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, India restored full diplomatic relations and will, in short order, upgrade its Technical Mission in Kabul to an Embassy. Crucially (and in a point Pak would not have missed), the Taliban minister condemned the Pahalgam terror attack that was carried out by a Pak-based terrorist group.

Trump: US, China 'Have a Deal' After Meeting With Xi

President Donald Trump said the U.S. and China "have a deal" after meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, a summit he described as "a 12" on a scale of 0 to 10.

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One after the nearly two-hour meeting at a South Korean air base on Thursday, Trump said the two nations reached agreements on trade, fentanyl, and rare earth exports, marking a thaw in the tense relationship between Washington and Beijing.

"On the scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the best, I would say the meeting was a 12," Trump said. "We have a deal. Now, every year we will renegotiate the deal. But I think the deal will go on for a long time."

Trump said Xi agreed to suspend for one year China's new export restrictions on rare earth and

critical minerals, a move that threatened to disrupt global supplies of materials vital for high-tech manufacturing.

In return, Trump said he would withdraw his planned 100% tariff increase on Chinese imports that was set to take effect Nov. 1.

"There's no roadblock at all on rare earth," Trump said. "It's a one-year deal that I think will be very routinely extended."

The Chinese president also committed to curbing fentanyl exports, a major U.S. concern, while Trump said Washington would reduce tariffs on Chinese goods containing fentanyl from 20% to 10%.

The overall average tariff on Chinese goods will drop from 57.6% to 47.6%, Trump said.

"On fentanyl, we agreed that he was going to work very hard to stop

the flow," Trump said. "I think you're going to see some real action taken." In exchange, Xi pledged to resume large-scale purchases of U.S. soybeans, a vital export for American farmers, and to begin buying U.S. energy products — including a potential "very large scale" oil and gas deal from Alaska.

"China also agreed that they will begin the process of purchasing American Energy," Trump said later in a Truth Social post.

"In fact, a very large scale transaction may take place concerning the purchase of Oil and Gas from the Great State of Alaska." In his online statement, Trump hailed the talks as "historic," writing: "There is enormous respect between our two Countries, and that will only be enhanced with what just took place.

We agreed on many things, with others, even of high importance, being very close to resolved." The president said the agreements "will deliver prosperity and security to millions of Americans" and predicted that "our Farmers will be very happy," urging them to "go out and buy more land and larger tractors." The two leaders did not discuss Taiwan, Trump said, but did speak "for a long time" about ending the war in Ukraine. "I thought it was an amazing meeting," Trump told reporters, adding that he plans to visit China in April and expects Xi to make a reciprocal trip to the U.S. later in the year. "Hundreds of billions of dollars are being brought into our country because of them," Trump wrote. "Our Nation is strong, respected, and admired again — and the best is yet to come."

The Beginning

MAD MEN

OF

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About the Author



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

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

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



The Beginning

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Sharanjit Thind Singh

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Bagram Blues: All About The Air Base That Triggered A War Between Pak And Afghanistan

The sudden but vicious Afghanistan-Pakistan border clashes have fuelled speculation that at the heart of the conflict lies US President Donald Trump's desire to return the Bagram military base to US control. Such speculation is anchored in the timing of the clashes. The initiative was taken by Pakistan when it bombed Afghanistan earlier this month. The bombings coincided with the visit of the acting Taliban foreign minister of Afghanistan to India. But some days before that, Trump had warned that "bad things" could happen if the Taliban refused to give back Bagram. This has given grist to the mill, given Trump's tight embrace of Pakistan and especially its Army Chief Field Marshall Asim Munir, something that till now was thought to have been driven by crypto deals, promises of rare earth mineral mining rights, and the necessity of containing China. There are several reasons for the US to want Bagram back, which had been deserted in the thick of night in 2021 by the US forces stationed there, prior to America's departure from Afghanistan and the return of the Taliban. Bagram would give the US a foothold in Eurasia, from where they could monitor China, Iran, Russia, Central Asian states, as well as Pakistan and its nuclear arsenal. Why It Works For Pak, Too Such an arrangement would serve Pakistan no less. A rentier state, it is always on the lookout for carrying out such services. Bagram is one of the world's biggest air bases, situated in Parwan province and located some 60 km from Kabul. Initially built in the 1950s by the Soviets, it was occupied by the US when it displaced the Taliban following the 9/11 attacks. They expanded the base, which now has one of the most powerful runways, constructed of heavy concrete and steel, and permanent barracks. It was the largest US military hub during America's 20-year war in Afghanistan. If Americans took hold of the base again, it would need Pakistan for logistics and for keeping up extensive supply chains. This would earn Pakistan handsome revenue. An American presence there would also enable the US

to rein in the Taliban, which from Pakistan's perspective has gone rogue. India deepening its ties with the Taliban and upgrading its technical mission in Kabul to a full-fledged embassy adds to Pakistan's spectre of a two-front war. That is the reason it has gone to great lengths to seek strategic depth in Afghanistan (the recently concluded Saudi-Pakistan defence pact did not seem to be impacted in the recent Af-Pak border skirmishes). Added to that now is Iran's current overtures to the Taliban. As Pakistan has accelerated the deportations of Afghan refugees from its territory to Afghanistan, Iran has offered to take in thousands of Afghan workers as migrant labour. Anyway, a fragile ceasefire is in place now and, as is known, so far it has been maintained, thanks in no small measure to the intervention of Qatar and Saudi Arabia. But Pakistan may not be alone in wanting the US back in Afghanistan. Members, loyalists, and sympathisers of the earlier US-backed Afghan government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, many of whom live outside Afghanistan now, and the

predominantly Tajik National Resistance Front, are equally interested.

The Supporters In Afghanistan

Writing in The National Interest, Abdullah Khenjani, the head of the Political Bureau of the National Resistance Front, argued recently that "If Trump truly wants to return an American presence to the Bagram Air Base, he might consider strengthening these resistance groups". Khejani said, "The National Resistance Front (NRF), an anti-Taliban resistance movement devoted to democratic principles, is composed mainly of former Afghan soldiers who fought alongside US and coalition forces against the Taliban and have continued the struggle even after America's withdrawal and the fall of the republican government." A month later, the same publication published an article in which Afghan journalist and activist Natiq Malikzada argued, "If America's long-term safety at a base depends on security assistance from the surrounding communities, the Taliban are the wrong guarantor.

Anti-Taliban networks are the ones with social capital there. As an added bonus, many of these networks are pro-democratic in their outlook, and fought alongside the United States against the Taliban during the 20-year conflict. Any durable arrangement near Bagram ought to start with them."

History May Repeat Itself

The National Front continues to represent Afghanistan officially in nearby Tajikistan from where India, Iran and Russia had once extended military and other supplies to the front battling the Taliban in the late 1990s, before 9/11 and the "war on terror" began. No doubt, this route from Tajikistan is also kept in mind in all the arguments made for the Trump administration to seize Bagram in coordination with those opposing the Taliban. Yet, these arguments seem to be made in some kind of wonderland. Because, if taken seriously, such advice would only lead to history repeating itself with another round of warfare and bloodshed. This is exactly what happened in 2001, when Operation Enduring Freedom against the first Taliban administration was launched.

Officially ending in 2014, it led to what is often billed as America's "longest war", only to end with the return of the Taliban. Moreover, a US return to Bagram this time will be far more difficult. The Taliban have, of course, rejected all such proposals from President Trump, citing that Afghan "sovereignty" is paramount.

US Just Has A Bad Rep

Another reason is that unlike today, when the US had launched its first war on terror in 2001, it had much goodwill both in the region and around the world. It was overtly and covertly supported in the war by its current foes - Russia, China, Iran, the Central Asian countries, many of whom like Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan even hosted US bases. Pakistan was an active participant in the war, and India, of course, extended non-military support. Now, China, Iran, and Russia are the very countries that the US wants to monitor from Bagram. While the Central Asian countries may not be opposed to a US footprint in the region, they have at least tactically made peace with the Taliban, engaging with it in a sustained manner.

Whistleblower warns illegal immigrants are sending 'shockwave' through crucial industry

FIRST ON FOX: Following several high-profile, deadly auto accidents involving illegal alien truck drivers, a commercial trucking industry leader is blowing the whistle on the devastating "shockwave" illegal drivers carrying sanctuary state licenses have had on the industry. Mike Kucharski, co-owner and vice president of JKC Trucking, which is based in Illinois, told Fox News Digital that in addition to endangering American roads, illegal alien commercial drivers have been "killing the trucking business." He said that though the problem has only recently been brought to the forefront of the public consciousness in recent months, drivers and trucking businesses have been feeling the impacts for years. "We knew there was an issue right after COVID because the rates dropped down, and we just thought, 'OK, look, it's just inflation... the wars, et cetera, all

these aspects causing the volumes to be down. We're thinking, 'OK, in the long run, these volumes will go back up to what they were pre-COVID conditions or just go back to regular volumes, and we'll be back in business.' But what happened? The complete opposite happened," he said. "They went down and stayed down, and we never knew, as truckers, what was the problem." Now, with recent revelations from the Trump Department of Transportation and Secretary Sean Duffy about rampant illegal alien truckers on American roads, Kucharski said the truth is finally out. Duffy issued a bombshell report on Thursday accusing California of violating federal law by issuing a commercial driver's license to a foreign asylum seeker whose semi-truck crash killed three people last week. The report alleges that Democratic Gov.

Gavin Newsom's administration ignored a federal order to halt noncompliant licenses and revoke improperly issued credentials, a failure that, according to Duffy, cost "three innocent souls." Federal regulators uncovered flaws in how California licenses were obtained by certain commercial truck drivers. The 2025 Annual Program Review and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) concluded that the state's commercial driver's license (CDL) system suffered from "systemic policy, procedural, and programming errors" when it came to handling non-domiciled licenses. In an audit letter dated Sept. 26, 2025, investigators also discovered that California had issued CDLs to non-domiciled drivers that were valid even after their federal work authorization expired. Kucharski explained further that, though a heavily

regulated industry, illegal alien truck drivers can exploit a "loophole" in the system by obtaining non-domiciled commercial drivers' licenses from states such as California and New York. They are then able to outcompete legitimate trucking businesses by charging lower prices, leading to the demise of many American small businesses in the industry. "As a business owner, I was thinking, 'Well, who is taking all these loads?' Now I could figure it out that this is another shockwave that's hitting the truck industry after COVID and violent volatility, these [non-domiciled] drivers are coming in and doing it for cheaper because they don't care, and... they don't have Social Security numbers, and I assume they're probably not filing for taxes. So, if you're not going to pay all your bills, of course, you can do it cheaper and keep on trucking."

