

The South Asian     

INSIDER

Voice of South Asian Community Since March 2002

Indian-Americans more bullish about India's future



Story on Page 24

Vol. 23 Issue 51 Friday 28 March to 3 April 2025 \$1 www.thesouthasianinsider.com

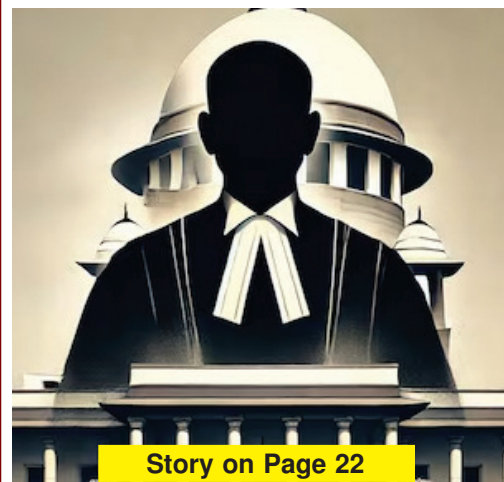
'India not a Dharamshala'

Immigration bill passed in Lok Sabha, Amit Shah says



Story on Page 22

Three days in Indian courts: A tale of 'corruption', misogyny and privilege



Story on Page 22

Gig economy faces grim reality



Story on Page 24

US cracks down on visa fraud, cancels 2,000 Indian appointments made by 'bots'



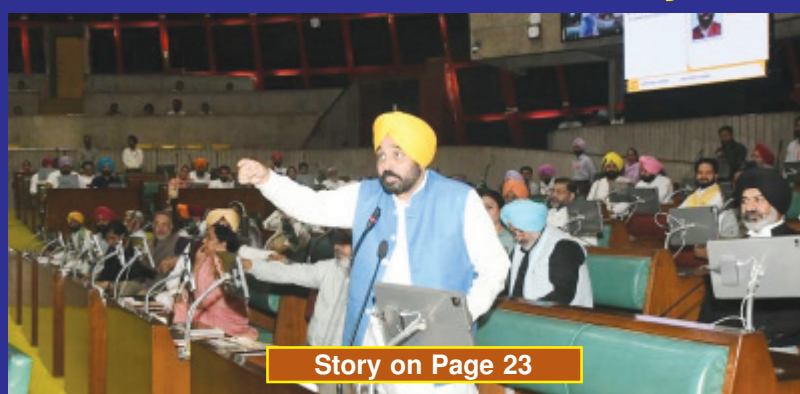
Page 24



Iran unveils underground 'Missile City' as US nuclear deal deadline looms

Page 23

Crippling debt trap Punjab, HP can take a cue from Haryana



Story on Page 23

Has Trump triggered US brain drain, the biggest since World War II?



Story on Page 23

Kolli Abhishek found dead in Texas a day after going missing, police suspect suicide



(Sai Bureau)- He was from Andhra Pradesh's Krishna district was found dead in Texas a day after he went missing. Authorities suspect suicide, while his family raises funds to bring his body home. Andhra man found dead in Texas, police suspect suicide
Family raises over 18,000 US dollars for funeral, body transport
Telugu community in the US steps in to support grieving family
A man hailing from Andhra

Pradesh's Krishna district was found dead in Texas, United States, a day after he was reported missing. Authorities have stated that it appears to be a case of suicide. Kolli Abhishek was last seen on Saturday in Princeton. Following his disappearance, law enforcement officials, along with members of the local community, launched a search operation. His body was discovered the next day.

Smitha Johny, a radiographer with '23 years of experience' fails to do foot x-ray in UK



(Sai Bureau)- Smitha Johny, originally from India, had moved to the UK in 2021. She claimed that she had been working as a radiographer for 23 years. However, a number of incidents at a UK hospital highlighted her incompetence. Indian woman in UK hospital lacked basic radiography skills
Claimed 23 years of experience, later revealed she worked in reception
Suspended for incompetence; tribunal found her naive, not dishonest.

Smitha Johny, as a radiographer shocked her colleagues at a UK hospital with her lack of basic skills. The woman was unable to perform a basic foot X-ray correctly or identify a specific wrist bone.

Smitha Johny, originally from India, moved to the UK and applied to join the Health and Care Professions register in 2021. She stated in her application that she had been working as a radiographer for 23 years and that English was her first language, according to a report by the Daily Mail.

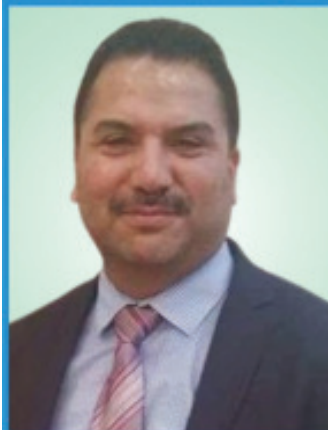
Jay Bhattacharya, Indian-origin professor to head US health agency



(Sai Bureau)- Indian-origin Stanford professor Jay Bhattacharya has been confirmed as the Director of the National Institutes of Health by the US Senate with a 53-47 vote. Jay Bhattacharya named Director of National Institutes of Health
He secured 53-47 vote in US Congress
Jay is health policy professor at Stanford School of Medicine
Jay Bhattacharya, an Indian-origin professor at Stanford School of Medicine, was confirmed as the Director of the National Institutes of

Health (NIH) by the US Senate on Tuesday. Bhattacharya secured the position with a 53-47 vote during the first session of the roll call vote in the 119th Congress. Following his confirmation, US Republican Senator from Kentucky Mitch McConnell congratulated Bhattacharya, stating, "Voted today to confirm Dr Jay Bhattacharya to lead the National Institutes of Health. With an extensive background in medical research, I expect Dr J Bhattacharya to provide sound leadership at the NIH."

THINKING OF BUYING /SELLING?



Sharanjit Singh Thind
Real Estate Broker



* Honesty
* Integrity
* Experience
* Knowledge

Ask us how to buy Bank Foreclosures,
Short Sale Properties,
Bank Auction Homes and to
Sell/Buy your Business.

WHITESTONE
Real Estate

Serving Community Since 2009

Phone : 646 875 8495 Email : whitestone1979@gmail.com

We specialize in Income Producing & Investment Properties.

(Whitestone Real Estate & Asset Management Corp.
DBA Night Real Estate is a licensed Real Estate Broker, New York State)

Couple deported after 35 years in California, their 3 US-born daughters in shock



(Sai Bureau)-A couple who had been living in the US for 35 years, with no criminal history after coming to America and having three US-born children, have been deported to their native Colombia. Couple deported to Colombia after 35 years in US They complied with immigration procedures, had no criminal background, says family Deportation left three US-born daughters behind A Southern California family is devastated after the deportation of a couple -- Gladys and Nelson Gonzalez -- who had lived in the United States for 35 years. Their three US-born daughters are in shock and heartbroken by the

sudden action by the US authorities. Gladys Gonzalez, 55, and Nelson Gonzalez, 59, were detained by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on February 21. After spending three and a half weeks in detention, they were deported to their native Colombia on March 18, according to CNN. According to the Customs Enforcement department, the Gonzalez couple had exhausted all legal options to remain in the US between March 2000 and August 2021. The officials added that Nelson Gonzalez had filed for asylum in 1992, but that case was closed in 1998, and that a voluntary departure order was issued in 2000.

Kash Patel, Tulsi Gabbard to brief House lawmakers amid Signal group chat leak controversy



(Sai Bureau)- Top intelligence officials from President Trump's government will brief House lawmakers on global threats to the US. CIA Director John Ratcliffe, DNI Tulsi Gabbard, and FBI Director Kash Patel are expected to testify on issues like China, Russia, and transnational crime. Top US intelligence officials to brief the House on global threats. Signal chat controversy involving Gabbard and Ratcliffe under scrutiny. Briefing aligns with Trump's foreign

policy goals. Top intelligence officials from President Donald Trump's government will brief House lawmakers on Wednesday. CIA Director John Ratcliffe, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, and FBI Director Kash Patel are some of the officials expected to testify. The briefing is part of an annual assessment of threats to the nation. They will focus on a broad set of global matters that continue to affect US security.

Turkish doctoral student arrested in Massachusetts after visa termination



(Sai Bureau)-Federal authorities arrested Tufts University student Rumeysa Ozturk after her visa was terminated. The university denied prior knowledge. ICE has recently detained 370 people, with over 100 arrests classified as "collateral." Turkish student arrested after visa termination Rumeysa Ozturk from Tufts University detained Tufts reassures international students amid concerns

Federal authorities arrested a Turkish student from Tufts University, Massachusetts, on Tuesday after the termination of her visa. According to the Boston Globe, the student is Rumeysa Ozturk, a Turkish national, who is part of Tufts' doctoral program for Child Study and Human Development. Ozturk's attorney, Mahsa Khanbabai, has filed a habeas petition in Massachusetts federal court seeking her release from detention.

Columbia student Yunseo Chung files lawsuit against Trump for trying to deport her



(Sai Bureau)-Yunseo Chung, a Columbia University student from South Korea, faces deportation after a pro-Palestinian protest. A federal judge temporarily blocked her detention, citing insufficient evidence of community danger. Judge blocks detention of Yunseo Chung, a Columbia student. Chung sues Trump and officials over the deportation attempt. Chung involved in pro-Palestinian protests at Columbia.

A federal judge ruled on Tuesday that Yunseo Chung, a 21-year-old Columbia University student from South Korea, cannot be placed in immigration detention for now as she faces potential deportation due to her involvement in a pro-Palestinian protest. Chung has filed a lawsuit against President Donald Trump and several high-ranking officials, challenging the actions of immigration authorities who attempted to arrest and deport her.

Georgia duo arrested for scamming elderly woman of over \$100K



(News Agency) - Two Dalton residents, Amit Patel, 37, and Dishaben Patel, 28, were arrested in Monticello, Kentucky, on March 19 in connection with a scam that defrauded an elderly woman of tens of thousands of dollars. The pair face charges of Theft by Deception over \$10,000, Exploitation of an Adult, and Engaging in Organized Crime.

Authorities say the scam began on March 12 when the victim's computer froze and displayed a fraudulent message instructing her to call a number. When she did, scammers posing as Federal Trade Commission (FTC) agents told her that her identity had been compromised and convinced her to withdraw \$52,000 in cash. She placed the money in a shoebox and handed it to a man who arrived at her home.

A similar incident occurred on March 17, when the victim was pressured into withdrawing an additional \$32,000, which she again handed over. A third cash pickup for \$50,000 was scheduled for March 19, but by then, authorities were tracking the

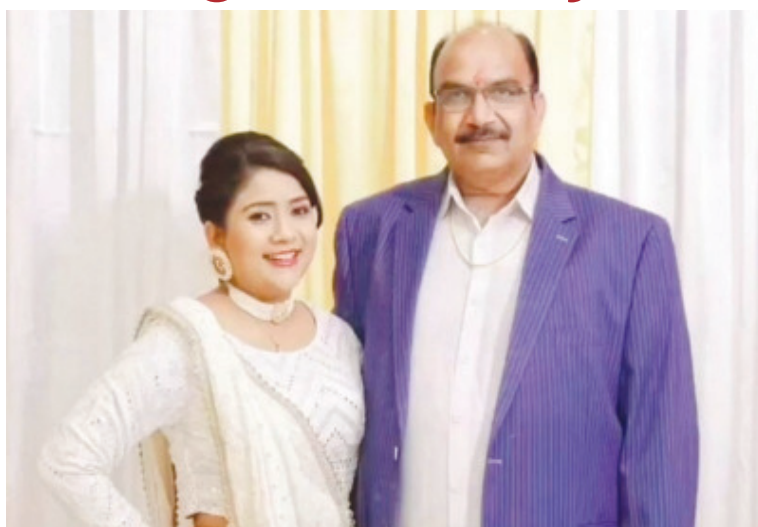
transactions. After the suspects retrieved the shoebox, police conducted a traffic stop at the intersection of Castle and Elk streets in Monticello. Officers recovered the cash and arrested Patel and Patel.

Investigators have not disclosed whether the suspects targeted other victims or if similar schemes were conducted in the Dalton area. Both remain in custody at the Wayne County Detention Center as the investigation continues. Authorities urge residents, particularly seniors, to be cautious of unsolicited messages claiming security threats to their computers or finances. Anyone with additional information is encouraged to contact local law enforcement.

Indian father-daughter fatally shot at convenience store

In a tragic incident, a 56-year-old Indian-origin man and his 24-year-old daughter were shot dead at a convenience store in Accomack County, Virginia, where they had been working. The fatal shooting took place in the early hours of Thursday, March 20, sending shockwaves through the community.

The victims, identified as Pradipkumar Patel and his daughter, were attacked shortly after the store opened around 5:30 a.m. Deputies from the



Accomack County Sheriff's Office arrived at the scene to find Patel unresponsive with gunshot wounds outside the store, while his daughter was found critically injured inside the building. Despite being rushed to Sentara Norfolk General Hospital, she succumbed to her injuries.

Authorities have arrested 44-year-old George Frazier Devon Wharton, a resident of Onancock, in connection with the double homicide. He faces multiple charges, including first-degree murder, at-

tempted first-degree murder, possession of a firearm by a felon, and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony. Wharton is currently being held without bond at the Accomack Jail. The motive behind the shooting remains unclear, and investigations are ongoing. The senseless killing has sparked concerns within the Indian American community regarding safety, particularly for small business owners and workers in convenience stores, who often face heightened risks of violence.

Indian national arrested by ICE for transnational criminal ties



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested Gurdev Singh, a 23-year-old Indian national, during a targeted criminal enforcement operation on March 12. Singh was taken into custody in French Camp, California, following allegations of involvement with transnational criminal organizations.

Singh had initially entered the United States illegally at an unspecified location and date. He first came to the attention of U.S. authorities on September 2, 2023, when U.S. Border Patrol encountered him near

Lukeville, Arizona. At that time, he was released with a notice to appear before an immigration judge.

Investigations later linked Singh to transnational criminal groups, identifying him as an individual who illegally carried firearms and engaged in criminal activities both domestically and internationally. On March 6, he was arrested by the California Highway Patrol for multiple offenses, including carrying a loaded firearm in public, possession of a stolen vehicle, and child endangerment. A subsequent search of his residence revealed seven

additional firearms, while two more were found in a vehicle on the property.

ICE issued a detainer request with the San Joaquin Sheriff's Office on March 12, but the request could not be honored. Following Singh's release from the San Joaquin County Jail, ICE agents apprehended him without incident.

Singh remains in ICE custody as removal proceedings are underway. Authorities have reiterated their commitment to targeting individuals involved in criminal enterprises that pose a threat to public safety.

Air India staff to fly economy as airline tackles passenger concerns: Report

The move is part of Air India's effort to improve its service and customer experience, following criticism over frequent flight delays.

(News Agency)-Air India mandates staff to fly economy from April 1

Move aims to enhance customer experience after criticism Premium seats prioritised for customers under new management Air India has mandated that all its staff, including senior management, will have to travel in economy class from April 1, reported The Times of India. The airline has made the decision to free up premium seats for paying customers.

Employees will only be allowed to upgrade to premium economy or business class if those seats remain unsold 50 minutes before departure, added the report. The move is part of Air India's effort to improve its service and customer experience, following criticism over frequent flight delays. A spokesperson for Air India said the change was aimed at ensuring



that premium seats, which are in high demand, are available for customers first. The airline wants to build a strong customer-first approach under its new management.

India's aviation market is one of the fastest-growing in the world, with domestic air travel increasing by 10-12% annually over the past decade, according to govern-

ment data. With more people choosing to fly, airlines are under pressure to ensure better service and availability of seats.

"These individuals have shown unbelievable resilience."

Trump weighs in

Their unexpected stint also became a political lightning rod, with President Donald Trump and his close advisor, Elon Musk -- who leads

SpaceX -- repeatedly suggesting former president Joe Biden abandoned the astronauts and refused an earlier rescue plan.

"They shamefully forgot about the Astronauts, because they considered it to be a very embarrassing event for them," Trump posted on Truth Social on Monday.

Such accusations have prompted an outcry in the space community, especially as Musk offered no specifics and NASA's plan for the astronauts' return has remained unchanged since their Crew-9 reassignment. Trump has also drawn attention for his bizarre remarks, referring to Williams, a decorated former naval captain, as "the woman with the wild hair" and speculating about the personal dynamic between the two.

"They've been left up there -- I hope they like each other, maybe they love each other, I don't know," he said during a recent White House press conference.

WORKING CAPITAL R US



SOLUTIONS

SBA FINANCING

ASSET BASED LOANS

EQUIPMENT FINANCING

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLES

BUSINESS LINES OF CREDIT

We look forward to your valued inquiry for our Business Solutions.



Call (646) 897 3016

info@workingcapitalrus.com
www.workingcapitalrus.com

When you want to read **News that matters**
The South Asian Insider Weekly



Uncompromised and Unbiased

*21 Glorious Years *Always a Step Ahead

*Journalism of Courage

*Fearless Voice of the Community

www.thesouthasianinsider.com



Trump signs big election order mandating citizenship proof, cites India example

Donald Trump has signed a sweeping executive order that will drastically alter American voter registration processes, imposing stringent measures.

(News Agency)- Donald Trump mandates citizenship proof for voter registration in US

Prohibits accepting mail-in ballots received after election day

Democrats call it 'unlawful', move expected to face immediate legal challenges

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday signed an executive order mandating sweeping changes to the US election process, including requiring documentary proof of citizenship for voter registration and ensuring that all ballots are received by election day. The new requirements are expected to face immediate legal challenges.

The order asserted that the US has failed "to enforce basic and necessary election protections" and urged states to collaborate with federal agencies to share voter lists and prosecute election-related crimes. It also warned that states where election officials fail to comply may face cuts in federal funding.



India calls US religious freedom panel 'entity of concern', rejects its report



(News Agency)- US report says minorities facing deteriorating treatment in India

Report recommends sanctions on spy agency RAW

India calls report biased and politically motivated

India asserted that the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) should be designated an "entity of concern" as it rejected its report

suggesting minorities were facing deteriorating treatment in the country.

In a strongly worded statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) underscored that efforts to undermine India's standing as a beacon of democracy and tolerance would not succeed. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the latest USCIRF report continues its pattern of issuing "biased and politically motivated assessments".

Trump's fresh 25% tariff threat linked to Venezuelan oil. Trouble for India?

US President Donald Trump's "secondary tariff" on countries buying Venezuelan oil will come into effect on April 2, the same day when reciprocal tariffs on US's trading partners, including India, will be imposed.



(News Agency)-US to impose 25% tariffs on countries buying Venezuelan oil

India and China may face higher levies due to US tariffs on Venezuela

Earlier, Reliance Industries secured US approval for Venezuelan oil imports. In a move that could stir up the global energy market, US President Donald Trump on Monday said that countries that buy gas and

oil from Venezuela would pay 25 per cent tariffs on any trades made with the United States. The move could trigger higher levies on goods from India and China, which are Venezuela's two biggest oil players. Trump said the "secondary tariff" will come into effect on April 2, the same day when reciprocal tariffs on the US trading partners, including India, are set to be imposed unless the US President winds down.

US aerospace giant delivers first of Tejas Mk1A engines, ends 2-year delay



contract signed in 2021, come after a two-year delay, which had hindered HAL's production timeline and the IAF's fleet expansion plans. HAL officials said the delivery marks a significant milestone, enabling it to boost the pace of assembly of Tejas jets. Sources within HAL revealed that the company had restructured its production line at its Bengaluru facility to accelerate the integration process. A new parallel

assembly line has been added, aiming to deliver at least 16 Tejas Mk1A fighters annually, fulfilling the IAF's contract for 83 jets by 2028. "Despite the delay in engine delivery, we have optimised our assembly process to ensure swift deliveries. The arrival of the F-404 engines will allow us to ramp up production significantly," said an HAL official.

DELAY IN TEJAS FIGHTER

JETS

The Tejas Mk-1A, an upgraded variant of the Mk-1, features advanced avionics, improved radar, and enhanced weapon capabilities. The jets will ease the pressure on the IAF, which has been looking to phase out older MiG-21 and Jaguar fleets. Earlier this year, Air Force chief AP Singh lamented that the IAF was yet to even receive the first batch of 40 Tejas aircraft ordered in 2009-2010.