95% Of Gen-AI Projects Are Failing - And Markets Can Smell The Fear

The rapid and competitive surge in investment and media attention around Artificial Intelligence (AI) has led to a resurgence of earlier technological manias, sparking fears that the AI bubble could soon burst. Global institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Bank of England and financial leaders such as Jamie Dimon and Ray Dalio have issued cautionary warnings about the same. They have all brought forth concerns about the inflated AI valuations and the bubble created by AI. But what exactly is fuelling this surge? How does it compare to the infamous Dot-com crash? And what implications could such a burst have on the United States and the global economy?

The AI Mania

The AI sector has witnessed unprecedented capital inflows, with just American private AI investment touching \$109.1 billion in 2025. This, along with investment in dozens of other countries and by other entities, has poured into AI development, data centres, chip manufacturing, and other related infrastructure. The S&P 500's growth in recent months can also, to a certain extent, be linked to AI-related growth. The above graph indicates that AI has maintained a steady share of about 2% to 3% of the index until 2020. Between 2021

and 2024, its weight in the S&P 500 generally ranged from 3% to 4%. Significant changes in the index began in early 2023, driven by a surge in AI Hardware. This growth was largely fuelled by the growth of the Santa Clara-headquartered chip manufacturer NVIDIA, whose share rose from 1.13% at the end of 2022 to 6.6% by June 30, 2024, reflecting investor optimism that AI will revolutionise productivity and economic growth. Yet, as cautioned by IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, current AI-related valuations are approaching levels resembling those seen just before the dot-com crash of 2000. "Today's valuations are heading toward levels we saw during the bullishness about the internet 25 years ago," she said. Many firms still struggle to display meaningful returns and profits from their AI investment. A new Massachusetts Institute of Technology study revealed that approximately 95% of generative AI business efforts are failing, with only 5% achieving meaningful revenue growth. Even with more than \$44 billion poured into AI startups in the first half of 2025, tangible productivity improvements remain limited as AI continues to face challenges with real-world applications.

OpenAI's CEO, Sam Altman, has openly acknowledged this, warning, "In fact, there are many parts of AI that I think are kind of bubbly right now."

AI vs Dot-com

The dot-com bubble of the late 1990s elicited similar excitement around the transformative potential of the internet with companies having minimal revenue commanding sky high valuations based on 'future expectations'. When investor confidence in the same expectations waned in the early 2000s, these firms collapsed, wiping out trillions in market value. The bubble did, however, in its messy aftermath, leave behind vital technological infrastructure, which went on to become the backbone of today's internet, led by survivors such as Google and Amazon. A key difference, however, between the AI bubble and the dot-com craze lies in the source of capital. Many big tech giants are investing heavily into AI from their own profits, unlike the dot-com era startups, which relied on external capital. Bridgewater Associates founder Ray Dalio has also cautioned investors that the current rally in favour of AI stocks is showing signs of "froth". He drew parallels to the speculative fervour of the late-1990s dot-com boom. He

went on to state that while AI's technological trajectory remains transformative and inevitable, investor expectations have far outpaced the sector's real-world monetisation capacity. "The progress in AI is real, but so is the speculation around it," he noted, leading us to understand the widening disconnect between genuine innovation and inflated market valuations.

What's At Stake?

The United States remains the epicentre of AI innovation and investment, thus making its economy highly sensitive to any and all shifts in AI market dynamics. AI investments accounted for nearly 92% of America's GDP growth in the first half of 2025. In the same time, AI-related capital expenditures contributed a whopping 1.1% to GDP growth, outpacing the US consumer as an engine of expansion. This has led experts to warn that a contraction in AI spending could give the US economy, already burdened by rising debt and tariffs, the tip it needs to go into recession. The bursting of the AI bubble could trigger a domino effect, which would lead to a rapid downshift in AI stock valuations, which, in turn, would erode household wealth and take a huge toll on investor confidence in the market

while pulling down overall market indices. It would also lead to companies slashing AI budgets and broader capital expenditures, which would, in turn, slow innovation and dampen productivity growth. A sudden slowdown in AI-related sectors would also most likely trigger layoffs and downward pressure on wages, particularly in technology-driven regions where employment and income growth have become heavily dependent on the AI boom. Globally, an AI bubble burst could lead to a weakening of the global financial sentiment and slow down international trade. Countries heavily reliant on technology exports and AI-driven service industries would face reduced external demand, while emerging markets could possibly experience capital outflows as investors shift funds toward safer assets, leading to an amplification of the exchange and liquidity pressure. The IMF and other major financial institutions have come out cautioning that current equity valuations are precariously stretched.

The world economy at this very moment faces a "triple risk" scenario emanating from the United States, involving tariffs, the AI bubble, and mounting debt burdens, all of which threaten medium-term growth prospects.

Life imitates Netflix in the world of Russian missiles

Netflix audiences recently got a heavy dose of geopolitical fiction with the release of The Diplomat's latest season and the global streaming of A House of Dynamite (AHD) earlier this month. Without spoiling the endings, both stories shared one common element — a weapon designed to shatter the comfort of security long associated with Western defence systems. The Diplomat's latest plot revolves around the successful deployment of Poseidon — a supposed nuclear-powered, long-range, nuclear-armed autonomous torpedo that Russia has claimed to be developing for years but has not been showcased in action. Meanwhile, Kathryn Bigelow directed AHD questions the reliability of US missile defence systems in the event of a nuclear strike on American soil.

Following its Netflix release, the Pentagon reportedly had to issue an internal memo clarifying that the United States' missile defence capabilities are far superior to what the movie depicts. So when Russian President Vladimir Putin announced on Sunday that Russia had successfully tested the 9M730 Burevestnik — a surface-to-land, nuclear-powered and nuclear-capable cruise missile — calling it a 'unique weapon,' it raised an inevitable question: is life finally imitating Netflix? Both Poseidon and Burevestnik have been part of public and pop-culture discussions since 2018, when Russia unveiled a series of six superorozhie ("super weapons"). Of these, only two — the Kh-47M2 Kinzhal and 3M22 Zircon — have seen real-world application. Western experts

have long questioned the lack of verified data on the actual performance of Burevestnik and Poseidon, often dismissing their 'exaggerated abilities' as part of Russia's strategic narrative. Authoritative details about Burevestnik's design and functionality remain scarce, but India Today's Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) team has created a provisional animation model of the missile based on available Russian media reports. A tentative design of the 9M730 Burevestnik cruise missile. Credit: India Today OSINT

BUREVESTNIK: A SILVER BULLET ?

Before assessing the impact of Russia's new missile, it's worth understanding what Moscow already had in its arsenal. Russia continues to maintain long-range Intercontinental Ballistic

Missiles (ICBMs) capable of delivering nuclear warheads across continents — enough to destroy entire cities, as dramatised in AHD. So why does a cruise missile matter? The answer lies in how defence systems respond to different threats. Ballistic missiles are rocket-propelled for a brief phase before following a curved, high-altitude trajectory — making them easier (at least in theory) to detect and track using radar and missile-defence systems. Cruise missiles, by contrast, behave more like aircraft, powered by jet engines and equipped with wings. They travel at low altitudes — sometimes less than 100 meters above ground — which makes radar detection difficult. Their unpredictable flight paths complicate interception but come at the cost of speed and

range, as low-level flight consumes more fuel.

The Burevestnik, however, is nuclear-powered — giving it potentially limitless range and endurance. According to Russia's top military general, Valery Gerasimov, the missile recently travelled 14,000 km and stayed airborne for about 15 hours, still short of its maximum capability. Russian defence experts have since claimed the missile has an 'unlimited range,' theoretically allowing it to strike anywhere on Earth. Many analysts argue that Russia already possesses sufficient capability to threaten adversaries in a nuclear conflict. No missile defence system is perfect — its efficiency depends on multiple factors, including deployment, reload intervals, intelligence quality, threat assessment, and prioritisation.

"A Hint Of The Great Depression": Amazon Layoffs Spark Fierce Online Backlash

Amazon plans to lay off 30,000 corporate employees, nearly 10 per cent of its corporate workforce, triggering strong online backlash.

E-commerce giant Amazon is set to cut up to 30,000 corporate jobs starting Tuesday, marking its largest workforce reduction since late 2022, a move covering nearly 10 per cent of its 350,000 global corporate staff. The cuts come amid a broader push by CEO Andy Jassy to streamline operations, remove bureaucracy, and make greater use of artificial intelligence and automation. Divisions expected to feel the impact include Human Resources (People Experience & Technology), Devices & Services, and Operations. While the figure represents a small percentage of Amazon's 1.55 million total employees, but nearly 10% of its roughly