After a two-year delay, US aerospace giant GE has delivered the first of 99 F404-IN20 engines to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mk-1A programme. The delays have in turn affected the deliveries of 83 Tejas Mk1A jets, a fact lamented by Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal AP Singh on several occasions. The issue was raised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to the US last month to meet President Donald Trump. The first of the F404-IN20 engines was delivered to HAL on Tuesday, announced Shawn Warren, general manager (combat and trainer engines), GE Aerospace. "It is an important milestone in our 40-year relationship with HAL and in our efforts to ensure a strong future for India's military by developing next-generation fighters while enhancing the country's defence manufacturing capabilities,"

Warren said. The long-awaited engines, part of a \$716 million

Portion of Mumbai's Azad Maidan to be officially notified for protests, morchas



Following a direction from the Bombay high court, the Maharashtra government said that it would notify an area in the Azad Maidan ground to hold morchas, protests or agitations in South Mumbai. The area had already been earmarked following an interim direction of the High court. However the court had directed the

state to formulate rules and notify the area formally. The petition had been filed by Nariman Point Churchgate Citizens Association and others in 1997 objecting to rallies and demonstrations that were held near Mantralaya and the ruckus created in the neighbourhood. During the hearing on Wednesday, Additional Government Pleader Abhay

Patki submitted before the bench of Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice MS Karnik that the state had finalised the rules under the Maharashtra Police Act and regulations for controlling the morchas and that in two weeks time the state will notify the same in its official gazette by April 2, 2025. Patki also handed over a draft notification along with an affidavit through which the State apologised for the delay in this notification. Advocate Shailesh Naidu appearing for the petitioners however sought some time to go through the documents as the petitioners could go through the exact area in Azad Maidan which would have been notified. The ground is used for Cricket practice, there is metro construction also

happening amidst the protests being held on a daily basis. Naidu submitted, "All that we are saying that they identify the designated area or else we will have to come back though 28 years experience is a long time." However the Chief Justice said, "There is no point in keeping a petition from 1997 pending any further. Every time such petitions come up for hearing, we feel guilty that this petition is coming up after 28 years. If you have a problem with the notification then challenge that." Justice Karnik too said, "Let it get operational. There is no justification for keep this PIL pending." The bench directed that the notification be implemented in letter and spirit.

Infighting, adjustment politics will take Karnataka BJP to new low: Expelled MLA

Hours after being expelled from the BJP for six years, senior leader and Karnataka's Vijayapura MLA Basangouda Patil Yatnal lashed out at the party leadership, accusing it of protecting those who worked against the party from within, while punishing those who tried to bring reforms. In a post on X, Yatnal alleged that those responsible for BJP's electoral setbacks in Karnataka, particularly in traditional strongholds like Kalaburagi, Koppal, Raichur, Ballari, and Chikkodi, were being protected despite engaging in what he called "adjustment politics." "Those vested interests who rampantly indulged in Adjustment Politics weakening the party in Karnataka have

gone scot-free without any disciplinary action," Yatnal wrote. "While those who wanted to reform the party by ending the one-man upmanship and family-centered politics have been suspended or served notices." He also criticised the party's apparent inaction against two legislators who, according to him, openly rebelled and supported the Congress, claiming they were only sent notices after pressure from party workers. "Some leaders in the State now are masquerading as carriers of the party legacy will only cause the party's downfall in the days to come," he wrote. He accused the party of ignoring serious setbacks, saying that the high command has completely ignored the defeat of the



party in its strongholds, and instead of introspecting, it is cracking down on those who raised questions about internal functioning. "I will continue to abide and work by the principles of: Nation First, Party Next,

Self Last in letter, spirit & practice," wrote Yatnal. Yatnal's expulsion came after he made repeated public remarks critical of the BJP's state leadership and its decision-making process.

Kerala Assembly passes bill allowing private universities in state, amid debate

(News Agency)- The Kerala Legislative Assembly, in what is being seen as a landmark yet contentious move, passed the Kerala State Private Universities (Establishment and Regulation) Bill, 2025, paving the way for private universities in the state. The Bill, which was scrutinised by the subject committee, was met with strong opposition and intense debate before being passed through a voice vote. Opposition Leader VD Satheesan expressed deep concerns about the impact of private universities on Kerala's existing public universities and colleges. While clarifying that the opposition does not outright reject the Bill, he stressed the need for strict regulations. "The government must ensure that only well-established and credible educational agencies with decades of experience are allowed to operate. At the same time, public universities must



remain a priority, and private institutions should not be given free rein without accountability," he stated. Senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala raised another pressing issue—Kerala's ongoing student migration crisis. Thousands of students leave the state every

year in search of better educational opportunities. "Student migration is rampant. Will this Bill actually help reduce it, or will it worsen the situation? We need a thorough study before moving forward," he warned. Meanwhile, Congress ally KK Rema of the

Revolutionary Marxist Party took a stronger stand, demanding the Bill's complete withdrawal. She argued that the move would commercialise higher education, putting quality education out of reach for many. "This Bill prioritises profit over education. It will only deepen

inequalities in access to education," she said.

GOVERNMENT DEFENDS BILL

Higher Education Minister R Bindu, however, defended the Bill, calling it a progressive step towards making Kerala an international education hub. "This is not about replacing public universities but about enhancing Kerala's position in higher education. We aim to attract students from across India and abroad while increasing our Gross Enrollment Ratio," she explained. She also highlighted the government's investments in public education, citing the newly introduced four-year degree program as a model for the country. Despite the sharp criticism, the Bill was ultimately passed, after Speaker AN Shamseer put it to a voice vote, marking a significant shift in Kerala's education policy.

China, India in talks to resume direct flights after 5 years: Chinese diplomat

(News Agency)-Signalling a thaw in China-India relations, Chinese Consul General in Kolkata, Xu Wei, stated that the two countries are in constant talks to resume direct flights, five years after the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent border clashes halted them. "Before the pandemic, the two countries had launched direct flights from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Kunming to New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and other cities, with 50 flights per week. The two sides are currently



Kolkata, Xu Wei, stated that the two countries are in constant talks to resume direct flights, five years after the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent border clashes halted them. "Before the pandemic, the two countries had launched direct flights from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Kunming to New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and other cities, with 50 flights per week. The two sides are currently

conference. The announcement was first made by India's foreign ministry following top diplomat Vikram Mistri's visit to China in January. In the statement released after Mistri's visit, the foreign ministry said that both countries have agreed "in principle to resume direct air services between the two countries." On Tuesday, Wei expressed confidence in the ties

working on resuming direct flights between the two nations, stating that a string of events will be held to commemorate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations while adding that "the spring of China-India relations is arriving". "In another week, on April 1, it will be the day marking 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and India. This year, China and India will jointly hold some celebrations. We are happy to see that the spring of China-India relations is arriving," he said. "We are willing to take the 75th anniversary of China-India diplomatic relations as an

opportunity to work with India to sum up past experience, forge a path forward, and advance China-India relations on the track of sound and stable development," Wei added. According to sources, Chinese authorities are also hoping that India will give relaxation in the visa policy to Chinese people. They are also hopeful that trade between the two countries will go up.

Kunal Kamra doubles down with new satire video, takes dig at Nirmala Sitharaman



(News Agency)-Unfazed by the raging controversy over his "traitor" jab at Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde, comedian Kunal Kamra dropped a new parody song on Wednesday, taking potshots at Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and accusing the BJP of "tanashahi" (dictatorship). The video was released by Kamra as Mumbai police issued him a second summons, rejecting the comedian's request for a week's time to appear for questioning. The new song released by Kamra, who is facing defamation charges, is a parody version of the famous song 'Hawa Hawai' from the movie Mr India.

Donald Trump is moving fast and breaking things, but that may result in a better US

Move fast and break things" was Mark Zuckerberg's motto in launching Facebook 20 years ago. It seemed the antithesis of management-school custom and practice. But it worked, to be imitated after a fashion by Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and other digital tycoons with similar success. Donald Trump is now seeing if it works in government.

The smart money in Washington was that after the fiasco of Trump's first term, his second would see a more emollient president, one careful of his reputation. He would reach out, consult, become a peacemaker, in his desperation to become a Nobel president like Barack Obama. How wrong that has proved. Trump is doing what few leaders dare do. He is being a cultural revolutionary, a Mao Zedong, a grandiloquent system smasher. He wants to reorder Washington's role in the US and the US's role in the world. He knows that he may have just two years before "the system" – the electoral cycle, the judiciary and state governments – blocks his path. If he truly wants revolution he must break things, and fast.

The historian Arthur Schlesinger said the US needed occasional shocks to wipe away the cobwebs, the bureaucracy and the dirt of an ever more cumbersome union. Should it get out of hand and disaster threaten, the constitution was designed to pull the country back from the brink. Thus it rid itself of Richard Nixon, but not before his radicalism towards China achieved the US's exit from Vietnam. Might this apply to Trump?

Already a dose of the so-called new realism has torn through Nato's cobwebs. Trump simply does not regard Russia as a threat to the US and western Europe. It is merely obsessed, as it has been throughout history, with its frontier states, with the Baltics, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia and the "stans", nations that Trump has little interest in defending. Yet ever since the end of the cold war – and during most of it – Nato's rationale has relied on a thesis, a conventional wisdom, that Russia is set on the conquest of western Europe. If Keir Starmer really thinks, as he appears to, that Russia's assault on Ukraine threatens Britain, Trump's message is that Britain should pare down its welfare state and rearm quickly. American taxpayers are not going to be taken for that ride. It was indeed a Republican, Dwight Eisenhower, who warned against exaggerating the Russian threat to sustain Nato, which was already the biggest and richest military establishment the world had ever seen. The defence lobby demanded deterrence to be infinite. Trump has called that bluff. To him the US's defence is just that: to guard its own borders. So should be Europe's. It is hardly an outrageous view. No one was screaming for war when Russia

invaded Georgia or Ukraine in 2014. It is one thing to disagree with this argument, another to dismiss it as 1939-style appeasement, as western defence lobbyists have done.

Meanwhile, on the subject of borders Trump is hardly out on a limb. The US gains about 150,000 Mexican immigrants a year, to join the 11 million already there. Mexico and Canada bombard the US with imports, as does China. To Trump, Americans should pay for their goods what it costs Americans to make them. If they want Chinese cars they can donate 25% of the price to the government as a tariff. As for fentanyl, the way to get countries such as China to stem the flow and the deaths that follow is again with tariffs, massive tariffs. Sometimes in diplomacy only force talks – force backed up with uncertainty.

Almost every president comes to Washington promising to cut the bureaucracy. Thus did Warren Harding, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and George W Bush. The reality is that an activist president breeds bureaucrats. The power of the centre in a democracy attracts more power. Trump knows he has no time for a long fight. It is Musk and the chainsaw or it is nothing. Education is not a federal function but a job for the states. So shut the US Department of Education. Ditto USAID. Also slash the state department. Raid the Treasury. Sure, things will get broken, but it is no worse than doing nothing. That is what cultural revolution means.

Trump and his administration's actions have been in many respects appalling. To renege on Joe Biden's aid to Ukraine in mid-battle, to call Volodymyr Zelenskyy a dictator, to insult Canada, to threaten Greenland, to stop famine relief to Africa, to propose a Gaza beach resort, to bully lawyers, to leak security meetings, all beggar belief. Trump and his team are like playground thugs in their crudity and rudeness. But this is the sound of things breaking. It illustrates why Washington develops a defensive "swamp", to guard against inexperienced presidents. As it is, the chance of Trump succeeding in his radicalism is small. You cannot stage much of a revolution in two years. There will be a counter-revolution. Greenland is unlikely to be an American Ukraine. Tariffs will come back down. The Democrats will recover their nerve. Many of Trump's "broken things" will be patched together. But in among the chaos are challenges to convention that were overdue. Nato could become realistic. A forever war in Ukraine – or wider – could be avoided and Russia readmitted to the community of nations, as China was after Nixon.

By Simon Jenkins

Can The Real BRICS+ Please Stand Up?

When the Trump administration decided that Europe had no place at the table in peace talks with Russia over Ukraine, the continent was left gasping. For decades, Europe had been the junior partner in transatlantic affairs, but never had Washington so bluntly slammed the door in its face. The initial reaction was a mix of disbelief, outrage and even existential crisis. Leaders, journalists and academics—left wing or right wing—were all united in their reactions, ranging from "unthinkable" to "unprecedented in 80 years". The transatlantic unity they had taken so much for granted had just been put on life support. Dazed and desperate, a few European leaders even made a hasty pilgrimage to the White House, hoping to talk President Trump into letting them back into the negotiations. They pleaded, massaged his ego and no doubt spoke of shared values and historic bonds. Trump, in his signature style, didn't just refuse—he doubled down, showering praise on President Putin while the Europeans watched, horrified. And just when they thought things couldn't get worse, Trump's strategy became clear: push Ukraine into a ceasefire by any means necessary. Last Wednesday, the European Parliament responded, calling Washington's decision "blackmail". In an amusing twist, even some of the far-right MEPs—normally Trump's biggest cheerleaders—signed on. For decades, Europe had lived in the illusion that the US would always have its back. With NATO at the helm, they outsourced their security while their militaries withered away into underfunded relics. Now, the reality is hitting them hard: the transatlantic alliance isn't what it used to be, and Europe might actually have to fend for itself.

Best Timing

So, the once-mighty White, Western bloc—the self-proclaimed guardians of the post-WWII world order—is in disarray.

And who ought to be watching? Indeed BRICS. The bloc, already an economic heavyweight, has grown even stronger since expanding to 10 members last year. Some in the West love to paint it as an anti-Western alliance, but that's wishful thinking. If anything, BRICS isn't trying to burn the house down—it just wants a seat at the table. At its Kazan summit last October, it didn't call for tearing down the Bretton Woods institutions. Instead, it pushed for reforming them, making the global financial system fairer.

Apart from Russia and Iran, most BRICS+ members maintain solid ties with the West. But the common thread binding them? A history of colonial exploitation, economic dependency and political meddling—courtesy of Europe and the US. That shared past has given BRICS a purpose: challenging the entrenched dominance of Western powers and building what it calls a "more just and democratic world order". It may sound lofty, but with the West fumbling and bickering, BRICS must be seeing an opening. It must. From pushing for de-dollarisation to rejecting Western sanctions, the bloc is well-positioned as a possible counterweight to a system that has long favoured a select few. Indeed, for decades, the West wrote and imposed the rules. Now, BRICS must remind them that they are not the only players in the game. And may we emphasise that with the transatlantic alliance unravelling, the timing couldn't be better?

Strike When The Iron Is Hot

Are they ready for it though? That's the billion-dollar question. Annoyingly, BRICS+ only seems to make headlines during their annual summits—or when Trump threatens to slap them with sanctions. For a bloc that dreams of reshaping the global order, they have a habit of fading into the background when it actually matters.

By Syed Zubair Ahmed



ISSN No. 1554 06X

Editor in Chief & Publisher

Sharanjit Singh Thind

Tel: 646 875 8495

Email: editor@thesouthasianinsider.com

Mailing Address:

Nu Way Media Group Inc.

223 W 38th Street, Suite 4

Manhattan, NY 10018

For General and Advertising Inquiries:

thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

Disclaimer The South Asian Insider is a weekly newspaper published every week by The South Asian Insider. It's available in community & religious centers, ethnic grocery stores and also available by mail, email & online to subscribers. The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various writers, authors and forum participants in The South Asian Insider do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the Editor. All advertisers advertising in The South Asian Insider assume responsibility for accuracy of their advertisements. The South Asian Insider and/or people associated with it are not responsible for any claims made by the advertisers and don't endorse any product or services advertised in The South Asian Insider. We strongly urge consulting your lawyer before buying/contracting/hiring through the ads published in the newspaper. We are in the business of selling space and claims made by the advertisers are not authenticated or confirmed by an independent source

Why India Inc Shouldn't Lobby For Protectionism

By : Ravi Shanker Kapoor

There is a line, Haye mar jaayenge/hum to lut jaayenge/ aesi baaten kiya na karo, in the famous Urdu poem, Aaj Jaane Ki Zid Na Karo. Written by the Pakistani poet Fayyaz Hashmi, the poem is beautifully sung by Farida Khanum. The line was the sum and substance of what Minister of Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal told export promotion councils (EPCs) in his recent interaction. Not in these words of course.

His message was prosaic—and correct. "Reflecting on the reciprocal tariffs, he has cautioned the EPCs to come out of their protectionist mindset and encouraged them to be bold and ready to deal with the world from a position of strength and self-confidence," an official press release said. Last month too, Goyal had exhorted corporate India to shed its protectionist mindset and focus instead on becoming globally competitive. US President Donald Trump has promised to impose sweeping levies on India from April 2. "India charges us 100 per cent tariffs; the system is not fair to the US, it never was. On April 2, reciprocal tariffs kick in.



Whatever they tax us, we will tax them. If they use non-monetary tariffs to keep us out of their market, then we will use non-monetary barriers to keep them out of our market," Trump said early this month while addressing a Joint Session of the US Congress.

This is even though India and the US have decided to negotiate the first tranche of a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) by fall (September-October) 2025. The proposed pact is quite comprehensive in scope, aimed at increasing bilateral trade, augmenting market access, decreasing tariff and non-tariff barriers, and boosting supply chain integration. Goyal said that the BTA with the US "will be the

mother of all deals."

Trade talks with Washington are on, and there has been no sign of major disagreements between the two countries. And yet, political and intellectual elites are angry and anxious; consequently, markets are in ferment. So, the Congress has claimed that the Narendra Modi government's "trade policy is disastrous." Congress media department chairman Pawan Khera is aghast at "Modiji's surrender."

Most intellectuals, who are still wedded to the postmodern woke doctrines, are also incensed not just because Trump is challenging and changing their rules but also because India is not resisting the US President's threats and statements. Trump's

America is just having its way too easy; this galls the Left-liberal establishment.

Four points need to be made here. First, just because Trump says something doesn't mean that it is incorrect. Former chief economic adviser Arvind Subramanian said two months ago, "India has been protectionist since about 2018." Other experts have also made similar observations. For too long, sections of our industry have enjoyed protection in the form of high import duties and non-tariff barriers (NTBs) like quality control orders (QCOs). Second, if India lowers its duties and reduces NTBs, it may help American firms that want to enter our market; but less protection will also—indeed more so—give a fillip to our economy. This will, perforce, make our companies become more competitive; they will become more inclined to adopt newer technologies to gain a competitive edge. Besides, this will also mean more choices and lower prices for consumers.

Third, less protection will also help micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). While

discussing protectionism, we should never lose sight of the interests involved. The economy is not a monolith; quite apart from various sectors, there is an important categorization based on size. There are a small number of big companies controlled by tycoons, and there are a big number of small companies run by businesspersons you and I come across in everyday life. When someone says that the economy should be protected, we must find out whose interests they are talking about. The steel industry may want higher tariffs, but the user industries—in which MSMEs are preponderant—oppose that. In other words, the interests of one sector or lobby should not be confused with the national interest.

And, finally, we should not get worked up because we are forced to tweak our economic policy because of external pressure. It is a well-known fact that the tectonic shift in India's economic policy in 1991 was goaded by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The ensuing liberalisation was fiercely resisted by both the Left and the Right.

Rhea cleared, TV hysteria left unpunished



By GEETA SESHU

ON Sunday, a day after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had filed two separate closure reports on the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput — one, that it was a death by suicide, and two, a clean chit on the charge of abetment to his former partner and actor Rhea Chakraborty — a motley bunch of people gathered on the dug-up road outside the building the actor had resided in.

They put up banners, posters and candles on a pipe left by construction workers to seek

justice for the actor. They called themselves 'SSRaians' and even brought along a cake to celebrate the birthday of one of their members.

Less than five years after Rajput was found hanging by his staff at his Bandra residence on June 14, 2020, the spectacle his life and death was reduced to, has not ceased. Today, media focus has shifted to the plea by Satish Salian, the father of Rajput's manager Disha Salian. He has sought a CBI probe and the registration of a first information report (FIR) against Shiv Sena

(UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray for her death. She had fallen from the 14th floor of her building on June 7-8, 2020. The Mumbai police had then said that it was an accidental death.

But in 2020, the carpet bombing coverage by highly competitive television media served as a distraction from administrative failures over the Covid-19 pandemic, and it was Chakraborty and her family who bore the brunt of a media trial.