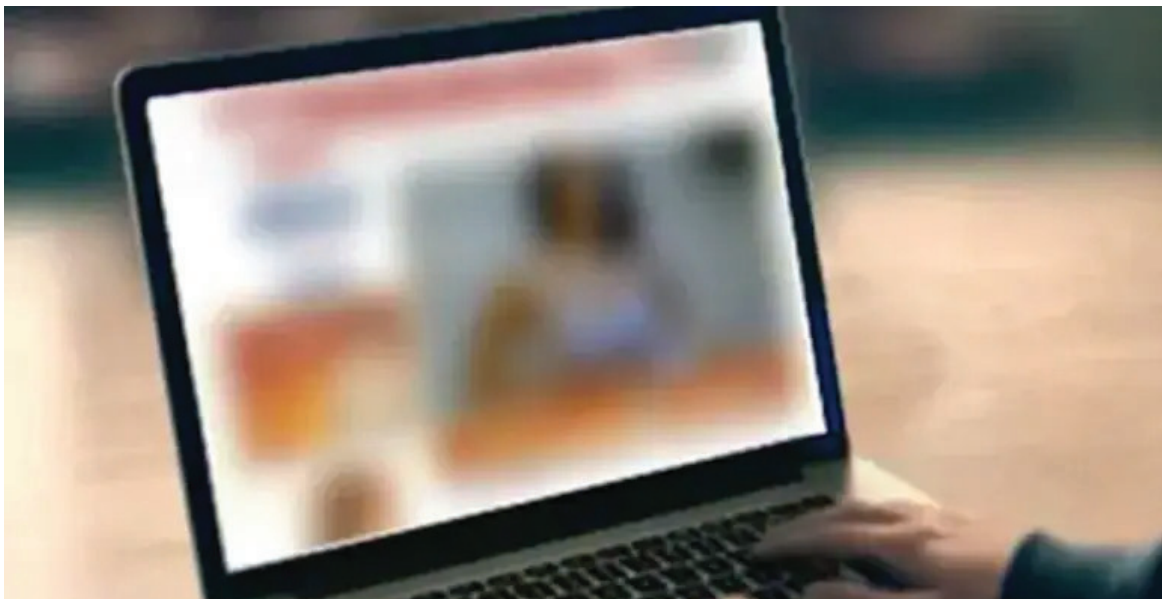
350,000 corporate employees, the scale and speed of the layoff have stirred significant unease. In particular, social-media users reacted sharply: While Amazon's massive layoff announcement is making headlines across major media outlets, it has also triggered intense reactions on social media. Many users are calling it the end of the stable job era, with some even likening it to the onset of a modern-day Great Depression. One user questioned, "Is Amazon replacing humans with robots?" while another remarked, "The focus has clearly shifted to automation and AI, humans out, bots in." A third user summed up the sentiment, saying, "This



isn't just about layoffs. It's the driven survival and capital-driven overrides empathy, people are age-old struggle between labour- ambition. When efficiency seen as costs, not contributors."

OnlyFans Generates \$37.6 Million Per Employee, Surpasses Nvidia And Apple

In fiscal year 2024, OnlyFans recorded \$1.41 billion in net revenue from \$7.22 billion in transaction volume



OnlyFans has outperformed Nvidia (\$3.6 million) and Apple (\$2.4 million) per employee. In fiscal year 2024, OnlyFans recorded \$1.41 billion in net revenue from \$7.22 billion in transaction volume. The platform has over 4.6 million creators and 377 million registered users.

How OnlyFans Made It Happen

It is a subscription-based social media platform that allows creators to earn money by sharing content directly with their fans.

Unlike typical social media platforms, OnlyFans enables

creators to monetise their photos, videos, live streams, and messages. While it is often associated with adult content, many creators use it for non-adult content, including fitness coaching, music, cooking tutorials, etc, as well. Fans pay a monthly

subscription fee to access a creator's content, giving creators a way to earn income directly from their audience. Creators can also earn money through tips and pay-per-view content. OnlyFans takes a 20 per cent commission from all earnings.

OnlyFans was founded in 2016 by British entrepreneur Tim Stokely in London. Over time, the platform gained massive popularity, particularly for adult content. In 2021, a majority stake was acquired by Fenix International, led by Leonid Radvinsky.

OnlyFans Profit Margin

Financially, OnlyFans reported pre-tax profits of \$684 million and net profits of \$520 million in 2024. Creator earnings totalled \$5.8 billion, with OnlyFans retaining its 20 per cent share. Creator accounts grew 13 per cent, and fan accounts increased 24 per cent during the year. OnlyFans distributed \$701 million in dividends to owner Leonid Radvinsky in 2024.

Effects Of Bullying In Childhood That Persist Into Adulthood

Bully-victims are often the most troubled of all—they are impulsive, easily provoked, have low self-esteem, and have a poor understanding of social cues

The people we are surrounded by inevitably shape the habits and behaviours we pick up. In the case of school-going children, this effect is multiplied by virtue of being surrounded by peers and friends more than adults. The effects of bullying during childhood are palpable and easy to identify. However, it is assumed that once the affected child grows up, the icicles of pain and trauma melt into the spring of youth. It is this very assumption that leads us to ignore the long-lasting effects that pose a threat to the quality of life throughout one's life. Bullying is often understood as an isolated, individual problem—a matter that can be solved through resilience on the part of the victim and imposition of disciplinary action on the bully. However, such a myopic understanding of the phenomenon tends to obscure the larger social impact it has on society. The ripples of emotional scars, social withdrawal, and mistrust experienced by the victims of bullying in childhood eventually transform into surging waves that alter health and behaviour patterns in adulthood. So far, bullying is only seen as consisting of two stakeholders—bullies who intentionally and

systematically abuse the imbalance of power, and victims who suffer. However, there is also a third classification we must familiarise ourselves with—the bully-victims. Bully-victims are those who perpetrate bullying against others, as well as are, or have been, victims of bullying themselves. This third classification of children is especially prone to adverse financial, social, educational, and health risks in adulthood.

Children who are physically weak, withdrawn, have few or no friends to stand up for them, and have poor social understanding are more likely to become victims. These victims then become vulnerable to emotional, psychological, and physical health problems. This, in turn, affects their academic achievement, later affecting their career and income. In stark contrast, pure bullies are often children who are physically strong, healthy, and competent in emotional recognition, which enables them to effectively manipulate their victims. They are deviant in their behaviours, which puts them at risk for later offences such as juvenile delinquency or crimes in adulthood. Bully-victims are often the most troubled of all—

they are impulsive, easily provoked, have low self-esteem, and have a poor understanding of social cues. Since they often come from dysfunctional families, it has been contested that pre-existing emotional and behavioural problems might be the root cause of problems in childhood rather than bullying. However, we must also take the chronicity of bullying into account. Those who are chronically bullied by peers tend to have a higher risk for psychiatric problems and maladjustments as compared to those who are bullied at only a single point in time. Chronic victims have significantly higher levels of social adjustment issues and greater financial problems. In adulthood, bully-victims tend to show the worst health outcomes, including regular smoking, higher risk of serious illnesses, and a slower rate of recovery. Similarly, in adulthood, bullies tend to show risky and illegal behaviours such as felonies and substance abuse. While all three groups show difficulty in keeping jobs, bullies and bully-victims in particular display impaired educational attainment. Additionally, they also follow a trend of experiencing disrupted social functioning and relationships.



Predispositions such as coming from deprived families, poor emotional recognition, mental health problems, and lack of resources to deal with such disadvantages lead to children becoming victims of bullying. When these victims resort to bullying others as an unhealthy coping mechanism in order to "get back" at others for the distress they have had to endure, they transition into the bully-victim hybrid. Astonishingly, they may also ally with their own bullies against those weaker than them as a way to redirect attention from themselves and avoid becoming a target. The degree and salience of maladjustments in adulthood are dependent on how the psyche was affected during childhood bullying. Genetic vulnerability is a pre-ordained outcome that cannot be altered. For instance, when disruptions in the serotonin transporter genes coincide with altered psychological responses to stress as a result of bullying, the entire cognitive circuit is rewired, thus resulting in socio-emotional regulation problems that eventually lead to adulthood problems. Another such route is the alteration of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (commonly abbreviated as the HPA axis). HPA axis disruptions are a common cause for mood disorders, depression, and sleep problems. An imbalance in the HPA axis leads to susceptibility in the body's immune system, causing the child's social cognition and neurocircuitry to be reshaped.

Dietitian Shares 3 Easy Tips To Beat Bloating And Get A Flatter Tummy In 2 Weeks

Most of us dream of having a flatter, toned tummy, but bloating, poor digestion, and late-night eating may sometimes make that goal feel far away. Between long work hours, unhealthy snacking, and confusing diet trends, it is easy to lose track of what really works. But according to dietitian and weight-loss coach Sakina Mustansir, simple changes in your daily routine can make a noticeable difference in just two weeks. In a recent Instagram post, Sakina shared three easy habits that can reduce bloating, support digestion, and help trim your waistline; no crash diets or fancy supplements needed. Her practical approach focuses on timing, movement, and a simple homemade drink that

soothes your stomach naturally.

Finish Dinner Early For Better Digestion

Sakina's first piece of advice is to finish dinner by 7 PM and avoid eating carbs at night. "Make sure your dinner ends by 7 PM and avoid carbs for dinner," she says. "This helps regulate your fat-storage hormones and supports better overnight digestion," she adds. According to her, eating early allows your body to rest and digest properly, preventing gas, heaviness, and discomfort in the morning. Skipping heavy carbs at night also helps keep insulin levels stable, reducing fat buildup around the midsection. Take A Short Walk After Dinner The second step is simple: take

a 20-minute light walk after dinner. "A light 20-minute walk after dinner can stabilise your blood sugar and curb late-night cravings," Sakina explains. This small effort helps burn off some calories, improves digestion, and prevents the urge to snack before bed. Walking also reduces bloating by keeping your metabolism active and aiding smoother digestion.

Drink This Herbal Tea Before Bed

To end your day on a soothing note, Sakina recommends a homemade herbal tea made with kitchen ingredients that target bloating and inflammation. Her recipe includes:

1 cup of hot water



½ teaspoon each of fennel (saunf), cumin (jeera), and carom seeds (ajwain) ¼ teaspoon grated ginger A pinch of turmeric and black pepper "Boil for 5–7 minutes, strain, add lemon, and drink while still warm. This tea helps reduce gas, bloating, and inflammation, making your tummy feel lighter," she says.

Sakina shared these tips in an Instagram video posted on October 9, which has crossed over 4 lakh views. Many viewers praised the simplicity of her advice. A user commented, "Amazing tips," while another wrote, "Really works!! I drink daily." Others thanked her for offering natural remedies that are easy to follow at home.

'The Chola Tigers': When Bharat Roared Back

Author Amish Tripathi has, over the years, carved a niche for himself as India's foremost storyteller of mytho-historical fiction. From *The Immortals* of Meluha to *Legend of Suheldev*, his works have celebrated India's civilisational depth, cultural pride, and spiritual ethos. With *The Chola Tigers: Avengers of Somnath*, he once again ventures into the realm where history meets imagination, delivering a rousing tale of vengeance, unity, and dharma that rekindles the embers of forgotten valour.

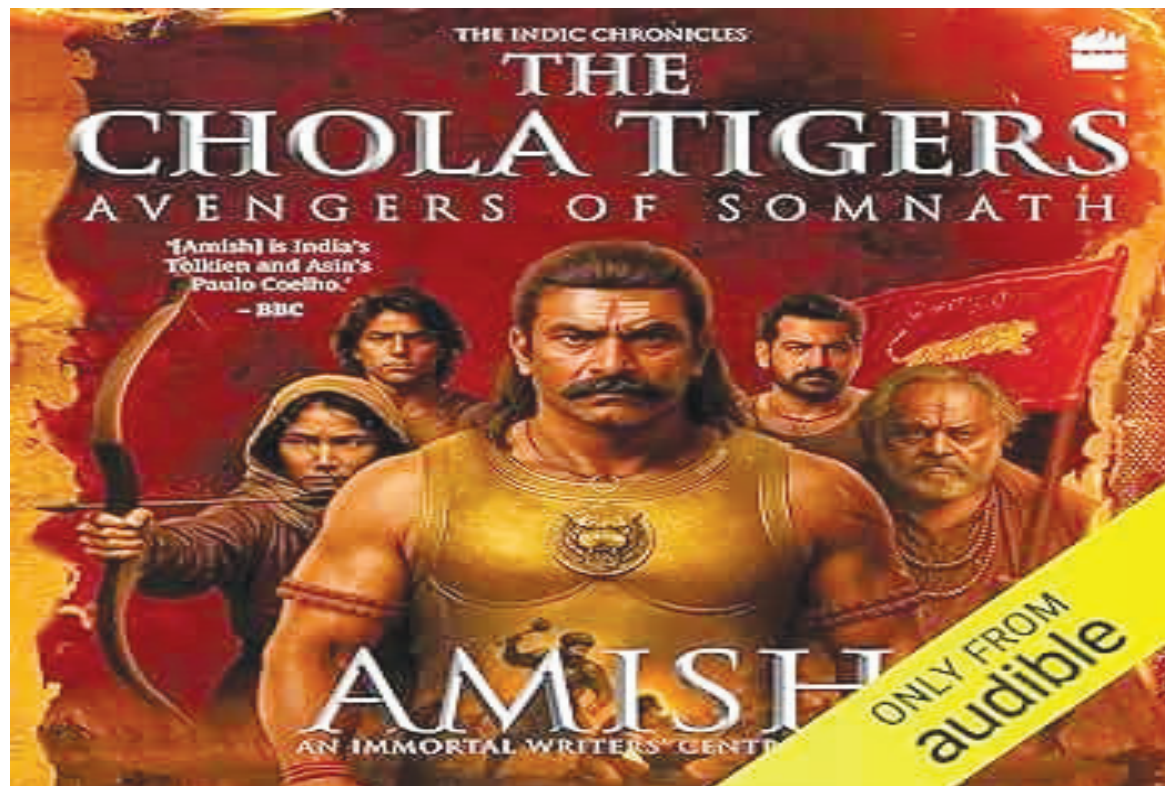
Set in the aftermath of the infamous 1025 CE plunder of the Somnath Temple by Mahmud of Ghazni, *The Chola Tigers* imagines what might have happened if Bharat had chosen to strike back. It begins with the devastation of the sacred Shiva Linga at Somnath lies shattered, thousands have been slain, and the land of Bharat bleeds under humiliation. Yet, amidst this ruin, five individuals make and authentically rooted. The an oath to avenge, to restore, author's signature style of and to reclaim. Among these accessible prose fused with avengers is a Tamil warrior, a profound philosophy is in full Gujarati merchant named play here. Passages like "If

Someshwar, a devotee of Lord Lord Mahadev can take away Ayyappa, a scholar-emperor something you never imagined from Malwa, and none other you would lose, He can also than the mighty Emperor bless you with something you Rajendra Chola himself, the never imagined you would sovereign whose empire receive. Charaiveti, charaiveti stretched from the Ganga to keep walking, keep walking" the distant shores of the South serve as the moral compass China Sea. Their mission: to of the tale, reminding readers travel from the sunlit grandeur that vengeance in *The Chola* of Gangaikonda Cholapuram Tigers is not mere bloodlust; to the bloodstained court of it is dharma, the righteous Ghazni and to retrieve what restoration of cosmic balance. was stolen, not merely the The central characters are Somnath Linga, but the pride well-etched and compelling. of an entire civilisation. Commander Narasimhan, the

Amish's narrative is taut, fierce yet introspective Chola cinematic, and infused with general, embodies the passion. Kshatriya ideal of valour

His pen turns every guided by restraint. His deputy setting into a vivid panorama Vijayan and the enigmatic from the shimmering temples woman warrior Amal add layers of the Chola capital to the of emotion and humanity to the biting chill of the Afghan mission. Even the portrayal of plains. The reader can almost Mahmud's wife, Kausari smell the incense and the Jahan, is nuanced; she blood, feel the dust rising from represents the tragic moral hooves, and hear the clang of conflict within the enemy swords as dharma clashes camp. with adharm.

If there's one mild regret, it The attention to historical is that Emperor Rajendra texture is striking; every Chola himself doesn't occupy architectural detail, military as much narrative space as formation, and cultural ritual one would wish. Given his



historical stature as one of India's greatest maritime emperors, his presence, though commanding, sometimes feels distant. Yet, his influence permeates the book like a guiding force—a symbol of India's once-united civilisational might.

The battle scenes are where Amish's writing achieves its most cinematic rhythm. Each confrontation on land or sea brims with tension and grandeur. The roar of the cavalry, the swish of arrows, and the desperate cries of warriors create an immersive experience that rivals the best of historical epics. The deaths of characters feel personal, each a sacrifice, a testament to the spirit of Bharat that refuses to kneel before tyranny.

But beyond the blood and steel lies a deeper current, that of unity. The *Chola Tigers* are not just about revenge; it's about rediscovering the spirit of Bharatvarsha, transcending language, caste, and region. A Tamil warrior and a Gujarati merchant stand shoulder to shoulder, proving that when the sacred soil of India is defiled, every son and daughter of the land rises as one.

This theme of unity through

diversity is powerfully woven into the narrative, reminding readers of an age when India's strength was in her spiritual cohesion.

The author also offers a subtle commentary on the civilisational resilience of India. Before the story begins, a haunting passage declares: "Every other pre-Bronze Age civilisation is dead. But we are still here. We are still standing. And we will be there till the last human lives. For our motherland is Sanatan. She is immortal."

It's this assertion that Bharat survives because she is Sanatan, eternal, which forms the emotional and philosophical spine of the book. Even in defeat, the Indian spirit plots its return. Even in destruction, dharma finds renewal.

In tone and vision, *The Chola Tigers* is a natural successor to *Legend of Suheldev: The King Who Saved India*. Both books reclaim India's historical memory, presenting the ancient and medieval past not as a tale of helpless invasions but as one of fierce, determined resistance.

Amish's bibliography and historical notes at the end further affirm his commitment

to research-driven storytelling, an approach that combines creative imagination with academic rigour.

By the time the book reaches its climax, the reader is left with goosebumps. The vengeance, when it comes, is not merely military; it is civilisational, spiritual, and moral. And as the final pages close, a profound sense of pride lingers in a land that never surrenders, pride in a people who live by the eternal dictum: Charaiveti, Charaiveti keep walking.

In an age where historical fiction often bends to fashionable narratives, *The Chola Tigers* stands tall as a counter-current, unapologetically Indian, deeply dharmic, and passionately patriotic. It is not merely a novel; it is an invocation, a reminder of who we were and who we still are. Verdict: *The Chola Tigers* is a magnificent blend of history, heroism, and heart.

It makes you bleed for Bharat, fight for her honour, and rise with her glory. A must-read for every Indian who believes that our civilisational story did not end with the invasion, it only began anew every time we chose to fight back.

A Prince, A Teen, Queen's Hush Money: The Sex Scandal Rocking UK's Royal Family

It's all about privilege, how sexual encounters happen in high places and how victims have nowhere to go. Virginia Giuffre's posthumous book, *Nobody's Girl*, officially released on October 21, is the story of a girl who was nobody until she met Jeffrey Epstein and his associate Ghislaine Maxwell, and later Prince Andrew, the younger brother of King Charles of the United Kingdom. What she could not achieve in life she achieves in death: reveal all. An Urdu poet once wrote, "Zabaan-e-tishna khamosh ho sakti hai, magar khoon apna fasaana nahi bhoolta", that is, "the thirsty tongue may fall silent, but blood remembers its story." It is often used to suggest that even in death, truth speaks through memory. Or memoirs. Surely so is the case with Giuffre's *Nobody's Girl*. Even before its official release, it set the British Royal House on fire and marked one of its darkest days in recent history. Much of what she has written was already in the public domain, but she has added exact details, background and context the world was unaware of earlier. The 367-page book is a memoir of surviving abuse and fighting for justice. But it's also a testimony to the fact that even the most privileged and protected men who indulged in abuses and exploitations cannot escape the ruin brought by a commoner. Giuffre, who allegedly took her own life in April, details her encounters with Epstein and Maxwell. But it is Giuffre's account of her alleged sexual encounters with Prince Andrew that has caused an uproar across the United Kingdom. Prince Andrew, of course, has denied all the allegations. Giuffre writes that she had sex with Prince Andrew three times, including once during an "orgy" on Epstein's private island with eight other girls, many of whom she believed were under 18. She herself was barely 17 on one of the three occasions Prince Andrew slept with her, she alleges in the book. Prince Andrew, the Duke of York, is the second son of the late Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip. He was married to Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, and divorced in 1996. Their two daughters are Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie, both married. In the memoir, Giuffre outlines the pressure she claimed she faced from Prince Andrew's legal teams. She also suggests that some media organisations were afraid to cover her story due to fears of losing access to the Royal Family. The King's brother

has since relinquished his Duke of York title. "He was friendly enough," Giuffre writes, "but still entitled - as if he believed having sex with me was his birthright."

The Explosive Revelations

The memoir lays bare Giuffre's tangled and traumatic relationship with



Ghislaine Maxwell and Jeffrey Epstein - who died in a US prison in 2019 - and the Prince. It dives deep into the world they built - a world filled with wealth, predation and silent complicity, where a teenage girl's body became currency.

She writes that Maxwell told her, "Just like Cinderella, you're going to meet a handsome prince", before introducing her to Andrew for the first time in March 2001. The book says: "It was going to be a special day, she said. Just like Cinderella, I was going to meet a handsome prince. Her old friend Prince Andrew would be dining with us that night and we had lots to do to get me ready."