The CBI closure reports, which will be placed before a magistrate's court next month, were received with more benign coverage for Chakraborty and her family, a far cry from the chasing and outpouring of vitriol in news broadcasts and social media posts in 2020, that was nothing short of diabolical.

Chakraborty, who spent 27 days in jail, was accused of abetting the death by suicide of the actor. She was also charged under the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) for being part of a network to

supply drugs and for money-laundering of Rajput's money, allegedly to the tune of Rs 15 crore.

Along with Rhea, her brother Showik, Rajput's former cook Dipesh Sawant and former housekeeper Samuel Miranda were also arrested.

While the money-laundering charge fell through without any evidence of money in Rajput's account, the drug-running charge also came to naught. As Justice SV Kotwal of the Bombay High Court said while granting the actor conditional bail, "There are no other criminal antecedents against her. She is not part of the chain of drug dealers." Nevertheless, Chakraborty was cast in the classic trope of a scheming gold-digger who exploited the feelings of a sensitive and likeable man. Television channels vied with one another to ratchet up the hate and performative hysteria, taking the absurdity to incredible lengths (case in point: The

Republic anchor Arnab Goswami's "give me drugs" performance or then reporter and now BJP spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari's deranged circling with the mike, cameraman dutifully in tow).

Chakraborty was even accused of performing 'black magic'. Social media stalkers noted that the 'green' colour of a waist belt she wore striking a yoga pose in one Instagram photo was the same colour of the cloth that the actor had hanged himself with! When Chakraborty finally spoke to some television channels to share her side of the story, she was criticised for conducting a PR exercise and for being a 'boss-lady' delivering 'a perfectly-scripted, glitch-free performance' (Rhea's Polished, Glitch-Free Prime Time Performance, Shobhaa De, NDTV, Aug 28, 2020) because she narrated the sequence of events before Rajput's death in a seemingly unemotional manner.

Columbia Learns a Hard Lesson

The university betrayed its Jewish students—and its core mission—and is now paying the price.

Columbia University's decision Friday to bend to the Trump Administration's governance demands has shocked the academy far and wide, and it is an unprecedented sanction. But perhaps it will also shock our academic elites into recognizing that they have courted this political backlash by too often abandoning their central mission of free inquiry.

The Trump Administration withdrew \$400 million in funding from Columbia and issued a list of demands as the price of restoring the money. Columbia's president, Katrina Armstrong, seemingly agreed to every one in an extraordinary four-page letter to the school community. Many in academia are calling this an act of surrender, but she had little choice if she wants the money.

Many of the steps Columbia is now promising should have been made long ago in its own best interest. Restricting masks means rule-breakers have to take responsibility for their actions. Clear rules—clearly enforced—about time, place and manner restrictions on campus speech will raise the cost for those who want to block speakers they dislike.

The school will also incorporate into formal policy the definition of antisemitism recommended by Columbia's own Antisemitism Taskforce last year, which makes you wonder why it hasn't already. And it will adopt so-called institutional neutrality "institution-wide." This means the school itself, and presumably academic departments, won't take sides on political controversies of the day.



This principle is associated with the University of Chicago and is being adopted by much of academia. The test will be whether it is enforced throughout the institution. All of these reforms will be controversial only among those who think a university is an ivory foxhole from which to launch political movements or indoctrinate students.

More notable are Columbia's concessions on academic study, admissions and faculty hiring. The school has agreed to appoint a new senior vice provost to "conduct a thorough review of the portfolio of programs in regional areas across the University, starting immediately with the Middle East."

Ms. Armstrong's statement goes into some detail about what this review will mean, and it includes "hiring of non-

tenured faculty." These instructors have been among the leading agitators of anti-Jewish protests.

This doesn't go as far as putting the department into a form of government "receivership." But presumably the Trump Administration will monitor how the school proceeds as it decides whether to restore funding. Conservatives should also be wary of government dictation of curricula because the left will do the same thing if it returns to power. Do we want the next secretary of Education telling Notre Dame or Yeshiva how much religion can influence their courses of study?

As for those who are appalled by any strings on federal money, what did they expect after events of recent decades? American universities were once widely respected as citadels of learning that were

the best in the world. Taxpayers were content to leave them alone, even as the schools became ever more dependent on federal dollars.

But over time too many universities have become intellectual monocultures that refuse to allow alternative points of view. The public saw conservative speakers shouted down on campus, if they were invited at all. Leftist critical theory and anti-Western, anti-American views often dominate curricula.

Then last spring the schools erupted into a display of antisemitism that presidents and trustees seemed unable or unwilling to control or discipline. Traditional liberal elites shrank under pressure from the left. Americans can't be expected to hand a blank financial check to schools that promote values that are inimical to their own. The Columbia sanctions, and perhaps others to follow, are a warning to schools to return to their traditional mission. That is, in the famous Matthew Arnold phrase, to examine and transmit to the next generation the best that has been thought or said.

Way back in 1988, these columns wrote about curriculum changes at Stanford that abandoned instruction in Western civilization in favor of studies focused on race, gender and class. That shift was novel at the time, but now this is the core curriculum of too many humanities and social-science departments.

This is not what Americans want to subsidize with scarce dollars, and schools would be wise to reform themselves or abandon federal money.

Lessons From the Signal Chat on the Houthis

The leak furor will fade but not JD Vance's contempt for allies.



Democrats had fun pounding away at the Trump Administration Tuesday over a security leak to a journalist on the Signal messaging app, and we trust the White House has learned a lesson. It's amusing to hear journalists who dine out

on leaks deplore this leak. But the lasting import won't be the security breach as much as what Trump officials really think about our European allies.

The White House is insisting that no classified information appeared on the now

infamous group chat about the Houthis, and Mr. Trump's chief spooks Tulsi Gabbard and John Ratcliffe said as much at a Capitol Hill hearing on Tuesday. It was nonetheless notable to watch Ms. Gabbard, the supposed enemy of the intelligence deep state before she became director of national intelligence, obfuscate about the thread's contents. What you admit apparently depends on where you sit.

President Trump reacted to the blunder better than anyone. He defended as "a good man" his national security adviser Mike Waltz, who may have been the one to add the Atlantic editor to the group chat. Democrats want heads to roll. Mr. Waltz appears to have been defending the President's decision to protect freedom of navigation from the Houthis, and telling his colleagues they could find classified information on the usual secure channels.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's behavior looks less defensible a day later, as he may have been cavalier about the details of incoming military strikes. He also tried to shift the blame for the fiasco on the journalist who was put on the chat, which is silly given that the Atlantic editor did nothing but listen and says he declined to publish information he said might jeopardize U.S. troops.

A real security scandal is that the Signal chat apparently included Steve Witkoff, Mr. Trump's envoy to wars in the Middle East and Ukraine. Press reports say Mr. Witkoff was receiving these messages on the commercial app while in Moscow. This is security malpractice. Russian intelligence services must be listening to Mr. Witkoff's every eyebrow flutter. This adds to the building perception that Mr. Witkoff, the President's friend from New York, is out of his depth in dealing with world crises.

India Erases Islamic and Colonial History

Battling sectarians have a long history of behaving in the manner of American leftists after George Floyd's killing in 2020.



You might think that India, a country with nuclear weapons, an ambitious space program and aspirations for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, would have better things to debate than a Mughal emperor who died more than 300 years ago. You would be mistaken. Earlier this month, clashes between police and Hindu and Muslim mobs in Nagpur, in the western state of Maharashtra, injured about 70 people. Angry Muslims torched cars and battled police after Hindu nationalist protesters allied with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party burned an effigy of Aurangzeb, a Muslim emperor who ruled the Mughal Empire—which for a time included most of the Indian subcontinent—from 1658 to 1707. The protesters were demanding that the government raze Aurangzeb's modest grave—an idea many Muslims and Hindu secularists find abhorrent. The immediate cause of the Hindu nationalist demand appears to be “Chhaava,” a Bollywood movie that focuses in lurid detail on Aurangzeb's execution of the son and successor of a widely revered Hindu king who battled the Mughal Empire during the latter half of the 17th century. The film, already the highest-grossing Indian movie this year, has earned more than \$90 million worldwide. The movie's commercial success and the controversy it has sparked take

place amid an ideological battle between the ruling Hindu nationalists and once-dominant Hindu secularist and Muslim groups. In the Hindu nationalist pantheon of villains, arguably no one ranks higher than Aurangzeb. They despise him for murdering his brothers, imprisoning his father, reimposing the Islamic jizya tax on Hindus, destroying Hindu temples and building mosques in their place, executing Sikh spiritual leaders for refusing to convert to Islam, and outlawing Hindu religious fairs. Some Indian Muslims admire Aurangzeb for his piety and military prowess. He extended the Mughal Empire to its farthest boundaries. His empire spanned Kabul in today's Afghanistan, Lahore in Pakistan, Chennai in southern India and Dhaka in Bangladesh. It contained some 150 million people, more than the population of Europe at the time. But the secularist case against demonizing Aurangzeb hinges less on praising his actions—which some historians regard as extreme even by the standards of his time—and more on placing them in context. As the argument goes, religious bigotry and bloodshed were common in the 17th century. And while Aurangzeb razed some Hindu temples, he provided grants to others. Above all, secularists argue that India needs to move on. What's the point of endlessly litigating

the past?

In today's India, defending Aurangzeb is a losing battle. In 2015, the government renamed Aurangzeb Road, a prominent street in New Delhi, after an ex-president of India. In 2023, the city of Aurangabad, named after the Mughal ruler, was renamed Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar after the Hindu ruler whose death the recent Bollywood film depicts. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has castigated Aurangzeb for his “atrocities” and “terrorism.” On social media, Indians regularly compare the Mughal emperor to Stalin and Hitler. Hindu nationalists aren't only interested in erasing Aurangzeb; they want to overwrite centuries of Islamic rule in India more generally. In recent years, they've renamed many cities, districts and cultural sites with Hindu names. Those who want India to approach history with more temperance have a point. The country ought to be able to come to terms with the past without razing historical sites or renaming places to erase all traces of Islamic rule. The trouble with this argument, however, is that many of those who seek to prevent the erasure of India's Islamic past followed the same playbook when wiping out symbols of British colonial rule. Over the years, the anglicized place names Bombay, Madras and Calcutta

have given way to Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. The imposing Victoria Terminus, a railway station built in the late 19th century to mark Queen Victoria's golden jubilee, is now called Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, named after the founder of the Maratha Empire, who battled Aurangzeb. Roads named for British viceroys and governors-general have been erased. Statues of imperial rulers lie rotting in fields and other out-of-the-way sites. Some hyper-nationalists even seek to stop using the name India and replace it with “Bharat,” which is the country's official name in Hindi. Compared with India, the West is fortunate to have a culture that approaches the past with a greater degree of moderation. Still, India's wars over history bring to mind the excesses of radical leftist protesters during the madness that followed the killing of George Floyd in 2020. According to the New York Times, in the three years following Floyd's death, activists succeeded in removing more than 230 purported symbols of white supremacy across the U.S. This hysteria appears to have receded in the U.S. But the lesson from India is clear. If you allow one group of people to wield history as a cudgel in contemporary political battles, don't be surprised when another group does the same to symbols you want to preserve.

Trump Administration Loses Bid to Restart Deportation Flights

Decision leaves in place, for now, an order that the White House has strongly criticized as judicial overreach



WASHINGTON—An appeals court upheld an order that blocked the Trump administration from using a wartime law to deport alleged Venezuelan gang members, dealing a setback to President Trump in a clash with the judiciary over the limits of his authority.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit's 2-1 decision on Wednesday denied the Justice Department's bid to lift the block while it fights the lawsuit, which challenged Trump's use of the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to carry out the deportations.

Judge Karen L. Henderson, who was appointed by President George H.W. Bush, said U.S. District Judge James Boasberg's March 15 emergency order temporarily blocking the deportations was entered "for a quintessentially valid purpose: to protect [the court's] remedial authority long enough to consider the parties' arguments."

She said that the administration hadn't, at this early stage, shown it was likely to prevail in the lawsuit. The administration had previously signaled it was prepared to ask the Supreme Court to hear the case if necessary.

Boasberg had ordered the deportations to stop while he considered the challenge to the administration's use of the centuries-old law to remove dozens of alleged

members of Tren de Aragua, a violent Venezuelan gang.

The Justice Department has called that order "an affront to the president's broad constitutional and statutory authority to protect the United States from dangerous aliens who pose grave threats to the American people."

Wednesday's ruling signaled trouble ahead for the Trump administration as it defends that action in court. In her concurring opinion, Henderson rejected the Justice Department's argument that courts couldn't second-guess the lawfulness of Trump's use of the Alien Enemies Act.

"Sensitive subject matter alone doesn't shroud a law from the judicial eye," Henderson wrote.

Judge Patricia Millett joined Henderson in ruling against the Trump administration. Millett, an appointee of former President Barack Obama, had been sharply critical of how the administration had treated deportees during a hearing earlier this week. "Nazis got better treatment under the Alien Enemies Act than has happened here," she said during the hearing, a reference to when the law was invoked during World War II. She wrote separately to say that Boasberg—who has been

accused by the Trump administration of bias and judicial overreach—has been handling the litigation "with great expedition and circumspection."

Boasberg's orders so far "do nothing more than freeze the status quo until weighty and unprecedented legal issues can be addressed," she added.

Judge Justin Walker dissented, saying there were issues with where the lawsuit—brought by the American Civil Liberties Union and co-counsel at Democracy Forward on behalf of individuals who fear being deported based on the Alien Enemies Act—was filed.

Walker, a Trump appointee, said these plaintiffs should have sued in Texas, where they were being detained in a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility, and not Washington, D.C.

He also said the government had also "shown that the district court's orders threaten irreparable harm to delicate negotiations with foreign powers on matters concerning national security."

The Alien Enemies Act allows a president to deport citizens of countries considered an enemy of the U.S. Trump, in a March 15 proclamation, said he would invoke the act to deport members of Tren de Aragua, which he said was an extension of the

Venezuelan government. The U.S. had designated the group as a foreign terrorist organization in February.

It is one tool the Trump administration has used as it moves quickly to fulfill the president's campaign promise to carry out mass deportations of illegal immigrants.

Lawyers for the challengers, however, say that the administration failed to give the deportees a fair chance to challenge the determination that they were Tren de Aragua members—and some who were deported weren't, they have alleged in court filings.

The deportees were taken to the Terrorism Confinement Center, or Cecot, in El Salvador. It is known as the world's largest prison and home to the country's most violent gang members. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem flew to El Salvador on Wednesday to visit that facility.

Skye Perryman, Democracy Forward's president, called the appeals court's ruling an important step for due process.

"President Trump is bound by the laws of this nation, and those laws do not permit him to use wartime powers when the United States is not at war and has not been invaded to remove individuals from the country with no process at all," Perryman said.

The Evolving Socio-Political Thinking Of Hindu Americans



By : Ratan Sharda

I was in the USA for a month recently, during which I interacted with a cross-section of Americans, including Black people, intellectuals, and Hindu Americans. I even had long chats with Hindu youth in a few cities. My stay everywhere was with my friends from India, i.e. local Hindu families.

I could not help, but reflect on my earlier interactions with email groups during the Donald Trump-Hillary Clinton elections, and personal conversations with many Indian Americans, including Muslims, during my earlier trip in December 2019. I experienced a huge upheaval in Hindu society about how they look at American politics as US citizens. During the Clinton-Trump battle, I saw a big divide between the traditional Democrat supporters among the Hindu community and the new-age Republicans. Democrats, being the vocal majority at that time, were more aggressive. The Democratic Party was the party for all immigrants by default, and Indians were no different. However, the younger citizens and the American-born citizens were no more bound by the reflexive sympathy for Democrats. The political divide was so bitter that once I

commented on a group, why were they fighting with each other? Why could they not come up with a Hindu agenda and talk to their respective candidates that this is our agenda, whichever candidate wins.

Hindus do not seek any favour because they have risen with hard work without seeking any favours. The only thing that worries and irritates Hindus is the way their religion is presented in education and the way they are misrepresented in public discourse. I was surprised at that time to hear from some senior Hindus that "we do not have that kind of lobbying power". However, since I did not have any stakes in American politics, I just let it pass. I had also told my hardcore Democrat friends that unless Clinton came up with a clear stand on Islamic terrorism and radicalism, she would lose. And she lost.

In the next election, we had the spectacle of Hindus falling for Kamala Harris, as one of their own, despite her never accepting this ownership, except for a few public shows of Indianness. It was the time when some politicians with Indian ancestry used to show themselves as American Christians, converted for the sake of being successful in politics. People like Bobby

Jindal and Nikki Haley tried to shy away from their ex-Hindu and Indian identity, while we Indians insisted that they had strong Indian roots. The socio-political changes in the Indian community slowly saw the fake, make-believe politicians losing steam because they tried to be what they were not.

I could sense the changing mood of Hindu American citizens — the growing confidence in their American identity, while being open about their affection for their land of origin. They had begun taking an interest in American politics more actively. One saw more Indians in local politics, if not national politics. Some senators and Congressmen/women did come up. But they were either highly anti-Hindu or took one stance in public and another in private. So, there was an element of tentative uncertainty about them and their beliefs.

In this election, we saw Hindu politicians comfortable in their skin. No more apologetic, nor did they need to Americanise with a name change, no more need to show themselves to be more American Christian than they were. Their two generations of success based on sheer hard work backed by strong family values in that land have made

them more confident and bolder. They profess a strong belief in America without giving up on their identity. Similarly, I also found Hindu youth and younger-generation Indians pitching their political and social views very confidently.

In one of the meetings, I met two young Hindu Americans making a strong pitch for the Democratic Party, believing that the youth were being misled by the Republican Party, which can never be theirs. There were also strong Trump supporters there. But, like true Hindus, they did not have any confrontation. I felt very happy to see this transformation of the political landscape within the Hindu community. No more bitter fights within the community, but healthy competition.

Another interesting thing I noted was that the Indians in the USA with H1B visas seem to be much less worried about their visa renewal than the Indians in India. They are confident of their skills and knowledge. The pro-Trump Indians and even Democrat Indians feel that what Trump is doing is necessary for the USA to break free of the shackles put in by the extreme Left. A senior Hindu Democrat leader said they were saved from doing this clean-up as Trump is doing it, and they will

also reap the benefit from this spring cleaning. There is nothing one can do about hardcore Democrat supporters who were swearing at Trump. But there were objective critics who feared that the aggressive stance of tariffs could hurt the USA badly, as inputs will become costly. In a way, there is a big churn. And like other Americans, Hindu Americans are also equally invested in it.

An Atlanta senator, who was incidentally Black, asked me about Modi ji's economic policies, which he thought were Leftist, although he was being called a right-wing politician. I responded by telling him how India does not fit into the western binary of Left and Right. And how, economically, Modi ji and Hindu economic philosophy was more 'left of centre'. I also explained the philosophy of Integral Humanism that Modi ji imbibed. It was refreshing to see rising American interest in India without any traditional baggage, with a fresh look.

A group of students at Harvard requested me to give a talk about my book 'Conflict Resolution — The RSS Way'. Although they got some hate mail from the usual suspects, they stuck to their guns. I am told it was the first talk ever in the Kennedy Centre at Harvard with a subject directly about the RSS. Surprisingly, it was attended by students from five countries from the African continent and Eastern Europe, apart from the Indian students.

I met an eminent professor who specialises in democratic institutions. He shared a chapter about the success of India and Indonesia in democracy. When I told him that Indian democratic polity does not flow from the western model and just our Constitution, but from our long tradition of institutions like Panchayat, to my surprise, he had no clue. He was honestly eager to know more. However, his ignorance showed me how the academics references in the west is dominated totally by Left, secular intellectuals. So much so that he could not find any book about these traditions.

Much Before Bofors, This Deal Brought 'Q' Into Limelight

By Shubhabrata Bhattacharya

The ghost of 'Q' mentioned in Bofors managing director Martin Ardbo's private diary, which was relied upon by Chitra Subramainam, a Europe-based Indian journalist, to expose the bribery scandal in 1987-89, has resurfaced. Italian business executive Ottavio Quattrocchi is back in the news.

Three weeks after Subramaniam's book, *Boforsgate: A Journalist's Pursuit Of Truth*, hit the stands, BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia has now demanded Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi's resignations as Members of Parliament. The allegations are old and have been off-repeated (in his order related to Bofors on November 14, 2022, Special Judge Prem Kumar had detailed how since 1974, the Quattrocchis had regularly interacted with the Gandhis over 'Italian food' and how their children grew up together).

There seems to be renewed interest in the Bofors case, which lingered in courts for 25 years before in 2011, a judge in Delhi's Tis Hazari courts discharged



Quattrocchi from the payoffs case after allowing the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to withdraw prosecution against him (while the CBI didn't make any headway, an Income Tax Tribunal had established that Rs 41 lakh had been paid in bribes to Quattrocchi).

Letter Rogatory Sent To US

The CBI last month made a judicial request to the United States after sending a 'Letter Rogatory' (LR)—a written request sent by the court of one country to the that of another country to obtain assistance in the investigation or prosecution of a criminal matter—requesting information from private investigator Michael Hershman of an agency called

Fairfax. Hershman had expressed willingness to share with Indian agencies crucial details about the Bofors bribery scandal way back in 1988. Sources say the process to send the LR was initiated on October 14, 2024, and it was sent in February after approval from the court concerned. The CBI has also informed the special court hearing the agency's plea for further probe into the alleged bribery case about the recent developments. So, 'Q' may soon be back in the limelight. Emergence of 'Q'

Ottavio Quattrocchi had come to India as a representative of Italian petroleum company Eni and engineering giant Snamprogetti, both firms of repute, in the mid-1960s. His name surfaced in

Parliament in 1981-82 after Haldor Topsoe, a firm acquired by Snamprogetti, in September 1980 bagged the prestigious contract for consultancy for setting up the world's largest gas-based urea plant in Thal Vaishet on the outskirts of Mumbai. The project, set up under public sector company Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilisers (RCF), had been under consideration since 1976. The contractor chosen for Thal Vaishet was to be a frontrunner for a dozen more Bombay High gas-based fertilizer plants that came up in later years.

An American Firm, CF Braun, had been shortlisted by a Committee of Secretaries of the Union government—the change of regime in 1977 necessitated a review and CF Braun continued to head the list in the Janata regime as well. The ouster of Morarji Desai in 1979 saw yet another review by H.N. Bahuguna, the Petroleum Minister of Charan Singh regime. The choice of CF Braun persisted.

In January 1980, when Indira Gandhi returned to power, a review panel was set up yet again

and CF Braun, represented in India by a firm headed by Narendra N. Kapadia (better known as Mama Kapadia), a former Sheriff of Bombay and his nephew, Nanak Sheth, continued to be the prime choice initially.

Sanjay Gandhi died in June 1980. Power equations in New Delhi changed swiftly. In September 1980, the contract was awarded to Haldor Topsoe, a Snamprogetti affiliate, which had not figured in the deliberations of any of the panels hitherto. Quattrocchi's proximity to the 'Powers that Be' started buzzing in Lutyens' Delhi's grapevine.

'Q' Surfaces In Parliament Congress (S) stalwart K.P. Unnikrishnan (who later was Cabinet Minister under Vishwanath Pratap Singh) raised the issue of award of contract for RCF Thal Vaishet in the Lok Sabha and placed on the table of the House a copy of the deal file (authenticated by him, as per Lok Sabha rules in vogue since similar disclosures by Feroze Gandhi on the Mundhra scandal).

Is It Payback Time For Pakistan Army?



By Tara Kartha

It's ironic in the extreme. Even as the Pakistan Army marched in precision on the parade ground and showcased its might on the occasion of Pakistan Day two days ago (March 23), facts indicate that it is riven with divisions on an unprecedented scale. Apart from near-daily attacks on itself, the army has turned into a brute force, with its 'counter-terrorism' operations not differentiating even children or women from terrorists. That's terrible for the people on the receiving end, but deeply

corrosive also for the forces that undertake such actions. So what explains the rumours of deep resentment within the lower ranks, and, if reports are to be believed, calls for the Army Chief to resign?

A Bloody War

The parade itself was held with all fanfare, with a rather uncomfortable looking Prime Minister in front, while President Zardari delivered the formal address. Behind him was the Army Chief and his cohorts. The whole seating arrangement could have been reversed and nobody

would have batted an eye, so obviously was the Army Chief in charge.

However, recent attacks on his forces—not just the hijack of the Jaffar express but also a series of attacks thereafter not just in Balochistan, but also in the highly unstable Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region—have called into question the Army's slipping grip. Reports from Pakistani think-tanks have already highlighted 2024 as the worst year on record in a decade in terms of terror attacks; the graph is likely to only rise this year. Reports indicate that there have been 179 incidents till March 11 with 255 casualties, which include members of the Army, Frontier Corps, Levies, Constabulary, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and Police.

In a rage, the Pakistan army acted exactly as per precedent. It turned upon the hapless population, firing on crowds, including children, and picking up those who have stood up peacefully for Baloch rights. That includes the charismatic Mehrang Baloch, who is fast being made

into a leader of repute, ironically due to the actions of the army itself. She has been charged with sedition and terrorism, all for staging a sit-in at a university. But anger within Balochistan is growing. Quetta erupted with protests after her arrest and hundreds turned up for the funerals of those killed. As the numbers mount, so will the situation.

No Counter-Strategy

Amazingly, the Pakistan army, arguably the most experienced 'terrorist'-sponsoring army in the world, seems to have no conception at all about counter-terrorism in its own country. It has bombed, strafed and used artillery against its own citizens, even taking journalists on an air ride to see the destruction caused in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where hundreds upon hundreds of houses had roofs missing even as some 72,000 fled the area. That was 2016. Anyone with a modicum of knowledge would have said that things were likely to get much worse roughly three to four years down the line. That's

how much it takes for an angry population to turn upon its tormentors, and for resistance groups to regroup.

And that did happen. Now, there are few areas where Pakistani forces can move with impunity. That also applies to Balochistan, which has been treated with colonial contempt. But the real downside is this: such operations against one's own people have eroded the cohesion of the army that is fighting it. Armies are honed and trained on 'honour' in battle against an 'enemy', for which valour they are rewarded and respected, most of all from the villages they come from. But fighting civilians and children carry no such benefits, and no army man, whether Pakistani or Indian, will tolerate this. That is the core reason why the Indian army has had the sense to fight with 'one hand behind its back', and why it organised its own outreach programmes such as 'Sadbhavana', which has a range of initiatives aimed at providing services to populations in insurgency-hit areas.

Punjab's Economy At A Crossroads: Protests Cleared, Real Issues Remain

By :Sanbeer Singh Ranhotra

Punjab has suffered at the hands of economic disruptors for five years now. What started in 2020 as a state-wide protest against the three farm bills brought by the Narendra Modi government metamorphosed into a larger movement, with farmers primarily from Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh camping on the borders of Delhi for more than a year. The Centre then decided to withdraw the contentious agriculture bills, which helped disperse the protesters. While normalcy returned to Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, Punjab somehow found itself caught between a rock and a hard place. Farmer unions, ostensibly worried about losing relevance, continued demonstrations against the Modi government at the state level. For about a year now, some farmer unions have blocked the border between Punjab and Haryana, causing tremendous pain to the state's economy. After its Delhi loss, AAP is in survival mode. A Punjab defeat in 2027 could relegate it to political obscurity. So when Punjab police came cracking down on protesters at the Shambhu and Khanauri borders on March 19, many were quick to connect the dots. Ahead of a crucial assembly bypoll in Ludhiana West, AAP sought to address the fears of Punjab's industrialists and traders, who have suffered extensive losses owing to continuing protests. The prolonged shutdown of key border crossings—Shambhu, Khanauri, and Kundli—has led to an estimated economic setback exceeding Rs 1.25 lakh crore for Punjab and Haryana. The regions adjacent to



these borders faced immediate financial damages surpassing Rs 1,600 crore, while Punjab's businesses alone bore losses north of Rs 1 lakh crore. Therefore, the Aam Aadmi Party stood a fair chance of losing the battle for Ludhiana West even before the first vote was cast. It is for this reason that the Punjab police was brought in to dismantle the protest sites and detain farmer leaders and hundreds of protesters. From vociferously supporting such protesters when they were camping on the borders of Delhi to now, quite literally bulldozing their protest sites—life has come full circle for Arvind Kejriwal's party.

Time to focus on Punjab's real issues

Another reason why Bhagwant Mann's government felt comfortable bulldozing the kisan dharna is the fact that farmer unions have gradually lost support in Punjab. The initial adrenaline rush of 2020-21 is over, and Punjabis want their state to get back on track and focus on

issues that really matter. After all, the issues facing Punjab are severe and many.

Let's start with the economy. Punjab ranks as India's second-most indebted state, with its total liabilities estimated at Rs 3,78,453 crore. With a debt-to-GSDP ratio of 46.6%, Punjab holds the second-highest debt burden in the country, effectively owing nearly half of its annual economic output. The state is now relying on borrowing merely to cover routine expenses, trapping it in a risky cycle of debt repayment and fresh loans. Unwise subsidies for farmers, especially the provision of free electricity, have landed Punjab in its present financial mess. In addition, industrial growth has been stagnant, with many manufacturers even moving out of the state for greener pastures.

Punjab also faces a crippling water table crisis. The land of the five rivers—once known for its water abundance—is now on the path to desertification. In many

ways, this is a tragedy of epic proportions. As per data presented by the union minister of state for Jal Shakti, Raj Bhushan Choudhary, in the Rajya Sabha on February 3, groundwater levels in Punjab have been steadily declining. Out of 174 wells monitored over the past five years, 67.2% (117 wells) recorded a drop in water levels. Punjab ranks among the worst-affected states in the country, experiencing one of the most significant groundwater depletions.

Punjab's drug problem needs no introduction. Bollywood has made films about it; Punjabis have been made fun of, and India's enemies have taken advantage of the menace. The Aam Aadmi Party, which vowed to eliminate drugs from Punjab, has evidently failed to keep its promise. Only recently has the party shifted gears and launched an extensive crackdown on the state's drug cartels. This, too, has more to do with the setback AAP faced in Delhi than a genuine desire to alleviate the state's drug woes.

Add to the mix the fact that Punjabis are leaving their state to settle abroad, and you now also have a demographic problem to deal with. As more and more Sikhs fly out, Christian missionaries have been having the time of their lives in Punjab. The lure of money and supposed miraculous healings is driving many low-income residents of the state towards Christianity. According to reports, more than 350,000 people have converted to Christianity in the past two years alone. If you happen to travel through Punjab now, the demographic change is hard to miss.

Mahakumbh: A Research Opportunity Unlike Any Other

By Santosh Kumar Biswal & Uttam Chakraborty

The 45-day Mahakumbh Mela in India has now concluded. However, this spiritual gathering remains significant in a unique way. Beyond its religious and cultural aspects, it has also provided rich material for academic inquiry, research, and new perspectives. The intersection of academia and research has taken multiple shifts, fostering innovation and novelty. Suffice it to say, the event has opened up diverse research platforms with fresh perspectives.

Scholars and researchers have delved deeply into both theory and practice to study this vast spiritual and cultural festival. Research methodologies—including ethnography, interviews, focus groups, and experimental approaches—have been applied and reassessed for their validity. Studies on the wide range of rituals and ceremonies have contributed to the development of new research methodologies. Findings and generalisations are forthcoming, with



emerging socio-cultural, economic, and management theories set to challenge existing paradigms. Mixed methods, research design, sampling techniques, and interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches have become central points of discussion. Originally organised in 1870 under British rule, this vibrant cultural festival now rests on strong pedagogical foundations, incorporating integrative, collaborative, reflective, and inquiry-based approaches to comprehend phenomena that often defy description

and challenge the imagination.

The Mahakumbh, held after 144 years, was not just a spiritual spectacle but also an unparalleled research hub. Scholars from diverse fields—anthropology, sociology, environmental science, public health, and artificial intelligence—examined the grand event to understand human behaviour, urban planning, and the impact of faith-driven mobility. Unlike many global pilgrimages—such as Dajia Mazu, Abraham's Path, Lourdes, Kumano Kodo, and St Magnus Way—the

Mahakumbh stood out due to its sheer scale, demographic diversity, and temporary city planning, making it an extraordinary case study.

There is no doubt that researching the Mahakumbh is both rich and novel in terms of inquiry and outcomes, especially when compared to other pilgrimages worldwide.

The Dajia Mazu pilgrimage in Taiwan remains one of the most well-known spiritual events globally, fulfilling tourists' spiritual aspirations while also driving the development of destination tourism. Studies on this event have provided theoretical insights into happiness, marketing, and sustainable development. Abraham's Path, a cultural walking route tracing the journey of Abraham across the Middle East, serves as a model for cultural tourism, inspiring hope for humanity. A Harvard Business School case study has explored ways to revitalise the Abraham Path as a cultural tourism route.

Message to India? Yunus jets off to China on Bangladesh Independence Day

The head of Bangladesh's interim government, Muhammad Yunus, chose to fly to Beijing on the country's Independence Day. A senior Bangladesh official called the visit a "message". A day earlier, PM Modi sent a message on "mutual sensitivity". What are the messages, and what do they convey?

(News Agency)- On Wednesday, just hours after paying tribute to Bangladesh's fallen soldiers on Independence and National Day in Dhaka, Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus hopped on a special China Southern flight and flew off to China for a four-day official visit. Yunus's visit to China, coinciding with Bangladesh's strained ties with India, is no coincidence. It's a message. And that has been signalled by Dhaka. Just a day earlier, India sent across a message on the need for "mutual sensitivity to each other's interests and concerns".

Yunus, on his first bilateral visit after stops in Davos, Washington DC, and Cairo, did not fly solo. Yunus, scheduled to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping, took off with a full entourage, including advisers on foreign affairs, power, energy, minerals; road transport and bridges; and railways, SDGs affairs principal coordinator and

his press secretary.

Yunus wanted to visit India before China, but did not receive a positive response, his press secretary told The Hindu. But what exactly is Dhaka trying to convey to India? And how has India, with President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi extending greetings to Bangladeshis and Yunus on this historic day, hinted at what needs to be done by Dhaka to take the bilateral relationship back to normal? What are the strains in the relationship that New Delhi's top leadership is looking to iron out? YUNUS-XI JINPING IS A "MESSAGE", SAYS DHAKA.

WHAT'S ON THE TABLE? Yunus's departure on a Chinese chartered flight, sent by Beijing, itself is a significant message. Described by Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen as potentially "the most important visit by a Bangladeshi leader in 50 years", the trip is packed with high-stakes engagements. In

addition, Dhaka's top foreign ministry officer, Mohammad Jashim Uddin, told news agency AFP, "Muhammad Yunus has chosen China for his first state visit and with this Bangladesh is sending a message".

Beyond Yunus' meeting with Xi Jinping, he will address the Boao Forum for Asia, meet CEOs of global and Chinese firms, deliver a lecture at Peking University, where he will receive an honorary doctorate, and tour hi-tech parks and hospital chains to attract investment.

On the table are discussions aimed at bailing out Bangladesh's collapsing economy. Key agenda items include a USD 138 million healthcare grant, negotiations for a Bangladesh-China Free Trade Agreement (FTA), and a revised bilateral investment treaty, reported Dhaka-based The Business Standard.

China, already a major investor and the biggest trading partner of Bangladesh, must be looking



to deepen its economic and strategic footprint.

With at least 14 Chinese firms investing over USD 230 million since Yunus took charge, Beijing's influence is growing. Yunus would be looking to secure financial support and infrastructure deals, such as the Chinese Economic Zone in Chattogram, amid diminishing Western aid and souring ties with India.

Any increase in China's involvement in Bangladesh's critical infrastructure and strategic projects would be of concern for India over Beijing's expanding footprint in its immediate neighbourhood.

Beijing also wants Dhaka to support the one-China principle. Dhaka did so under BNP's Khaleda Zia in 2005, but now-

ousted PM Sheikh Hasina didn't reaffirm support for it.

Therefore, the optics of Yunus' China visit on Independence Day hints at a broader geopolitical churn, one that India is watching closely.

However, India is not just focused on Bangladesh's actions beyond its borders but is also closely watching developments within the country. Also, Dhaka's bilateral engagements that would have an impact on India's eastern borders are certainly on India's list of priorities.

PRESIDENT MURMU, PM MODI FLAG NEED FOR MUTUAL SENSITIVITY

India's greetings to Bangladeshis and Yunus on Independence Day were measured yet pointed.

Pakistan rattled as Baloch women turn suicide bombers

Pakistan's Balochistan problem is no longer a slow burn. The flames of the Baloch movement are leaping high and far. There have been spectacular attacks one after another. The hijacking of the Jaffar Express by Baloch militants came immediately after a suicide attack on an army convoy in Balochistan's Kalat district. The suicide bomber was a woman and reveals a rare pattern emerging in Pakistan's mineral-rich, restive Balochistan province.

Women from the Baloch ethnic minority are increasingly turning into suicide bombers and shaking Pakistan's security interests and apparatus. The attack by a Baloch female suicide bomber first came to light in the 2022 Karachi University bombing. As the attacks escalate, Pakistan's



military seems to be running around like a headless chicken. And Baloch resistance is no longer the age-old male-dominated tribal resistance. The BLA revealed this week that it was a woman who blew herself up to inflict damage on the Pakistani military. The woman, Banuk Mahikan Baloch, was a science graduate and member of

its elite Majeed Brigade. The BLA shared her last audio message too. So, what is driving the Baloch women to turn into suicide bombers, and what does it say about the changing face and mechanisms of contemporary Baloch resistance? Analysts point to a confluence of changing times, Pakistani mistreatment of its largest province, rage,

despair, and strategic adaptation. It is also the story of women pushed to the brink after the forced disappearances of their men by the Pakistani military apparatus.

ROOT CAUSE OF BALOCH RESISTANCE, LIBERATION MOVEMENT

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest yet poorest province, is rich in oil and minerals. However, Balochistan has long suffered from underdevelopment and is now grappling with exploitation by both Islamabad's federal government, and the plunder of resources Pakistan has facilitated for its 'iron-brother'. Baloch groups have even regarded the accession of Balochistan and Kalat to Pakistan, after independence, as "illegitimate".

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a China-

backed infrastructure project, has become the prime target for Baloch grievances, with locals accusing Beijing and Islamabad of exploiting their resources without sparing them much. This has sparked resistance and opposition to Pakistani and Chinese interests, both through dialogue by groups like Mahrang Baloch's Baloch Yakjehti Committee and through armed movements led by militant organisations like the Balochistan Liberation Army. However, Pakistan's response has been iron-fisted, with enforced disappearances of Baloch activists becoming the norm, making dissent increasingly rare. The Voice for Baloch Missing Persons estimates over 5,000 individuals, mostly men, have vanished since 2000, leaving families shattered.

Putin will die soon: Zelenskyy's bold claim amid Russian leader's health rumours



(News Agency)-Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in a bold claim, said his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin "will die soon" and it would bring an end to the war between the two nations. Zelenskyy's remarks, during an interview in Paris, come amid widespread speculation about the Russian President's health. "He (Putin)

will die soon, and that's a fact, and it (the war) will come to an end," Zelenskyy told reporters after his meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday.

PUTIN'S HEALTH RUMOURS For several months, Putin's health has been the subject of speculation and rumours. Videos of the Russian leader coughing

incessantly, and his hands and feet making involuntary jerky movements have only added grist to the rumour mill. One video that grabbed attention in 2022 showed Putin slouching in his chair while gripping a table during a meeting with former defence minister Sergei Shoigu. There have also been unverified reports of Putin suffering from Parkinson's disease, and that he has been battling cancer. However, the Kremlin has always denied such claims. The Ukrainian leader also accused Russia of "dragging out the conflict" despite peace overtures. "Russia wants this war to continue. It is dragging it out. We need to put pressure on Russia so that the war ends indeed," Zelenskyy said.

Naked woman goes on stabbing, biting spree at Texas airport in 'manic episode'

(News Agency)-The Texas airport witnessed chaotic scenes earlier this month after a woman stripped herself naked and went on a stabbing and biting spree in what police called a "manic episode". A video of the harrowing incident, which happened on March 14 at the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, has gone viral on social media. The woman, identified as Samantha Palma, stabbed two airport staffers with a pencil and bit a restaurant manager, according to a report in the New York Post. In the two-minute video, she is also seen yelling and hurling abuse at the security personnel and throwing water around the premises. As an employee of an airport eatery tried to subdue her, the woman, who called herself goddess Venus, stabbed him in the head and face with a pencil.