That "handsome prince" turned out to be the man now fighting to salvage what remains of his public reputation. Giuffre claims their first encounter took place at Maxwell's London townhouse, after a night out at Tramp nightclub - the evening immortalised by the now-infamous photograph of her standing beside Andrew, smiling, his arm casually around her waist. "I remember running for my Kodak FunSaver camera to snap the picture," she recalls, "because my mom would never forgive me if I met someone as famous as Prince Andrew and didn't pose for a picture." In the book, she says Andrew guessed her age correctly: seventeen. "My daughters are just a little younger than you," he told her, according to her account.

Their subsequent encounters, she writes, took place in Epstein's Manhattan townhouse and later on Little St James - the Caribbean island where Epstein hosted what Giuffre describes as an "orgy" with "approximately eight other young girls". "The other girls all appeared to be under the age of 18," she recalls. "Epstein laughed about how they couldn't really communicate, saying

they are the easiest girls to get along with."

Denials, Legal Battle and Compromise

After years of denial, deflection and legal warfare, Giuffre alleges how the Prince's legal team allegedly tried to intimidate her and even hired internet trolls to harass her after their settlement. "We would never get a confession, of course," she writes. "That's what settlements are designed to avoid. But we were trying for the next best thing: a general acknowledgement of what I'd been through." She recalls the night the settlement was finalised. "My lawyer read the duke's agreed

statement at 2:30 a.m. Florida time - through tears, both hers and mine." The memoir also recounts her reaction to Prince Andrew's infamous 2019 Newsnight interview - an event she describes as "an injection of jet fuel" for her legal team. In the interview, Andrew had insisted he had "no recollection" of ever meeting Giuffre and claimed he could not have been with her in March 2001 because he was at a Pizza Express in Woking with his daughter, Beatrice. The arranged interview was meant to exonerate the Prince. Instead it sealed his downfall. "If we deposed the princesses," Giuffre wrote, "his family members could potentially poke holes in his alibi." Giuffre describes watching the interview in disbelief - a man denying the undeniable, failing to show sympathy for Epstein's victims and clinging to implausible defences. The interview triggered global outrage and led to Andrew's withdrawal from public duties, followed by the eventual loss of his Duke of York title. What stands out about Giuffre's memoir is that it doesn't merely recount the abuse but also exposes the system of silence that protected powerful, privileged men and shamed their victims into isolation. She writes that after Epstein's death in 2019, she felt cheated of justice. "This wasn't how justice was supposed to work out," she says. "He was supposed to face the women he had destroyed." Even after his death, the spectre of Epstein obviously looms large in her narrative - a symbol of impunity. Maxwell, now serving a 20-year sentence for sex trafficking, features prominently in the book as the manipulator and recruiter who first enticed Giuffre. "She looked to be in her late thirties," Giuffre writes. "Her British accent reminded me of Mary Poppins." That genteel mask of

refinement, Giuffre suggests, concealed the machinery of exploitation.

But amid the horror, there are flashes of determination - a woman's will to reclaim her story. In one of the book's most poignant moments, she writes of using her settlement not for revenge, but for redemption: "I look forward to disseminating some of the Crown's money to do some good."

She never discloses how much she was paid, though reports suggest the amount exceeded GBP 9 million - allegedly covered by the late Queen herself to protect the monarchy's dignity. "That his mother, the Queen of England, had footed the bill," she notes dryly, "was not lost on me."

The Same Old Story

We often wrongly believe that kings and princes, leaders and celebrities are meant to be models of virtue and righteousness. We do not expect them to indulge in soliciting for sex, entrapping young bodies in their grip and exploiting them like predators. Also, the #MeToo movement in India was, in its own way, a naked display of power and privilege by those in positions of authority. I wonder whatever happened to that movement.

Ultimately, the stories of the privileged and powerful - the toasts of the charmed circles - are often similar to those of the common people. Power rules. The vulnerable are exploited. There are always enough 'madams' and 'middlemen' springing up, like Maxwell and Epstein. It's a story that unfolds in any society, any city. I vividly recall, as a young reporter, writing about a 16-year-old girl in Delhi sold to a 'madam' by her greedy uncle and later rescued by police. Looking at her tender age and beauty, she was "served" only to the privileged, powerful customers. There aren't rewards for guessing what kind those privileged and powerful were.

Giuffre's voice, often silenced and often doubted, speaks through her pages with unsettling clarity. It is the voice of a woman wronged, scarred and yet unbroken. "In my mind," she writes in her closing passage, "I hold a picture of a girl reaching out for help and easily finding it. I picture a woman, too, who - having come to terms with her childhood pain - feels that it's within her power to take action against those who hurt her."

In the end, Virginia Giuffre's tongue was silenced when alive. In her death, her blood and her words remember their story.

**PRC Production Inc. and MST Infomedia Inc Unveil Poster of Upcoming International Film “UK TO UK” in Manhattan NEW YORK.



(By Our Staff Reporter) Manhattan, New York , PRC Production Inc, in association with MST Infomedia Inc, proudly unveiled the official poster of their highly anticipated international feature film UK TO UK at an exclusive event held at the Buttonwood Café in Manhattan, New York. The glamorous evening marked a significant milestone for PRC Production as Pawan Kumar Chouhan the visionary filmmaker, actor, writer, and producer, introduced the talented cast of his upcoming Psychological Thriller “I Have a Gun” which is set to hit theaters soon. The grand announcement of the

film’s cast added an extra spark to the Manhattan event, drawing attention from media and film enthusiasts alike.

In addition to “I Have a Gun”, Pawan Kumar Chouhan is currently working on another major project “UK TO UK” an international production that bridges “Hollywood and Bollywood” The film is being shot across India, the United Kingdom, and the United States, featuring a diverse ensemble of global talent.

“UK TO UK” stars famous Turkish actress Aslıhan Karalar in the leading role, alongside American actress Victoria Grace and British actress Daisy

Louve, bringing together cultures and cinematic styles from around the world. Speaking at the event, Pawan Kumar Chouhan expressed his excitement about blending international storytelling with powerful performances: This project represents a fusion of art, culture, and emotion. UK TO UK isn't just a film, it's a journey that connects worlds.”

Notably, Pawan Kumar Chouhan has become the first Indian Punjabi filmmaker in Hollywood to simultaneously serve as actor, writer, director, and producer, on a cross-continental project an inspiring achievement for the South Asian creative

community. The event's special guest, Mr. Sharanjit Singh Thind , praised the film’s global vision and encouraged the PRC Productions team to explore Hudson Valley, New York as one of the filming locations for the project. His creative suggestion has inspired the filmmakers to capture the natural beauty of the region in upcoming schedules. With its unique premise and multicultural cast, UK TO UK promises to deliver a gripping cinematic experience that celebrates unity through storytelling. The production continues its filming schedule in India and will resume international shoots later this year.



Trump holds all the cards in New York's mayoral contest

NEW YORK — Heads, he wins. Tails, he still wins. President Donald Trump is in the catbird seat as New York City's mayoral race enters its final days — positioned to benefit no matter who takes City Hall. If Zohran Mamdani prevails, the president gets a hard-left foil to demonize as he uses federal power to punish deep-blue cities. If Andrew Cuomo pulls off a comeback, Trump will gain new leverage over an old rival who is facing a potential Department of Justice inquiry into whether he lied to Congress. The Republican has already exerted authority over New York City Hall: Incumbent Democrat Eric Adams' federal corruption charges were dropped this year after he cozied up to the White House — a move that deepened his unpopularity and forced him from the race. "Trump is in a good position no matter what happens on Nov. 4," said Rev. Ruben Diaz, a former state and city lawmaker and ally of Trump. "Whoever wins has to deal with Trump and none of them would be able to beat Trump. Any one of them will have a losing battle against Trump. He is an 800-pound gorilla."

The deeper significance of the race is hard to miss. With the midterms less than a year away, a Mamdani win would hand Trump a vivid example of left-wing governance to point to — a test case for his warnings about what happens when progressives run major cities. Every policy move the democratic socialist makes could become campaign fuel for Republicans and a political headache for Democrats nationwide.

Whoever wins, the city's next mayor will inherit a deep affordability crisis, with people squeezed by soaring rents, grocery prices and child care costs. Yet City Hall's attention next year will likely be consumed by Trump's drive to impose his will on New York — from expanding immigration enforcement to freezing billions of dollars in infrastructure funding or even deploying

federal troops on city streets.

Trump's impulse to put New York under his thumb is colliding with Democratic voters' desires to battle the president and halt his agenda as a federal government shutdown stretches to nearly a month. The rookie mayor will have to balance the city's needs with the political



imperative of fighting the president.

The dynamic with Trump — and whether a relationship can be forged along the lines of his direct communication with Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul — will define the first term for whomever wins the election. The race has become a microcosm for a rudderless Democratic Party — a battle between the moderate Cuomo and the left-leaning Mamdani.

Trump has taken an outsized interest in the contest to lead his native city, where his family retains significant business interests, often commenting on it while belittling Mamdani and longshot Republican nominee, Curtis Sliwa.

Cuomo, the former governor who resigned amid a sexual harassment scandal and denied any wrongdoing, has insisted he's best suited to take on Trump, whom he has known for decades. (Trump made a video appearance at Cuomo's 1990 bachelor party.) They tangled over Covid policy and federal funding for the Gateway rail tunnel. Cuomo has talked up their shared Queens roots, and both men have a reputation for being deeply transactional in negotiations.

Sen. Rand Paul and Katelyn Jetelina | The Conversation

The former governor was previously targeted by the Trump administration during the president's first term. Those investigations — including a pandemic-related probe — never amounted to charges. A Department of Justice inspector general later determined the Covid

investigation was politically motivated. "Nobody fought Trump the way I did," Cuomo said Monday. "Then, nobody had the consequences I had for fighting him. I was investigated by the Justice Department for years because I stood up to Trump." Cuomo has also ratcheted up his rhetoric, suggesting in a NY1 debate last week he would have the NYPD intervene in actions by the Immigration Customs Enforcement agency — a move that stands to spark a confrontation with federal authorities.

The former governor believes the inexperienced Mamdani is too much of a lightweight to go up against Trump, asserting the president would run through him "like a hot knife through butter."