She also bit him in the forearm, the report said. Her erratic behaviour didn't end at that. As a woman offered her a coat, Palma attempted to snatch it and dashed off, shouting "f**k you" maniacally as passengers gawked and recorded her on their phones. She then went on to shatter a monitor at the airport and hurled her phone at another screen multiple times before hiding behind an emergency door. She was then taken into custody by security officials. As the police handcuffed her, she told them she "wanted to be with the flowers" and was "in a forest". During the interrogation, Palma told police that she didn't take her medication that day. Police, however, did not specify what type of medication she was taking.

Taliban asks US to hand over Afghan embassy in Washington, pushes for formal ties

(News Agency)-The Taliban has formally requested the United States to transfer control of Afghanistan's embassy in Washington, DC, marking a significant step in its efforts to gain international recognition. Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed the request in an interview with Al Arabiya on March 25, 2025, revealing that the issue was raised during a recent meeting between a Taliban delegation and US officials. In addition to seeking control of the Washington embassy, the Taliban has urged the US to reopen its own diplomatic mission in Kabul, signalling a push for formal engagement.

However, Washington has yet to respond to the demands, maintaining its stance of cautious diplomatic interaction without official recognition of the Taliban



government. The Taliban's request is part of broader negotiations with the US, which have been ongoing despite tensions between the two sides. While the US does not recognise

the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, discussions have taken place on security and humanitarian issues. Mujahid pointed to recent developments, including the

removal of key Taliban leaders from Washington's most-wanted list, as positive steps toward easing strained relations. Among those removed is Sirajuddin Haqqani, Afghanistan's Interior

Minister, who was previously sanctioned for his involvement in attacks against US forces. Despite lacking official recognition, the Taliban claims control of 40 Afghan embassies worldwide, with countries like China and the UAE accepting Taliban-appointed diplomats. Securing control of the Afghan embassy in Washington is seen as a key objective in its ongoing diplomatic efforts. The discussions come on the heels of a US delegation's recent visit to Kabul-the first since the Taliban's return to power. The visit led to the release of an American citizen, George Goldsmith, in what was perceived as a goodwill gesture. However, multiple US citizens remain in Taliban custody, an issue that continues to complicate negotiations.

US, Russia discuss proposed Black Sea ceasefire: Positive announcement likely

(News Agency)US and Russian officials wrapped up day-long talks on Monday focused on a narrow proposal for a ceasefire at sea between Kyiv and Moscow, part of a diplomatic effort that Washington hopes will help pave the way for broader peace negotiations. Even as the meeting was under way in Saudi Arabia, where a Ukrainian delegation was present on the sidelines, a Russian missile strike damaged a school

and a hospital in Ukraine, wounding at least 88 people. The talks, which focused, amongst other issues, on trying to reach a Black Sea maritime ceasefire deal, were portrayed by Washington as a step in President Donald Trump's effort to end the three-year-old war. A White House source said progress was being made in the Riyadh talks and that

a "positive announcement" was expected "in the near future."



Russia's RIA news agency said the Russian delegation, when

asked about their mood after the end of the talks, replied: "It's good." A Russian source told Reuters that the talks had concluded late on Monday and a draft joint statement had been sent to Moscow and Washington for approval, with the parties aiming to release it on Tuesday. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said earlier that no documents would

be signed, the TASS agency reported. Earlier on Monday, Trump listed other issues he said were on the table: "We're talking about territory right now. We're talking about lines of demarcation, talking about power, power plant ownership." Last week, Russia rejected a proposal by Trump for a full 30-day ceasefire in Ukraine, and it has so far agreed only to a moratorium on attacking energy infrastructure.

Trump's adviser admits Yemen strikes chat leak, President downplays breach



(News Agency) - President Donald Trump on Tuesday sought to downplay a major security breach after his National Security Adviser, Michael Waltz, admitted to accidentally adding a senior journalist to a secret group chat of top US officials discussing classified details of planned airstrikes in Yemen. The controversy erupted after Jeffrey Goldberg, editor-in-chief of The Atlantic, revealed he had been

inadvertently added to a private Signal group chat where Vice President JD Vance, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and other senior officials were reportedly discussing "operational details" of upcoming strikes on Houthi targets. In his first public response, Waltz took full responsibility. "I take full responsibility. I built the group. My job is to make sure

everything's coordinated," Waltz told Fox News, adding that he did not personally know Goldberg. President Trump, however, attempted to deflect blame from Waltz. Speaking to NBC News, Trump said, "I don't think he should apologise. It was one of Michael's people on the phone. A staffer had his number on there. Michael Waltz has learnt a lesson, and he's a good man," signalling continued support for his National Security Adviser. Speaking about the Signal app, Trump said "we won't be using it very much" in the future. "That's one of the prices you pay when you're not sitting in the Situation Room with no phones on, which is always the best, frankly," he added. The President also said that the lapse "turned out not to

be a serious one". The President also denied leaking of any classified information in the chat group. "No it wasn't classified, as I understand it. There was no classified information. There was no problem, and the attack was a tremendous success. So only by what I've been told — I wasn't involved in it — but I was told by and the other people weren't involved at all. But I feel very comfortable," he said while speaking to Newsmax. Trump also attacked The Atlantic, calling it a 'terrible' magazine. "It's a terrible magazine. They made up all sorts of stories about me with standing over the grave of soldiers," he said, referring to a prior piece — written by Goldberg, and published in 2020 — which accused the president of referring to dead

military members as "suckers and losers". "Goldberg's a loser. His magazine's a big loser," the President added. Meanwhile, the use of Signal, a messaging app, to discuss sensitive operations has drawn sharp criticism from Democratic lawmakers. "This is an embarrassment," said Sen. Jon Ossoff, a Georgia Democrat. "This is utterly unprofessional. There's been no apology. There's been no recognition of the gravity of this error." According to an Atlantic story published on Monday titled "The Trump Administration Accidentally Texted Me Its War Plans", Goldberg was added to the open-source messaging app by someone posing as Michael Waltz, President Trump's national security adviser.

Judge rules against detention of Columbia student and permanent US resident



(News Agency) - A Korean American Columbia University student, who is a legal permanent US resident and has participated in pro-Palestinian protests, cannot be detained by federal immigration officials for now as she fights the administration of President Donald Trump over attempts to deport her, a judge ruled on Tuesday. Yunseo Chung, 21, has lived in the US since she was seven, and sued the Trump administration on Monday to prevent her deportation. Her legal team was informed this month that her lawful

permanent resident status was being revoked, according to court records in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York. Trump has pledged to deport foreign pro-Palestinian protesters and accused them of supporting Hamas militants, of posing hurdles for US foreign policy and of being antisemitic. Protesters, including some Jewish groups, say the administration wrongly conflates their criticism of Israel and support for Palestinian rights with antisemitism and support for

Hamas. Human rights advocates condemn the government's moves. The US Department of Homeland Security alleged Chung engaged in concerning conduct, including when she was previously arrested by police during a protest at Barnard College that DHS termed "pro-Hamas." Chung has not yet been arrested by federal officials. Immigration agents made multiple visits to her residences looking for her. US District Judge Naomi Reice Buchwald on Tuesday issued a temporary restraining order against the government that prevents Chung from being detained, court records showed. Actions against Chung form part of a pattern of government efforts against pro-Palestinian voices critical of Israel's military assault on Gaza, her lawsuit said. Columbia protester Mahmoud Khalil, who was arrested this month and is legally challenging his detention, is also a lawful permanent resident. Trump, without evidence, accused Khalil of supporting Hamas, which Khalil denies.

Democrats demand Trump officials' resignations after war plans on Yemen leaked



(News Agency) - The Trump administration sought on Tuesday to contain the fallout after a magazine journalist disclosed he had been inadvertently included in a secret group discussion of highly sensitive war plans, while Democrats called on top officials to resign over the security incident. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and CIA Director John Ratcliffe — both of whom were in the chat — testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee that no classified material was shared in the group chat on Signal, an encrypted commercial messaging app. But Democratic senators voiced skepticism about that claim, noting that the journalist, The Atlantic Editor-in-Chief Jeffrey Goldberg, reported that Defense Secretary Pete

Hegseth posted operational details about pending strikes against Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis, "including information about targets, weapons the US would be deploying, and attack sequencing." "It's hard for me to believe that targets and timing and weapons would not have been classified," Senator Angus King, an independent who caucuses with Democrats, said at the contentious hearing, which featured several sharp exchanges. The extraordinary revelation on Monday triggered outrage and disbelief among national security experts and prompted Democrats — and some of Trump's fellow Republicans — to call for an investigation of what they described as a major security breach.

4 US Army soldiers killed in Lithuania during training: Nato chief



(News Agency) - Four US Army soldiers have died in Lithuania during training, Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte said while visiting Warsaw on Wednesday. "Whilst I was speaking, the news came out about four American soldiers who were killed in an incident in Lithuania," Rutte told reporters, adding that he did not know any details. Lithuania's military earlier on Wednesday said they were searching for four US soldiers and a tracked vehicle which had gone missing on Tuesday afternoon. The soldiers had been training near Pabrade in eastern Lithuania near the border with Belarus, the US Army said in a statement. "The soldiers, all from 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, were conducting scheduled tactical training at the time of the incident," the statement read.

Ex-Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro to stand trial over 2022 coup attempt

(News Agency) - Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro will stand trial for allegedly conspiring to overthrow the government after he lost a 2022 election, the Supreme Court ruled on Wednesday, moving swiftly in a case that could reshape the political landscape. A five-judge panel decided unanimously to put Bolsonaro on trial. If found guilty in the court proceedings expected later this year, Bolsonaro could face a long prison sentence, isolating the far-right firebrand who has avoided naming a political heir. Soon after the ruling, Bolsonaro held a press conference in Brasilia to deliver a lengthy



defence against what he called "grave and baseless accusations". It seems they have something personal against me," he said, referring to the judges. Coups, he said, "have troops, have guns and have leadership. They haven't found who this leader would be." In his opening remarks on Wednesday, Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who is overseeing the case, screened dramatic footage of Bolsonaro's supporters storming government buildings in violent scenes that unfolded just a week after the inauguration of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in January 2023. Moraes cast that insurrection as the result of Bolsonaro's "systematic effort" to discredit the election he lost and then conspire to overturn using violence, with the help of senior military officers and cabinet members. Bolsonaro, a former army captain who served as Brazil's president from 2019 to 2022, is accused of five crimes, including an attempt to violently abolish the democratic rule of law and a coup d'etat.

I know nothing: Trump on US officials mistakenly sharing war plan with journalist

(News Agency) - US President Donald Trump's top national security officials, including his Defence Secretary, mistakenly shared war plans for upcoming military strikes in Yemen in a group chat on a secure messaging app that included the editor-in-chief of The Atlantic magazine, the White House said on Monday after the magazine disclosed the incident. According to The Atlantic's Jeffrey Goldberg, the plan, which included precise information about weapons packages, targets, and timing, was shared in the group chat two hours before the US launched an attack in Yemen on March 15. "The world found out shortly before 2 pm Eastern Time on March 15 that the United States was bombing Houthi targets across Yemen.



However, I knew two hours before the first bombs exploded that the attack might be coming. The reason I knew this is that Pete Hegseth, the Secretary of Defence, had texted me the war plan at 11.44 am. The plan included precise information about weapons packages, targets, and timing," the first-hand report by the magazine said. The US National Security Council spokesperson, Brian Hughes, acknowledged the misstep and said the chat group appeared to be

authentic. Accounts belong to Vice President JD Vance, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, CIA Director John Ratcliffe, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, and senior National Security Council officials were also part of the chat group, according to Goldberg. "At this time, the message thread that was reported appears to be authentic, and we are reviewing how an inadvertent number was added to the chain. The thread is a demonstration of the deep and thoughtful policy coordination between senior officials. The ongoing success of the Houthi operation demonstrates that there were no threats to our service members or our national security," the National Security Council spokesperson's statement said.

Attacker rams car into soldier and stabs him, kills elderly man in Israel



(News Agency) - One man was killed and another wounded in a combined ramming, stabbing and shooting attack by a lone assailant at a bus stop in northern Israel on Monday, emergency services said. Police said that the assailant was a 25-year-old Israeli citizen from the country's Arab minority. He rammed his car into an Israeli soldier standing at the bus stop, then got out of his car, stabbed him and seized his weapon. After that, the assailant started shooting at motorists driving past. An 85-year-old man was killed by the gunfire at his car, police said. Israel's ambulance service pronounced him dead at the scene. The soldier was badly wounded and taken to hospital, it said. Police officers shot the assailant dead, a spokesperson said. He resided in a town near the site of the attack, police said in a statement.

A rare show of dissent: Anti-Hamas protests grow in Gaza

(News Agency) In an extraordinary turn of events, Palestinians in Gaza are taking to the streets to voice their opposition to Hamas. In a rare display of protest, hundreds of people have gathered in northern Gaza, particularly in areas such as Jabaliya, Beit Lahiya, and Khan Younis, demanding that Hamas step down from power. The chants in these protests have been strikingly critical, with some calling Hamas a "terrorist organisation" and

others pleading for an end to their suffering. Hamas has ruled Gaza since 2007, when it took control from the Fatah group led by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Dissent has long been suppressed in the enclave, with critics fearing for their safety if they oppose the ruling party. Yet, the recent protests reflect a growing disillusionment, as people, particularly in Gaza, see Hamas as an obstacle to peace. One of the poignant messages

from the protests was the cry for children in Palestine to simply live, a statement underscoring the toll the ongoing conflict has taken on the region's younger generation. The situation has been dire, with over 50,000 people dead and millions displaced since the war broke out in October 2023. Many hostages remain trapped in Gaza, and the military operations continue, further complicating any hopes for peace.

US accuses Palestinian student of hiding UN aid agency work on visa application

The US government alleges that Mahmoud Khalil covered up his work for UNRWA, a United Nations body that provided food and healthcare to Palestinian refugees.

US alleges Columbia student Mahmoud Khalil lied on visa application
Khalil, a permanent US resident and pro-Palestine demonstrator, faces legal action

Judge halts deportation, Khalil claims political persecution

The US government has alleged that Columbia University student and pro-Palestinian demonstrator Mahmoud Khalil withheld that he worked for a United Nations Palestinian relief agency in his visa application, saying that should be grounds for deportation.

The UN agency known as UNRWA provides food and healthcare to Palestinian refugees and has become a flashpoint in the Israeli war in Gaza. Israel contends that 12 UNRWA employees were involved in Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, leading the US to halt funding of the group.



Popular teen DOGE member once provided tech support to cybercrime ring: Report

Edward Coristine is among the most visible members of the DOGE effort that has been given sweeping access to official networks as it attempts to radically downsize the U.S. government.

Elon Musk's team member linked to cybercrime gang.

19-year-old Edward Coristine ran DiamondCDN aiding EGodly.

EGodly boasted of cyber crimes, including harassing an FBI agent.

The best-known member of Elon Musk's U.S. DOGE Service team of technologists once provided support to a cybercrime

gang that bragged about trafficking in stolen data and cyberstalking an FBI agent, according to digital records reviewed by Reuters.

Edward Coristine is among the most visible members of the DOGE effort that has been given sweeping access to official networks as it attempts to radically downsize the U.S. government.



Medical assistant posing as nurse jailed for assaulting women in Pennsylvania

Ramon Garcia, a Pennsylvania medical assistant, was sentenced to 5-10 years for sexually assaulting women while posing as a nurse. Victims reported disturbing incidents, prompting a lawsuit against him and the medical center.



Ramon Garcia sentenced to 5-10 years for sexual assault
Classified as 'sexually violent predator' with lifetime Megan's Law registration - Arrested after multiple women reported incidents at medical center
A Pennsylvania man has been sentenced to 5-10 years in prison for sexually assaulting multiple women while claiming to be a nurse. The 34-year-old, Ramon Garcia, was given the sentence on Monday. The Montgomery County District Attorney's Office classified him as a "sexually violent predator," leading to lifetime registration under Megan's Law in the US. Garcia pleaded guilty in December 2023 as part of a plea deal. Garcia was working as a medical assistant in an urgent care center in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, where he committed the gruesome crimes.

Three days in Indian courts: A tale of 'corruption', misogyny and privilege

In a nation where judges are revered as demigods and courtrooms as temples of justice, the events of three calamitous days in March have laid bare the clay feet of these presumed divinities.

From March 14 to 18, the Indian judiciary, that self-proclaimed final bastion of democratic values, offered the public a tour through its chambers of disgrace, revealing patterns of corruption, moral turpitude and a troubling disconnect from the society it purports to serve.

The judge and the burning cache

On the night of March 14, as flames engulfed an outhouse at the official residence of Delhi High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma, they illuminated more than just the structure itself. Firefighters stumbling upon wads of currency notes amid the inferno unwittingly sparked a different kind of fire; one that threatens to consume the judiciary's reputation. The Supreme Court, in an unprecedented move towards transparency or perhaps damage-control, released videos and photographs showing what plainly appear to be bundles of cash in plastic bags retrieved from the flames. "Mahatma Gandhi mein aag lag gayi", someone is heard remarking in the video, a mordant observation about the Gandhi-emblazoned notes that were

burning, an apt metaphor for the values they represent going up in smoke within judicial quarters.

Justice Varma, in Bhopal when the blaze erupted, has denied any connection with the cash. His defence rests on the claim that the outhouse where the fire occurred was "completely disassociated" from his living quarters, "unlocked and accessible" to all and sundry. One is left to wonder if it is standard procedure for high court judges to maintain unsecured outhouses where anonymous benefactors might deposit large sums of cash without their knowledge.

The chief justice of India (CJI) has constituted a three-member committee to investigate the matter, the judiciary's time-honoured ritual for addressing impropriety within its ranks. Yet history suggests that these committees have often failed to deliver the desired results.

The case of Justice S.N. Shukla of the Allahabad High Court vividly illustrates this failure.

In 2017, Justice Shukla was implicated in a medical college corruption scandal. Despite an in-house inquiry finding the allegations credible and the then CJI urging him to resign, Justice Shukla simply refused. The judiciary's re-

sponse? They merely withdrew his judicial work while he continued to hold his position and draw his full salary until retirement in July 2020. To some, it would seem like nearly three years of paid vacation for alleged corruption.

Though the CJI eventually authorised a criminal complaint against Justice Shukla in July 2019 and the CBI formally charged him in December 2021, the case continues to languish in court with no resolution in sight.

The judge and the definition of dignity While Justice Varma's cash burned in Delhi, Justice Ram Manohar Narayan Mishra of the Allahabad High Court was busy redefining the boundaries of sexual assault. On March 17, in a ruling that has drawn deserved opprobrium, he determined that grabbing a minor girl's breasts and breaking her pyjama strings while dragging her under a culvert were not sufficient grounds for charges of rape or attempted rape.

This judicial pearl of wisdom came in a case involving an 11-year-old girl, who was assaulted by two men in Uttar Pradesh's Kasganj district. The assailants fled only when passersby intervened, a fact that Justice Mishra apparently found irrelevant to their intentions. Instead, he ordered the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Of-

fences Act) court to modify the charges to the lesser offence of "assaulting or abusing with an intent to disrobe".

The judgment provoked immediate and widespread condemnation. Union minister for women and child development Annapurna Devi declared she "completely disagreed" with the ruling, adding that "such a ruling has no place in a civilised society". Senior advocate Kapil Sibal was more direct: "God save this country with such judges adorning the Bench."

Yet Justice Mishra's ruling is hardly an anomaly but part of a troubling pattern. In 2017, the Punjab and Haryana High Court suspended the sentence of three students convicted of gang-rape, saying that the accused were young and the narrative did not throw up gut-wrenching violence that normally preceded or accompanied such incidents. In another infamous case, a Karnataka High Court judge, while granting anticipatory bail to a rape accused in 2020, remarked that it was "unbecoming of an Indian woman" to fall asleep after being "ravished". In 2021, the Bombay High Court ruled that groping a child without "skin-to-skin contact" did not constitute sexual assault under the POCSO Act, a judgment the Supreme Court overturned.

India not a Dharamshala Immigration bill passed in Lok Sabha, Amit Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the government was ready to welcome those who wished to come to India as a tourist or for education, healthcare and business, but stressed that those who posed a threat would be dealt with seriously. He made the remarks while participating in a debate in the Lok Sabha on the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, which was passed by the Lower House.

Shah said the Narendra Modi-led government would stop only those people who have malafide intentions for visiting India, adding that the country was not a 'dharamshala' (shelter home).

"Those who pose a threat to national security will not be allowed to enter the nation. The nation is not a 'dharamshala'. If someone comes to the nation to contribute to the development of the nation, they are always welcome," he said.

The Union Home Minister said the proposed legislation would strengthen the country's security, boost the economy and business, besides encouraging the health and education sectors. He also said the immigration bill would ensure the country

gets up-to-date information about every foreigner visiting India.

Touching upon the issue of illegal infiltration into India by Rohingyas from Myanmar and Bangladeshis, Shah underlined that such people taking refuge in India for personal gain had increased, making the country unsafe. He warned of strict action against infiltrators if they created unrest in India.

The Union Home Minister said the bill would strengthen the country's security and help India become the most developed nation in the world by 2047. "I want to assure the country that we will have up-to-date information about every foreigner coming to our country," he said.

"I welcome everyone who wants to visit India as a tourist, for education, for healthcare, for R&D, for business and so on. But those who come as a threat to the country, we will keep a close look at them and take strong action against them," he added.

AMIT SHAH ATTACKS TRINAMOL OVER INFILTRATION

Accusing the Trinamool Congress-led government in West Bengal of not tak-

ing stern action against illegal infiltration, Shah said the 450 km of fencing work on the India-Bangladesh border was pending as the West Bengal government did not give land for it.

"Whenever the process of fencing is done, the ruling party workers indulge in hooliganism and religious sloganeering. The fencing work of 450 km of border has not been completed because the West Bengal government is showing mercy to the infiltrators," he said.

"Out of around 2,200 km of land border area, only 450 km of area is left for fencing. But, the West Bengal government is not providing the land for the fencing work," he said. The Home Minister said the fencing work remained pending despite the central government writing 11 letters to the West Bengal government and holding seven rounds of talks with state officials on the issue. "Illegal immigration is happening from that area only. The state government is ensuring Aadhaar cards for the infiltrators and they are spreading to different parts of the country," he alleged.

"Maximum number of illegal Aadhaar

cards were found in South 24 Parganas. But, don't worry, we will form the government in Bengal next year and the remaining area will be fenced," he said.

WHAT DOES THE IMMIGRATION BILL PROPOSES?

According to The Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, anyone found to be using a forged passport or visa to enter India or staying in or exiting from the country will be punishable with a jail term of upto seven years and a fine to the extent of Rs 10 lakh.

The proposed legislation also provides for mandatory reporting of information about foreigners by hotels, universities, other educational institutions, hospitals and nursing homes to enable tracking of overstaying foreigners. It also says that any foreigner who enters any area in India without a valid passport or other travel document, including a visa, in contravention of the provisions of the law or of any rule or order given in pursuance thereof, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years or with fine which may extend up to Rs 5 lakh rupees or with both.

Crippling debt trap

Punjab, HP can take a cue from Haryana

The AAP government in Punjab has been waging a war on drugs as well as corruption, but it hasn't put up a strong fight against fiscal indiscipline. Successive governments in the state have been living beyond their means, and the current dispensation is continuing in the same vein as if there is no tomorrow. Punjab is the second-most indebted state (after Arunachal Pradesh) in the country in terms of the debt-to-GSDP (gross state domestic product) ratio. There is nothing surprising or shocking about this dubious distinction. The state finished last among 18 major states on the NITI Aayog's Fiscal Health Index just two months ago. A similarly grim picture was painted by the Comptroller and Auditor General's audit report in September last year — the state's expenditure has been consistently outpacing its revenue receipts. Things have come to such a pass that fresh loans are being taken not only to repay previous ones but also to meet routine expenses. AAP never tires of blaming the Akali-BJP and Congress governments for the crippling debt burden, but it has added to the mess by offering subsidies and freebies without bothering about the state exchequer's precarious position. It's obvious that tough, unpopular decisions have to be taken. Having antagonised the farming community by evicting protesters from Shambhu and Khanauri borders, will AAP go on to withdraw or rationalise free electricity for farmers? And will it also discontinue the freebie being given to domestic power consumers? However, electoral compulsions may prevent the



ruling party from taking such drastic steps, even though they may be beneficial for Punjab in the long run. Neighbouring Himachal Pradesh is also facing a financial crisis, despite conscious efforts by the Congress government to tighten its belt. Revenue from the tourism, hydropower and agriculture sectors has been dwarfed by mega borrowings to fund infrastructure projects. Arresting the alarming slide should be a top priority for both Punjab and HP, which can take a cue from Haryana's reasonably good model to manage debt and generate revenue.

Has Trump triggered US brain drain, the biggest since World War II?

The US might witness an exodus of researchers, if media reports and chatter on social media are anything to go by. The flight of scientists might be the biggest since scientists fled Nazi Germany. With President Donald Trump slashing research funding and increasing work visa scrutiny, European countries are planning to seize on the brain drain from the US.

The US might be facing an exodus of researchers, reminiscent of the mass departure of intellectuals from Nazi Germany during World War II. Many top scientists, frustrated by funding cuts and increasing scrutiny of work visas, are considering relocating to Europe, Australia and Canada, where there are more stable opportunities.

Countries such as France and Sweden are actively courting these scientists, positioning themselves as havens for independent research and trying to make the most of the brain drain. The Trump administration's decision to withdraw billions in funding from premier research institutions such as the National Health Institute (NIH) has created an uncertain climate for many scientists. It has also led to attorneys general of 22 US states suing the Trump administration.

Many American parliamentarians, member states, and companies have requested the European Commission to help the fleeing talent from the US, according to El Pas, a Spanish newspaper. In response, the Commission is

assessing proposals and expanding initiatives to facilitate the transition of these researchers. Maria Leptin, president of the European Research Council, told the Financial Times that the environment in the US "is discouraging for independent investigator-driven research". For many scientists and researchers in the US, the future remains uncertain. Alex Kong, a US citizen working on malaria research at the United States Agency for International



Development (USAID), had his fellowship abruptly terminated in February. USAID has also seen cuts in its spending recently. Kong is now applying for positions worldwide, with Europe at the top of his list. "It [the US] doesn't necessarily feel like the best place to be doing science or public-health research anymore," he told Nature, a British scientific journal. However, he acknowledges that securing a visa might be a challenge. Many researchers in the US are in a similar situation to Kong's. "I've been really, really passionate about my work, but the situation in the US is so stressful," a postdoctoral researcher who studies cancer and genomics at a prestigious US institution told Nature.

Iran unveils underground 'Missile City' as US nuclear deal deadline looms



The unveiling marked Iran's latest defiance of US pressure, showcasing advanced missile stockpiles while exposing structural vulnerabilities that could prove disastrous if hit by American or Israeli strikes.

Iran unveils third underground missile facility amid US tensions. Facility dubbed 'Missile City' by Iran's Revolutionary Guards

A Video shows critical vulnerabilities in storage and design Iran has unveiled its third underground missile facility, underscoring its determination to bolster military defences as the deadline for Donald Trump's ultimatum to surrender its

nuclear program approaches. Dubbed a "missile city" by Iran's Revolutionary Guards (IRGC), the base features extensive underground tunnels packed with advanced weaponry.

In the 85-second footage broadcast by Iranian state media, top military commander, Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, and IRGC Aerospace Force chief Amir Ali Hajizadeh can be seen touring the fortified complex. The arsenal includes some of Iran's most sophisticated missiles, such as the Kheibar Shekan, Ghadr-H, Sejil, and Paveh Land Attack Cruise Missiles — weapons reportedly deployed in recent attacks on Israel.

Gig economy faces grim reality

THE Covid-induced lockdown, which was imposed five years ago, witnessed an exponential rise in the demand for gig workers, who delivered groceries and other goods to people confined to their houses. Though they were hailed as frontline warriors, their wages and perquisites shrunk as the pandemic progressed.

Studies on gig workers reveal that despite a high demand for online deliveries during the Covid era, they received little support from the online platforms that had employed them. It must be clarified that gig workers are not described as employees but 'partners'. Even the e-Shram portal of the Ministry of Labour and Employment calls them workers who are not part of the traditional employer-employee relationship and work on a contract basis. This takes them out of the purview of traditional labour codes and makes their position somewhat fuzzy.

During the pandemic, such platforms would highlight the stringent hygiene standards of gig workers to reassure customers that there was no risk to their safety. The workers themselves were highly vulnerable to con-

tracting infection, while consumers were freed from the responsibility of declaring their disease-free status. Some studies found that it was extremely difficult for such workers to communicate with platform managements to voice their concerns. Wages reportedly became stagnant or reduced in many cases. It is during this period that customers began tipping delivery workers. As their grievances went unheard, these workers banked on family support to survive this difficult phase. The lockdown period was thus a time of huge uncertainty for gig workers. Contact-intensive fields like beauty treatment and taxi services were hit hard, leading to more job losses than gains despite the avalanche of online activity.

The gig economy has again come into sharp focus, with the 2025-26 Budget having included workers in this sector under the auspices of a government health scheme, while a plan for registration is also underway. This has been followed by reports that gig worker hiring is going to go up significantly in the coming months. Manpower consultancies are predicting that

hiring of temporary workers will shoot up in the June-August quarter. This would largely be in the areas of q-commerce (quick commerce), e-commerce, consumer durables and electronics, hospitality, FMCG and retail as well as logistics and manufacturing. The demand for temporary and gig workers is expected to be as high as one lakh during this quarter. What is interesting is that this requirement is not just from well-known online companies but also from brick-and-mortar firms, including the air-conditioning and refrigeration sector as well as the hospitality industry. Technicians are apparently expected to be in great demand, as well as chefs, kitchen staff and hotel front-desk personnel. Yet these will only be temporary seasonal jobs rather than permanent positions that provide much greater security.

It is the uncertain nature of temporary and gig employment that has prompted the government to give them the umbrella of a public health scheme that would at least reduce crippling expenditure on medical care. Registration would also provide better data on this relatively new worker category and enable bet-

ter targeted assistance.

A 2022 study by the Niti Aayog estimated the size of the gig workforce to be 7.7 million and projected that it would rise to 23.5 million by 2029-30. It found that 47 per cent of the workers were in medium-skilled jobs, 31 per cent in low-skilled jobs and 22 per cent in the high-skilled category. The 2020 Code on Social Security even has a separate provision for a fund to support welfare measures for gig workers. This has yet to see the light of day, even as talks among stakeholders are reportedly underway.

he promise of government aid to gig workers has led to online platforms warning about excessive regulation in the sector. The argument is that these platforms offer easy entry-level jobs, provide adequate wages and even offer life and health insurance without having any legal mandate. It is undoubtedly true that temporary workers cannot be treated on a par with permanent ones and plans to impose criminal liabilities on these enterprises for minor issues need to be ditched once and for all.

It cannot be denied, however, that there is a need for online entities in all areas, be it food

delivery, taxi services, e-commerce or professional services, to be more responsive to the grim reality of a gig worker's life. It should be a cautionary signal that a segment of consumers even provide food packets to exhausted and famished delivery workers arriving at their homes. Many users of online taxi services have encountered drivers who are sleep-deprived due to the compulsion of taking on too many trips. The 'partners' are clearly not being given sufficient time to recuperate between assignments.

At the same time, welfare provisions for the gig economy need to be evolved by the government in collaboration with online platforms as well as the conventional industry that relies on temporary workers. While health insurance is a laudable first step, issues relating to disability, accident insurance and maternity cover along with sustainable wage levels need to be discussed thoroughly. This needs to be put on the fast track if the gig worker is to be given dignity and a small measure of security in his or her admittedly all-important job.

US cracks down on visa fraud, cancels 2,000 Indian appointments made by 'bots'

The US Embassy in India has cancelled approximately 2,000 visa appointments that it said violated scheduling policies and were made by "bots". The associated accounts have had their scheduling privileges suspended immediately, the US Embassy in India said in an 'X' post today.

The Embassy further said that its consular team in India uncovered fraudulent activities and identified the "bad actors" responsible for these appointments. The Embassy asserted that it has zero tolerance for fraud and will continue to strengthen its anti-fraud measures.

This development comes at a time when the US government under President Donald Trump has been cracking down on visa fraud and unlawful immigration. Today's development also comes around a week after the Delhi Police initiated an

investigation into fraudulent visa and passport applications based on a US Embassy complaint filed on February 27.

Delhi Police registered a case against over 31 accused involved in submitting false information in visa applications. The fraudulent activities reportedly spanned from May to August 2024, with agents operating out of Punjab, Haryana, and other states.

As detailed in the FIR, 21 cases were identified where applicants and agents conspired to forge documents, including bank statements, educational certificates, and employment records, to obtain US visas.

The accused allegedly charged applicants between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 15 lakh for arranging these fake documents. In one instance, an agent promised to secure a visa for an applicant in exchange for Rs 13 lakh.

Indian-Americans more bullish about India's trajectory than 4 years ago

Indian-Americans are more optimistic about India's future than they were four years ago, reveals a recent survey. Compared to 2020, 10 percent more respondents now believe that India is heading in the right direction. The survey also highlights strong diaspora support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with many saying that the 2024 elections strengthened India's democracy.

The survey was conducted by the Indian American Attitudes Survey (IAAS) in collaboration with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and research firm YouGov. The report was released in the second week of March.

This survey gives a sneak peek into the minds of the over 5 million Indians in the US. This is a substantial number, and the Indian-Americans contribute significantly in several fields in the US. It highlights how Indian-

Americans remain cautious about the future of US-India relations under a second Trump presidency. These concerns stem from Trump's protectionist policies and focus on reciprocal taxes, with many suggesting that bilateral ties might fare better under Kamala Harris. Overall, 40 percent believe US-India relations will improve under Trump, while 26 percent expect them to deteriorate, and 34 percent anticipate no change. INDIA ON THE RIGHT TRACK: INDIAN-AMERICANS IN US

But desis in the US remain more "bullish" about India's trajectory. The survey reveals a divide between US-born and immigrant Indian-Americans in their perception of India's direction. While 55 percent of US-born respondents believe India is on the right track, only 42 percent of foreign-born respondents share this view.

However, roughly one-third of

both groups feel India is headed in the wrong direction, and immigrants are more likely to be uncertain (25 percent compared to 15 percent of US-born respondents).

MORE DEMOCRATIC, BETTER GOVERNANCE IN INDIA: SURVEY

Regarding India's governance, 46 percent of respondents express support for the current administration's policies, while 36 percent are critical. The remaining 18 percent have no opinion.

A key factor behind the positive sentiment appears to be the results of India's 2024 general election, which led to a more evenly divided Parliament and a stronger opposition. Forty-one percent of respondents believe the election made India more democratic, while 28 percent disagree. Fourteen percent believe it had no impact on democracy.

India may cut duties on Harley bikes, bourbon whiskey amid US trade talks: Sources

The government had earlier reduced import duties on Harley-Davidson motorcycles from 50% to 40%. Similarly, import duty on Bourbon whisky was reduced from 150% to 100% in the past.

India may lower import duties on Harley-Davidson, Bourbon, wine. Talks between nations aim to boost India-US trade ties with tariff cuts. US wants better access for wine, India seeks pharma export terms.

The government is considering lowering import duties on Harley-Davidson motorcycles, Bourbon whiskey, and Californian wine as part of ongoing trade discussions with the United States. According to sources, both countries are engaged in negotiations to further reduce tariffs on certain products and boost trade ties.

The government had earlier reduced import duties on Harley-Davidson motorcycles from 50% to 40%. Now, discussions are underway to further lower the tariffs, making these premium



bikes more affordable in the market.

Similarly, import duty on Bourbon whisky was reduced from 150% to 100% in the past, and officials are now



considering another cut to promote smoother trade between the two nations. Californian wine is also part of the talks, with the US pushing for better access to the Indian market.

Samsung Electronics co-CEO Han Jong-hee dies of cardiac arrest at 63

South Korean tech giant Samsung Electronics said on Tuesday that its co-chief executive officer Han Jong-hee has died due to cardiac arrest. Han was 63. Han was in charge of Samsung's consumer electronics and mobile devices division, while co-CEO Jun Young-hyun oversees the chip business of South Korea's biggest company. Samsung Electronics shares were flat in morning trade. The South Korean firm has been suffering from weak earnings and sagging share prices in recent quarters after falling behind rivals in advanced memory chips and contract chip manufacturing, which have enjoyed strong demand from AI projects. Samsung has also ceded its smartphone market crown to Apple. Han, who joined Samsung Electronics nearly 40 years ago, built his career in the TV business. He became vice chairman and CEO of Samsung Electronics in 2022. Han was also one of the company's board members. He chaired Samsung's shareholder meeting last week, where he and other executives were grilled by shareholders after the company's failure to ride an artificial intelligence boom made it one of the worst-performing tech stocks last year. In semiconductors, Samsung lags behind SK Hynix in HBM chips that Nvidia and others rely on for AI graphic processing units. "First and foremost, I sincerely apologise for the recent stock performance not meeting your expectations. Over the past year, our company failed to adequately respond to the rapidly evolving AI semiconductor market," Han said.

India likely to remove 6% Google tax from April 1, tech giants to benefit

India is likely to remove the 6% equalisation levy, often called the "Google tax," on online advertising services provided by foreign tech companies like Google and Meta. The tax will be scrapped from April 1, 2025, as part of amendments to the Finance Bill, reported news agency Reuters. This move comes amid efforts to improve trade relations with the US, which had previously criticised the levy and threatened retaliatory tariffs. The removal of the tax is expected to benefit tech companies, advertisers, and India's digital economy.

WHAT IS THE GOOGLE TAX?

The Equalisation Levy was introduced in 2016 to tax payments made by Indian businesses to foreign companies for digital advertising services. It was aimed at ensuring that global tech firms, which earn significant revenue from Indian users but do not have a physical presence in the country, contribute to India's tax system. Initially set at 6% for online advertising services, the levy was later expanded in 2020 to include a 2% tax on all e-commerce companies with annual business exceeding Rs 2 crore in India. The 2% levy was withdrawn last year following an agreement between India

and the US. Now, the government plans to remove the original 6% tax as well.

WHY IS THE GOVERNMENT REMOVING IT?

The decision to remove the tax is part of India's negotiations with the US to avoid trade conflicts. In the past, the US had threatened to impose tariffs of up to 25% on Indian products such as shrimp, basmati rice, and jewellery in



response to the equalisation levy. Experts believe the tax removal will help improve India-US relations and prevent any future trade disputes. Some countries, including the UK, are also considering withdrawing similar digital taxes to avoid tensions with the US. "Removal of the equalisation levy is a smart move by the government, as collections weren't very high, and it was a concern for the US administration," Sudhir Kapadia, senior advisor at EY told Reuters.

HOW WILL TECH GIANTS BENEFIT?

The removal of the Google tax is expected to provide multiple advantages to global tech firms operating in India:

Lower advertising Costs – With the 6% tax gone, advertising on platforms like Google and Meta will become cheaper for Indian businesses,

encouraging more digital ad spending. **Higher profit margins** – Tech giants will no longer have to account for the levy in their pricing, improving their profitability. **More advertisers on digital platforms** – Lower costs could attract more advertisers, boosting revenues for digital platforms. **Better trade relations** – India's move

may prevent the US from imposing retaliatory tariffs, ensuring a stable trade environment for multinational companies.

IMPACT ON INDIA'S DIGITAL ECONOMY

The decision to remove the tax is expected to encourage more foreign investment in India's digital sector. By lowering costs for advertisers, it could also lead to higher spending on online platforms, benefiting businesses that rely on digital marketing.

Not BMI, waist size a crucial marker in predicting cancer in men

Researchers are now suggesting that waist circumference is a stronger predictor of cancer risk in men compared to body mass index. The study, conducted by scientists from Lund University, Sweden, was published in The Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

WHY WAIST SIZE MATTERS MORE IN MEN

Traditionally, BMI has been used to assess obesity-related cancer risks. However, researchers found that waist circumference, which measures fat around the abdomen, is a better indicator of cancer risk - especially for men. The study analysed health data from 3,39,190 people in Sweden over nearly four decades. A larger waist size (about 11 cm or 4.3 inches more) in men was linked to a 25% higher risk of developing obesity-related



cancers. In comparison, an increase in BMI was associated with a 19% higher risk in men. Even after adjusting for BMI, a higher waist circumference still predicted greater cancer risk in men, suggesting abdominal fat is particularly harmful. In

women, both waist circumference and BMI were similarly linked to cancer risk, with a 13% increase observed for both.

WHY THIS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN?