Cuomo, who lost the June Democratic primary to Mamdani, will have pressure points for Trump to exploit too, though. House Republicans last year accused the ex-governor of lying when testifying to a panel probing his administration's Covid-era policies and actions. A criminal referral was made earlier this year to the Department of Justice by GOP lawmakers.

Cuomo has denied any wrongdoing and has insisted the perjury claims are politically driven by ax-grinding Republicans.

The peril, though, is clear. Trump's Department of Justice has shown a desire to pursue cases against political enemies, including New York Attorney General Letitia James, who pleaded not guilty to mortgage fraud charges.

"Mr. Trump's model seems pretty clear," said Democratic state Sen. Liz Krueger, who chairs the powerful Senate Finance Committee. "You're in legal trouble, either you go to jail for it, you do something for him, maybe he lets you out, maybe he drops the charges. That's much more disturbing to me as a citizen of New York — that Andrew Cuomo still could become mayor and then be directed or ordered around by Donald Trump."

Cuomo is making a concerted effort in the final days of the race to woo Republican voters — including those New Yorkers who, in an otherwise Democrat-dominated city, backed Trump. The president, though, has all but acknowledged Cuomo is unlikely to win the race given Mamdani's double-digit polling advantage. Indeed, Trump has turned much of his public opprobrium on the frontrunning democratic socialist.

The president has called Mamdani a "liddle communist" and has warned aid to the city will be slashed in the event Mamdani wins, arguing he does not want the Queens Democrat to misuse the cash. Trump's allies in Congress, like Rep. Andy Ogles, have discussed deporting the Ugandan-born Democratic nominee, who is a naturalized U.S. citizen.

Mamdani, like Democrats around the country, has vowed to fight Trump on all fronts. He also extended an olive branch, of sorts, when appearing on Fox News this

month by citing their shared desire to address the cost of living. Both Mamdani and Trump command a fiercely loyal base of support — a bulwark as each pursue political agendas running in opposite directions.

As Democrats weigh how best to engage the mercurial president, Mamdani will likely be eager to mix it up with him.

"The president has been pretty effective in nationalizing his battles with the Chicago mayor and the California governor when there are policy disagreements," said Republican former City Councilmember Joe Borelli. "The difference with Mamdani is he's going to be a willing dance partner. He wants to be a voice for the socialist movement and not parochial issues."

Sliwa, the longshot Republican nominee, has the most complex relationship with the president — a shared history that dates back to their time as tabloid stars in the 1980s. Trump has derided the two-time GOP mayoral nominee as not ready for prime time and mocked him for living in an apartment with numerous cats. Trump has pointedly not endorsed his party's standard bearer. Yet Sliwa, who must carry Trump's small but vocal MAGA base in Republican strongholds like Staten Island, has struck a conciliatory note when discussing the president. The Guardian Angels founder knocked Cuomo and Mamdani in a recent debate for vowing to mix it up with Trump, arguing it does no good to battle a determined federal administration.

Sliwa in the final debate said it's best to negotiate and "show respect" to the president. In an interview, the Republican nominee said that, despite his "a love-hate relationship" with Trump, New York City's next mayor must tread carefully.

"He has all the cards," Sliwa said. "He has New York by the short hairs. You don't have to buckle or bow to Donald Trump. But you have to acknowledge that he's in charge. There's no problem respecting him."

By NICK REISMAN

The Theory Behind Trump's Gunboat Diplomacy

After two world wars nearly destroyed the planet, at mid-century America decided to step up and apply its ingenuity to the Eastern Hemisphere's many unstable dynamics. Europe needed settling down, then Asia, and then, later, the Middle East and Africa.

An objective view of history says that, despite our many mistakes, we've left each region far more stable and globally connected — not to mention wealthier — than we found them. Now, through the radical presidency of Donald Trump, we are seeking to load-shed those distant responsibilities and refocus on our own hemisphere.

If Iraq was George W. Bush's "Big Bang" theory of regional transformation, then Venezuela has become Trump's test of hemispheric re-engineering. His administration has cast President Nicolás Maduro's regime as the antichrist — a cauldron of corruption, narcotics, and Chinese meddling that demands and justifies a U.S. management. McKinley belligerent approach. To topple it, Trump vows, would be to reset the strategic physics of the Americas: a "splendid little war" for the digital age.

As unlikely as it might seem, it is a history-resuming America's first grand strategy, part of a throughline — a connecting ideological vein — that runs from Founding Father James Monroe to William McKinley and then through Theodore Roosevelt to Trump. We are witnessing the latest iteration of an enduring American impulse: to redraw the map of the hemisphere as the world system begins to fold back upon itself.

When Monroe issued his famous doctrine in 1823, it wasn't the chest-thumping declaration of hegemonic destiny that later generations made it out to be. The Monroe Doctrine was, at root, a nervously defensive posture — a hemispheric firewall against a reassertion of European imperial power in the post-Napoleonic world. The U.S. was barely a functioning state itself, and its military reach extended no further than its continental borders. The Doctrine's function was more psychological bluff than strategic threat: an

assertion of autonomy in a world still ruled by far more powerful empires. Monroe was drawing a line around a hemisphere — not promising dominance, merely exclusion.

Yet doctrines are like software — written for one age, they evolve and get constantly updated for another. What began as a static line of containment would, within decades, morph into an operational architecture of regional control. Expansion followed the rails of industrialization, and industrialization required order, access and secure markets. The U.S. may have rejected Old World imperialism, but it busied itself in inventing a New World variant.

McKinley, more than any president before him, gave that software a hard power upgrade. As America industrialized in the late 19th century, the Monroe Doctrine's rhetorical simplicity became an enabling license for hemispheric integration under U.S. management. McKinley made explicit what Monroe had merely implied: that the hemisphere was not just a defensive shell but the economic flywheel for America's industrial revolution. Under McKinley, tariffs, territory, and communications technology (ring a bell?) were fused into a single national mission. Protectionism wasn't a dirty word. Economic nationalism fueled industrial growth, while overseas wars — the "splendid little war" of 1898 chief among them — served both moral and mechanical functions: cleansing the neighborhood of old empires (Spain) while testing America's new capacity for global projection. Cuba was the firewall; the Philippines were the graduation test. In those twin theaters, the United States simultaneously secured its hemisphere and previewed its emergence as a planetary actor.

McKinley's mercantile patriotism — his oxymoronic blend of tariff walls and territorial aspiration — resonates uncannily in Trump's own rhetoric today. The "Trump Wall of steel and tariffs" may have been marketed as an opioid of the masses, but its underlying

purpose — to manufacture a protective perimeter while refocusing America inward — delivers the same sermon as McKinley's tariff gospel. Both men saw protectionism not as retreat but readiness: a way to make America the secure base from which expansion could again proceed.

That is the part of Trumpism that much of MAGA simply does not understand and thus fearfully misinterprets.

If McKinley gave the Monroe Doctrine its mercantile teeth, Theodore Roosevelt gave it muscle and motion. His 1904 "corollary" transformed Monroe's keep-out signage into a managerial doctrine of preemption — as in, we'll fix it before outsiders intervene. Roosevelt wasn't guarding a fortress; he was building a system. He used hard power (creation of the Panama Canal), soft power (the Nobel-winning peace negotiated between Japan and Russia at Portsmouth), and symbolic power (gunboat diplomacy) to organize a hemisphere for the industrial century. The Roosevelt Corollary was both moral and mechanical: interventionism as hemispheric housekeeping.

Again, notice the obvious throughlines to Trump: rhetorically reclaiming the Canal, seeking a Nobel for settling Russia-vs-Ukraine, literally gun-boating Venezuela.

TR embodied America's transition from reactive to proactive. He saw disorder not an excuse for withdrawal, but as a call to organize — a worldview that resonates deeply with Trump's messianic self-conception as disruptor, fixer and builder all rolled into one. Roosevelt's expansive energy linked industrialization to order-making; Trump's, in turn, connects digital-age reindustrialization with hemispheric control. The medium changes, but the organizing instinct endures.

Trump, now in his second term, consciously revives this lineage — Monroe's sphere, McKinley's tariff fortress, Roosevelt's managerial empire — but repackages it for the 2020s. He no longer describes the Western Hemisphere as a neighborhood to protect, but as

a domain to dominate. Monroe's shield becomes Trump's sword.

This up-tempo Monroeism isn't about resisting foreign interference; it's about expelling foreign presence outright. The target isn't Europe this time, but China, whom Trump puts on notice by implicitly stating that "Here in the Western Hemisphere, we are committed to maintaining our independence from the encroachment of expansionist foreign powers." That framing harkens back to Monroe himself, but with 21st-century tools: economic sanctions, tariff blackmail, naval shows of force and strategic investments designed to suffocate Chinese alignments in Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Venezuela.

In that sense, Trump's Doctrine 2.0 mirrors McKinley's operating logic: consolidate regional control to serve industrial revitalization. Energy dominance replaces steam-powered industry; reshored supply chains replace imperial trade routes. The hemisphere becomes both resource base and security zone — a closed system powering an open-ended nationalism.

Trump's goals are not purely economic. He is Shelley's Ozymandias personified, seeking monumentalization or visible proof of dominion. The Eastern Hemisphere, in his view, offers headaches and headlines. The Western offers trophies: infrastructure projects, resource corridors — even territorial acquisitions. The talk of annexing Greenland and militarizing the Panama Canal — dismissed by many as bluster — fits this pattern. McKinley thought in railroads and tariffs; Trump thinks in spaceports and pipelines. Both methods achieve the same end: self-actualizing national ambition.

The symbolism also matters. To Trump, the Western Hemisphere represents heritage — the space of American myth, or manifest destiny reborn. He relishes the historical echo: annexations and canal zones as hallmarks of American greatness. It is no wonder, then, that he revived "Mount McKinley" as a name, reasserting 19th-century confidence as a 21st-century

brand.

"Florida Man's" hemispheric vision even has a headquarters: Miami. In the Trumpian worldview — aided and abetted by his Cuban American Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Miami isn't just an American city but the geopolitical capital of the Americas. From its towers of exile politics and crypto-wealth emerges what could be called the "Rubio Doctrine": a fusion of Cold War anti-communism, migrant capitalism and regional dealmaking.