Researchers believe that men tend to store more fat around the abdomen (visceral fat), while women accumulate more fat under the skin and in peripheral areas. Visceral fat is linked to inflammation and insulin resistance, both of which

increase cancer risk. The study suggests that measuring waist size alongside BMI could improve cancer risk predictions, especially for men. For women, adding hip circumference to assessments may provide better insights into fat distribution and cancer risk. "Our study provides evidence that waist circumference is a stronger risk factor than BMI for obesity-related cancers in men, but not in women. Waist circumference appears to provide additional risk information beyond that conveyed by BMI in men," the researchers concluded. The reason waist size is not as strong a cancer risk factor for women as it is for men could be due to differences in how body fat and hormones affect cancer risk. It may also be because waist size and BMI measure body fat differently in men and women.

India cracks the TB code, maps 10,000 genome strains to enhance treatment

Tuberculosis (TB) is one of India's most pressing public health challenges as the country accounts for the highest number of TB cases globally. While the government has set a target to eliminate TB by 2025, five years ahead of the global goal set by the World Health Organisation (WHO), drug-resistant TB strains and delayed diagnosis are still major roadblocks. In a recent scientific breakthrough, on World Tuberculosis Day, Indian researchers have successfully completed genome sequencing of 10,000 Mycobacterium tuberculosis (MTB) isolates, a move that could transform TB diagnosis and treatment. Mycobacterium tuberculosis (MTB) isolates are individual samples of the TB-causing bacteria taken from patients to study drug resistance and treatment response.

TUBERCULOSIS AND DRUG RESISTANCE

Tuberculosis is an ancient disease, caused by the bacterium Mycobacterium tuberculosis, which primarily affects the lungs but can also impact other parts of the body. It spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. While TB is treatable with antibiotics, the emergence of drug-resistant strains has

made treatment quite complicated. Drug-resistant TB occurs when the bacteria mutate (DNA changes) and develop resistance to standard TB medications. This makes the disease harder to treat and increases the risk of transmission. Traditional methods of diagnosing drug-resistant TB, such as culture-based drug susceptibility testing, take weeks, which delay treatment and increases the chances of transmission.

GENOME SEQUENCING: A

GAME-CHANGER IN TB DIAGNOSIS

To combat the challenge of drug-resistant TB, India launched the Dare2eraD TB initiative on March 24, 2022. Under this program, the Indian Tuberculosis Genomic Surveillance (InTGS) Consortium, a collaborative effort involving the Department of Biochemistry, the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) institutes, is working to sequence over 32,000 TB

isolates across the country. Out of these, researchers have successfully completed genome sequencing of 10,000 Mycobacterium tuberculosis isolates. Genome sequencing is a cutting-edge technique that analyses the complete genetic material of the bacteria. By studying the genetic makeup of Mycobacterium tuberculosis, scientists can identify mutations that make the bacteria resistant to drugs. This helps in predicting which antibiotics will be effective for a particular patient, allowing

for faster and more personalised treatment. "This data will enable the development of next-generation genomic tests, allowing for faster and more precise detection of drug-resistant TB strains. Unlike conventional tests that take weeks, genomic sequencing can deliver resistance profiling within hours or days," said Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, at an event announcement of the scientific advancement today, March 24.

UN records over one lakh cholera cases in eastern, southern Africa in 14 months



Nairobi : More than 178,000 cases of cholera have been confirmed in 16 countries in eastern and southern Africa from January 2024 to March 2025, the United Nations

Children's Fund (UNICEF) said on Monday. The startling number, worsened by limited access to water, sanitation, hygiene, and health services, has resulted in about 2,900 deaths, many of which are children, UNICEF said. "We need the continued commitment of governments, the private sector, and individuals who believe that every child deserves a future," UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa Etleva Kadilli said in a statement issued in Nairobi. According to UNICEF, South Sudan and Angola have faced the most severe cholera outbreaks, with children under 15 years of age comprising 50 per cent of cases in South Sudan and 40 per cent in Angola, news agency reported. UNICEF said more than 40,000

cases were reported in South Sudan from September 28, 2024, to March 18, 2025, including 694 deaths nationwide, its worst outbreak in 20 years. Angola, it said, reported over 7,500 cases and 294 deaths across 14 provinces from January 7 to March 18, with high risks for further escalation. According to the UN agency, the latest data from 2022 indicated that almost 120 million people, including 60 million children, are drinking unsafe water in eastern and southern Africa, with up to 22 per cent of the population in the region having no access at all.

Increased screen time to drive near-sightedness in children, adults: Experts

New Delhi : Overuse of digital devices and the resulting increased screen time is driving a significant number of people, especially the young towards near-sightedness or myopia, warned experts on Monday. Health experts have long been raising concerns over the world moving towards an explosive myopic crisis, especially post the Covid-19 pandemic, when traditional schools shifted to online learning through tablets and laptops; and outdoor activities were almost eliminated. "Digital eye strain is becoming a significant concern, especially among children post Covid. When children focus on screens for long periods, the eye muscles remain contracted. Over time, this prolonged strain contributes to the development of myopia (near-sightedness), particularly in young, pliable eyes," said Dr. Anuj Mehta, Professor, and HOD, Ophthalmology, VMMC



and Safdarjung Hospital at the 'Illness To Wellness' Summit organised by ASSOCHAM. Dr. Kirti Singh, Director Professor, Guru Nanak Eye Centre, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi said that the constant focus on screens decreases the rate of eye

blinking, leading to dry eyes. "This issue is even more pronounced in cramped spaces with poor ventilation, excessive air conditioning, or exposure to smoke – conditions often seen in 'sick building syndrome,'" Singh. According to ophthalmologist Dr.

(Prof.) A. K. Grover, from a city-based hospital, reduced or ineffective blinking leads to ocular surface issues such as dryness, burning, and eye fatigue. "Prolonged screen time strains our ability to shift focus between near and distant objects causing

focusing difficulties. It can also lead to poor posture which contributes to neck and head strain, adding to overall discomfort," Grover noted. Singh added that the impact of digital strain isn't limited to just the eyes. "Our body functions as a connected system — eye health is linked to liver and heart health and kidney," she said. The experts agree that eliminating digital devices from children's lives is unrealistic. However, steps can be taken to minimize its impact of causing digital eye strain. They emphasised the importance of balance, encouraging more outdoor activities to strengthen long-distance vision. They suggested the 20-20-20 rule which is after 20 minutes of screen time, take a 20-second break by looking at an object 20 feet away and aim for at least 2 hours of outdoor activity daily as well.

Citrus summer: Eat fruits, but wear them too



Florals for spring might not be groundbreaking, but adding a fruity punch to your fashion game this season? Definitely a great idea! Food has long served as an inspiration for fashion designers. From vibrant yellow lemony prints to cherry designs on dresses and T-shirts, culinary influences have often made their way into our wardrobes. In fact, food has become a signature design element for many fashion labels. Take Dolce & Gabbana, for instance, whose collections often celebrate the rich aesthetics of Italian cuisine. For now, fruits are ruling the plates... err... fashion; not just as prints or patches on breezy outfits but as high-end fashion jewellery too. Think of a watermelon-shaped Judith bag swathed in

blingtastic stones, or a bunch of grapes adorning your ears. Eminent international fashion brands like Tory Burch, Chloe, Kate Spade, Oscar de la Renta, Loewe, and Dolce &

Gabbana are making fashion fruitilicious with their statement accessories. The brands are offering an eclectic collection of dainty as well as elaborate statement pieces. Most of them are, of course, colourful, with designs inspired by strawberries, cherries, bananas, and watermelons. These pieces add an instant pop of colour to your look – whether you are rocking fruit jewels with a basic white shirt and blue jeans combo or a skimpy dress for a day out with your girls. For those with a flair for all things luxe and

sophisticated, metallic fruit jewellery is irresistible. Take Chloe's chunky metallic necklace, for instance. The all-golden chunky necklace is dotted with banana and pineapple charms. Similarly, Balmain's oversized golden grapes are neither green nor black but a subtle golden hue - chunky enough to make you look like a piece of art. PS: You don't need to be a Shalini Passi or Uorfi Javed to give your fashion game a fruitilicious makeover. There are also dainty and affordable pieces easily available in the market. Head

to Zara or jewellery stores on Instagram – you'll find plenty of designs. Stack up your wrist with bracelets, some of them embedded with fruit charms. You can also fashionably flaunt your zealous and vibrant personality with layered fruity necklaces or even cute pendant neckpieces (you are obviously an enthusiastic and lively person if you are inclined towards rocking colourful fruit jewellery). Ananya Panday, Khushi Kapoor and Hailey Bieber are all in for the trend, already rocking it with their cutesy fruity earrings.

North Eastern Institute of Ayurveda and Homoeopathy organises Yoga event in Meghalaya

Shillong : As part of the countdown to the International Day of Yoga-2025 in a fusion of tradition, nature, and well-being, yoga practitioners unrolled their mats at one of India's most astonishing natural marvels – the 'Double Decker Living Root Bridge' in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district on Monday Against a backdrop of misty hills, gushing waterfalls, and the whisper of ancient roots, the North Eastern Institute of Ayurveda and Homoeopathy (NEIAH), an autonomous institute under the Union Ministry of

AYUSH, organised a one-of-a-kind Yoga session as part of the countdown to International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2025. Officials said that the participants noted that this wasn't just another Yoga event, it was a testament to resilience and harmony — both of nature and the human spirit. "By organising the Yoga session on the living root bridge at the Nongriat village (in East Khasi Hills district), the message was clear. Yoga is not confined to studios, it belongs to the world, to nature, and every individual seeking balance and

well-being," a NEIAH official said. Much like the bridge itself, which has withstood the test of time through generations of Khasi craftsmanship, yoga embodies patience, strength, and balance. The event symbolised how ancient wisdom can seamlessly blend with modern wellness to inspire sustainable, mindful living. The Living Root Bridge, a UNESCO World Heritage contender, is woven entirely from the aerial roots of rubber fig trees, creating a living, breathing pathway that grows stronger with time.



Why Is Trump Invoking JFK? Hint: Russia

By Nishtha Gautam

"Let's get out of the Defense mess before it's too late...Be brave, Jack."

Less than two years before his assassination in November 1963, US President John F. Kennedy (JFK) received this letter from filmmaker Rod Serling, best known as the creator of the popular television series *The Twilight Zone*. The poignancy of this postscript in a March 26, 1962 letter needs to be examined afresh today in the aftermath of the latest release of another tranche of the 'JFK Files'.

Keeping his promise, President Donald Trump made more than 2000 documents related to JFK's assassination available to the public on March 16. JFK, who lived by the media and also died on screen, continues to rule the mediascape six decades after his death. While experts are still parsing through more than 64,000 pages of the declassified JFK Files, speculation, conspiracy theories, shock, and awe over the presidential assassination have come back in full strength. Who'll Tell The Conspiracy Theorists?

Did the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) have JFK

assassinated to continue its Vietnam experiment? Did assassin Lee Harvey Oswald work in tandem with the Soviet Union to eliminate the US president who was going the extra mile to push for disarmament at the height of the Cold War? Did the mafia, particularly the Chicago mob, order the hit? Did JFK's ambitious Vice-President, Lyndon Johnson, have his boss eliminated? None of these questions have yet been answered to the satisfaction of those asking. But this is the nature of conspiracy theories. Nothing assuages the anxieties of conspiracy theorists, and no document can disprove what they already believe.

So, what really is the purpose of declassifying documents that have ended up exposing more than 400 social security numbers and other personal details of political, military and congressional personnel?

CIA, The Mover-And-Shaker The documents largely reveal the inner workings of the CIA, offering crucial historical context to Cold War events. Details include the active bases in New Delhi and Kolkata, the contamination of Cuban sugar shipment to the Soviet Union,

the destabilising efforts to bring down hostile governments, and a lot more. The CIA spycraft is for all to see and deduce lessons from.

Yet, rather than establishing the CIA as the villain that took down a beloved president, the current tranche bolsters the agency's image as a global mover-and-shaker. JFK's aide, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., expressed his discomfiture about the CIA's autonomy and power in 1961, stating that the agency possessed "many of the characteristics of a state within a state". The CIA remains one of the most influential weapons in the US armoury.

The timing of this revelation is interesting. At a moment when the Trump administration's uninhibited policy actions—domestic and international—are being dreaded, decried, or defended, an exhibit of US capabilities is useful. And so is bringing JFK back into the political arena. Despite historians' scepticism around JFK's policies and character, his public image of perfection has endured to date. JFK remains the usher of what Jackie Kennedy called 'Camelot', the Arthurian idyll, in US history. It's not the first time that Trump has

leaned on JFK to gain validation from the US public. In 2016, he attacked his fellow Republican and rival, Ted Cruz, on the grounds of the latter's father's alleged involvement in JFK's assassination.

Trump Could Use Some Help But let's get back to Rod Serling's advice to JFK. Written before the Cuban missile crisis when, according to the Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, "The two most powerful nations had been squared off against each other, each with its finger on the button," Serling's letter contained a pat-on-the-back for JFK for his nuclear disarmament efforts. JFK had been campaigning for nuclear disarmament since 1956 and made it an issue during his presidential bid. Just before and during JFK's presidency, the Soviet Union and the United States suspended nuclear tests between November 1958 and September 1961.

Trump's self-fashioning as a peacenik who stops wars needs JFK's blessings. Keeping JFK alive in public image, Trump can lean on the precedent set by JFK in bringing Russia to the negotiating table for the nuclear test ban treaty. Interestingly, JFK was castigated as being

"weak" in front of his Soviet counterpart Khrushchev when the two met in Vienna in June 1961, immediately after the CIA-sponsored invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs failed. When the Soviets resumed nuclear testing, JFK challenged them "not to an arms race, but to a peace race". Unfortunately, all diplomatic efforts failed, and the US started nuclear testing precisely a month after Serling told JFK to "Be Brave" in his letter. The Cuban crisis unfolded less than six months later, in October 1962.

Image-Making

Now that the Trump administration is avowedly in favour of peace with Russia, invoking JFK's memory works in their favour. Just a month before his assassination, JFK signed the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty on October 7, 1963. He had spent the previous two months convincing the American public and a divided Senate about the need for nuclear disarmament. Trump's act of declassification of the JFK files ostensibly to bring the truth of JFK's assassination to light can, therefore, be seen as a self-serving one. Like JFK, Trump understands the power of image-making.

Lest It Be Forgotten: Operation Searchlight And Pakistan's Excesses In Bangladesh

By : Arun Anand

Bangladesh is undergoing a turbulent phase of its political recalibration following the removal of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024. Various ideological factions, notably the Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami, which historically resisted the nation's liberation from Pakistan's hegemonic hold, are increasingly consolidating their influence. These actors are actively shaping the discourses concerning the ideological trajectory and post-Liberation identity of Bangladesh. Concurrently, a discernible effort to obscure and diminish the historical memory of the Pakistan Army's atrocities, especially during Operation Searchlight (launched on March 25, 1971), have gained momentum. This revisionist impulse is particularly pronounced amidst the new government's overtures toward fostering closer diplomatic and economic ties with Pakistan, signalling a deliberate attempt to erase the memories of genocidal violence of the Pakistan Army. This calls for renewed attention to remind the nation about Pakistan Army's ethno-religious violence against Bengalis as it approaches the 54th anniversary of Operation Searchlight. Before delving into the military operations conducted by the Pakistan Army, it is imperative to contextualise the broader political landscape of Bangladesh — then East Pakistan — and its intricate relationship with West Pakistan, which ultimately culminated in the Liberation War of 1971. The establishment of Pakistan as a bifurcated state comprising two geographically non-contiguous regions, separated by approximately 1,600 kilometres of Indian territory, presented an inherently fragile political configuration. While the nascent state was ideologically unified under the banner of Islamic nationalism, this abstract sense of solidarity rapidly eroded as asymmetrical power dynamics emerged.

The initial aspirations of equitable governance and interregional parity disintegrated as West Pakistan's polity, predominantly dominated by ethnic Punjabis alongside the influential Muhajir elite from India, asserted



disproportionate control over the central apparatus of the state. This was perpetuated by the Pakistani military establishment, whose ranks were overwhelmingly composed of Punjabis. Consequently, the early years of Pakistan's political evolution were marked by systemic marginalization and institutionalized exclusion of the country's diverse ethno-linguistic communities be it Bengalis, Pashtun, Balochis and Sindhis. The imposition of Urdu as the sole national language, a policy vigorously pursued by the West Pakistani ruling elite, symbolised this overarching agenda of cultural and political homogenization.

This linguistic hegemony was particularly egregious given the demographic realities of Pakistan. Bengali-speaking people, constituting approximately 44 million out of the country's total population of 69 million, formed a clear majority. Despite this demographic predominance, the political leadership in West Pakistan dismissed the cultural

and linguistic identity of East Pakistan with disdain. The demand for the recognition of Bangla as one of the state's official languages, alongside Urdu, was met with authoritarian resistance, as evidenced during 1952 Language Movement protests when dozens of Bangla students were killed by the Pakistan Army in Dhaka University. Though the Pakistani state was compelled to officially recognise Bengali as one of the national languages alongside Urdu in 1954, the West Pakistani-dominated establishment persistently upheld systemic socio-political marginalisation and economic subjugation of the Bengali-speaking population of East Pakistan. Amidst the continued homogenisation attempts by Pakistani state at the cost of the country's ethnic components, Awami League-led opposition parties presented a Six-Point Proposal in 1966 which demanded that Pakistan be organised as a federation of units with power devolved to individual units; this was rejected by military

dictator Ayyub Khan, who had seized power by deposing President Iskander Mirza in 1958. Nevertheless, the most egregious act of political betrayal was orchestrated in the aftermath of Pakistan's inaugural general elections of December 1970, when the military regime under President General Yahya Khan, in collusion with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of the Pakistan People's Party, obstructed the democratic mandate of the Bengali dominated Awami League. Despite Sheikh Mujibur Rahman-led Awami League securing an overwhelming victory with 167 seats out of the total 313 and firmly establishing its right to form the national government, the military junta and Bhutto's faction, driven by entrenched ethno-linguistic prejudices, refused to facilitate the constitutional transfer of power. Bhutto's People's Party, which trailed significantly with only 85 seats, engaged in deliberate political manoeuvring to disenfranchise the Awami League. General Yahya Khan brazenly abdicated his constitutional responsibilities, instead conspired with Bhutto to indefinitely delay the convening of the National Assembly — a move emblematic of the regime's determination to negate the electoral will of East Pakistan and perpetuate West Pakistani hegemony.

What was more humiliating for the Bangla people was Bhutto's audacious proposition during his meeting with Mujibur Rahman and President Yahya Khan on March

3, 1971, suggesting the establishment of two separate prime ministers for the eastern and western wings of the country. This blatant disregard for the Awami League's unequivocal electoral mandate symbolized the West Pakistani elite's contempt for democratic principles as well as against Bengali people. The provocative demand triggered widespread outrage and mass protests across East Pakistan, reflecting the collective resentment of a population whose democratic aspirations were being systematically undermined.

Rather than honouring the legitimate political verdict, the Pakistani state responded with brute militarised repression. It culminated in the launch of Operation Searchlight on the night of March 25, 1971, a brutal military crackdown that started with the arrest of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his associates, thereby marking the commencement of a long campaign of mass violence and systematic persecution.

Under the military leadership of commanders such as Lt Gen. Tikka Khan, the Pakistan Army, following the systematic disarmament of Bengali military personnel across key garrisons in East Pakistan, initiated a comprehensive and indiscriminate military campaign against the Bengali population. The offensive commenced with a ruthless assault on Jagannath Hall at Dhaka University, a residential facility predominantly accommodating Hindu students.

Cockroach milk: The Superfood you never saw coming!

The term superfood is commonly used in health and fitness to describe nutrient-rich foods. Common examples include leafy vegetables, berries, and nuts, which are known for their high levels of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Such foods enhance general health when added to a healthy diet.

Cockroach Milk A Surprising New Contender

Recent scientific research has found an unexpected new addition to the superfood group: cockroach milk. It may sound bizarre, but scientists have

discovered that milk from the Pacific beetle cockroach (*Diploptera punctata*) is potentially three times more nutritious than cow's milk. This cockroach species produces a nutrient-rich milky substance to nourish its young ones. Scientists believe that this liquid contains proteins, fat, and sugar, thus is one of the most nutrition-dense naturally occurring substances identified until now. Given its nutrition content, researchers believe that it could play a role in future food technology.