Miami connects the hemispheric network Trump aches to command — linking Cuban dissidents, Venezuelan opposition leaders, Colombian investors and regional security hawks into a single operating grid that displaces China's Belt and Road scheme. In true Trumpian fashion, it's a system built less on law than on leverage, less on institutions than on influence. Each transactional move — a trade deal here, an arms sale there — serves as both means and message: the return of hemispheric hierarchy. Monroe would recognize the fear; McKinley would recognize the pattern; Roosevelt would approve the ambition.

Trump's test case, Venezuela is a gambit that is as theatrical as it is strategic. Supporting opposition leader María Corina Machado — Venezuela's own Nobel laureate — allows Trump to root his interventionism in moral terms, even as it doubles as economic realignment (and triples as self-promotion for the 2026 Nobel). In this narrative, Venezuela isn't just a rogue state; it's the obstacle to an integrated Americas-First order. United hemispheric markets, linked by AI-driven supply chains, and governed by U.S. security guarantees — that's Trump's 21st-century version of McKinley's tariff empire.

And the symbolism doesn't end there. Trump, ever attuned to spectacle, has openly mused about adding new stars to Old Glory. Absurd? Not at all, because, as history shows, American grand strategy often begins with metaphors that become maps.

By THOMAS P.M. BARNETT

How the Bagram airbase from the 1950s is geopolitically significant in the 21st century

US President Donald Trump, at a joint press conference with Prime Minister Keir Starmer on 20 September 2025, during his visit to the UK, demanded that the Taliban regime hand the Bagram airbase back to the US or else face “bad” consequences. Trump’s remarks have yet again stirred the US–Taliban equations. Incidentally, the UK is not only one of the US’s closest NATO allies but was also the first country to take control of the Bagram base after the War on Terror was unleashed. The Taliban have rejected the demand and insist that not “even an inch” can be ceded to the US.

Bagram and geopolitics: A History

The former Soviet Union constructed the Bagram Air Base in the 1950s when it exercised considerable influence in Afghanistan. Later, after it militarily intervened in Afghanistan in the late 1970s, the airbase became the epicentre of its air operations against the anti-communist and resistant mujahideen forces. In March 1978, Soviet Mi-8 transport helicopters, An-12 turboprop cargo planes, and a paratroop battalion landed at the Bagram airbase. Amidst Afghanistan’s internal power struggles and upon requests from the pro-Soviet factions, in July 1979, Moscow dispatched a battalion of the 105th Guards Airborne Division to the Bagram airbase. This battalion later spearheaded the Russian intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979. Dwight Eisenhower visited the Bagram airbase in 1959 during his tour to Pakistan, Afghanistan and India. His visit was the first of a sitting US president to the South Asian region. Decades later, President George W. Bush landed at Bagram in 2006. This was followed by President Barack Obama’s multiple surprise visits to the airfield in 2010, 2012 and 2014. Obama’s visits to Bagram were intended to raise the dipping morale of the US forces as the War on Terror became the longest American war. Earlier, with the onset of the War on Terror, Donald Rumsfeld, as the US Secretary of Defense, undertook multiple trips to Bagram to address the US

soldiers working at this crucial base. His earliest interaction with US soldiers at Bagram was held only months after the War on Terror was launched and immediately after US forces moved into Bagram in December 2001.

Bagram airbase is located at a key location proximate to the capital Kabul, allowing for a quick military response to those in control. From 2001 to 2021, the Bagram airbase, by far the largest in Afghanistan, remained the nerve centre for US-led NATO operations. The Americans exited the Bagram airbase in July 2021, about a month before their eventual withdrawal, leaving behind huge caches of arsenal, sophisticated military vehicles, and other wherewithal gathered over two decades. During the interregnums when no external power was present in Afghanistan, the Bagram base was a battlefield which witnessed fights between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance.

During their protracted presence in Afghanistan, the Americans expanded the base. They built a second runway and also developed the base in phases. This was to provide better living conditions to the troops stationed in rugged terrain and climatic extremes. Gradually, facilities were created to offer a variety of amenities to the soldiers stationed there. American multinational companies ran food outlets and utility stores catering to soldiers’ daily needs. There was also a well-equipped hospital with a trauma centre.

The US also developed detention facilities to house prisoners, many of whom were Taliban fighters. Videos that emerged in the aftermath of the US exit in 2021 from Bagram show the nature and size of the prison on the Bagram base. The conditions of these detention centres at Bagram have been a subject of debate with contentions on limited access, and some even equate it to Guantanamo Bay. Notably, all the prisoners were set free as soon as the Taliban captured the Bagram base from the Afghan Security forces. It is also pertinent to note that in April

2011, the US Navy Seals, who later killed Osama Bin Laden, spent a night at the Bagram base before flying out to the Jalalabad base, the final stage station. After the operation, Osama’s corpse was flown to Bagram base before being buried at sea.

The Taliban’s response

In his latest statement, Trump claims that it was the Americans who built the Bagram airbase into one of “the most powerful runways ever built in terms of weight, length and load of what it could take”, which, he alleged, the Biden Administration “gave up for nothing”. Noting the US “should have never given it up”, Trump further contended that as the architect of the peace deal with the Taliban, he was clear on retaining control over Bagram base even after the US’s formal departure from Afghanistan.

In response to Trump’s claim, Zakir Jalal, an Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, noted: “Afghanistan and the United States need to engage with one another... without the United States maintaining any military presence in any part of Afghanistan.” Jalal further observed: “Kabul is ready to pursue political and economic ties with Washington based on mutual respect and shared interests.”

While there is much talk of how no clause to retain the Bagram base was discussed under the Doha pact, the Taliban’s defence minister, Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid, conceded that indeed, during the Doha negotiations, “American negotiators asked for a base in Afghanistan”. To which the Taliban responded, noting, “If you don’t leave and want bases, we are ready to fight you for another 20 years”, Mujahid said during a media interaction after Trump’s demand.

The Taliban also seem to be perceiving Trump’s Bagram statements as relating to domestic politicking against Joe Biden. Trump has perpetually criticised the Biden administration’s alleged incompetence in executing the withdrawal from Afghanistan, which was seen as symbolic of the chaotic end to the US’s 20-year intervention in Afghanistan.

Footage from Bagram poorly reflected on the US’s exit planning. Trump used it to highlight his predecessor’s failures and the waste of American resources by leaving behind billions of dollars’ worth of equipment and assets in Bagram.

Why now

Trump’s Bagram pitch cannot be delinked from the geopolitical events that have shaken South Asia. While the US–India strategic partnership is currently under strain, Washington’s ties with Pakistan have got a fillip after Army Chief Asim Munir’s consecutive visits to the US in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor.

Intriguingly, Hasina, before she stepped down, alleged a Western hand in pressurising the Awami League government to cede a crucial base at St Martin’s Island to the US. Moreover, the US’s greater interest is happening at a time when Bangladesh is mutating towards an extremely pro-Pakistan position.

China has also been a significant factor in Trump’s latest bid to regain the Bagram airbase. He has reportedly noted that the base is “barely an hour away from where China makes its nuclear weapons”. Earlier, there were reports of a possible Chinese takeover of Bagram. There has been a definite increase in China’s role in Afghanistan after the US exit in 2021. China has also fostered diplomatic and economic relations with the Taliban, even though it has not formally recognised the Taliban regime. Beijing appointed a new Ambassador to Kabul in September 2023. The US and Taliban are still trying to figure out possible windows for negotiation and engagement.

A Russian angle in Trump’s Bagram pitch also cannot be ignored. The Bagram airbase has witnessed Cold War interplays, perhaps more than any other military base worldwide. The former Soviet Union and the US have taken turns intervening in Afghanistan and have been forced to exit. President Vladimir Putin has been less amenable to the US efforts to end the Ukraine war. On the contrary,

Russia has escalated its offensive against Ukraine. Reclaiming Bagram could be a tacit signal to the Russians that the US is reclaiming its space in Afghanistan and the adjoining regions. Incidentally, Russia became the first country to recognise the Taliban regime in July 2025.

An auxiliary proposition concerning the timing of Trump’s Bagram proclamation may have to do with Pakistan, its perennial conduit to Afghanistan. The US–Pakistan ties have warmed considerably, and there is a great deal of momentum after the ‘reset’, following a series of deals relating to crypto, minerals, oil, etc., in the period following the Pahalgalam massacre on 22 April 2025. Pakistan–Taliban bickering is far from over despite China’s efforts to arbitrate peace between them. After Trump’s statement reclaiming Bagram base, in a high-level meeting at Kandahar convened under the Taliban Supreme leader, Hibatullah Akhundzada, it was resolved that “if Pakistan facilitates or supports the United States in any form, logistically, diplomatically, or militarily, it would be considered an enemy state by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan”. Pakistan has also been wary of the Taliban developing links with New Delhi. As chair of the 1988 Sanctions Committee at the UN, it recently blocked the travel of Taliban foreign minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi, to India. Meanwhile, days after Trump lay claim to the Bagram base, the fourth quadripartite meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Russia, China, Iran and Pakistan on Afghanistan, in its statement, “firmly opposed the reestablishment of military bases in and around Afghanistan by the countries responsible for the current situation”. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York.

A bargaining chip in US–Taliban negotiations?

President Trump’s statements on Bagram come at a time when the Taliban are struggling to stabilise the country economically.

By PRIYANKA SINGH

Bangladesh's economic crisis is a cautionary tale. For India too

In times of regional economic instability, wise nations pay attention to the challenges faced by their neighbours. Bangladesh, once heralded as a quiet success story of South Asia, now confronts its most precarious economic situation in decades. The nation that once turned its garments into gold and microfinance into a global model is currently facing a financial crisis. Non-performing loans have escalated to nearly Tk 4.2 lakh crore, about 36 per cent of sector credit, as of early 2025. Non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) are under acute stress, with defaulted loans now accounting for roughly one-third of total lending. What was once a story of export-driven confidence has now turned into one of credit-deprived factories and fading trust.

In June 2025, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved approximately \$ 1.3 billion in additional assistance for Bangladesh under its Extended Credit Facility, Extended Fund Facility, and Resilience and Sustainability programmes. The decision followed months of external financial strain, during which foreign-exchange reserves, having fallen below \$ 20 billion in 2023, had only recently recovered to approximately \$ 27 billion by mid-2024.