What Does Research Say?

A 2016 study, published in the *Journal of the International Union of Crystallography*, investigated this peculiar milk-like substance. Scientists discovered that when young cockroaches ingested it, the material crystallized within their stomachs.

According to a report in *The Independent*, this milk has three times the calories of buffalo milk, which was once thought to be the most calorie-dense mammalian milk. It is also full of proteins, amino acids, and good sugars, all of which are vital for cell repair and growth.

Can Humans Eat Cockroach Milk?

Despite its remarkable nutritional profile, cockroach milk is not yet attainable for human consumption. The most significant hurdle lies in its production, as extracting milk from cockroaches is an elaborate and labor-intensive process.

Like all superfoods, cockroach milk should be viewed as a supplement. While further research is needed, this research could open the way for sustainable and nutritious food options in the future.

Great Rethink: Why Indians Must Bet On India, Not The West

By :Sanbeer Singh Ranhotra

The world is changing rapidly. Volatility is at an all-time high. American foreign policy has been turned on its head by Donald Trump. Conventional wisdom has been thrown out of the window. Immigration policies are changing across the West, most notably in Canada and the United States. Amidst this flurry, some Indians are being forced to reckon with a new reality – that of the West no longer being the “land of opportunities” that “welcomes” foreign immigrants. Recently, a Reddit post triggered a conversation about Canada losing its shine for Indian immigrants, especially students. An anonymous Indian student currently living in Canada posted his experience of living in the North American country. The post, titled I Regret Moving to Canada, described the education system in Canada as a “college scam,” saying students pay high fees for low-ranking colleges “but teach almost nothing.” The user mentioned that the courses are outdated and employers do not take the degrees seriously. According to him, international



students are treated as a business opportunity. “Once you land here, you realise you’ve been scammed.”

Next, the Redditor highlighted the financial struggles faced by international students in Canada, adding “The cost of living in Canada is insane. Rent is sky-high, groceries are overpriced, and basic necessities cost a fortune. Most students end up working long hours at minimum-wage jobs just to survive. Work-life balance doesn’t exist—you

either work or you don’t eat.”

Perhaps the starkest part of this post was the student’s call for Indians to rethink their migration plans. He said, “India is growing, and opportunities are improving. The West sells you an illusion, but once you get here, you realise you’ve been brainwashed. Don’t fall for the trap—stay in India, invest in yourself, and build something meaningful at home.” Several Redditors agreed with the student, with some even saying they had given up their PR

(permanent residency) to be back in India. “It was the most rational decision I’ve ever made,” the user added.

Abrupt permit cancellations, increased scrutiny of visa applications, and stricter enforcement of departure regulations have already left thousands of the approximately 423,000 Indians in Canada in a state of uncertainty and distress. TIME FOR INDIANS TO BET ON THE “INDIA STORY”

Canada must not be looked at in

isolation. In fact, Indians are realising that the West offers opportunities and a comfortable lifestyle mostly to already affluent Indians. These are people who are liquid enough to invest money they earned in India and start life from scratch in a Western country. However, most Indians do not have this luxury.

In fact, ordinary young Indians are running off to the West by incurring severe debts. In Punjab and Haryana, children force their parents to sell properties and pay exorbitant fees to travel and visa agents, many of whom turn out to be fraudsters.

Last year, Indians chose to dump Sweden – a beautiful European country. Between January and June 2024, Sweden saw a dramatic increase in the number of Indian-born individuals leaving the country, with 2,837 departures – a massive 171 per cent rise from 2023. Why is this happening?

For starters, tech companies have been laying off staff. Second, the cost of living has escalated dramatically. Third, Sweden has decided to tighten its visa and work permit rules.

How creators are turning to OnlyFans, without the adult content

When Hollywood actress Drea de Matteo joined OnlyFans in August 2023, the news sent shockwaves through her fanbase. Even though she was known for her ‘sexy’ role in ‘The Sopranos’ and a string of similar performances, De Matteo was the last person many expected to see on the platform. But behind the decision lay a story far removed from glitz and glamour - it was one of financial struggle, survival, and an unexpected suggestion from her teenage daughter. The actress, once a staple in the industry, found herself struggling to make ends meet during the pandemic. After refusing to take the vaccine, work opportunities dwindled, and she was left scrambling for a way to support herself and her family. That’s when OnlyFans (a subscription social platform) became her lifeline. Setting her subscription price at 15 dollars a month, De Matteo went from near financial ruin to a staggering



monthly income of over Rs 7,58,84,439 (that’s 7 crore+), excluding commission of the app. But there’s a catch. If you’re assuming this massive sum is linked to nudity, think again. In fact, Drea insists she doesn’t do nudity on OF. “They don’t really ask me to do crazy things. Because they know it’s me. You know, so I’m talking to their friends, ‘Can you make me a video for this person, for that person?’ And then there’s some

guys that want some intense foot stuff,” De Matteo revealed in an interview with ABC.

OnlyFans is an exclusive, subscription-based platform that takes a 20 per cent cut of creators’ earnings, allowing fans to connect directly with artists and content creators. The app does allow nudity and porn as part of its content and is known for that, but of late, not just content creators but also celebrities are posting sans-nude

content and earning millions, which is contrary to what you’d expect when you open the site. (we’ll get into more details on that soon).

“I signed up [for] that OnlyFans thing, and I thought, wow, I didn’t think it was gonna work, but I didn’t think anybody would care. I didn’t think anybody would care. I’m, you know, Adriana from The Sopranos from 100 years ago,” De Matteo told ABC News. She further says that she was just three days away from foreclosure, and OnlyFans saved her from financial ruin.

Now, like we told you, De Matteo is not alone. Over the past five years, since the pandemic, numerous celebrities have quickly set up their own accounts, earning millions of dollars along the way.

Among them are TV personality Blac Chyna, who reportedly made 20 million from her page, comedian Whitney Cummings, actress Denise Richards, 1990s

sex symbol Carmen Electra, Real Housewives stars Sonja Morgan and Larsa Pippen, and even DJ Khaled and Cardi B. Yes, you read this right. “I’m starting an OnlyFans for my hair. It’s niche even for me. Join me on this strange new journey,” she wrote alongside a video on Instagram. The 37-year-old actress explained that her content will focus entirely on her hair, offering subscribers “best quality hair sounds” and “very sensual stuff.” “I’m going for a very pure aesthetic. There will be no feet or bums involved,” Cave shares on while having a conversation with her boyfriend.

The trend trickling down Now, the trend of opening an OnlyFans account for content beyond pornography is gaining traction online. Today, you can find various queries on Reddit, with people asking about how well non-sexual content does on these apps and many people are making the switch.



Russia Plays Hardball On Ukraine While Sweet-Talking Trump: The Strategy Is Paying Off

By : Shubhangi Sharma

Ending the Russia-Ukraine war is proving to be an arduous challenge for President Donald Trump. Far from finding a straightforward resolution, the complexities of great-power manoeuvring have only deepened as Washington attempts to bring Kyiv and Moscow to the negotiating table. Over the past two days, separate discussions in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – one between the US and Ukraine, and another between the US and Russia – have sought to establish a ceasefire. Yet, while Ukraine remains engaged in negotiations with Washington, the US appears increasingly preoccupied with coddling Putin, while Russia, in turn, is raising its stakes.

Trump himself has further complicated matters by floating the possibility of US ownership of Ukrainian power plants, sending shockwaves through Kyiv. For President Volodymyr Zelensky, the battlefield is no longer the sole challenge – he must now contend with shifting American positions on military aid, diplomatic backing at the United Nations, and even

intelligence sharing.

The Diplomatic Chessboard in Riyadh

The recent talks in Riyadh have aimed at securing a limited ceasefire. On Sunday, the US held discussions with Ukraine, followed by a separate meeting with Russia on Monday, all under the same roof. In effect, Washington has positioned itself as a mediator between the two warring sides. However, early indications suggest that expectations for a breakthrough may be misplaced. Putin has already dismissed a joint US-Ukrainian proposal for a full and unconditional 30-day ceasefire, instead agreeing only to a pause in aerial strikes against energy infrastructure. How such a partial ceasefire would be implemented remains unclear, especially given that drone and missile attacks continue unabated. Meanwhile, Moscow has made it clear that the negotiations will not be easy, warning of “difficult discussions” ahead even as Washington optimistically speaks of “real progress.”

The US seeks a broader ceasefire by April 20, but Russia remains focused on securing

guarantees for its energy and agricultural exports. A potential revival of the Black Sea Grain Deal – brokered by Turkey in 2022 and abandoned by Moscow last year – has emerged as a bargaining chip for Putin. This agreement, which facilitated the safe passage of Ukrainian and Russian agricultural exports, is now a crucial element in Russia’s broader bargaining strategy. Following the talks, the Russian delegation was reported to be in a good mood. Yet, it is clear that the primary focus of the talks was simply safety of navigation in the Black Sea, and a deal could be finalised in the coming days. There are no breakthroughs when it comes to a larger ceasefire.

A Fractured Transatlantic Front The world witnessed as tensions between the US and Ukraine blew up, culminating in a public spat between President Trump, Vice President JD Vance, and Zelensky. If allies on the same side of the conflict struggle to maintain cohesion, one can only imagine the divide between Washington and Moscow.

Talks with Russia remain in their infancy, with Putin holding firm

to maximalist demands—including the recognition of Russia’s annexation of Ukrainian territories in Donbas, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia, and a formal guarantee that Ukraine will never join NATO. Being on the winning side, with Ukraine’s position dwindling, the Russian President has no reason not to project strength. While Moscow’s position remains unwavering, Trump has watered down Ukraine’s position with his noncommittal treatment.

Donald Trump has held two long phone conversations with Vladimir Putin, and even suggested that the two leaders could visit each other’s nations soon. The Americans, focused on great power politics, are floating the idea of a US and Russia that work together on the global stage, hoping to reverse Russia’s strong pivot towards China. Russia is showering Trump with flattery while driving a hard bargain on business—and the strategy is working.

Trump’s special envoy Steve Witkoff, who met Putin earlier in March, believes that Putin wants peace, that he does not plan to take all of Europe, and

that “he is not a bad guy” but he’s “super smart”. He said all this in a podcast with Tucker Carlson. Witkoff also went on to reveal that Putin gave him a portrait of President Trump from a leading Russian artist and that Putin went to Church to pray for Trump when there was an attempt on his life last year. All this left Trump touched, according to Witkoff. These gestures suggest that Trump is pursuing a high-stakes diplomatic gamble – one that relieves pressure on Putin while exerting new demands on Ukraine. The US president has turned the screws on Kyiv, conditioning further American support on Ukraine ceding critical mineral resources and energy infrastructure to US ownership. However, whether this strategy will yield tangible results remains to be seen. If Trump’s overtures to Putin fail, he risks both personal embarrassment and a diplomatic impasse. If he refrains from pressuring Russia, Washington may find itself unable to secure a meaningful settlement for Ukraine, undermining American credibility.

Alia Bhatt shares glimpses of her 'Love and War' moments from March

Alia Bhatt took to social media to share a series of glimpses from her memorable moments in March. From personal milestones to heartwarming experiences on the sets of her next film, 'Love and War,' the actress offered a peek into the special memories she created throughout the month. Alia's candid snapshots capture everything from radiant smiles on set to cozy, sleepy selfies in bed, offering a glimpse into her everyday life. On Tuesday, the 'Raazi' actress took to Instagram to share a collection of pictures that highlighted some of her most memorable moments from March. She dedicated time to her work on Sanjay Leela Bhansali's upcoming film Love & War and even showed off shoes from her husband Ranbir Kapoor's brand. Her photo dump also includes moments with her beloved pet Edward, relaxed brunches with her sister Shaheen Bhatt, and behind-the-scenes glimpses of her glam routine. The candid shots also captured Alia's fitness journey, cozy sleep moments, and fun mirror selfies. One of the photos showcases the clapboard from "Love and War." Sharing an array of photos, Bhatt simply captioned the post, "March so far." Meanwhile, Alia will next star in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's highly awaited project "Love and War," alongside her husband Ranbir Kapoor and Vicky Kaushal. This marks Alia's second collaboration with Bhansali, following their successful partnership in the 2022 drama "Gangubai Kathiawadi." The film was officially announced in January 2024, with the announcement on Instagram reading, "We bring you Sanjay Leela Bhansali's epic saga Love & War. See you at the movies." "Love and War" also marks Bhatt's second onscreen collaboration with Vicky after their 2018 spy thriller "Raazi." Besides this, the 32-year-old actress also has "Alpha," directed by Shiv Rawail, in the lineup. The Yash Raj Films' spy universe is scheduled for release on December 25. Alia was last seen in "Jigra," where her performance was widely appreciated. However, despite the positive reviews for her acting, the film struggled to attract audiences and underperformed at the box office.

Men's jewellery is going beyond bracelets, brooches. Enter elaborate necklaces

Superstar Shah Rukh Khan is at the forefront of the trend. The actor has lately been flaunting a stunning collection of neckpieces, like a tennis necklace, a layered emerald haar, and polki jewels.



That fashion and its trends are cyclical is a known fact. A major blast-from-the-past trend that has re-emerged in the fashion scene is elaborate men's jewellery. Ornate jewellery, though now predominantly associated with women's fashion, has historically been a significant part of men's style. Consider the Maharajas and kings who adorned themselves with layers of precious, bejewelled necklaces, royal belts and kamarbandhs, and armlets. The contemporary jewellery scene for men in the last few decades has promoted minimalism – with brooches, dainty chains, and bracelets (or kadas). However, there's a resurgence now, with elaborate jewellery pieces once again reclaiming men's wardrobes. Superstar Shah Rukh Khan is at the forefront of the trend. The actor has lately been flaunting a stunning collection of neckpieces, like a tennis necklace, a layered emerald haar, and polki jewels. At the IIFA Awards held in Jaipur earlier this month, SRK's jewellery game stole the show.

Salman's SIKANDAR BREAKS RECORDS & WINS HEARTS AHEAD OF RELEASE!

Sikandar releases in theatres near you on 30th March 2025



The teaser of Sikandar shattered records to become the most-viewed teaser for an Indian film of all time, a true testament to the unstoppable excitement surrounding Salman Khan's return this Eid!

Now, the Sikandar trailer has stormed its way into the Top 10 most-viewed Indian film trailers ever, cementing its status as 2025's ultimate mass entertainer. With less than a week to go, Sikandar has already begun making box office history, with record-breaking advance booking numbers in the UAE, a clear sign of the storm that's about to hit cinemas worldwide.

Meanwhile, the #SikandarTrailer continues to trend at #1, with fans raving about the on-screen chemistry between Salman Khan and Rashmika Mandanna. One scene in particular has captured everyone's hearts: Rashmika's haunting rendition of the timeless classic 'Lag Ja Gale', intercut with Salman's intense action sequence, has gone viral—balancing raw emotion with high-octane thrills in a way only Sikandar can.



Sharvari: My journey has been full of ups and downs

Actress Sharvari is just five-years-old in the acting business and is grateful for her journey which has been full of ups and downs. Sharvari made her acting debut with the series "The Forgotten Army – Azaadi Ke Liye" after which she was then seen in the dud "Bunty Aur Babli 2". After a slow start, the actress rose to major stardom with her work in hits such as "Munjya", "Maharaj" and "Vedaa". Talking about it, Sharvari told VOICE: "It has been a grateful journey. My journey has been full of ups and downs and I'm actually grateful for each day and each learning and teaching that came to me through this journey and I think that it has just started, you know? So, I'm waiting for it to go a long way." Sharvari is all set to star in "Alpha" with actress Alia Bhatt. Directed by Shiv Rawail, "Alpha" will mark the seventh film in Yash Raj Films' expansive spy universe. This universe began with the "Tiger" franchise, starring Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif, starting with "Ek Tha Tiger" and followed by

"Tiger Zinda Hai." The saga continued with "War," "Pathaan," and "Tiger 3." Upcoming films in the franchise include "War 2," directed by Ayan Mukerji, "Pathaan 2," and "Tiger vs. Pathaan." Talking about working with Alia, Sharvari, who was in the capital for the launch of Sheba's new campaign, told VOICE: "I think my most important takeaway of course from this film is to be able to learn from Alia. She's an incredible actor and an incredible human being." "And it was like a master class actually to just be with her on set every single day. So, I think I will take everything that I have learnt from her and hopefully, you know, apply it in every coming project. So, I'm really grateful to have gotten this opportunity to work alongside Alia," she wrote. It was on October 4, when the makers of the upcoming spy movie "Alpha" revealed that the film will hit the screens on Christmas, December 25.

Deepika Padukone honors her unbreakable bond with sister Anisha in heartfelt post

Actress Deepika Padukone took to social media to share a heartwarming tribute to her sister, Anisha Padukone, celebrating their strong and unbreakable bond. In a sweet post, the 'Piku' actress reshared a reel that beautifully captured the essence of sisterhood, highlighting the ups and downs they experience together but always supporting each other in the end. On Sunday, Deepika took to her Instagram stories and reshared a reel, writing, "I love you! @anishapadukone." The video featuring two animals has a text written on it: "Debating whether to tell my sister there is something on her head or just enjoy the moment." An Instagram user shared this video with the caption, "Sisters: one minute we're laughing, the next we're arguing, but at the end of the day, we'd fight the world for each other. #UnbreakableBond #LifetimeOfChaos." Deepika and Anisha Padukone share a close and inseparable bond. While Deepika is often in the spotlight, Anisha, a professional golfer, prefers to stay out of the limelight, but the two sisters have always stood by each other. The 'Padmaavat' actress frequently speaks about how Anisha is her

pillar of strength, and their sisterly connection is evident in the way they celebrate each other's successes and navigate life's challenges hand in hand. Last year, Anisha opened up about her excitement about Deepika and Ranveer Singh embracing parenthood and shared her joy at becoming a 'first-time' aunt. When asked about her excitement at becoming an aunt, Anisha had responded, "Great, great... first-time feeling." On the topic of who might spoil the baby the most, Anisha jokingly said, "Spoil? That's a tough one. I want to say Ranveer, but I have a sneaky feeling that my parents, Prakash and Ujjala Padukone, will be right up there too." She also admitted that she might end up spoiling Deepika's baby herself. Meanwhile, speaking about Deepika, she was last seen in Rohit Shetty's cop drama "Singham Again" as DCP Shakti Shetty. She will next be seen in "The Intern," where she will star alongside Amitabh Bachchan in lead roles. The film is the Indian adaptation of the 2015 Hollywood movie of the same name, starring Anne Hathaway and Robert De Niro.

Shriya Reddy on Salaar's Re-Release: "Grateful for the Love, Excited for the Conversations to Continue"

Actor Shriya Reddy who played a major role in the blockbuster movie Salaar :Part 1 – Ceasefire said that she was so excited on the re-release of the movie to the big screen following its phenomenal box office success. She also reflected on the film's journey, the love it has received, and the growing excitement for Part 2. Speaking about the film's impact, she shared, "I'm so excited! I can't wait to witness the euphoria again—the memes, the chatter, and hearing how people have watched it multiple times. The way Salaar has connected with audiences across regions is truly special, and I know the conversations will only grow stronger as we look forward to Part 2." Shriya also expressed her gratitude for the unexpected outpouring of love for her character, Radha Rama. Adding to it she said, "When Prashanth [Neel] told me Radha Rama would resonate with people, I didn't quite believe it. But the response has been overwhelming, and the questions about what she will do next just make me feel even more grateful."



Sonakshi returns to the 'Jatadhar' mode

Sonakshi Sinha is currently occupied with her much-awaited drama, 'Jatadhara'. Sharing another glimpse from her shoot diaries, she posted a picture on social media. Taking to her Instagram stories, Sonakshi shared a picture of her hand adorned with golden bangles, matching hath-phool, and nail paint on long nails. "Back in Jatadhara mode", Sonakshi wrote in the caption. The makers recently unveiled the intense first-look poster of Sonakshi from the film featuring her in

elaborate traditional jewelry, including a golden headpiece, bangles, and rings. Sonakshi's bold makeup was completed with dark kohl-lined eyes, a red bindi, and a tilak on her forehead. Her fierce look was further intensified as she covered part of her face with her hand, adorned with rings and long nails. The tagline on the poster read, "A Force of Strength and Power." 'Jatadhara' will mark Sonakshi's Telugu debut, alongside Sudheer Babu.