The IMF's support has afforded Dhaka temporary relief: the taka has stabilised, and exports have shown a modest recovery. However, the deeper crisis persists. While IMF funds can stabilise the balance sheets, they cannot restore credibility. When financial management becomes a political instrument and regulatory frameworks are compromised for convenience, liquidity serves merely as a temporary sedative.

For India, this is not an opportunity for schadenfreude but rather a reflection of shared responsibility. Bangladesh's economic distress serves as

A crisis that was foretold



Bangladesh's current situation is characterised by a gradual deterioration. The restructuring of defaulted loans, rather than their recovery, the proposal to eliminate the term "wilful defaulter" from banking legislation, and the endurance of politically connected borrowers over their regulators have collectively transformed moral hazard into a component of monetary policy. This issue is not confined to domestic boundaries. Bangladesh's export sectors, comprising garments, leather, and jewellery, are now more constrained by a lack of trust than by demand. When banks lose their credibility, exporters are deprived of credit, resulting in trade becoming a casualty. For India, the lesson is clear and cautionary: the health of finance determines the horizon of growth. An economy experiencing rapid growth without disciplined financial management is just like a speeding car with worn-out brakes, impressive until it encounters a curve.

India's progress and its precarious edge

India's financial system has already encountered a significant challenge in the past. The twin balance-sheet

crisis of the 2010s compelled the nation to address its financial excesses. The implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code reinstated accountability; provisioning norms were

strengthened financial-sector governance. These are not merely monetary adjustments; they are ethical imperatives. India must absorb this lesson profoundly. The Reserve

and financial stability by offering technical cooperation in areas such as banking regulation, fintech interoperability, and export-credit insurance across the Bay of Bengal.

The establishment of a "South Asia Stability Forum" anchored by India and supported by the World Bank and the IMF could formalise this forum. Effective leadership is characterised not by rhetoric but by the establishment of robust architecture.

From stability to strategic agility

While the reforms in Bangladesh supported by the IMF may temporarily stabilise the situation, their ultimate challenge lies in rebuilding institutions faster than liabilities accumulate. For India,

strengthened; and public-sector banks were recapitalised and restructured. Those were challenging yet necessary reforms that ultimately paid off. However, success must not lead to complacency. As India's ambitions grow through initiatives such as Make in India, the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, and increased infrastructure investment, regulatory oversight must not be relaxed. The experience of Bangladesh serves as a reminder that complacency, rather than competition, poses a significant risk. Future reforms must be proactive rather than reactive. Financial systems must adapt to the increasing complexity of the economies they support. India's current challenge is not merely to avoid crisis but to institutionalise resilience.

Institutions as strategic capital

At its core, the crisis in Bangladesh represents a narrative of institutional fatigue, characterised by overwhelmed regulators, diluted oversight, and evaded accountability. The conditions set forth by the IMF for support are indicative: greater exchange-rate flexibility, improved tax

Bank of India, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board are not merely regulatory bodies; they are strategic institutions. Their autonomy is not a bureaucratic luxury but a national asset—an intangible capital that sustains investor confidence.

The same level of vigilance must be applied to India's shadow-banking sector. Non-banking financial institutions are crucial for small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) credit and rural liquidity. In Bangladesh, such institutions became channels for crony credit. India must integrate transparency, stress testing, and climate-linked risk analysis into the operational framework of all lenders to ensure that financial leverage grows under proper oversight.

Regional leadership

A crisis next door undermines not only a currency but also the credibility of the entire region. In South Asia, financial instability is not restricted by national borders; it travels through trade routes and remittance channels. Consequently, India's responsibility extends beyond its own economic interests. New Delhi should lead discussions on regional

resilience must be anticipatory, not reactive. By 2030, the goal should go beyond a \$5-trillion economy to creating a digitally integrated, climate-aligned, and crisis-resilient financial ecosystem.

In this system, credit would circulate with the same efficiency as data, regulators would employ AI-driven stress analytics, and the digital rupee would operate seamlessly across Asian markets. Imagine an India where bank solvency is an academic discussion, exporters secure capital quickly after due diligence, and financial policy is evaluated based on prudence. This future will not be secured by luck or liquidity, but by leadership that transforms institutional integrity into institutional intelligence—detecting fragility early and responding with quiet precision. Bangladesh's current crisis serves as a cautionary tale; India's opportunity lies in transforming it into a strategic advantage for the future. Our destiny will be determined not by crises, but by the preparedness and confidence with which our institutions confront them.

By Bidisha Bhattacharya

Türkiye is expanding its influence in India's neighbourhood — after Pakistan, now Bangladesh



Türkiye is not part of India's immediate neighbourhood, but it has strategically expanded its influence in South Asia in the past two decades. Since Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came to power, he has pursued a neo-Ottoman foreign policy, making the country's engagement in South Asia not just linear but a complex combination of strategic, military, economic and ideological engagements. Türkiye's recent support to Pakistan became a part of public discourse in India during the four-day India-Pakistan military conflict in May. Pakistan reportedly used 300-400 Turkish-supplied drones to target Indian military and civilian areas. Although the two nations have held joint military and counter-terrorism exercises, such as the "Ataturk/Jinnah" since 2018, Türkiye's increasing support for Pakistan in various international forums, including the UN General Assembly, has raised concerns for India.

The relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye is not new, but the latter's influence in India's neighbourhood has been quietly building up in recent years. Türkiye has also shown a keen interest in Bangladesh, especially after the ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August last year. After the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government took over, Türkiye and Bangladesh have accelerated cooperation in the defence industry, adding a new layer to South Asia's complex security dynamics.

The global shift of power from the West to the East, the "pivot to Asia" trend and Türkiye's pragmatic foreign policy are

shaping Ankara's turn toward Asia far more quickly than expected.

Türkiye's strategic recalibration with Bangladesh

In July, Bangladesh announced that it would build two defence industrial complexes in Chittagong and Narayanganj with Türkiye's support. It has also been expanding its purchase of military equipment from the Middle Eastern country, including Bayraktar drones, howitzers, and armoured vehicles. Türkiye's strategic expansion and support for Islamist groups in Bangladesh can be interpreted as a move to increase its power projection, threatening regional stability.

In 2016, after Bangladesh executed a Jamaat-e-Islami leader convicted of war crimes, Türkiye temporarily withdrew its ambassador to Dhaka, and Erdoğan strongly condemned the execution. The Türkiye-Bangladesh partnership could be characterised as a strategic alignment against India, given Türkiye's traditionally pro-Pakistan stance and its overt support for radical groups.

For instance, Türkiye has been a vocal critic of the treatment of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and has consistently called for an end to the violence and atrocities in Rakhine State. As a self-proclaimed champion of Muslim rights globally, Türkiye has used its state-run aid agency, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), to provide significant assistance to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and, when permitted, in Myanmar.

Through Erdoğan, Türkiye has

elevated the Rohingya issue on the international stage, urging other Muslim-majority nations and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to take action. Senior Turkish officials, including First Lady Emine Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, have also visited the refugee camps in Bangladesh to offer support and publicise the crisis. Türkiye has consistently emphasised its long-term commitment to assisting the Rohingya population.

The Yunus-led interim government is favourable to receiving support from Türkiye and other OIC nations, resulting in a not-so-subtle message to India. The regime change in Bangladesh could be linked to Hasina's proximity to India, among other more prominent reasons. Therefore, Dhaka's silence was not a surprise when 'Saltanat-e-Bangla' — the Islamist group allegedly backed by the Turkish Youth Federation NGO — circulated a map depicting the so-called "Greater Bangladesh", which included West Bengal and all of Northeast India.

But the messaging from Bangladesh does not end here. A landmark defence deal with Türkiye is in its final stages. The agreement will see Bangladesh acquire the SIPER long-range air defence system and co-produce Turkish combat drones. Previously, Bangladesh had acquired the Bayraktar TB2 armed UAVs, TRG-300 missile systems, COBRA-II armoured vehicles and BORAN howitzers from Türkiye. For Bangladesh, it is perhaps the most significant strategic recalibration, whereas for Türkiye, the deal projects its role as a global defence

exporter that can compete with Russian and Western equivalents.

Challenge for India in its neighbourhood

In July 2024, Erdoğan said, "We neither turn our backs on the East for the West, nor neglect the West for the East." This understanding has guided Ankara to expand its sphere of influence and diversify its foreign policy from a West-centred outlook to a more comprehensive approach. To this end, it is establishing and reviving ties with Southeast Asian countries.

Erdoğan's increased interest in Southeast Asia and South Asia, especially with Muslim-majority nations, is also seen as his attempt to get a bigger seat at the Muslim world table and dethrone the traditional Saudi leadership. Türkiye's move to seek strategic space in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) aligns with its 2015 Naval Forces Strategy and 2023 National Foreign Policy document, which mentions IOR as an area of strategic importance. The document states that Türkiye aims to improve interoperability by "acquiring logistic bases and local port facilities" and references its own "security of energy and supply chains".

It is expected that the defence deal will be signed this year, giving Bangladesh its first integrated air defence network. Bangladesh would not only have signalled India but also begun its diversification strategy to balance Beijing's near monopoly on Dhaka's defence procurement. Türkiye, through this deal, would definitively seal its influence in South Asia.

The deal would provide a pivot to its roadmap toward becoming one of the top ten global defence exporters by 2030 in the backdrop of its neo-Ottoman ambitions. India, on the other hand, will be left to tackle a new player in its eastern neighbourhood. India is more adept at handling the complexities that China brings, having done so for decades in its familiar terrain, but Türkiye may be somewhat of a "terra incognita". However, if India wants regional stability, it must become a regional stakeholder, not just countering inimical forces but ensuring that new ones don't become too comfortable in its neighbourhood. Rami Niranjan Desai is an author, anthropologist, and scholar of the Northeast region. She is a distinguished fellow at the India Foundation and has conducted extensive research in conflict areas, recently in Myanmar. She interviewed the victims in Maesot, Thailand. Her X handle is @ramindesai and she is on Instagram @raminiranjandesai. Views are personal.

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Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado who won the Nobel Peace Prize 2025 and ended Donald Trump's dream of winning the prize, praised the US President for supporting the Venezuelans working to establish democracy and end President Nicolas Maduro's dictatorship.
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